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des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Monday 20 October 2014**

**Lundi 20 octobre 2014**

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 20 October 2014

## ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 20 octobre 2014

*The House met at 1030.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Good morning, and welcome home. Please join me in prayer.

*Prayers.*

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I want to acknowledge teacher Yvonne Malanka-Linseman's grade 5/6 class at Prince of Wales Public School in Brockville. Although they didn't make the three-and-a-half-hour trip, they're watching at home.

Good morning, students.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I'm delighted that the parents of our page captain, Adam McMahon from Parkdale-High Park, are here. Wendy Hubble and Peter McMahon are here in the public members' gallery to see their son.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Today it is my great pleasure to introduce three individuals in the members' east gallery who work extremely hard every day on behalf of Ontarians and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs: Bryan Bossin, Lesley Sherban and Christina Crowley.

**Mr. Jim McDonnell:** Today, I'd like to welcome Judy Wilcox from the county of Glengarry—next to my riding in South Glengarry—to the Legislature. Welcome.

**Hon. Helena Jaczek:** Please help me in welcoming an old high school and university friend in the members' east gallery. Maxine Charlesworth and her husband, Derek Reimer, are visiting us from Victoria, BC.

**Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde:** It's with great honour that, today, I would like to introduce two of my good, good friends: Anick Tremblay, who is our executive assistant in my riding of Ottawa-Orléans, and also Kyle Reaburn, who is going to be joining me here at Queen's Park. I would like to welcome them this morning.

**Mr. Harinder S. Takhar:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to the grade 10 students of Stephen Lewis Secondary School and their teachers and volunteers. I know they are not here, but they should be here shortly.

### JOSEPH NG

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Point of order, Speaker.

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

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Speaker, it's with much sadness that I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent that one representative from each caucus be allowed to speak for up to five minutes in memory of Mr. Joseph

Ng, a valued member of the Legislative Assembly dining room who passed away recently, and rise for a moment of silence following the speeches.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to do a tribute.

Do we agree? Agreed.

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** Today I would like to recognize the life of Joseph Ng. Joseph served in the legislative dining room for the last 15 years, but he does not need an introduction to my fellow members in this room. Everyone knew Joseph, admired Joseph and felt a warmth of friendship towards him.

Joseph came to Canada from Hong Kong as a teenager. Like a number of us in this chamber, Joseph lived the most Canadian experience—that of an immigrant—and he had made the best of it.

It was clear that Joseph found great pride and honour to serve in this building. This was felt in the way that he befriended each and every member who entered the dining room. Joseph had a way of making us feel, every time, that we were being greeted by a lifelong friend. He always remembered how you took your coffee and the last time he had seen you. He was just as kind in nature and courteous with everyone, whether they were a visitor, a staff member, an MPP or a minister. Joseph was a true gentleman. I am certain that great warmth and friendship is reflected in all of our memories of Joseph.

These past few days, as I spoke to some of my colleagues, the conversation more than once turned to reflecting on Joseph. The more people I spoke to, the more I realized how Joseph had impacted the experience of so many who serve at Queen's Park. Joseph always remembered everyone's name, and we just as certainly knew his.

Hundreds of people work so diligently, Mr. Speaker, to keep the institution of the Legislature running every single day. Joseph stood out among them. Of all the staff at Queen's Park who support and serve the members of the Legislative Assembly, Joseph truly shone. That is a gift of humanity, an example of the generous and kind nature of human existence. In this very busy, very hectic, very partisan institution, he served to remind us of the humanity that lies within all of us, and the importance of never forgetting someone's name and giving them a smile or a warm greeting.

This wonderful man had such an impact on our lives. We feel a sense of loss and a hole in this building, but the greatest loss is felt by his family. On behalf of the Premier, my colleagues and every member of this House, I

extend my deepest sympathies to his wife, Carol; his daughters, Aeolia, Martina and Amaranta; and all of his family and friends. We thank you for sharing Joseph with us.

Joseph, we will miss you.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Mr. Speaker, like everyone here in this assembly, I was shocked, astonished and surprised beyond words when I heard the news of Joseph Ng's unexpected passing earlier this summer. On behalf of the entire Progressive Conservative caucus—both current and former—I would like to extend our most sincere and heartfelt condolences to Joseph's family: to his wife, Carol; his three daughters, Aeolia, Martina and Amaranta; and also his twin granddaughters, Abigail and Rowan.

I first met Joseph and came to know him shortly after being elected here in 2007. We found that we had something in common: beer and enjoying good conversation. I was not an intimate or long-time friend of Joseph, and I know little of his earlier life, other than that he arrived here in Ontario nearly 40 years ago from Hong Kong at the age of 18.

**1040**

Although there is much of Joseph's life that I do not know, I wanted to take a few moments to share with everyone those qualities and traits that I do know. What struck me most about Joseph, since he first served that beer to me, and was immediately obvious to anyone, was his happiness. Each and every time, and without fail, when I saw Joseph, he was always happy. His eyes were always shining and gleaming. He was never without a smile and a face full of enjoyment and an upbeat greeting. Whether in the dining room or at an evening reception or meeting him in the lobby while leaving the building on his way home, you would always find the most friendly, happy greeting that was infectious, everlasting and genuine.

Joseph served me many beers over the last seven years. In our world of politics and in our habitat of partisanship, where it's theatrics that keep our world turning, Joseph was a most memorable individual, full of those most endearing and genuine qualities of honesty, friendliness and happiness. Although Joseph did not hold elected office, he embodied those qualities that we all find honourable.

Once again, on behalf of the entire Progressive Conservative caucus, we shall all dearly miss our honourable and happy friend Joseph Ng.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, on behalf of New Democrats, I also want to extend our sincere condolences to the family of Joseph. His daughters are here with us: Aeolia, Martina and Amaranta Ng. As well, we give our condolences to Joseph's wife, Carol; his father; and his grandchildren.

Joseph was a fixture in the dining room downstairs. I always think of Joseph and of Richard; they were two peas in a pod, if you will, in terms of their work in the dining room, serving the members and our guests, as

Joseph did so diligently over so many years in his employment in the dining room.

It's interesting. We knew Joseph was sick. He had come to work a number of times looking not well, looking weaker and thinner, even though he was a wiry and thin guy to begin with. We saw as his disease—a disease that touches pretty much everybody in Ontario and in Canada, that devastating disease of cancer—started to eat away at him. We saw that he was gone for a little while from the dining room as he was receiving treatments. We were thrilled to welcome him back when he came back, having gained enough strength to once again come to work. As you know, Joseph was a working guy. He was somebody who needed to work to be able to pay the bills and put a roof over his head and the heads of his family. He was a stand-up guy in that regard.

One of the things that I found interesting about Joseph was that, notwithstanding the fact that he did remember if you took coffee or tea or sugar or no sugar—he would say to me, “No carbs today again, I guess,” and I would say, “No carbs, Joseph. Whatever you can get me in the line of a salad would be great.” So he did remember things about the people that he provided such diligent service to.

One of the things that I always enjoyed about Joseph was that he was quite a conversationalist. Joseph could engage you in a discussion about politics on any level. He got what was going on. He got what was going on here. He was always careful: He was never partisan. But he certainly paid attention to what was happening here in this Legislature, what was happening in Canadian politics and what was happening in world politics, as a matter of fact. He was a very astute person and was always very engaging if you took the time to have a discussion with him about important issues that face our province, our country and our world.

The other thing about Joseph is that he had a pretty wicked sense of humour. I don't know how many people experienced that, but I can tell you that more than once I was in tears laughing at something that Joseph said. He had a very quick wit. He was quite interested in all things going on around us and was very able to turn a quick phrase or to make a very astute comment that often was quite humorous. He was a very funny, funny person.

As was mentioned, he had a sparkle in his eye. I think that's because often in his mind, he was thinking about a whole bunch of things that he just wasn't going to say out loud. But for sure, he had a great sense of humour.

He was also, at the same time, a very quiet and humble person. I think that's what led to so much of the respect that he had gained in his life from the members and their guests as he went through his work at the Legislature.

I've heard that Joseph was a singer. I never heard Joseph sing. I heard him tell jokes, I heard him tell stories, and I bantered with him on political issues. I never heard him sing. I can remember being in the dining room a couple of times later on in the afternoon having a quick meeting with someone while they were cleaning up

and tidying up the aftermath of the lunch rush, and I can remember there being jazz music on the radio. As I think of Richard over the next—or rather of Joseph; I keep thinking of Richard and Joseph. They were two peas in a pod the whole time. As I think of Joseph over the next while, when he comes to my mind, I'll be thinking of him singing some Frank Sinatra tune as he cleans up the tables in the dining room downstairs.

To all the family and friends and associates of Joseph Ng, on behalf of New Democrats, our sincerest condolences. We will miss him terribly.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank all members for their heartfelt condolences and their thoughts and prayers. I offer my personal condolences to the family and to the dynamic duo of Joe and Richard, who served me root beer on an ongoing basis; they knew exactly what to do for me. I too had some marvellous conversations with Joe, and I deeply appreciate the gift of him.

I thank the members for elevating our staff. We sometimes take our staff for granted, and I know that all of us never do that here with the hard-working people of the Legislature. His loss is our loss, and I thank you all.

It is now time for question period. The leader of Her Majesty's—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Oh, sorry. Forgive me. I forgot the rest of the unanimous consent. Could we all rise please for two minutes of silence.

*The House observed two minutes' silence.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I think that was a reminder that I haven't been in the chair very long, so it's a reminder of my duties.

I also forgot to say that we will provide the family with a copy of Hansard and a DVD of the tributes paid to Joseph. Thank you.

It is now time for question period. The leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I just want to begin by welcoming everyone back to the Legislature. With the exception of the tribute to Joseph Ng, it feels like déjà vu all over again, Speaker—they're there, and we're here.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** All's right in the world.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I teed that up for you.

Premier, Ed Clark made it clear that his report had only the conclusions that you wanted when he stated, "You can only do it by sitting down with the Premier and saying ... 'If you're going to ask me to do something, why don't you have me do something that you actually want?'"

Premier, because you didn't allow Mr. Clark to have all of the options on the table right from the get-go, a number of people, including myself, think that what you

really wanted was an excuse—a report, that would allow you to bring in new revenue tools that will raise the cost of alcohol, beer and hydro, just to name a few, with the added threat of people losing their jobs as you squeeze these assets.

So I ask you today: Are people going to lose their jobs? How many people are going to lose their jobs? Is the price of beer going to go up? Is alcohol going to go up? Are hydro—

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

1050

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to join my voice with the Leader of the Opposition to welcome everyone back. I know that everyone has worked very hard in their constituencies over the period of time that the Legislature wasn't sitting. Welcome back here. There is a lot of work to do, and I'm very pleased that we are all back here to do it.

As the Leader of the Opposition knows, we ran on a plan to build the province up. We ran on a plan to make investments in the people, in the infrastructure, in the businesses of this province, and that's what we're going to do. Part of that was, we said we were going to ask Ed Clark and his group, the council that included Janet Ecker and Frances Lankin, to give us some advice on assets, and that's exactly what we've done.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Mr. Speaker, to go back to the Premier, it's clear that Ed Clark's recommendations won't solve the significant financial problems that you've brought to this province: an \$11-billion deficit, which is more than all the other provinces and the federal government combined. My colleague from Wellington-Halton Hills said it right when he said that it's clear that you've learned nothing from previous debacles. You couldn't "run a hot dog stand."

Premier, will you do what we have asked—to make sure you get it right this time, because your track record with Ornge and the gas plants is abysmal and scandalous—and ask the Auditor General to review every public asset sale before you move forward, to ensure that the taxpayers are getting the best deal?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, I actually believe that what we have asked Ed Clark and his council to do is a perfect example of learning from the past, because if we think about the way the member opposite's party, when they were in office, dealt with the 407, there could not be a more blatant example of a thoughtless, unplanned and absolutely bad deal for the people of Ontario. We have learned that this view and review of assets has to be done in a thoughtful way. It has to be done in a way that maximizes and optimizes the assets that we have in this province and then allows us—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Answer.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** —to make the investments that we know we need in assets for the future, like transportation infrastructure—

*Interjections.*

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

I'm going to make this comment once and then move on to a more aggressive way to bring civility here. When the Premier or anyone on that side is answering, if I hear heckling from that side, I'm going to cut the answer short. The same goes on this side. Now I'll move in to individuals.

Final supplementary, please.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Premier, since you've taken office, you've talked a lot about transparency and accountability, but your actions don't match up with the rhetoric. Your new Liberal member from Trinity-Spadina told us recently in committee that he believes in supporting openness and transparency, but only at the right time. That is pretty consistent with what we've seen from you thus far.

However, you have stated that, had various precautions being taken in the past, the gas plant scandal would never have happened. So we're asking you to take those precautions today and let the Auditor General do her job and look into every public asset sale before you close the deal. Why won't you agree with that? We all agree with the Auditor General and the impartiality there and the expertise there. It's the right way to go. Just say yes.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know that the Auditor General will choose the areas that she wants to look at. I'm confident that as we move forward, as I say, on a review of and an action on optimizing the assets that belong to the people of Ontario, we are going to be able to realize real, new benefit from those assets. In fact, the council was asked to look at maximizing the value of Hydro One, OPG and LCBO to generate a better return, to provide a benefit to customers and to provide the opportunity for us to invest in transit and transportation infrastructure.

Ed Clark, who has led that review, made a speech last week. We will be looking forward to his interim report, and all of that information will be available to the people of Ontario, including the Auditor General.

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Back to the Premier: Clearly, Premier, you don't want to be accountable and transparent on that file, so let me try another one. We strongly believe that it's the duty of those of us who are fortunate enough to be elected to this place, on behalf of the public, to maintain transparency, accountability and openness.

You've talked about it a lot, but how can you reconcile that promise that you make so often, Premier, to be open and accountable when you've instructed your government committee members to hide financial information about your \$309-million MaRS bailout? Why won't you be open and transparent and provide the documents we're asking for?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Let me just go over a little bit of background, because I know that the member opposite wants there to be—as we do—the best possible innovation and research in Ontario. He wants, as we do, start-up companies to have the support that they need.

We know that MaRS is a world-renowned centre of research and innovation. It's an organization that has generated economic activity of about \$3 billion and has helped or advised 1,400 companies to get started and to be able to expand.

Our priority has been, and it will continue to be, to protect Ontario's investment in that building. We fully expect that the \$224-million loan will be paid back in full. We are operating on that assumption and supporting MaRS in their innovation and research.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Premier, we all know what MaRS is intended to do. It's a great objective. Our government was involved in starting phase 1, which we built, by the way, knowing that we could fill the building.

You went on. You knew fully, when you went on to phase 2—there were lots of media reports—that that building may very well be empty. Then you involved a private developer, Alexandria Real Estate, and then you changed the rules at Infrastructure Ontario—all of this without any transparency, without any light shining in at all from the Auditor General, without reporting to this House.

You owe us and you owe the taxpayers an explanation of what you're up to, and the best explanation is to show us the documents we want. We want the agreement between your government and Alexandria Real Estate. We want the details around the Infrastructure Ontario loan, which, at the very least, should be public.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The member opposite knows that this building has been repeatedly valued at or above the amount that we've invested. I think that the member opposite also knows that it would be reckless, and it would jeopardize a conditional agreement, to make certain confidential documents public before that deal, that arrangement, had been completed.

We're not going to undermine an arrangement that would be in the best interests of the people of Ontario by providing information publicly that needs to be confidential for a period of time.

We are committed to being open and transparent. I want information to be available to the public and, obviously, to the members of the opposition as they ask for it, but not at the risk to the benefit of the people of Ontario. We're not going to undermine those commercially sensitive transactions.

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

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** To the Premier again: It clearly is déjà vu all over again. You obviously haven't learned anything from Ornge or eHealth or gas plants. You're continuing your propensity as Liberals to just throw more money after bad.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister of Economic Development, come to order.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Rather than saying no on phase 2—which, it was clear around here, you shouldn't have gone ahead and developed—you went ahead, using the tax-

payers' money, because you don't care about the tax-payers' money.

It's the same thing you did in Ornge, the same thing you did with gas plants, and the same thing you did at eHealth—just throw hundreds of millions out the door—and you refuse to be accountable and transparent for that.

Don't repeat the mistakes of the past. You've got two police probes going on now because of those mistakes in the past. Let's not have to call for another one. Give us the documents we want and be transparent.

*Interjections.*

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

Premier?

1100

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The minister responsible for infrastructure is reviewing the documents. We will release those documents responsibly.

But as I said, we will not undermine the best interests of the people of Ontario by releasing commercially sensitive documents when there is a process under way. We will not do that, because we know that MaRS is, and is going to continue to be, a success.

I would say to the member opposite that he should be careful as he undermines the rhetoric around the future of MaRS, because the fact is—

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** —because he knows full well that there is expertise and innovation potential in this province. He knows full well that MaRS has been successful—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Leeds–Grenville: second time.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** —and will continue to be successful. Part of that is making sure that that building is functioning at the highest capacity.

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Premier. Why does the Premier think it's better to have Ontario's local hydro companies in the hands of private, for-profit speculators rather than in the hands of Ontarians themselves?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Again, Mr. Speaker, I welcome back the members of the third party. I know that they've been working hard in their constituencies.

What the leader of the third party is asking about is the practical and sensible plan that we are moving forward with, to make sure that the assets of this province owned by the people of Ontario work to the very best advantage of the people of Ontario. That's the work that Ed Clark is doing with his council. He has said quite clearly that he doesn't believe that selling those assets is the right answer. He has said that.

I believe that the leader of the third party is probably having a bit of a hard time framing the question because in fact Ed Clark has said he agrees that selling those assets is not the right thing to do.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Last week, Ed Clark released his interim plan for our shared public assets at a private business luncheon. He released a plan for alcohol sales that he knew would get a lot of ink and tried to bury a plan to privatize hydro utilities.

Now, if this was this Premier's intention, why did she not campaign on Harris-style hydro privatization?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The assumptions about optimizing the value of Ontario's assets were part of our plan. We campaigned on it, and so did she. The leader of the third party campaigned on exactly the same fiscal assumptions that we campaigned on.

She knows full well that with Ed Clark having been asked to do his work, he is going to deliver an interim report. She also knows full well that he has said he agrees that selling off those assets is not the right thing to do.

He has also said that there are changes that can be made that will benefit the customers, will benefit the ratepayers, and will also provide the best benefit to the people of Ontario, because we will be able to then invest in transportation infrastructure that is much needed across this province.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** On Friday, Ed Clark told Ontarians that he wanted public hydro companies to bring in "private capital" so "Ontario could sell down some of its interest..."

The Premier wants to bring private speculators into local hydro utilities. Then she wants to sell them off. Ontarians are going to be left paying for the costs of hydro and the profits of private energy speculators.

When you privatize a public company, I call that privatizing. When you sell off public ownership, I call that a sell-off. What does the Premier call it, and why didn't she call it like it is during the election campaign?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, I was quite clear—we were quite clear—during the election that we were going to look at the assets of the people of this province and we were going to make sure that they were working at optimal capacity to provide for the opportunity for us to invest in new assets that are needed by the people of Ontario: transportation infrastructure.

What the leader of the third party is saying, Mr. Speaker, is that she would never change anything, ever, that she would not take a responsible and sensible look at assets that were purchased many years ago and find a way to make sure that they could work better. She would never do that. She would never take that responsible step.

I believe that does not serve the people of Ontario and would not serve the people of Ontario. I believe that there is a way to make change that actually benefits the future of the province.

*Interjections.*

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

#### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC ASSETS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My second question is for the Premier. The Premier is starting to behave as though Ontario's hydro system belongs to the Liberal Party of Ontario. Our public hydro companies belong to Ontarians, Speaker. The Premier is plunging headlong into a Mike Harris hydro privatization scheme. She hid this plan from Ontarians during the election.

Will she now come forward and commit to stopping and asking Ontarians first for their approval before she sells off their assets?

*Interjection.*

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

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'm laughing because the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change is re-playing the attacks that were coming at us from the third party before the election, Mr. Speaker, because we were talking about doing this very thing—that we were going to look at the assets. If I read you from the text of the 2014 budget that was introduced in May: "The government will look at maximizing and unlocking value from assets it currently holds, including real estate holdings as well as crown corporations such as Ontario Power Generation, Hydro One and the Liquor Control Board of Ontario."

It was right there, Mr. Speaker. That's what we ran on. That's what we brought to the people of Ontario. In fact, the assumptions in the budget were what she ran on as well.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** One of the things I think is clear is that that was part of the Trojan Horse budget that New Democrats did not support, Speaker.

Manitoba and Saskatchewan—

*Interjections.*

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

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Eglinton–Lawrence will come to order.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister of the Environment, come to order.

Proceed, please.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Manitoba and Saskatchewan are two provinces that actually have protections built in for their public assets.

Will the Premier support New Democrats' call for a referendum on the sale of any of our crown jewels, or will she keep tight-lipped, as she was during the election campaign, regarding these schemes?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, again, I will just refer the leader of the third party to the text of the plan that we ran on. Our Moving Ontario Forward plan

includes a balanced and responsible approach to paying for investments in transportation infrastructure. The funds will be from dedicated sources of revenue, including asset optimization of \$3.15 billion, or 10.9%.

Mr. Speaker, we ran on this. We said that there are assets in the province of Ontario that need to be reviewed, that we need to make sure are working in the best interests of the people of Ontario, including the opportunities to find a better rate for the people of Ontario when it comes to hydro, to find ways to bring costs down for the people of Ontario and to make sure that we have the funds necessary to invest in transportation infrastructure, including transit, which the leader of the third party says she supports.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The public hydro system belongs to Ontarians, but the Premier's adviser is calling for "bringing in private capital" so that the province can "sell down ... its interest." Ed Clark wants to "dilute the government interest" and wants public hydro utilities to "seek out their own new partners—public or private."

Now, is the Premier going to privatize and sell off public assets without the approval of the Ontarians who actually own these assets, or will she do the right thing by the people of this province and give them their say on these schemes?

1110

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Well, I believe that there is a role for the private sector. I think the leader of the third party might want to ask her predecessors, when the NDP government signed nine private power-generating contracts, whether that was consistent with what she is saying now.

Mr. Speaker, we will be responsible. We have said we believe that these assets need to be in the hands of the people of Ontario. Ed Clark has agreed with that. We will move responsibly to make sure that these assets work for the people of Ontario, because we believe that we can recycle some of those funds and invest them in transportation infrastructure, and that is the responsible and sensible thing to do.

#### CHILD CARE

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Welcome back, Premier. My question is for you.

Premier, you're proposing to eliminate 140,000 child care spaces throughout the entire province of Ontario. My question is: Why do you want to make it more difficult for Ontario parents like me, who are trying to find affordable and accessible child care that is close to their homes? Can you answer that question for us?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Education.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I'm a little bit confused by the nature of the question, because I have absolutely no plan to eliminate child care spaces. The only way I can figure out how the member opposite might have reached this conclusion is if we eliminate illegal child care spaces,



because what we are certainly doing is we have created a dedicated enforcement unit to look at unlicensed home child care spaces.

When we receive a complaint, we respond to that complaint very quickly. We have actually got a new bill before the House, which of course died on the order paper, but which we reintroduced. I'll be very pleased, in the supplementary, to talk about some of the steps that we're taking in that Child Care Modernization Act.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It doesn't surprise me that the minister is confused by the question, but I can tell you, certainly, having spoken with other parents across the province, this is a very real issue for them.

You are about to cut 140,000 child care spaces in this province and you have no plan. As a parent, I ask you: Why do you think you are better suited than me to make a child care decision for my child and every other child in this province?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** If you actually look at the Child Care Modernization Act, what you will find is that for those people who are licensed home child care providers, they will actually be able to increase the number of children that they serve. They will be allowed under the new legislation, which we hope we will have co-operation on in passing—you will find in the new legislation that we are increasing the number of children from five to six.

However, we also believe that, to ensure the safety of children, we should be asking unlicensed providers to follow the same rules that licensed home care providers already include, which is to count their own children in the count—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Answer?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** —of children being cared for. But what we've also done in the legislation is to put new enforcement tools there, so that when people break the law—

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

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** My question this morning is for the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. Good morning, Minister. Thank you for reaching out to the Friends of the Duff-Bâby Mansion when you were in Windsor. Thank you to the caucus for being in Windsor, in Ms. Gretzky's riding of Windsor West, and spending some money last weekend.

Speaker, one of the truly disturbing aspects of this growing MaRS scandal is this government's unwillingness to disclose crucial information that would shed some light on this \$400-million fiasco. For example, it refuses to tell us why, in 2010, it had to write a new regulation specifically to allow MaRS to be eligible for an Infrastructure Ontario loan, and it refuses to release the details of that loan agreement.

Minister, will this government finally release this crucial information and be transparent? Will you shed

some light—pull up the blinds, if you will—on this shady deal?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Mr. Speaker, let me begin by saying that all of my colleagues had a fantastic time in Windsor. Our meeting there went fantastically. Our party is really supercharged about being back here today. We have every confidence that we will continue to work hard with the good people of Windsor to continue to build a strong economy in Windsor. Certainly, we look forward to the member's advice going forward. It's a great part of our province. We are really proud to have been there on the weekend. I know each and every one of my colleagues—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Secondly, the member knows we have spent 10 hours together over the last two weeks in estimates committee. I've said many, many times that we will share all documents and information, and we have been doing that. But I think the member knows full well that I have to take advice from my deputy in terms of documents that may be commercially sensitive. If I were not to do that, I would be abdicating my responsibility as a minister. Surely the member wouldn't want me to do that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Quite frankly, I don't think I'm the only one for whom writing a new regulation, just to allow MaRS to qualify for a \$224-million loan, sets off alarm bells. This wasn't the regulation to expand eligibility of the IO loan program to a broader range of non-profits and charities. This was a secondary regulation that was designed to allow MaRS to pocket a \$224-million loan that they were in no position to repay.

Will this government admit that for the past four years, it has covered up the fact that it passed a regulation in secret that allowed MaRS to qualify for a \$224-million loan that this government knew MaRS was in no position to repay to the taxpayers of Ontario?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** It's ridiculous, Mr. Speaker. It is impossible for this government to pass a regulation in secret. All regulations are absolutely public. They're posted in public, they're circulated in public for a period of time, even before they are passed. So that suggestion is beyond ridiculous.

But let me say this: I will continue to release whatever information we have on this and other issues. This government will continue to be open and transparent. But if the member is asking us to release information that's commercially sensitive, it would be abdicating my responsibility as a minister—and go against the advice of my deputy minister—to do that. That would also be abdicating our responsibility to the public and the commercial reputation of this province, which would do us great damage. That would simply not be a responsible thing to do.

We will be open and transparent. We have been; we'll continue to be. We'll release whatever documents we can, and we'll do it as quickly—

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

#### JOB CREATION

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** My question is to the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. From canvassing door to door during the spring election to receiving calls coming into my constituency office, the economy is top of mind for residents of Davenport.

Over the summer, I have seen many reports that are saying Ontario's economy is on the right track and that our economic plan is working. To quote CIBC's report released in September, "Ontario has seen a notable resurgence." Last week, BMO released a very similar report, predicting strong growth in Ontario. This is great news for my riding of Davenport and the rest of the province.

Would the minister please inform the House about last month's job numbers and how our province has grown since the last global recession?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** That's a terrific question. I'm delighted to do that.

We have to be careful as we use month-to-month job numbers. They do fluctuate, but what they do is indicate a trend.

I'm really happy to be able to get up on my feet today in this Legislature and say that for the first time since the global recession, we are now up over half a million net new jobs recovered since the recession. We're up half a million jobs—514,300, to be exact—since June 2009. If you compare us to the US, we're up over 190% in jobs since the global recession. In the US, they're at about 120%, or just a little bit above that.

What that tells me is that our plan to invest in our people, our plan to invest in infrastructure, and our plan to build a good, healthy business climate is working. We've come a long way. We still have further to go, and we're going to keep creating jobs in this province.

1120

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** This is great news for my constituents and all Ontarians. Our government should be very proud of this growth.

As many of us must hear, people in Davenport are concerned about youth employment. I know that our government has introduced many programs and initiatives to help youth enter and succeed in our province's job market. The youth jobs strategy that was introduced in the 2013 budget has shown real success. Would the minister please update the House on our success to combat youth unemployment?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** First and foremost, we all believe and understand that youth unemployment is still too high. It's almost double the unemployment rate for the rest of us, and that's unacceptable. That's why the Premier moved forward with our youth jobs strategy some time ago now. It's been about a year that it's been in place and already over 20,000 jobs have been created. Job oppor-

tunities have been created for young people across this province, and that's really important.

Last month alone, 12,600 young people found employment in Ontario. That was a fantastic month for youth, but we have a lot of work to keep doing. We're going to keep investing in creating job opportunities for our young people. We're going to keep investing in our youth jobs strategy, which is providing opportunities for young people to find employment. We're determined to continue to bring down youth unemployment. We've made great gains to date. We've got more work to do, and we're looking forward to continuing that good work.

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** My question is to the Premier. Premier, I'd like to share with you a few headlines that I thought you might enjoy: The Globe and Mail, September 22, "Premier Wynne to Reveal Cabinet Plans in Bid to Boost Transparency"; CBC News, September 25, "Ontario Premier Promises More Transparency, Releases Mandate Letters for Ministers."

Premier, those headlines were less than a month ago, but so much has changed. Here's a few newer headlines: Toronto Star, October 14, "Liberal MPPs Block Release of MaRS Financial Details"; CBC News, October 15, "Liberals Won't Release Details of MaRS Office Tower Deal."

Premier, your member from Trinity-Spadina told the committee quite clearly that he believes in openness and transparency at the right time. So Premier, I ask you, do you agree with Mr. Dong's statement—

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

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** —and if so—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. I remind this member and all members: When I stand, you sit.

Premier.

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

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I'm really proud to be part of a government—

**Mr. Steve Clark:** The right time is right now.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Leeds-Grenville is warned.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** —with a Premier who is absolutely committed to ensuring that as we do business in this province, we do it in a very straightforward, transparent way. That's very, very important to each and every one of our ministers.

If the member is asking this government to put out documents that our deputy minister and our legal folks in the ministry are telling us are commercially sensitive, does he really think it would be responsible for us to do that? Frankly, that would be abdicating my responsibility as a minister if I were to supersede that advice and release those documents.

What I will do is what we've committed to do a number of times in the last couple of weeks, and that's to

release all documents that exist that are not commercially sensitive, and with the documents that may be commercially sensitive we'll ask our ministry—and I have asked our ministry to release what they can of those documents. I think that's pretty fair.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Back to the Premier: Your minister was less than forthright. Our requests in committee were very simple and very straightforward. We asked for the original loan agreement between the government and MaRS, as well as the original business plan MaRS used to justify the loan. Our final request was for the contract between ARE and MaRS, which the government has bailed out for \$65 million. We offered that the committee would go in camera to protect any commercially sensitive information—we offered to go in camera to protect that information.

Premier, members of your government in committee voted against each and every motion. Each vote was a clear vote against openness and transparency.

Premier, when will you stay true to your words and table these documents to the estimates committee?

*Interjections.*

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

Minister?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** The member's inaccurate, misinformed, over-the-top, silly rhetoric aside, yes, we will table documents to the estimates committee. What we will have to do is make sure those documents and the information we provide are not commercially sensitive. That's our responsibility. It's my responsibility as a minister and it's our responsibility as a government to ensure that we're serving the public interest.

I know the member understands that. I know what he's trying to do here as an opposition member, but I will not abdicate my responsibility as a minister to serve the public interest. I simply will not do that. I don't think that's an appropriate thing to do. I don't even think that's an appropriate request. But we will provide whatever information the committee has requested, provided it's not commercially sensitive.

#### HOME CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour le ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. New Democrats believe that all low-paid PSWs should receive the promised raise increase for all of the hours that they work, but under the Liberal Trojan Horse budget the PSWs who bathe clients get the raise and those who feed them don't. Those who work in community mental health don't, and most PSWs don't see the wage applied to their travel time from client to client. For all of these PSWs, this Liberal promise is a broken promise.

Why did the minister choose to leave so many of those low-paid PSWs behind?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** It's great to be back. I appreciate the question as well because it gives me the opportunity

to, first of all, acknowledge the tremendous critical work that our PSWs are doing right across this province in a number of venues, and certainly no more importantly than in our home care settings. I know that many Ontarians, particularly our seniors and those with complex needs, rely on our PSWs for their support. That's why I am so proud to be part of a government that has made a commitment to our PSWs who, quite frankly, are not adequately compensated, where we've committed to increasing their wages by \$4 an hour over the next three years. Of course, the party opposite, the third party, did not support those measures that we took.

I'm happy to talk about other measures beyond the wage increase that we're committed to as a government in the supplementary.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** New Democrats will continue to push for good living wages for all of the PSWs because right now there are so many of them that are falling through the big holes left behind in this Liberal promise. The minister has the opportunity to fix our home care system, but today it is as broken as ever and getting even more fragmented.

Now PSWs still don't know how many hours they have or if they will work next week. They are still being paid different wages for work of equal value, and many PSWs do not get their wage increases for time spent travelling. We're talking home care; they all have to travel.

Why doesn't the minister take this opportunity to fix, rather than continue with, this broken model for low-paid but vital health care workers?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I have great respect for the member opposite, but on this issue I have to say that the NDP has no authority to speak, and that's because it wasn't in your platform. It was in our budget, the budget that you voted against.

We're increasing the wages of our PSWs by \$4. We're also taking a number of important measures to increase and guarantee the sustainability of this important aspect of our health care system. We've added three million additional PSW hours in this province. We've added 2,500 new PSWs in our long-term-care homes alone in the last five years.

I'm glad that this gave me the opportunity to raise the important measures that we're taking, but I'm not going to take lessons from the NDP when it comes to our PSWs. We're working hard; we're seeing that progress.

1130

#### AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Speaker, my question through you is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Minister, the people of this province are interested and excited about the government's local food strategy. More consumption of local food is better for our health and supportive of our local agricultural community and economy.

In my riding of Northumberland–Quinte West we are fortunate to have so many opportunities to shop locally. For example, the Cobourg Farmers' Market offers a great opportunity to support the local producers—

*Interjections.*

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

Finish, please.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Sorry, Speaker.

I know my constituents and people across the province are interested in what our government is doing to support local food. Could the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs please update this House on the government's local food strategy?

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** It's great to have the positive voice of the member for Northumberland–Quinte West return to this House. I do know that the member for Northumberland–Quinte West is a fixture every week at the Cobourg Farmers' Market.

I also know, over the last couple of weeks, that the member has been spending a lot of time with his farmers as they combine both corn and soybeans.

Buying locally, we know, invigorates our local communities. We know that it keeps the dollars circulating locally. The agri-food sector in Ontario generates \$34 billion in GDP, employs over 740,000 Ontarians each and every day, and we will—our government, through the efforts of all of us here—continue to support local farmers' markets and people buying local food.

In fact, on Friday, Domino's Pizza announced that 100% of their cheese will now be made of 100% Canadian milk.

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

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Thank you to the minister for that answer. My constituents will be pleased to hear that our government's commitment to local food remains strong, as the local food movement is strong in my community.

Minister, over the past few months, people have taken an interest in the part of the legislation that deals with farmers donating food to food banks. The tax credit for farmers was proclaimed on August 2, and I know the farmers and community food organizations are interested to know more details about this important amendment. Can the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs please provide more details on this tax credit?

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I hope I provide a full answer so the member doesn't want a late show.

As part of the Local Food Act, farmers will now be able to get a tax credit for donations of agricultural products to community food organizations, the first of its kind in Canada.

I want to pay tribute this morning to the member from Sarnia–Lambton, who brought forward the private member's bill and who joined with me and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing in Hamilton a few short weeks ago to make this announcement.

Mr. Speaker, not only will this tax credit benefit farmers who generously donate and provide healthier, nutritious local food for those who need it most; the tax credit moved forward because of the work this govern-

ment has invested in with stakeholders to develop this policy. In fact, when we were in Hamilton one of the local farmers donated 1,000 pounds of hamburger to the local food bank in Hamilton to make this happen.

## SCHOOL TRUSTEES

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, it's my first question to you so I hope you'll be kind to me in your response. Minister, will you require school boards, including the Toronto District School Board, to post the expenses of their trustees online?

**The Hon. Liz Sandals:** Certainly, if trustees and school boards wish to have a policy that requires them to post their expenses online, we're quite happy to support that. The current state of the law is that school boards are required to have an expense policy which complies with the broader public sector expense policy.

In the case of the Toronto District School Board, which is what brought all of this up, when the audit committee came to us and said, amongst other things, that they didn't have a policy and they were concerned about expenses, we actually appointed a third party auditor to go in and look at them, and directed them to come in line with that BPS directive and create a—

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

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Minister, I thought your government believed in transparency and accountability, following a string of disasters like the power plant cancellations, Ornge, eHealth and now MaRS. The list goes on and on.

I think parents and taxpayers have the right to know the expenses their elected officials receive, including their trustees, especially when we know the funding shortfalls in areas such as student transportation and special needs and the fact that we are going into debt in the province of Ontario at about \$1 billion a month right now.

The media outlets like the Toronto Star should not have to pay tens of thousands of dollars for FOI requests. When will this House be assured that all elected officials will have their expenses posted online?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** As I say, we're quite willing to look at that as an option in our accountability legislation going forward, but right now I have no legal authority to order that to happen. When a board has not used the authority which it does have, has not complied with the law, then we have directed them to come in line with the law.

But quite frankly, I think this is why people all over the province need to be thinking very carefully over the next week about trustee elections, because the board is required to set an open and transparent policy that complies with the broader public service directive around expenses. If their local board has not followed that direction, then they should be looking very carefully at

the trustees that they elect, because it's ultimately up to—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.  
New question, the member from Algoma–Manitoulin.

#### ELLIOT LAKE INQUIRY

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning to you. My question is to the Premier.

Premier, Justice Paul Bélanger's report on the Elliot Lake mall collapse was detailed, conscientious and included excellent advice for the government. But Justice Bélanger also expressed deep frustration that a crucial government report on deteriorating parking structures was not disclosed to the commission until long after the hearings and policy round tables were over, even though some inquiry participants had helped prepare that report.

Justice Bélanger said that had he known of this government report, his mandate would certainly have been affected. How is it possible that government officials failed to disclose this document?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Premier?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** To the Attorney General, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** The Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services and I were in Elliot Lake last week when Justice Bélanger issued his report. I would like to thank the commissioner and his team for this very thorough study of the Algo Centre Mall tragedy, and I wanted to offer my deepest sympathy again to both families.

It was an unfortunate event that happened. I was there when this happened, I was there for the funeral of one of the victims, and I was there again with them, with the population of the Elliot Lake, receiving the report.

The commissioner has very, very important recommendations in his report. I want to thank everyone who was involved with the commissioner, all the individuals and organizations that contributed to his findings and recommendations.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Again to the Premier: Commissioner Bélanger said there remains a big question his report is unable to answer: Why didn't the government implement the policy recommendations of this missing report?

Justice Bélanger wrote, "If those reasons did in fact exist, they should have been made known to me." But they weren't, and this resulted in what he called missed opportunities. Will the government investigate and explain to Ontarians why this document was not disclosed to the inquiry process?

1140

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Let me first echo my sympathies and condolences to the Perizzolo and Aylwin families, who lost their two loved ones in that tragedy at Elliot Lake two years ago. I want to thank the member from

Algoma–Manitoulin for his hard work, along with this committee, on this important issue as well. He was present when the Attorney General and I were in Elliot Lake last week to receive the report from the commissioner.

While we were there, Speaker, we assured the community that we will be engaging in a very thorough analysis of the report, the work that Mr. Justice Bélanger has done, and have undertaken to get back to the community in about a year's time—as he has advised us—with specific steps as to how we will implement his recommendations.

#### ABORIGINAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. Our government has demonstrated its commitment to investing in people so that everyone has an opportunity to succeed and fully participate in the economy. I know that this House is keen to hear how this government will continue to help aboriginal populations across Ontario.

There are over 9,000 entrepreneurs in Ontario who identify as aboriginal. While there is positive growth for aboriginal businesses and entrepreneurs in Ontario, we know that aboriginal businesses and communities also face challenges. This includes difficulty in accessing capital and a lack of community-level capacity to leverage economic development opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: As a former business owner, I am most interested to know: What is our government going to do to ensure that aboriginal people can get support for business, employment and training opportunities?

**Hon. David Zimmer:** I want to thank the member for Kingston and the Islands for that question. My ministry and our government have been working across government with all our aboriginal partners to truly advance aboriginal economic development. There are many things that an entrepreneur needs to think about, research and undertake before starting a business.

Earlier this month, I announced that the Aboriginal Economic Development Fund is now open for business. It is a three-year, \$25-million initiative. The important part of the plan is to provide jobs and a prosperity fund and our overall plan of working to improve socio-economic outcomes for aboriginal people.

Through three funding streams, the Aboriginal Economic Development Fund will help aboriginal businesses, communities and organizations create, diversify and collaborate in their business activities. I can tell this House that improving socio-economic outcomes for aboriginal peoples is an important part of our government's economic plan. It's an investment—

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

**Hon. David Zimmer:** —in the future prosperity of—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. I stand; you sit.

Supplementary?

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** Constituents in my riding will be very interested to hear about the opportunities we are creating for aboriginal people. I am very glad to see that the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs is continuing its work on economic development for aboriginal communities. It is vital for communities to engage and collaborate with each other, and that is what the Aboriginal Economic Development Fund is promoting. The fund is not only providing support to expand aboriginal businesses, but it is also continuing to invest in new development projects.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister provide additional information to the House about the three different funding streams and how the Aboriginal Economic Development Fund will assist aboriginal communities in reaching their full potential?

**Hon. David Zimmer:** The elements of the fund consist of creation, diversification and collaboration. The first funding stream, the Business and Community Fund, will help create economic opportunities by financing projects that will expand economic capacity in individual aboriginal communities.

The second funding stream, the Economic Diversification Grants, will help aboriginal communities identify new high-potential opportunities in emerging sectors.

Lastly, the third funding stream, the Regional Partnership Grants, will help focus on helping communities collaborate to create skills training and employment opportunities across the various regions of Ontario.

I look forward to working in partnership with aboriginal communities through this development fund. As I said earlier, together we can help develop aboriginal communities, to help construct and to add to the infrastructure and the business opportunities of Ontario.

#### TRUCKING SAFETY

**Mr. Michael Harris:** My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Minister, the secret is out: Your government has been asleep at the wheel for more than a decade while lax standards for trucking licensing have jeopardized the safety of Ontario motorists. Make no mistake: Allowing unregulated trucking schools to turn out unprepared truckers is a clear threat to public safety on Ontario roads, and it's your responsibility to act when that safety is compromised.

Recently, a Toronto Star report revealed four unregulated schools identified for enforcement action still being allowed to operate, and you've done nothing to stop them. Why would anybody believe you will finally get this right after years of your government spinning its wheels?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I thank the member opposite for that question. Of course, I am aware of the Toronto Star stories on this particular topic. The member opposite will know that here in Ontario, thanks to many years of hard work on the part of not only this government but specifically the Ministry of Transportation and all of our road user safety partners, Ontario enjoys having amongst the safest roads in all of North America.

The member opposite would also know, I suspect, if he had read to the end of all of the stories, that I had the opportunity to speak to the Toronto Star and make it very clear that our government accepts nothing less than the very best in terms of road user safety for the people of Ontario. That's why I have undertaken to work very closely with the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities and with industry representatives to make sure that we can come up with a system that allows us to have mandatory entry-level training for truck drivers in the province of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Minister, we need action now. Your dithering and delay only further damages the reputation of reputable schools and drivers while continuing to compromise our safety.

The Star report indicated that, further to the incompetency of allowing unregulated schools to turn out untrained drivers, some of your own test centres are not even testing properly. It found, during a dozen road tests at your Woodbridge centre, that not one learner was taken on a 400-series expressway, this despite a ministry policy requiring them to do so.

Minister, do you agree with your test centres issuing licences to truckers without ever taking them on the highway?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I think it's important to note, as I said in my opening answer, the fact that Ontario continues to have amongst the safest roads in all of North America. I think it's important to note that we introduced a training standard for class AZ driver's licence training programs back in 2010. Since that time—this is where the facts take over this part of the story—we have seen the number of fatal conditions involving large trucks on Ontario's roads reach a five-year low.

Having said that, we know that more work is required to be done. It's why Ministry of Transportation officials will continue to monitor and audit all of our truck driving testing centres. It's why I have also undertaken to work closely with the Ontario Trucking Association, with the Ministry and Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, so that we can work towards implementing a mandatory training program for truck drivers in Ontario.

#### CHILD POVERTY

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** My question is to the minister responsible for poverty reduction. Six years ago, the minister wrote, "Poverty is a problem we can't afford." She said, "The time for action is now."

She set what was called an achievable target, to reduce child poverty by 25% in five years, a target New Democrats and anti-poverty people strongly supported. Clear targets and timelines are the only way to hold the government accountable for promises they make to the most vulnerable.

Her new poverty reduction strategy has no timelines to cut child poverty, no target for reducing homelessness. Why does the minister have no idea when, or even if, this government will deliver on its promises once again?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you for the question, because it does give me an opportunity to talk about a very, very important initiative that is core to our values as a government, and that is the reduction of poverty.

Speaker, we released our first Poverty Reduction Strategy, which set a very ambitious goal of reducing child poverty. If you actually look at that report—and I urge you to read it—you will see that we laid out the conditions under which we could have achieved a 25% reduction in five years. We were very clear about what the province could and should do, and we have done all of the things that we said we would do. The federal government, however, did not step up in the way they would have had to if we were to achieve that goal.

We continue to call on the federal government to make reducing child poverty a priority for them, because we are all better off when the least of us are better off.

Speaker, I would thank the member opposite for the interest—and continue to work to reduce child poverty.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1151 to 1300.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** We have a large group of people here in the members' gallery. They're from the OPSEU developmental services sector. If you'll just indulge me, I'll name them into the record: Patti Markland, Allan May, Kier Verner-Prokop, Angela Bach, Jennifer Bérubé, Erin Rice, Lisa Fewster, Sue Fairweather, Amanda Picott, Tracy More, Sheila Keenan, Emily Visser and Karen McKinnon. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It's my pleasure to introduce Maureen Trask, Don Trask, Linda Wintemute Smith and Michael Smith from the region of Waterloo. It's their first time here at Queen's Park, and they're here to witness the introduction of a new petition.

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It gives me great pleasure to introduce, from the United Way of Toronto, Stephanie Procyk and Nauman Khan. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I would also like to invite some guests today from OPSEU who are here to witness a new petition. They're from the youth corrections sector: Emily Visser, Noemi Khondo and Jonathan Guider. Welcome to Queen's Park.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I rise in this House today to speak to an initiative which I believe will significantly increase access to health care services in Muskoka. Earlier this year a detailed proposal was put forward by the district of Muskoka to establish new nursing stations in commu-

ities across Muskoka. In the July session of the Legislature I had an opportunity to question the Minister of Health on this proposal. He agreed to meet with the Muskoka district chair and recently followed through on his commitment.

I, along with district chair John Klinck, commissioner of community services Rick Williams, Lake of Bays mayor Bob Young and Muskoka Lakes mayor Alice Murphy, attended the meeting.

I'm very pleased with Minister Hoskins's decision to give the green light to the Muskoka nursing station proposal. In particular, the minister agreed to a three-year demonstration project, including funding for primary care staff in community hubs in Dorset and Port Carling, as well as a new mobile unit to provide service to Port Severn and Severn Bridge, and the reinstatement of nursing support for the Wahta First Nation.

The Ministry of Health is currently working with the local health integration network and the district, as well as other relevant agencies, to finalize the details. I'm confident that the process of implementing the district of Muskoka proposal has already begun.

With the great success of nursing stations in Parry Sound district and the significant community support that already exists for these nursing stations, it's my strong belief that this local project will be very successful.

## GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I would like to direct my statement today to the honourable members of the Liberal caucus, our government. The people of Ontario have given you a majority mandate. They have placed their faith and trust in you to deliver on the promises you made, especially given your reassurances that your government is transparent and accountable to the people of Ontario.

As the third party opposition, New Democrats have the responsibility to hold you and your record to account, and your record isn't good. My staff and I have spoken with countless constituents who come to my office asking what exactly this government is doing with their hard-earned tax dollars because what they see is your government failing to deliver on desperately needed funding for crucial services like the developmental services office, community care access centres and mental health services. They see Ontario government resources used inappropriately on joint vehicle safety blitzes with the CBSA, resulting in deportations. A lack of transparency there prompted me to write to the Ombudsman requesting a third-party investigation.

The people of this province need to see their government earn the trust they gave you in June. They need to see where their tax dollars are going. They deserve transparency and accountability. They need to know their loved ones will be safe and well cared for in hospitals and long-term-care homes and that their families can actually afford to live in Ontario.

I am asking you now to come through on your promises to the people of Ontario.

### ONTARIO DENTAL HYGIENISTS' ASSOCIATION

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** I rise today in the House to recognize a great organization, the Ontario Dental Hygienists' Association, whose head office is in my riding of Burlington, and to acknowledge its executive director, Margaret Carter, who is with us today.

In honour of Ontario Dental Hygiene Week, I'd like to recognize and thank the 7,000 members of the ODHA for serving our province for over 50 years and thank them for their ongoing commitment to the delivery of primary health care and wellness promotion in our province.

Dental hygiene has been recognized and practised as a profession for over 60 years, and since 1963, the ODHA has been representing the interests and needs of its members. Dental hygienists help clients attain and maintain optimal oral health, as well as prevent periodontal or gum disease and cavities.

Thanks to the amendment to the Dental Hygiene Act, many dental hygienists have established independent practices that often include a mobile component which allows them to provide services to clients who are in long-term-care homes or restricted to their own homes, those in rural and remote communities, as well as those who have difficulty travelling to a dentist.

With a mounting body of research showing a link between periodontal disease and countless other health conditions, the preventative treatment provided by dental hygienists takes on increasing importance.

Mr. Speaker, it is these entrepreneurial dental hygienists, as well as those working in dental practices, education and public health, that today I ask all members of the House to join me in saluting during Ontario Dental Hygiene Week.

### SPECIAL OLYMPICS

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** This coming Thursday is Special Olympics Day in North Bay. This takes on an even greater significance this year as Special Olympics Ontario and the North Bay Police Service have developed a collaborative partnership to celebrate the Change for Champions campaign. The primary focus for the campaign is to paint North Bay red to create awareness and funds in support of the 2015 Special Olympics Provincial Winter Games, which are being held in North Bay in January 2015. My hometown will play host to 450 athletes and coaches during the event.

Part of this campaign is a red shoelace drive in our city where local individuals, businesses and organizations are encouraged to get on board. All donations will be provided to the Adopt an Athlete program.

Special Olympics enriches the lives of people with intellectual disabilities through active participation in sport. Special Olympics provides world-class sport opportunities to people with intellectual disabilities daily in communities across the province and in over 160

countries around the world. Speaker, I want to acknowledge your special role in the Special Olympics as well.

I'm pleased that my riding of Nipissing is playing host to this world-class event. I wish to encourage residents to get involved with the Paint North Bay Red campaign to benefit these remarkable athletes and support them throughout the Special Olympics.

### SMALL BUSINESS

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** It's always a pleasure to rise in this House to speak on behalf of the people I represent in London West. Today I wanted to share with MPPs an important initiative that has been spearheaded by the London Small Business Centre in my community.

The September 2014 employment statistics from StatsCan show a decline in the number of people employed in the London CMA, with many people having given up looking for work because of frustration over the lack of decent opportunities. In this struggling economy, small business ownership provides a possible solution to increase labour market participation among unemployed, underemployed and discouraged workers.

To better understand the motivations and barriers to entrepreneurship, as well as awareness of existing supports, an entrepreneurial climate study was commissioned by the London Small Business Centre, working with a cross-sector committee of regional business and economic development organizations. Over 1,500 people from four communities in southwestern Ontario were surveyed, and the results were released to the community last week. The results suggest that entrepreneurship may indeed provide an opportunity to increase labour market participation.

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The report provides rich data to provide a context for next steps in initiating cross-sector collaborations to support entrepreneurship, particularly among those who are in the early stages of considering an entrepreneurial venture, as well as those who are underrepresented or disadvantaged in our labour market.

### TANNIS FOOD DISTRIBUTORS

**Mr. John Fraser:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today and to congratulate Tannis Food Distributors, who are celebrating their 75th anniversary this year. A family-owned business founded as Tannis Trading Co. on Laurier Avenue by brothers George Nesrallah and Toufic Tannis, and later led by Toufic's widow, Souad, it has grown from a small, cash-and-carry provider of dry goods to a major food service distributor in eastern Ontario, with a full line of dry goods, fresh and frozen products. Moving its base of operations into Ottawa South in 1981, it has more than tripled in size, to a 126,000-square-foot warehouse.

Still family-owned and -operated, employing 170 people, the company continues to be deeply involved in our community. Through its foundation, Tannis 21,



named for Souad and her 21 grandchildren, more than \$1 million has been contributed to local hospitals, health facilities, research and other charities.

The family's second generation continues to manage the day-to-day operation of the company and this week they will be hosting their semi-annual food show themed "Celebrating Canada."

To the Tannis family and all their staff and their families, congratulations on 75 years of business, and best wishes for a great fall food show and continued success in our community.

#### BEN TeKAMP

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I rise to pay tribute to Ben TeKamp, a man whose life set the gold standard by which commitment to community service is measured. Ben held many titles: three-term Brockville mayor, honorary colonel of the Brockville Rifles regiment, international rowing coach, teacher, husband and father.

But to the city of Brockville and the many thousands of lives made better by knowing him, he was simply our beloved Ben. His death last week at the age of 69 is a tremendous loss for Brockville. The community said its final farewell last Wednesday when hundreds lined the downtown streets to reflect on Ben's remarkable legacy as the funeral procession passed.

Our true character is revealed in tough times, and Ben faced many, whether during his years as mayor or most recently with his health. But no matter the test, Ben's kindness, humility and relentless optimism that appealed to the best in each of us never waned. His style was quiet, but don't be fooled: Ben was a tremendous leader.

Perhaps his finest moment came just a few months into his first team as mayor, in 1998, during the ice storm disaster. Ben's reassuring voice on the radio was a source of comfort and lifted our spirits, giving us confidence to get through that crisis.

To his wife Cathy, his son Mark and daughter Robin, I hope the outpouring of genuine love from our community for Ben offers you some comfort in your grief. He'll always have a cherished place in the hearts of those who knew him, and we thank you for letting us share him with you.

#### *Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Is it a point of order? Can I ask that it be held until after statements?

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** I thought statements were done, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** No, we still have other statements. Thank you.

#### STUDENTS OF ETOBICOKE CENTRE

**Mr. Yvan Baker:** Since June I've had the distinct honour of representing the people of Etobicoke Centre in this Legislature. The past few months have left me with an appreciation of the incredible responsibility each of us hold as MPPs and, by extension, underscores the importance of encouraging our constituents to get involved in

the democratic process. I believe that that involvement has to begin with our youth.

Last week I had the opportunity to meet with the impressive students of Kipling Collegiate Institute, right here at the Legislative Assembly. Since their studies commenced this fall, other students from Etobicoke Centre—including Broadacres and Transfiguration of Our Lord—have also visited our Legislature.

Over the last month, I've had the distinct honour of joining students in their classrooms to discuss civics in Ontario: at Valleyfield Junior School, Transfiguration of Our Lord, and St. Demetrius. After these experiences, I'm looking forward to visiting grade 10 students at Scarlett Heights Entrepreneurial Academy next week, and to Kingsway College, Rosethorn, Eatonville Junior and All Saints schools visiting this Legislature in the coming months.

What struck me most, Mr. Speaker, in my conversations with these students were their insightful questions and the breadth of their knowledge about how important it is that we have the right processes to make the right decisions as a province. My conversations with the students of Etobicoke Centre leave me with great hope for what governments of the future can and will achieve in Ontario under these future leaders.

I thank each of these students for their visits, for their invitations to join them in their classrooms and for their dedication to the democratic health of Ontario for generations to come.

#### DEWSON STREET JUNIOR PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** Since I was elected as the member for Davenport in June, I've had the pleasure of greeting a number of school groups from my riding at the Legislature. These visits have been a rewarding part of my new job as an MPP. It's always a treat to speak to young people about the work we do here at Queen's Park and the importance of public service.

I was very disappointed, then, that I could not meet a group of students from Dewson Street Junior Public School when they visited on Friday. As you know, Mr. Speaker, members of the Liberal caucus were in Windsor for our provincial council.

Dewson is a wonderful school in Davenport, located near the corner of College and Ossington. It boasts an active parent community and a dedicated faculty. Students at Dewson are high achievers, consistently scoring above the provincial averages on EQAO assessments.

I hope that I'll have the opportunity to show students and parents from Dewson around the Legislature on another occasion.

#### VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Windsor–Tecumseh on a point of order.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Speaker, with your indulgence, if I could introduce a friend from Windsor who is here.

Charlie Hotham, the president of Hotham building supplies, is the president of the Windsor Construction Association. He's here to invite you all to attend the reception at 5 o'clock in the dining room with the construction association of Ontario.

Charlie Hotham, welcome to the Legislature.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Algoma-Manitoulin on a point of order.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I would be remiss if I didn't mention this today, Mr. Speaker: Although he's not here, he's here in my heart, and that's my son Matthieu Mantha. It's his birthday. He's 19 years old today. I wish him a very safe day.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** These are the kinds of points of order that make me smile.

I want to thank all members for their statements.

The member from Nipissing made reference—for those who do not know, I'm on the Ontario board of Special Olympics Ontario, and I will be making available, in support of our games in North Bay, through the member, the red shoelaces that are symbolic of Special Olympics Ontario. I would encourage all of you to get involved locally and pay them a visit. They're one of the best examples of athletes I've ever seen in my life.

#### ROYAL ASSENT SANCTION ROYALE

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I beg to inform the House that on July 24, 2014, Her Honour the Administrator has been pleased to assent to a certain bill in her office.

**The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker):** The following is the title of the bill to which Her Honour did assent:

An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 / Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts.

#### TABLING OF SESSIONAL PAPERS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I beg to inform the House that during the adjournment the following reports from parliamentary officers were tabled: on August 14, the 2012-13 annual report of the Chief Electoral Officer; on October 7, the 2013-14 annual report of the Environmental Commissioner.

I have another "I beg."

#### 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. Miller, Hamilton East-Stoney Creek, assumes ballot item number 9 and Mr. Mantha assumes ballot item number 16.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Estimates on the estimates selected and not selected for the committee's consideration.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum):** Ms. Forster from the Standing Committee on Estimates presents the committee's report as follows:

Pursuant to the order of the House dated July 24, 2014, the estimates 2014-15 of the following ministries and offices have been selected for consideration: Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, five hours; Ministry of Infrastructure, 10 hours; Ministry of Transportation, 10 hours; Ministry of Community and Social Services, five hours; Ministry of Energy, seven hours, 30 minutes; Ministry of Finance, seven hours, 30 minutes; Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, 15 hours; Ministry—

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**Interjections:** Dispense.

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

Pursuant to standing order 61(b), the report of the committee is deemed to be received and the estimates of ministries and offices named therein as not being selected for consideration are deemed to be concurred in.

*Report deemed received.*

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### PROVINCIAL FRAMEWORK AND ACTION PLAN CONCERNING VECTOR-BORNE AND ZONOTIC DISEASES ACT, 2014

### LOI DE 2014 SUR LE CADRE ET LE PLAN D'ACTION PROVINCIAUX CONCERNANT LES MALADIES ZONOTIQUES ET À TRANSMISSION VECTORIELLE

Mr. Barrett moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 27, An Act to require a provincial framework and action plan concerning vector-borne and zoonotic diseases / Projet de loi 27, Loi exigeant un cadre et un plan d'action provinciaux concernant les maladies zoonotiques et à transmission vectorielle.

**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. Toby Barrett:** I'll just read from the explanatory note.

The bill enacts the Provincial Framework and Action Plan concerning Vector-Borne and Zoonotic Diseases Act, 2014.

The act requires the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to develop a provincial framework and action plan that establishes a provincial surveillance program, standardized educational materials and guidelines regarding the prevention, identification, treatment and management of vector-borne and zoonotic diseases. The framework and action plan must also promote research in connection with vector-borne and zoonotic diseases.

For the purposes of the act, vector-borne and zoonotic diseases are infectious diseases whose transmission involves animal hosts or vectors, such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), West Nile virus disease, Lyme disease and Ebola virus disease.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Introduction of bills? The member from Welland.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Davenport. Sorry.

#### HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH ACT, 2014

##### LOI DE 2014 SUR LE MOIS DU PATRIMOINE HISPANIQUE

Mrs. Martins moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 28, An Act to proclaim the month of October as Hispanic Heritage Month / Projet de loi 28, Loi proclamant le mois d'octobre Mois du patrimoine hispanique.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I apologize to the member from Davenport, and to the member from Welland for surprising her that she had a private member's bill.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

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

**Mrs. Cristina Martins:** Mr. Speaker, Ontario is home to 400,000 Canadians of Hispanic origin, many of whom I'm very proud to represent in my riding of Davenport.

Hispanic Canadians represent a dynamic community that has made an important contribution to the growth and prosperity of the province of Ontario. By proclaiming October as Hispanic Heritage Month, the province will recognize the rich contributions of Hispanic Canadians to the fabric of Ontario. Hispanic Heritage Month will be an opportunity to remember, celebrate, and educate future generations about the outstanding achievements and contributions of Hispanic people in this province.

#### MEDICINE AMENDMENT ACT, 2014

##### LOI DE 2014 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES MÉDECINS

Mr. Clark moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 29, An Act to amend the Medicine Act, 1991 / Projet de loi 29, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1991 sur les médecins.

**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. Steve Clark:** Currently, the Health Professions Procedural Code requires the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario to maintain a public record of its members, containing certain information.

The bill amends the Medicine Act, 1991, to provide that the register must also include information about complaints, cautions and civil actions or proceedings against a member as well as information about deaths occurring in patients under the member's care.

The register would also include comparable information from other jurisdictions in which the member practised.

#### PETITIONS

##### HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Great to be back.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Green Energy Act has driven up the cost of electricity in Ontario due to unrealistic subsidies for certain energy sources, including the world's highest subsidies for solar power; and

"Whereas this cost is passed on to ratepayers through the global adjustment, which can account for almost half of a ratepayer's hydro bill; and

"Whereas the high cost of energy is severely impacting the quality of life of Ontario's residents, especially fixed-income seniors; and

"Whereas it is imperative to remedy Liberal mismanagement in the energy sector by implementing immediate reforms detailed in the Ontario PC white paper Paths to Prosperity—Affordable Energy;

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

"To immediately repeal the Green Energy Act, 2009, and all other statutes that artificially inflate the cost of electricity with the aim of bringing down electricity rates and abolishing expensive surcharges such as the global adjustment and debt retirement charges."

I support this petition, will affix my name and send it with page Jagmeet.

#### MISSING PERSONS

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario does not have missing persons legislation; and

“Whereas police are not able to conduct a thorough investigation upon receipt of a missing person report where criminal activity is not considered the cause; and

“Whereas this impedes investigators in determining the status and possibly the location of missing persons; and

“Whereas this legislation exists and is effective in other provinces; and

“Whereas negotiating rights to safety that do not violate rights to privacy has been a challenge in establishing missing persons law;

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

“We ask that the Attorney General’s office work with the office of the privacy commissioner to implement missing persons legislation that grants investigators the opportunity to apply for permissions to access information that will assist in determining the safety or whereabouts of missing persons for whom criminal activity is not considered the cause.”

It is my pleasure to affix my signature to this petition, and I will give it to page Alex.

#### CHELTENHAM BADLANDS

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

“Whereas the Ontario Heritage Trust holds title to the Cheltenham Badlands, and the Rouge Trail conservancy has management responsibilities for the site under an agreement with the OHT; and

“Whereas community consultation and engagement is essential for the protection of the Cheltenham Badlands and surrounding areas; and

“Whereas local residents should be actively involved in all discussions about the Cheltenham Badlands and related projects in their community;

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

“That the Liberal government fully fund the Cheltenham Badlands management plan, which includes but is not limited to the fencing of the geological feature, viewing platforms, boardwalks, perimeter fencing, trail maintenance and other accessory requirements as part of a complete and approved management plan.”

I support this petition and affix my name to it.

#### CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Ontario’s youth justice facilities are run by two completely different sets of policy guidelines depending on whether they are part of the Ontario public service (OPS) and funded directly by the provincial government, or the broader public service (BPS) and funded indirectly; and

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“Whereas OPS and BPS facilities serve the very same youth, and both receive their funding from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services; and

“Whereas unlike in similar OPS facilities, there is no provincial mandate for youth corrections community agencies to provide WSIB coverage, meaning many agencies have inadequate private insurance coverage; and

“Whereas youth corrections community agencies are struggling with chronic underfunding;

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

“We strongly urge the provision of a provincial mandate for all youth corrections agencies to provide WSIB coverage to their staff. We further urge the assembly to improve systemic inequities by ensuring that all youth corrections facilities receive proper funding.”

I couldn’t agree with this more. I will affix my name to it and give to it page Adam to bring to the Clerk.

#### CORNWALL OUTDOOR RECREATION AREA

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

“Whereas many people use this” Cornwall recreation area “200 acres to walk their dogs on the scenic trails around the quarry. The MNR has stocked the quarry with trout every year for at least 40 years. The quarry is also great for bass fishing. This provides year-round enjoyment;

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

“Reopen the Cornwall recreation area trout quarry.”

I agree with this and will be passing it to page Faith.

#### AIR-RAIL LINK

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** To add to the thousands already delivered, I read this:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas diesel trains are a health hazard for people who live near them;

“Whereas more toxic fumes will be created by the 400 daily trains than the car trips they are meant to replace;

“Whereas the planned air-rail link does not serve the communities through which it passes and will be priced beyond the reach of most commuters;

“Whereas all major cities in the world with train service between their downtown core and the airport use electric trains;

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

“That the province of Ontario stop building the air-rail link for diesel and move to electrify the route immediately;

“That the air-rail link be designed, operated and priced as an affordable transportation option between all points along its route.”

I couldn't agree more. I'm going to add my signature and give it to Noah, the wonderful page, to be delivered to the Clerk.

#### RURAL AND NORTHERN ONTARIO TRANSPORTATION

**Mr. Bill Walker:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the loss of transportation service will further destabilize rural economies and impede on residents' ability to get to school, work, doctor or hospital appointments, or any other service unavailable locally;

"Whereas the prosperity, productivity and participation of all segments of society depends on a viable, accessible transportation network;

"Whereas the lack of a transportation service negatively impacts those people with special needs, accessibility challenges, seniors and those living below the poverty level;

"Whereas Greyhound Canada plans to cut bus service and Via Rail plans to cut train service in rural Ontario;

"Whereas there is no secondary carrier serving rural Ontario's students, workers, volunteers, tourists, business travellers and any resident without a driver's licence;

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

"To immediately strike an all-party committee at Queen's Park to study transportation needs in rural and northern Ontario."

I fully support this, will affix my name and send it with page Jagmeet again. We're quite a team.

#### MISSING PERSONS

**Mr. John Vanthof:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Ontario does not have missing persons legislation; and

"Whereas police are not able to conduct a thorough investigation upon receipt of a missing person report where criminal activity is not considered the cause; and

"Whereas this impedes investigators in determining the status and possibly the location of missing persons; and

"Whereas this legislation exists and is effective in other provinces; and

"Whereas negotiating rights to safety that do not violate rights to privacy has been a challenge in establishing missing persons law;

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

"We ask that the Attorney General's office work with the office of the privacy commissioner to implement missing persons legislation that grants investigators the opportunity to apply for permissions to access information that will assist in determining the safety or whereabouts of missing persons for whom criminal activity is not considered the cause."

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition, and sign and attach my name.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I have a petition signed by a great many of my constituents who are very concerned about the siting of a new landfill site in the county of Oxford; it is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the purpose of Ontario's Environmental Protection Act (EPA) is to 'provide for the protection and conservation of the natural environment.' ...; and

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

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

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

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me the opportunity to put this petition on the record on behalf of my constituents.

#### EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas there are an estimated 100,000 to 300,000 unpaid internships in Canada each year; and

"Whereas youth unemployment in Ontario is over 15%; and

"Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Labour is not adequately enforcing the laws on unpaid internships;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to take the following actions:

"(1) Proactively enforce the law on unpaid internships;

"(2) Engage in an educational campaign to inform students, youth, employers, educational institutions and the general public of the laws surrounding unpaid internships; and

"(3) Undertake a comprehensive review of the current laws surrounding unpaid internships in Ontario."

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

#### SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Ms. Christine Elliott:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the final report of the select committee, entitled Inclusion and Opportunity: A New Path for Developmental Services in Ontario, was tabled in the Legislature on July 22, 2014;

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

“That government of Ontario immediately review the final report and commence the implementation of the recommendations of the select committee, as contained in the final report.”

I’m in full agreement with its contents, Mr. Speaker, and pleased to affix my signature to it.

#### MISSING PERSONS

**Ms. Jennifer K. French:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario from people across the province.

“Whereas Ontario does not have missing persons legislation; and

“Whereas police are not able to conduct a thorough investigation upon receipt of a missing person report where criminal activity is not considered the cause; and

“Whereas this impedes investigators in determining the status and possibly the location of missing persons; and

“Whereas this legislation exists and is effective in other provinces; and

“Whereas negotiating rights to safety that do not violate rights to privacy has been a challenge in establishing missing persons law;

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

“We ask that the Attorney General’s office work with the office of the privacy commissioner to implement missing persons legislation that grants investigators the opportunity to apply for permission to access information that will assist in determining the safety or whereabouts of missing persons for whom criminal activity is not considered the cause.”

I am pleased to affix my name to this, and I will give it to page Renée.

#### PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

**Mr. Bill Walker:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ministry of Health is planning major changes to services provided by OHIP for physiotherapy as of August 1st, 2013; and

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

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

“Whereas ambulatory seniors in retirement homes would have to travel offsite for physiotherapy; and

“Whereas under the changes scheduled for August 1, the cost of visits under the CCAC (community care access centre) model will rise to \$120 per visit, rather

than the current fee of \$12.20 per visit through OHIP physiotherapy providers; and

“Whereas these changes will deprive seniors and other eligible clients from the many health and mobility benefits of physiotherapy;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, ask that the delisting of OHIP physiotherapy clinics as of August 1st not proceed and that the provincial government guarantee there will be no reduction in services currently available for seniors, children and youths, people with disabilities and all those who are currently eligible for OHIP-funded physiotherapy.”

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’ll sign my name to this and send it with page Josée.

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#### WORKPLACE SAFETY

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

“Whereas in 2013, 16 construction workers in Ontario were killed in tragic falls, almost 3,400 WSIB fall claims were accepted, and many other falls were never reported;

“Whereas in addition to the human tragedy of workplace falls, the financial cost of each year’s WSIB fall claims is about \$100 million;

“Whereas the provincial government of New-found-land and Labrador implemented new fall protection training regulations on January 1, 2012, after which fall claims declined by 25%;

“Whereas a similar training requirement and result in Ontario could prevent over 800 fall tragedies each year and avoid \$25 million in costs with the WSIB; and

“Whereas in 2010, the Ontario government promised to implement a similar training requirement by December 2011, but still has not done so; and has thereby left workers at risk;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the Minister of Labour to make saving workers’ lives a priority and stop delaying fall protection training regulations” in Ontario.

I sign my signature to the petition and deliver it to page Félix.

#### AIR QUALITY

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas collecting and restoring old vehicles honours Ontario’s automotive heritage while contributing to the economy through the purchase of goods and services, tourism, and support for special events; and

“Whereas the stringent application of emissions regulations for older cars equipped with newer engines can result in fines and additional expenses that discourage car collectors and restorers from pursuing their hobby; and

“Whereas newer engines installed by hobbyists in vehicles over 20 years old provide cleaner emissions than the original equipment; and

“Whereas car collectors typically use their vehicles only on an occasional basis, during four to five months of the year;

“Therefore, be it resolved that the Ontario Legislature support Ontarians who collect and restore old vehicles by amending the appropriate laws and regulations to ensure vehicles over 20 years old and exempt from Drive Clean testing shall also be exempt from additional emissions requirements enforced by the Ministry of the Environment and governing the installation of newer engines into old cars and trucks.”

I'm pleased to affix my signature, and I'll send it to the table with page Faith.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. That concludes the time that we have available this afternoon for petitions.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### STRONGER WORKPLACES FOR A STRONGER ECONOMY ACT, 2014 LOI DE 2014 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION DU LIEU DE TRAVAIL AU SERVICE D'UNE ÉCONOMIE PLUS FORTE

Mr. Flynn moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 18, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour / Projet de loi 18, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'emploi et la main-d'oeuvre.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I recognize the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Before I start, let me tell you that I'll be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the wonderful member from Barrie.

It's a pleasure to rise today, and I'm really happy to rise for second reading of Bill 18. The proposed legislation we're putting before the House today is both timely and necessary. Ontario has introduced the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act to protect our province's most vulnerable workers and to increase fairness for both employees and for businesses.

In a lot of ways, the introduction of this bill for second reading is the story of Ontario. It's the story of people who come to this country and begin new lives. Often, they're the people in our society who are viewed as being the most vulnerable, the people who are starting out in life, the people who are starting out in work life in Canada who may not understand the rules, the rights or the responsibilities they have in their new home.

What we're doing today is, we're taking action that's going to provide a more consistent, a more transparent and a more fair approach to such things as setting Ontario's minimum wage. In this bill, we propose legislation that will index future minimum wage adjustments to Ontario's consumer price index. This approach has been

supported to date by both employees and employers in the province of Ontario, and is based on the recommendations of an independent advisory panel that was established.

The Minimum Wage Advisory Panel was established in July 2013 as part of a commitment we made in the 2013 budget that was composed of employer and labour representatives, community representatives, anti-poverty groups, and students. The panel's report was based on extensive research. It was based on feedback that came in from over 400 Ontarians.

What it did was it recommended that the minimum wage be revised annually and that, going forward, it be linked to the consumer price index. In speaking to the requests of business, it was asked that at least four months' notice be given of these changes and that a five-year full review be conducted with a panel of stakeholders and an independent chair at a point in the future. Our government accepted these recommendations and is now moving ahead with them.

Under our proposals, the first CPI adjustment would take effect on October 1, 2015, with notice to be given to the public at least six months before that. It's important to remember that when the Liberals first came to office in 2003, we came into office with a minimum wage that had been frozen for eight years in a row. That was not fair to workers, who saw cost-of-living increases while their wages stayed frozen for that period of time.

That's why our government, over the years, has increased the minimum wage from the \$6.85 we inherited to the \$11 that it is today. We increased it during good times, but we also increased it during the depths of the recession because we thought it was the right thing to do and what hard-working families deserved.

However, in the past, increases to minimum wages have been made on a very ad hoc basis. They're subject to the political process of this place, and we feel, on this side of the House, that that's not fair to workers. They didn't know what their hourly wage would be from one year to the next. It was unpredictable for businesses that couldn't plan for the future and it was really based on the political whims of the party that formed the government at that particular point in time. That's why this government has introduced this legislation to remedy that and to index the minimum wage as we move forward.

This bill, if it is passed, will also have another effect, though. It will level the playing field for employers who play by the rules and who obey the laws we have here in the province of Ontario. By acting to strengthen workplace protection for the most vulnerable and increasing fairness provisions for employees and businesses, we're helping to build a stronger workplace, and that, in turn, builds a stronger economy, and that certainly, in turn, builds a stronger province here in Ontario.

This proposed legislation is part of the overall plan we have and a commitment that this government has to lead from the activist centre. It's consistent with our strategy that we've announced to reduce poverty in the province of Ontario.

Our government fully recognizes that the nature of work in the province of Ontario, in our country and throughout the globe is changing and that the rules we have in place to govern those workplaces have to keep up as well. Employees may have a difficult time establishing themselves financially, which has a negative impact on the economic growth we all want for this province. That speaks to those people who are just establishing themselves in the province of Ontario.

It's also a key factor in poverty and those who find themselves living in near poverty. Historically, a significant portion of vulnerable workers has been recent immigrants. They've been women, they've been young workers and they've been those individuals who come from minority ethnic groups. These individuals often find themselves starting their work life in Ontario or in Canada in precarious jobs.

I'm standing here today speaking to the second reading of Bill 18, but I want to thank those people who have helped form this bill: those people who have provided input; those people who have provided their expertise.

I want to particularly thank the United Way, McMaster University and the Law Commission of Ontario, who helped lead a dialogue around these very important issues and put some very important issues on the table. But they also put forward many thoughtful solutions which are reflected in the bill. It shows that, out of positive conversations and constructive recommendations, you can get real, meaningful action that can protect people in the province of Ontario. It shows that we have a government—and, I believe, a Legislature—that both listens and acts. It demonstrates that through well-intended engagement with people who may have a variety of opinions on issues we can make progress, and that we can take the steps that are necessary to move forward as a province and to strengthen our economy, while at the same time we address those ever-important issues of social justice.

### 1350

Speaker, in drafting this legislation we've consulted with 14 other provincial government ministries, as well as the Ontario Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. We propose this bill to the House because we believe it's the right thing to do. It's the right thing to do for those people in our society who we deem to be vulnerable workers, but it's also the right thing to do for our business community. It gives us a stronger economy. Bill 18 is an essential part of ensuring that as our province grows financially and socially, it grows the right way. By acting to safeguard workers who need our protection and helping responsible, law-abiding businesses stay competitive, we're protecting the province in which we live and we're also working to strengthen our economy.

These should not be viewed as being mutually exclusive goals—and often they have been in the past. I think we're saying that these are goals that complement each other, that they're goals that can travel forward together, that the legislation should be good for business and for those businesses particularly who choose to obey

the laws, who are the good guys when we are doing the enforcement.

We need to support those companies, but we also need to recognize that as people move to our country from other countries, they're moving into areas where they may not understand that they've got certain rights they can avail themselves of. Of Ontario's many advantages, none is greater than the people who live here and the people who choose to make Ontario their home. Their talent, the skills they bring, their compassion, their competitive nature, their depth and diversity, are an unfailing commitment that we have to one another as citizens of Ontario.

We're investing in our people and we're investing in our province when we increase workplace protections, but we're also supporting that dynamic business environment that increases fairness for companies in Ontario as well, Speaker. We believe we've made progress; we believe we're going to continue to do so.

Last year, for example, Ontario was North America's top destination for foreign direct investment and our economy right here in Ontario added nearly 100,000 jobs. We want to maintain that momentum, and I believe we will maintain that momentum, but at the same time we need to work for fairness and we need to protect those in our society who are employees, who are most vulnerable.

Our legislative proposals respond to key recommendations in recent reports that most members of this House will be familiar with. They come from our stakeholders. They come from the people we meet on a daily basis. They come from the people who come here to advocate for groups in the province of Ontario. Some of the recommendations that you will find in this bill include eliminating the \$10,000 cap on the recovery of unpaid wages and increasing the period of recovery to two years for employees.

In the past, it was deemed that a cap should be in place as to the amount of money you'd be able to claim from an employer who had chosen not to pay you. We don't see any justification for that anymore. We believe that in the interest of justice, you should be able to claim what is owed to you. If someone you have worked for in a contract setting, or under any sort of workplace arrangement that you have—if somebody who has told you they will pay you for that work, we need to ensure that that work is indeed paid for.

We're going to increase the period of recovery to two years for employees as well. In the past, it was deemed that the time should lapse earlier, the time that you could actually file a claim to get those wages recovered, and I think often you would find people who would go into the process of trying to recover their wages with the best efforts, with a good-faith attitude, thinking that the employer eventually would see the error of their ways and would pay the employee. Often that doesn't happen. Often time goes by as that wait occurs. What we're doing here is increasing the amount of time that employees have to make claims against employers who haven't paid them.



We're also doing something that involves client employers and temporary help agencies. In the past, if you worked for a temporary help agency and they sent you out to work for a client employer, if the temporary help agency did not pay you, you had no claim against the place you had actually worked at. What we're proposing to do in this bill is make client employers who use temporary help agencies liable when agencies don't pay certain types of wages. What I think will happen as a result of this is that we now are actively encouraging companies to use temporary help agencies that treat their employees fairly, that are going to pay them at the end of the day.

Extending, as well, Occupational Health and Safety Act coverage to include unpaid co-op students is something that I am particularly pleased to see in this bill. We're also including other unpaid learners and unpaid trainees in this bill. In the past, when we've had co-op students in workplaces, because they haven't been covered under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, the Ministry of Labour's involvement in certain cases would have been limited.

What we're doing is saying that if you're part of a training program at a school, a college, a high school, and you go and get some workplace experience, the same protections that every other worker in that workplace enjoys under the Occupational Health and Safety Act should apply to you as well. As a young worker, as a learner, you should have the same rights as the people you're working along with, learning your trade, your craft, your profession or whatever you are being trained for.

In the past, Speaker, employers used to be able to recover certain costs—fees, recruitment fees—from people they were placing. We're saying that that shouldn't be allowed. What I think every member of this House would agree with, I hope, is that this bill will now make it impossible to seize personal documents, like passports, from all foreign employees, and not just live-in caregivers as it exists today. What we're proposing to do is extend the application of employment protection for foreign nationals to cover all foreign employees who come to the province of Ontario, whether by immigration or by foreign temporary employee programs.

Apart from this legislation, but certainly complementary to this legislation, our government has been in the process of boosting the number of enforcement officers in the province, and we're ensuring that more workplaces are inspected and that more employees are protected. We all know that the world of work is changing, as I said earlier. It's changing in our province, it's changing across the country and the continent, and it's changing around the globe. The number of temporary foreign workers in Ontario, for example, has risen from 91,000 in 2008 to 133,000 in 2013. We believe that Ontarians would agree with us that it's proper, it's fair, it's compassionate that we protect these people, and that now is the time to act.

Nobody in this province should ever have to surrender their passport or leave their country and come to Ontario

because they are promised a job that simply doesn't exist, and perhaps get charged inappropriate recruitment fees along the way. This is why the proposed legislation that we have before the House today would amend the Employment Protection for Foreign Nationals Act, which applies to live-in caregivers and to others, that was passed in 2009. Our government introduced that bill. It was passed in 2009, and I think that most Ontarians would agree it was the right thing to do.

What we will do is amend this act to apply to all foreign employees in Ontario who are here, as I said earlier, either through immigration or through foreign temporary employee programs. This means that foreign employees in Ontario would also be protected from illegal recruitment fees, and from having their passports or any other travel documents, or any other documents they may have, withheld by their employers. Under Bill 18, which we have before the House today, the Employment Protection for Foreign Nationals Act would also be extended to cover approximately 110,000 additional temporary foreign employees. This same sense of justice and compassion that led to the original act now leads us to propose extending these safeguards to others who work in Ontario.

#### 1400

The act, which came into force in March 2010, includes the following protections for foreign live-in caregivers, which under our proposed legislation will now routinely apply to any other foreign employee in this province. It prohibits recruiters from charging any fees at all to the caregiver, and that's directly or by any surreptitious means indirectly. It prohibits employer recovery of recruitment or placement costs from the caregiver. It prohibits reprisals against foreign live-in caregivers for exercising any one of their rights that are available to them under this act. It requires that information sheets be provided to these employees—information about the rights they have under the act. It also requires employers and recruiters who make a living from this business—and I think this is quite reasonable—to maintain records, that when they're asked to produce records, those records be available. It prohibits the employer or the recruiter from taking possessions or property, including personal documents, from the employee. It contains no monetary limit on the recovery of monies pursuant to an order of the act, and it provides a 42-month time limit on filing claims under the act as well.

Extending these protections to most foreign employees in Ontario helps ensure that these workers are treated fairly, regardless of the occupation they're in, regardless of the skill level they have. It's only fair because this act sets out minimum standards that all employers and recruiters of foreign employees who are here under an immigration or a foreign temporary employee program will now be aware of, and will now understand very, very clearly that they have to follow.

Speaker, people in the province of Ontario have a history and a tradition of working very hard. As a result of that, our province, I think, is the envy of the western

world as a place to live. When people leave other countries and decide they're going to settle somewhere else, Ontario is usually near the top of the list as a place that they would like to settle, and that's for very, very good reasons.

But they come here with an expectation that we all have—we have it for ourselves; we have it for our parents; we have it for our children and our families; we have it for each other: At the end of your shift, at the end of the day, at the end of the project, you quite simply deserve to be paid for the work you've been promised; you quite simply deserve to be paid for the work that you have done. If they are operating a business, they deserve to know that their competitor isn't undercutting them by not obeying the law or by not paying their employees.

Unfortunately, right now under the legislation as it exists today, there are both time restrictions and there are monetary limits on the claiming of unpaid wages in the province of Ontario. That simply is not right so we're making it easier for employees to get the money owed to them by making those limits much more reasonable.

What we're proposing to do is to remove the \$10,000 cap entirely under the Employment Standards Act, and that is on the recovery of unpaid wages through a Ministry of Labour order to pay those wages that's being enforced. That means that employees would no longer be forced to pursue larger claims through the courts, saving both employees and businesses time and money, and doing the right thing.

If passed, our legislation would also increase the time limit for recovery of wages through an order to pay under the Employment Standards Act. It would increase that time limit to two years. We're proposing this so that older claims can be dealt with fairly, and employees at the end of the process simply get the money that they are owed.

Everyone recognizes in the province of Ontario that employees should be paid for the work they do. When they are not paid, often those employees come to the Ministry of Labour for help. However, because of changes that were introduced by another party previously, in 1966, employees can only recover up to \$10,000 through the ministry. We're saying that time has passed; that limit is unfair. In fact, what we're saying is there is no justification for a limit. If you're owed the money, you're owed the money. Ontario is the only jurisdiction in Canada that still has such a cap. It's important that we scrap this unnecessary and punitive measure that was introduced at a different place and time. Even employees who earn minimum wage can have claims above \$10,000 if they are also owed termination pay, or perhaps they're owed severance pay.

Vulnerable employees often cannot afford to go to court for larger claims. Court proceedings can discourage employers from settling claims quickly, and small businesses should also not have to pay a lawyer, if possible, to resolve these claims. That's why we're proposing to remove this cap.

We've been told repeatedly by advocates that many employees need the longer recovery period because

they're afraid to make a claim before they leave their jobs. They're worried that if they do so, their employer may punish them in some way, and that is simply not right.

Our proposed legislation would also require employers to provide a free Employment Standards Act information handout to all new employees, explaining their rights under the act. A translation would also have to be provided in a language requested by the employee themselves, if that is available under the many languages that we have available through the Ministry of Labour. These translations were brought into place by the Ministry of Labour to reflect the diverse workforce we have here in the province and to recognize that people come to this province perhaps speaking English well, but perhaps not; perhaps speaking English and another language; or perhaps their language skills are much more proficient in a language other than English. We have done the best we can at the Ministry of Labour to ensure that we have those laws translated into languages where they mean something.

Our proposed legislation, if passed, will better protect employees who are employed by temporary help agencies. What we're doing is we're establishing what is called a joint and several liability provision between the agencies and their clients for failure to pay certain types of wages that may be owed by the agency. This is going to help level the playing field for good employees in this province. Good employees, I think, deserve fairness, and they need protection. Client employers who use temporary help agencies would be liable for regular wages and for overtime pay if the agencies don't pay up. That simply is the right thing to do. This would help provide employees with better recourse. It would help to encourage clients to work with the more reputable temporary help agencies that we all know exist in the province of Ontario.

Our government was the first in Canada to introduce legislation specifically addressing temporary help agencies, and that was in 2009. What we did was we made sure that employees were not unfairly prevented from being hired directly at the place they were working by the agency client themselves. Often, they were prevented from doing that—or often, they weren't actively encouraged to do that. We prohibited agencies from charging fees to workers for such things as interview preparation, resumé writing and some of the other things they were charging fees for at the time that were, upon investigation, deemed to be completely inappropriate. We required those agencies to provide their employees with information about the rights that each and every one of us has, including them, under the Employment Standards Act.

Speaker, we all know that safe workplaces, when you break it right down, come down to people looking after one another. The Ministry of Labour has been undergoing the largest transformation in the last 30 years. We're creating a culture that puts health and safety at the centre of every workplace. We're the first government to appoint a Chief Prevention Officer. His job is to create a

health-and-safety/prevention focus in all of our province's workplaces. This month, we've released the proposals that were contained in a government round table that was sponsored by the Ministry of Labour to help address and to begin to deal with an issue that's very, very important to us, that being work-related traumatic mental stress. Ontario will be hosting a summit early in 2015 specifically on work-related traumatic mental stress, and we're hoping to attract some of the best and brightest minds in this field to come to the province of Ontario to ensure that Ontario is a leader in this.

1410

The Ministry of Labour conducts regular enforcement blitzes to help ensure the safety and health of working Ontarians. My ministry recently conducted enforcement blitzes to protect miners in the mining industry in Ontario.

In September, we issued a progress report—that was very well received both in southern Ontario but certainly in the mining communities in the north and specifically in Sudbury, where it was introduced—of our ongoing mining health and safety review. We didn't wait to act on that. We're conducting the review. The review is still ongoing. This was an interim progress report. My understanding is—and from talking to the participants in the group, who come from business and labour and who bring expertise to the table—that simply is something that is just invaluable.

They asked us to do certain things. They said, "Don't wait until we're finished. We've got more information for you, but here are some things you can do right now to make mines safer." What they did was they asked us if we would issue guidelines for high-visibility safety apparel for mines and mining plants.

Speaker, I went down my first mine about a month ago. I think I was about a mile underground. I think we were at the 5,000-foot level. You really get a sense for the importance of that one recommendation when you're in a mine. The only light you have is a light that's coming off your helmet. You're working in very hot conditions, you're working in very humid conditions, and you're working in very industrial conditions. Certainly, the ability to see somebody, I think, is a primary issue that the review committee was very, very quick to adopt. Just the fact that you can see somebody, just the fact that somebody is wearing reflective clothing when you're in an area or environment like that, is something that, quite simply, I think, is going to prevent injuries and save lives, starting the day it was introduced.

We're currently conducting an enforcement blitz that is going to help protect workers who are involved in material handling as well. We've also recently conducted an enforcement blitz on construction workers that involves excavation specifically, to help protect these workers as well.

Our job, and the job of everybody in this House, and certainly my role as the Minister of Labour, is to make sure that workers who go to work at the beginning of the day go home at the end of the day to their families, safe

and healthy. That's what people expect when they go to work. That's what we all expect: to see that person again, whether it be our mother, our father or any family member who goes to work. We expect to see them again at the end of the shift.

We believe the expectation of a healthy and safe workplace, though, should also apply to workers in co-op placements or other unpaid learners as well. That's why, if passed, this bill would also extend coverage of the Occupational Health and Safety Act to unpaid co-op students and to other unpaid trainees and learners, ensuring they have the same individual rights and the same protections as other workers at that workplace. That makes sense, and it's the right thing to do.

I'd like to take a few minutes to address another issue related to interns that I know has been of keen interest in recent months. The Ministry of Labour conducted an internship inspection blitz that ran from April 1 of this year to the middle of June.

Let me be clear right from the start: Unpaid internships are simply illegal in the province of Ontario. Generally, if you perform work for another person or a company or an organization, and you're not in business for yourself, you're considered, under the Employment Standards Act, to be an employee. Therefore, under the Employment Standards Act, you're entitled to the same rights as everybody else. You're entitled to minimum wage. There are some exceptions, but they're very, very limited, and the fact that you are called an intern is of no relevance to whether your internship should be paid or unpaid.

This is about the extension of the Employment Standards Act to all people in the province of Ontario. Quite simply, unless you have an exemption as a secondary school student in co-op work, or you've got a credit program, or you've got a program to give you work experience that's approved by a college of applied arts and technology or a university—if you don't have that exemption, then you need to be paid. The Employment Standards Act applies to you and you need to be paid.

During our recent enforcement blitz, our employment standards officers visited workplaces in the greater Toronto area in sectors that in the past had been known to employ a high proportion of interns. What these inspectors did specifically was, they looked for contraventions of the Employment Standards Act. What they did in particular when they went in to do the inspections was to check whether there were interns present, unpaid or not, and if so, whether those interns were availing themselves of their rights under the Employment Standards Act. If they were, then they were entitled to be paid. It was that simple.

I'll give you some examples of the sectors that we concentrated on because I've said in the past, people have said, that internships are used in certain industries much more frequently than they are in others. One was advertising, one was public relations, and computer systems design, consulting services and information services.

During the blitz, we completed a total of 56 inspections. This is what we found:

Eight of those employers simply had no internship programs; they hired employees. That's how they did their business.

Thirteen of those employers had internship positions, but they were lawfully exempt from the ESA because they were part of a school program. They were part of a college, part of a university; they were part of somebody that was involved in a learning or training experience.

Five of those employers had internship positions, and they were doing the right thing. They had interns and they were paying them. They had interns and they made sure those interns had every right available to them under the Employment Standards Act as anybody else in the province of Ontario.

Seventeen employers did not have active internship programs at the time of the inspection, but what the inspectors did in that regard was to make sure that they were given educational materials for their future reference, so that these employers, should they at some point in the future decide to revive or continue an internship program or introduce a new one, would know very specifically what the rules are governing interns in this province.

What we found was that 13 employers had internship positions and had Employment Standards Act contraventions. What we did with those 13 employers was, we issued 37 compliance orders and we told them to pay the wages. Very simply, we told them they were doing the wrong thing. As much as perhaps they thought they were doing the right thing, we told them that they were in contravention of the act. What that allowed was for close to \$50,000 to be paid to interns that should have been paid all along. The full amount has been recovered. Each one of those companies has stepped forward and done the right thing and now knows that, moving forward, this is how they have to conduct themselves.

What we found was that the most common monetary violations were for three things: minimum wage, vacation pay and not paying for public holidays. They have changed. The most common non-monetary violations were for such things as wage statements, record keeping and hours of work.

What you have in the province of Ontario now is, you have employers who thought they were doing the right thing in the past, were told they weren't and have now turned themselves around and are complying with the law. That's what we wanted.

Speaker, in order to proactively protect the rights of workers, the proposed legislation you have before you would give the Ministry of Labour the authority to require employees to conduct self-audits to determine their own compliance with the Employment Standards Act. We will go into companies. We will tell them, "Take a very careful look at what you're doing. Do an audit of yourself and report back to us and tell us whether you think you're complying with the Employment Standards Act or not." If they aren't, then certainly we will pros-

ecute if we find there are places that we need increased enforcement.

What we're trying to do is provide a tool that's going to promote compliance with the Employment Standards Act, and we're going to expand the program's reach, we think, in a very significant way, in a way that's efficient and cost-effective. It allows employers to voluntarily do the right thing. It asks them to take a long look at how they're conducting themselves, and it's asking them, at the end of the day, if they find themselves in contravention of the act, to come into compliance.

**1420**

Finally, Speaker, we know that all construction is a key driver of Ontario's economy. Our government recognizes this and, as a result, we're investing \$35 billion in infrastructure projects over the next three years. That's going to create and support 100,000 jobs each year. That's going to grow our communities. It's going to build our economy.

That's why we're strengthening the Labour Relations Act, the cornerstone of what I think is a fair and balanced labour relations system. What we're proposing to do here is something very, very simple but something that has been asked for and something that I think is going to really help labour relations between parties in the province of Ontario.

Quite simply, we're being asked—and we're asking the House to support this bill—to reduce the collective agreement open period in the construction industry from three months to two. What happens when the collective agreement opens up? Often, there's a desire, perhaps, to consider changing unions, to consider unionizing, to consider decertifying. A whole host of choices is available to people during that open period. What this will allow our skilled workers to spend more time doing is building the roads, the bridges, the schools and the hospitals we need to grow our economy and to ensure that a prosperous Ontario will remain prosperous for generations to come.

We're proposing to reduce that period from three months to two months. What all parties have come forward and said to us is that they think two months is adequate time to make those types of decisions, to finalize an agreement, to make a decision, and then simply to move on. They found that the three-month period simply was too disruptive, and it led to an awful lot of non-productive effort.

To further protect businesses that play by the rules and to further strengthen our economy, the Ministry of Labour is proposing to develop and share with key stakeholders an operational policy regarding enhanced use of enforcement tools, particularly with regard to those people who perhaps don't get it the first time: the repeat offenders in our system. Enforcement tools such as notices of contravention allow for higher penalties for subsequent violations. That's going to help the ministry target those unscrupulous employers that simply don't play by the rules, the way that most Ontario business does.

Speaker, I mentioned earlier in my statement that my ministry will electronically make available clear employ-

ment standards information. This information is a crucial piece of our larger enforcement strategy. Employers will be much more likely to comply with the Employment Standards Act if their employees are aware of those rights under the Employment Standards Act. As I spoke to earlier, language barriers often prevent that. What we're doing is requiring those employers to provide a translation as long as we have that translation available in the Ministry of Labour. We do have an exhaustive list of languages and dialects that we're able to do business in.

As I wrap up, the proposed Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act is about taking action to protect workers, especially the most vulnerable in our society. It's about levelling the playing field for businesses that play by the rules and have always played by the rules.

We simply want to ensure that employees in the province of Ontario are paid for the work they do, and that temporary help agency employees are provided the fairness that we get and that they deserve.

We want to ensure that foreign employees have the protections they need and deserve when they set out to make a new life in the province of Ontario.

Our government's economic plan is about creating jobs for today and for tomorrow. Along with this bill, we're investing in infrastructure, we're investing in skills training, we're investing in second careers for people, and we're moving forward with a youth jobs strategy for our younger workers.

We're also proceeding, using a very measured and a very balanced approach, to balance the budget. We're building on our knowledge economy and we're supporting small business.

The comprehensive plan and six priorities focus on Ontario's greatest strengths, but most importantly, this bill is an indication that we're also prepared to invest in our people, the people in this province. It has been said that the true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members. This is an example today of how we can help further that. We can and we will help build our economy, and at the same time, we can work together to protect the most vulnerable.

Speaker, we're all one Ontario here. We stand up for each other. When people move here, they move here for a reason. It's because the province of Ontario has developed a reputation internationally that I believe, as a proud Ontarian, is second to none. By supporting this bill, and I'm asking all members of the House to support the bill at second reading, we're enhancing the reputation that the province of Ontario enjoys around the world as a people, as a society, as an economy that treats its workers the way that any one of us would want to be treated.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Barrie.

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** I'm very happy to rise for second reading of the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act, 2014, because this proposed legislation is about standing up for some of the most vulnerable workers in our province and providing them with the safeguards they need and they deserve.

Our proposed legislation, if passed, would establish a fair and predictable means of increasing the minimum wage to keep pace with inflation. It would take important steps to ensure that every Ontarian gets the paycheque they have earned at the end of the day. It would help safeguard temporary foreign workers who have come to our province and deserve workplace fairness. It would better protect interns and other unpaid learners from dangerous work situations, and importantly, it would increase the competitiveness of businesses who obey the laws and play by the rules.

We are all aware of the growth in precarious and temporary work that has taken place not only in our province but across Canada. This includes employment where workers are in temporary jobs. I see many of them in Holland Marsh as I drive through on my way from Barrie to here. These employees may have difficulty establishing themselves financially, which has a negative impact on the economic growth of our province. It is also a key factor in poverty and near poverty. Many of the people in my riding are in this situation.

Recent reports such as the United Way and McMaster University report *It's More Than Poverty*, prepared by PEPSO, the Poverty and Employment Precarity in Southern Ontario research group, have helped bring attention to this problem of precarious work. We have also taken note of the Vulnerable Workers and Precarious Work report of the Law Commission of Ontario. That is why I am happy to be here to tell you that we are taking steps to address these issues. Our bill would help us enforce our laws and protect vulnerable workers owed money by their employers. Our bill also reflects what we have heard from Ontarians about the needs that they have due to the changing nature of work in our province, which is also occurring throughout Canada.

First, I would like to review the basic provisions of the bill and then address particular provisions of it and questions that may arise. Our proposed legislation, if passed, would amend the Employment Standards Act to remove a \$10,000 cap on recovery of wages through a Ministry of Labour order. It would increase the limit on recovery of wages from six to 12 months, to two years. It would provide added protection for temporary help agency workers. It would require employers to provide workers with a free copy of information about their employment standards rights, if they request, translated into their own language if such translation is available from the ministry. And it would enable the Ministry of Labour to require employers to complete a self-audit of their records and practices to determine compliance with the ESA.

A very important provision of this bill is that it would provide fairness and justice to temporary foreign workers and would amend the Employment Protection for Foreign Nationals Act (Live-in Caregivers and Others), 2009, to extend protections that currently only apply to live-in caretakers to all foreign employees who come to Ontario under an immigration or foreign temporary employee program. It would protect all foreign workers from

having an employer withhold personal documents, like a passport, and it would protect all foreign workers from being charged recruitment or other fees by a recruiter.

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Foreign workers can work in many industries. Those occupations include agricultural workers, construction workers, professionals in business services and management, musicians and singers, university professors, engineers, specialist physicians, information technology workers, teaching and research assistants, and truck drivers, as well as live-in caregivers.

The Ministry of Labour has developed an enhanced education and outreach strategy to protect temporary foreign workers, to help ensure compliance with our laws among those who employ them and to raise general awareness in this sector by placing educational materials in locations and on websites where employers have hired or intend to hire foreign workers. Foreign workers can also access fact sheets on our Ministry of Labour website, or they can call our Employment Standards Information Centre, toll-free, at 1-800-531-5551, to get information in many different languages about their rights and how to file a claim.

For those employed by temporary help agencies—and we all know that employment in this sector has increased in recent years—this proposed legislation builds on our 2009 legislation. That legislation ensures that temporary agency assignment employees aren't charged fees for things like resumé writing or taking a job with an agency client, and are not prevented from becoming permanently employed.

If passed, Bill 18 would amend the Employment Standards Act to make temporary help agencies and their clients jointly and severally liable for certain unpaid wages owing to the agency's employees. This means that clients would potentially be liable if an agency failed to pay regular wages and overtime to an agency employee who had been assigned to perform work for a client.

If passed, our bill would better protect temporary help agency workers and ensure that temporary help agencies that operate above board could better compete. It's right that we reward those who follow the law. It would also encourage employers to work with reputable agencies and hire workers directly themselves.

All workplaces in Ontario currently covered by the ESA must post a Ministry of Labour poster on Employment Standards Act rights and responsibilities. However, vulnerable employees may be reluctant to read or copy information from the poster in the workplace; I have witnessed this myself in many areas. Therefore, our bill would require that employers provide individual employees with a copy of this information, which is available from the ministry. This will significantly increase the likelihood that vulnerable employees will learn about their employment standards rights.

Our bill would also amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act to extend to unpaid co-op students and other unpaid learners the same health and safety rights as paid workers. This is right and just. Even if you are a co-

op student in a university, college or other program where you are receiving educational credits, you deserve the same health and safety protections as every other worker, and that is exactly what the government is intending to ensure with this proposed amendment.

Under our bill, unpaid students, learners and trainees would be defined as workers under the OHSA, and would have the same rights and duties as the paid workers they work alongside. For example, they would also have the right to know about workplace hazards, the right to participate in joint health and safety committees and as safety representatives, and the right to refuse unsafe work.

Unpaid learners such as co-op students would also have the same duties as paid workers. For example, they would have to work in compliance with the OHSA and regulations, operate equipment safely and report any hazards or contraventions to the employer or the supervisor. These explicit obligations would enhance their accountability to the employer and to other workers.

As participants in co-operative education programs, co-op students, like all other workers, receive basic health and safety instructions, including information on the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the workplace hazardous materials information system, before entering a workplace.

The construction industry in Ontario is one of the engines of our provincial economy. We have recognized this in our government's economic plan with a historic investment in modern infrastructure, particularly in transit and transportation. Our government will spend more than \$130 billion on public infrastructure over the next decade, on new hospitals, schools, undergraduate campuses, safer roads, better public transit and all-day, two-way GO regional express rail—In Barrie, I hope, in particular—all to support sustainable economic growth across Ontario.

Is Mr. Del Duca here?

**Interjection:** He's listening.

**Ms. Ann Hoggarth:** Good. He's listening.

Reducing disruptions in the construction sector, therefore, is important for all. At least once during the life of every collective agreement, employees are guaranteed the opportunity to decide whether they wish to be represented by a union at all or to be represented by a different union than the one that currently represents them. This period is referred to as the open period.

The length of that period can result in increased uncertainty for employers, employees and unions. To achieve more stable and harmonious labour relations, it would be preferable to reduce the period of uncertainty while still retaining the ability of employees to decide. Our bill, if passed, would amend the Labour Relations Act to reduce the open period in construction industry collective agreements from three months to two months. This will reduce the period of uncertainty and the potential for disruption in this key economic sector.

Speaker, we must build and strengthen our province's economy and businesses, but we must also protect

Ontario's most vulnerable employees. I will take a few moments to describe some of the work the Ministry of Labour is currently undertaking to protect vulnerable workers, including temporary foreign workers.

In September, the ministry began a three-month employment standards blitz, focusing on vulnerable employees. Ministry of Labour employment standards officers are conducting inspections to determine compliance with the Employment Standards Act, 2000, focusing on sectors known to hire a high proportion of vulnerable or temporary foreign workers, including restaurants, building services and personal care services—for example, hair, esthetic and massage services.

Our inspectors are also focusing on business support services, such as collection agencies and call centres, and also horticulture businesses, such as nurseries and greenhouses.

Employment standards officers will check for compliance with core employment standards under the Employment Standards Act, with a particular focus on public holidays, vacation pay, minimum wage, record-keeping and payment of wages.

Our government is taking major steps to fulfill its commitment to protect vulnerable workers by enhancing proactive enforcement of the Employment Standards Act, 2000. As part of the 2013 budget, the government invested ongoing funding of \$3 million for additional employment standards officers and staff. This funding is being used to hire and train new staff and to conduct even more proactive inspections.

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The Ministry of Labour is also planning to develop and to share with key stakeholders an operational policy regarding enhanced use of the Employment Standards Act enforcement tools, particularly with regard to repeat offenders.

Minister Flynn began his second reading House statement on Bill 18 with comments on the legislative proposal to increase Ontario's minimum wage using the Ontario consumer price index, so perhaps it is fitting that I end my statement on that topic. Speaker, our government is committed to building a more prosperous Ontario while creating the jobs of today and tomorrow, and providing more opportunities for all. It is important to remember that when we came to office, the minimum wage had been frozen for eight years straight. That was not fair to workers, who saw their cost of living increase while their wages stayed frozen. That's why our government has increased the minimum wage by 50% since 2003. Against the opposition's wishes, our government has raised the minimum wage from \$6.85 to the \$11 it is today. I constantly get thanked for this when I'm out in public.

We increased it during good times and during the depths of recession because it was the right thing to do. Everyone should be able to move forward and to remain safe and protected while doing so. Ontario went from having one of the lowest minimum wages in Canada to one of the highest, because that's what hard-working Ontario families deserve.

A look at the past 20 years shows us that decisions on increasing the minimum wage were too often ad hoc and left to the political whims of the day. That was not fair to workers, who did not know what their hourly wage would be from one year to the next, and unpredictable for businesses, who could not plan for the future. That is why our government has introduced a fair, predictable and transparent approach to setting minimum wage in the future within Bill 18. Our proposed legislation would require all future adjustments to the minimum wage to be annual and tied to the increase in Ontario's consumer price index. This would ensure that our province's minimum wage keeps pace with the cost of living in a way that allows our businesses to plan for the future and continue to create jobs.

Tying our minimum wage to the change in Ontario's annual CPI was one of Ontario's Minimum Wage Advisory Panel's consensus recommendations in the report put forward by the chair of the panel. On behalf of Minister Flynn, myself and all Ontarians, I would like to thank Professor Anil Verma and the Minimum Wage Advisory Panel members for their dedication to this report and all their hard work. We will be acting on all of the panel's thorough and thoughtful recommendations. Under our proposed legislation, the first CPI adjustment would take place on October 1, 2015, and would be announced on April 1, 2015.

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

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's a pleasure to speak to this piece of legislation. Of course, anything that's going to improve the health and safety of our workers out in the community and in our workplaces is something that we would stand behind very fully. I'm a little concerned, in this case, that they've taken two totally different bills, disparate bills in many cases, and they've tried to put them all into one. I'm a little concerned with how much is maybe going to get lost in the shuffle of trying to do that.

At the end of the day, I think we really deserve separate. If there's really that much concern on both of the bills, we should have taken each of the bills separately, gone through committee and really gone through with a fine-toothed comb so that we could get the best legislation out there at the end of the day.

There are a number of housekeeping items in these bills that can be cleaned up, need to be cleaned up and should be cleaned up. However, I really think we could have gone back, and I'm a little concerned we may lose some in the middle.

Minimum wage is one of the things in the middle of it that they use. It's a bit of a buzzword. Who wouldn't argue for that in many cases, particularly if you're the person at that minimum wage level wanting more? But we have to look at what the realities of that type of legislation will do to our ability to actually employ more people. Will an increase to the minimum wage actually increase employment, or will it actually have a negative impact? I think that's something we have to look at wholeheartedly.

If the Liberal government really wanted to do something to make stronger workplaces, it would have focused on what I hear most in Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, in my riding—and a lot of my colleagues share the same thinking when we’re in caucus: lower energy rates. We have the highest energy rates on the continent. That’s driving people out of Ontario. It’s stopping people from coming to Ontario. And even businesses in my riding that I’m talking to about expanding certainly aren’t in that frame of mind right now, particularly because of that.

The other piece is, certainly, red tape. They’re drowning in red tape. We’ve heard it since the day I walked through these doors, and yet I haven’t seen anything happen. The Liberals, again, have been in power for 11 years. I find it very interesting that all of a sudden these types of bills come to the table and we have to do it today. Where have they been for the last 11 years? I look forward to committee and trying to find some improvements.

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

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I listened with interest to the minister’s comments and I want to thank the government for bringing this legislation forward once again. It’s obviously incredibly important that we protect the health and safety of all workers in this province, particularly young people who are often engaged in unpaid work placements as part of their program of study.

Certainly we know that a Niagara student, a high school student, died just weeks ago in a tragic workplace accident. The Ministry of Labour couldn’t even investigate the circumstances of that young person’s death because that young person was not covered in any way by the Occupational Health and Safety Act, because he was unpaid. So there is an urgent and pressing and critical need for this legislation to move forward, and on this side of the House we are glad to support that piece of the legislation in particular.

I wanted to point out, however, that there are a couple of omissions in this legislation. The first is around students who are excluded from the Employment Standards Act. The minister referenced that there are some exclusions for students. However, those students get no workplace protections around the hours that they work, the breaks that they’re able to take, the leave that they want to take.

We also know that two co-op students—who are also excluded from the Employment Standards Act—who were doing a co-operative education placement as part of their program of study were killed within the last 10 months, while they were on that placement. There is much more work to be done to address the needs of young people who are in secondary or post-secondary education and who are doing work placements as part of their study.

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

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** It gives me great pleasure to rise in support of Bill 18 on behalf of my colleague the Minister

of Labour and the PA from Barrie. As a background in labour relations, I have a master’s in industrial relations from Queen’s, and I taught and consulted in the field for many, many years. I know how important it is in labour relations legislation to get the balance right, and I believe that what we’ve done here is exactly that: getting the balance right between employees’ rights and employers’ rights, protecting employees, not having too much red tape but getting the balance where it should be to protect vulnerable workers.

I want to focus particularly, Mr. Speaker, on the pieces here that protect foreign workers. As the PA in agriculture, I know how important it is to our colleagues who represent rural ridings where there are many foreign workers working in the agricultural sector. The member for Haldimand–Norfolk, who is here—I’m delighted to see him here; I know how important this is to him and to the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. We do not want to be in a situation where vulnerable workers can have their critical documents taken from them in order to keep them from moving around the province and such. So it’s very important that we protect these vulnerable workers.

I’d also like to comment on how important these pieces about the employment minimum wage guarantee are. We can fight about what the proper level is. Economists on both sides of the House will argue that it should be this number or that number. We’ve got a fair number that we’re working from right now. Let’s not hash that debate out repeatedly. Let’s tie it to the cost-of-living indicators. Let’s make sure it keeps moving up with the cost of living so these vulnerable workers are protected.

I’d also like to talk very briefly about how this creates consistency and transparency in the legislation. It allows all classes of employees to be protected under the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Employment Standards Act. Whether they’re temporary foreign workers or interns, etc., they’ll all have the same general coverage and protections. I think that’s important to the province of Ontario.

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

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**Mr. Toby Barrett:** A brief comment on Bill 18: I’d like to say that I feel the suggestion of a separate minimum wage for agricultural workers is something that may well be worth exploring. We know that the Federation of Agriculture, the Greenhouse Vegetable Growers, and the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers’ Association have all indicated that these jumps in the minimum wage do have a negative impact on their members. I certainly hear this from individual farmers as well.

I’ll quote: “The horticulture sector is still struggling to absorb the last minimum wage increase to \$10.25 an hour.” This came up in the finance committee from the fruit and vegetable growers.

OFA: “Jumps in minimum wage reduce seasonal and youth employment.” If you hike the wage, there’s fewer jobs, according to that agricultural organization.



I mentioned the Greenhouse Vegetable Growers. They also came before the finance committee, and they indicated their profitability is sensitive to changes in the minimum wage—they compete with jurisdictions with a much lower wage—and they describe this as an ill-advised way to deal with poverty.

I will say that in all three organizations there is consensus. They do lean towards linking the minimum wage to Ontario's CPI, as long as we take into consideration the general health of their business. But they made it clear at the time that they certainly did not want to see this increase to \$11 in the minimum wage.

So a separate agricultural group is something we may want to consider discussing in committee. We already have a separate classification for hunting and fishing guides, by way of example.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our questions and comments for this round. I return to the Minister of Labour to respond.

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It is a pleasure to rise once again. I do want to thank the individual members who have passed comment on this bill, in particular the members from London West, Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, Beaches–East York and, finally, Haldimand–Norfolk.

I think everybody added a little bit to the bill. What I sensed was that, in general terms, there is overall support for either all the provisions in the bill or at least some of the provisions in the bill.

The next stage, obviously, in the preparation of a bill such as this is that it proceed to the committee stage, where we hear from the public. They will surely come and pass their comments on this and tell us what they think of the changes.

I'm asking members of this House to support it because I think—and the member from Beaches–East York mentioned it—a bill like this has to be balanced. It's got to take in the best interests and the protection of employees in this province, but it also has to take into account that we want an economy that is vibrant, growing and that is, in fact, providing jobs to those workers.

I think what we have before us in Bill 18 is a bill that has been out before those people who often express concerns or advocate on behalf of other members of our society who sometimes don't have people to advocate for them. Those members have come forward again today from the United Way and from some of the other groups that have stepped up to the plate and helped us form some policy around the indexation of minimum wage and the introduction of further employment protections to those people.

I think we would all agree, if we all took off our partisan hats, that employees in the province of Ontario deserve the protection that we want for ourselves, that we would expect for our children and that we would expect our parents should have received in the past, and perhaps didn't, even when they were immigrants, such as mine.

I'm asking the House to take a step forward today, to support this bill, to ensure it goes to committee. If it

needs to be refined along the way, we'll cross that bridge when we get to it.

Thank you, Speaker, and thank you to all the speakers.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** It's a pleasure to be here today to speak on Bill 18, and it's nice to see that the minister is here. I hope he remains riveted to the debate, in his seat, this afternoon, just as I was riveted over here listening to his leadoff debate and, of course, the 20-minute infomercial from the member for Barrie as well that went along with the minister's leadoff.

Minister, I'm going to start off by saying that we on this side of the House are in agreement with much that's in your bill. Much of what's in your bill can be considered housekeeping and necessary amendments to existing pieces of legislation. I do find it disappointing, though, Minister, that you've taken what were two very separate bills in the last session and put them together in this one new bill. That's fine when the bills are of a similar matter, similar substance, similar nature, but when we take policies very disparate, very irrelevant to one another and then combine them into a bill, it puts the whole House at a disadvantage to having a genuine and thoughtful debate on those aspects of the bill.

The minister just mentioned amendments in committee. I would ask the minister to truly consider removing the minimum wage bill out of this one and keeping the housekeeping aspects in one bill and the minimum wage component in a very unique and separate bill. Hopefully he'll take that under due consideration. I think it just benefits all of us here in the Legislature if we can focus our debates on relevant subjects and not have these disparate subjects all bundled up together.

First off, things like joint and several liability—that's good. I don't think anybody is going to be disappointed or would not support that. There are a number of those things that are supportive. I'm going to focus my comments more on the minimum wage aspect of this bill, with you already having the understanding that the other things we're generally in agreement on.

I'll start by saying this: Although this talk of minimum wage has a lot of interesting aspects to it, there are a lot of important considerations about minimum wage that have not been talked about. I'd like the minister to consider some of these statistics and facts about minimum wage here in Ontario. Since 2003, we are the only province in this country that has doubled the percentage of participation in our workforce that is minimum wage. We are now approaching 10% of our workforce here in Ontario that is in the minimum wage category. Most other provinces have restrained or actually diminished the number of minimum wage workers in the workforce. We have over 500,000 people now making minimum wage in the province.

That's something that this bill does not address. There hasn't been any discussion or mention about it. Why does Ontario have the greatest percentage of minimum wage workers in our workforce? Minister, I'd like you to con-

sider that. Are there things that we could do legislatively that would not necessarily just increase the minimum wage but increase the median wage of all people in this province? That's an important part here, and I'll come to this.

Raising the minimum wage, if it results in raising the cost of living, is no advantage to anybody. If there's no relative gain, then there is no benefit. That's what I'm concerned about with this bill: that there will actually not be any tangible gain for those people in the minimum wage workforce.

**1500**

Minister, I think you can probably—I remember that back in the 1970s, when I first started my working career when I left high school, it was commonplace back then for the industrial sector to have COLA clauses, cost-of-living increases, each and every year. Those cost-of-living increases—eventually we found out and realized that there was no benefit to them. They were actually detrimental. They continued to increase the cost of living.

Now, COLA clauses, where we had this defined increase that was going to happen each and every year, regardless of if there was any change in productivity levels, fell out of favour back in the 1980s. COLA clauses were found out and proven to be false, and here we see this government looking at repeating some of this with tying things to the cost of living. Will that also increase and begin to spiral, ensure that there is an increase in the CPI?

I also want to suggest, Minister, what do we do now, as well? And I'd like to hear a response from the Liberal side. If we go on this track where we are going to define and guarantee an increase in minimum wage costs based on CPI, is it not also, then, indicative and intuitive that we must do the same thing for OW, ODSP and others? How many others? Will we do it for the Ontario public service? Will we do it for the broader public service? Will we not run the risk of fuelling inflation by having a guaranteed increase each and every year but no increase in productivity, and therefore no relative gain whatsoever?

I would like the minister to respond to us, during this debate, as to what their considerations are for Ontario Works and ODSP, and for those other incomes derived from the public purse. Have you considered that? What is your position? Will you be implementing further items such as CPI tied to the minimum wage?

I want to just share a few statistics. I told you about Ontario having the largest percentage of minimum wage workers of any province in this country, nearly 10% of our workforce. That should give us some concerns. Let me give you some examples. Next door in Manitoba, the minimum wage is 30 cents per hour less than it is here in Ontario, but part-time workers earn six cents more on average in Manitoba than they do in Ontario, and workers who are 15 to 24 years of age in Manitoba earn, on average, 29 cents more per hour than workers in Ontario. So, even though they have a lower minimum wage, on average those part-time and youth workers are making more in Manitoba.

If we continue to go west, to Saskatchewan, the minimum wage drops down to \$10.20 per hour, but we see even further increases in youth and part-time wages in Saskatchewan. In Saskatchewan they have a \$1.40-per-hour increase over Ontario for the age group 15 through 24—again, a lower minimum wage, but higher average earnings for youth. Part-time workers make, on average, \$1.20 more than here in Ontario, even though—

**Interjection:** Because they are working more hours?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** No; these are hourly rates.

It's the same thing as in Alberta; Alberta has one of the lowest minimum wages in the country. Their youth wage rates are \$4 an hour more than here in Ontario. That's for youth, people aged 15 to 24. Part-time average wages in Alberta are \$3 an hour higher than in Ontario, again with a lower minimum wage rate.

The same thing happens in BC. BC's minimum wage is \$10.25; 15- to 24-year-olds in BC make, on average, \$1.08 per hour more, and part-time wages are \$1.03.

The same thing happens in Newfoundland. In Newfoundland, they have an average wage for 15- to 24-year-olds of \$1.76 per hour higher than Ontario, and the part-time wage is 60 cents higher, on average, in Newfoundland than Ontario.

If we really and truly want to look at improving those entry level workers and vulnerable workers in our workforce, increasing the minimum wage is a pretty blunt instrument, and it doesn't seem to have a very significant or tangible effect on the outcome, looking at all these other provinces and how they do things.

The only thing we really seem to be doing well in Ontario over the last 10 years is increasing the number of people who are in those entry level positions, those minimum wage positions.

Again, I see nothing in this Bill 18, Minister, even though the name of the bill is Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act. I'd like the minister or somebody on the Liberal side afterwards to really address what I've just said. What are you doing to actually improve the livelihood and the prosperity of our part-time and our youth who are working increasingly more and more at minimum wage? As we see across the country, other provinces seem to be doing substantially better and actually reducing the number of people who are working in the minimum wage category and improving their opportunities for prosperity.

I can go on about this, but I think that looking at or listening to the debate about minimum wage, there have been some changes in the discussion over the years. I know that when I got out of school, or even when I was in school, minimum wage was viewed strictly as a means to support and protect those vulnerable people who were just getting into the workforce. It was never expected that people would stay at that minimum wage. It was an entry level, and they would soon move on, progress and be more prosperous. But now the discussion seems to be of the nature that we've just accepted that there will be many, many people who will stay at minimum wage, not just the youth, not just part-time, not just service,

accommodations or retail—even though they do take up, by far, the largest percentage of people making the minimum wage in Ontario. But why it is now that we've accepted or tolerated that that is the new reality in Ontario's workforce, that people must accept that your best outcome in Ontario will be a minimum wage job? I don't buy it. I don't think it's right. I think it's wrong. I think it's harmful when we have that acceptance.

**1510**

We need to get this province increasing the workforce, not just at the minimum wage rates but at the much-improved rates, like what we've seen in these other provinces.

I can tell you that I have four children—they're all out of the house now. Three of them are working out west. The opportunities for significant improvements in income, in employment—hands down, hands down. They would have been foolish to stay here in Ontario with the opportunities that were available to them out west. They could have stayed here. It wasn't a case of not being able to get any work, just that the quality of employment was substantially diminished as to what they could find out west.

I hope those things do change down the road, and that not just my sons can find good employment in Ontario once again but that all our sons and daughters can find improved employment in Ontario. But we don't see that on the horizon and I don't see anything in Bill 18, this stronger economy act, which is going to achieve that. I do hope the minister, although he has left the chamber and he's not—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** You're not allowed to make reference to the absence of any member. I would ask the member not to do that.

I return to the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Forgive me, Speaker. I inadvertently did that. I won't do it again.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Today.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Today.

There is also a great document that was done up from the Minimum Wage Advisory Panel, and it was done up for the Minister of Labour. It goes through all the statistics of the minimum wage workforce in Ontario. I look at that chart. Sometimes I'm puzzled with the report, with what it says, with how they came up with Bill 18. It says, "Minimum wage workers are disproportionately concentrated in two industries: retail trade and accommodation and food services." We know that. "In terms of age, the youth stand out as a group among minimum wage earners. Youth in the 15-19 years age group are only 4.9% of the total workforce" in Ontario, "but they form a solid 42.1% of the minimum wage workforce." That's ages 15 to 19. That probably doesn't surprise anybody, because once again, that's what minimum wage was intended for, those people who are just entering the workforce.

I would like, during this debate on Bill 18, to hear some comments from the government side about this

change of discussion, where the government has now, in my view, from what I've heard, just accepted the fact that minimum wage is no longer just for our youth. If you want to work in Ontario, expect to work at the minimum wage. We've seen that in nearly 10% of our workforce.

The country as a whole—let me just see if I can find—I know I have some numbers here. Here's a good one: Ontario had over 500,000 people at the minimum wage rate. At the same time, the total minimum wage workforce in Canada was just slightly over 800,000. Truly, a disproportionate number of people on minimum wage in this country are here in this province.

I'll be looking forward to hearing the government's responses to some of our arguments and looking forward to hearing what the government may be contemplating doing with tying other government expenditures to the CPI. Will you be doing it for Ontario Works? Will you be doing it for ODSP? Will you be doing it for anybody else? Because if we do get into this, where we have defined increases each and every year, without an improvement in productivity, history will just repeat itself. The cost of living will go up. There will be no relative gains; there will actually be relative and real declines.

I have to make one other mention. Hopefully, the minister is watching. I think that's okay to say—

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri:** That's borderline, Speaker—borderline.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Yes, I think it implied that the minister is not present. I'm going to ask you a second time not to make reference to the absence of any member in this chamber.

The member for Lanark has the floor.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I'm sure the minister was listening intently to this debate. I wanted to share with him a story, because during this debate it was mentioned about the increase in enforcement officers by the Ministry of Labour.

I had the occasion earlier this year—I had a contractor call me up, concerned about a new enforcement officer who showed up on their job site. It ended up that, unbeknownst to me, we've hired a whole series of new enforcement officers, called personal hygiene consultants, by the Ministry of Labour.

Maybe the parliamentary assistant will be able to elaborate on these personal hygiene compliance officers that the Ministry of Labour has employed. I understand that they make \$95,000 a year—clearly not a minimum wage job. They make \$95,000 a year, and that is their official title: personal hygiene compliance officers.

**Interjection:** What do they do?

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** I didn't really want to ask what they do, but the title scared me. Actually, I do know what they do. I did have a significant conversation with them over their actions. I was not overly impressed, to tell you the truth, that this government has taken on the role of personal hygiene cops with the Ministry of Labour. But I'll leave that for another time.

I'll end my conversation. I see there are a lot of new members in the House today. I'm sure they're enjoying

the discussion and the debate on Bill 18. I would like to just provide some advice. There are two good books that have come out for parliamentarians, in my view, in the last year. They would be great for any parliamentarian to read, but even more so for somebody new in the business, if you want to learn about this great institution of responsible government that we have here.

**1520**

The first one is by Samara, and the name of that book is *Tragedy in the Commons*—a great book. The other one—it was just released a week or so ago, and I found it to be a very nice read as well—is by the member for Kelowna in the House of Commons, Brent Rathgeber. The name of that book is *Irresponsible Government*. It would be a real bonus, I think—eh?

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** He's talking about Conservatives, by the way.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** No, Brent Rathgeber is an independent member. But no, they talk about all members.

I just put that out for those new members who haven't yet fully gotten into the groove of what happens here in Parliament, in our Ontario Legislative Assembly. They might be some interesting reads and provide some insight on our activities here, and I do look forward to hearing a response.

As I said, we will be very supportive of many of these actions in Bill 18, but once again, I will say, to be fully responsible and respectful of this Parliament, I really believe that the minimum wage bill should be separated out of Bill 18 and introduced, as it was in the past, as a separate, stand-alone piece of legislation for that very important public policy on minimum wage. Thank you very much.

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

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I listened to the comments from the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington and want to thank him for participating in the debate. He made some remarks toward the end of his speech there about the role of Ministry of Labour enforcement inspectors. I also found it interesting, when the Minister of Labour was speaking to this legislation, how he talked about the inspection efforts that had been made around unpaid interns.

The minister mentioned that there were 57 businesses that had been inspected in sort of a spot blitz to determine if Employment Standards Act violations had been taking place. The minister spoke proudly about the results of the inspection blitz. From our perspective, on this side of the House, the results are very, very troubling. You know, 42% of the firms that were inspected that involve unpaid interns in the workplace were found to be violating the Employment Standards Act. We have big concerns about whether the provisions in this act go far enough to give young people the workplace protection they really deserve.

I also want to point out a further inadequacy of the act around workers' safety and insurance coverage. There is no WSIB coverage currently for students who are doing a

work placement that is optional and that is not a required part of their program to graduate.

Clearly, there are some good provisions in this act, but there remains much work to be done to give students the safety protections they deserve.

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

**Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn:** It's a pleasure to rise in the Legislature today in support of Bill 18, the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act. This is the first real debate that I've experienced in the Legislature. The budget debate, of course, was very important, but this has a different feel to it. It's very interesting.

I'm listening intently to the members of the opposition in their comments, and I'm very pleased to hear that, generally speaking, they're very supportive of our legislation. They see the need to modernize workplace legislation in this province, and I hope all members of this Legislature will support it.

But I've heard some interesting, unusual comments. I've heard that perhaps we should lower the minimum wage in certain sectors. I've heard that this is going to lead to inflation if it's unchecked. I know that the minister could share with the Legislature that built into the legislation is a review mechanism: that after five years' time there will be a review of the minimum wage increase components of this legislation to see what effect it has on the labour markets, on inflation. So that is built into it.

But to hear members of the opposition link the oil sector in Alberta and the \$25-an-hour jobs at Tim Hortons and somehow say that's relevant to our discussion in Ontario about having reasonable, fair increases to minimum wage so the standard of living for young people, for single moms, for the people who are in the retail sector—that's not really an apples-and-oranges debate. I hope they'll come back to the fruit market with some better—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's a pleasure to speak to Bill 18, the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act.

To my colleague from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington: I think he brought out a lot of good, valid points here. I think again we generally are supportive of anything in legislation that's going to actually improve the health and safety of workers in our great province of Ontario. I think he also, though, raised good issues out there, those being that there were two bills here that were bundled into one, and our concern is going to be, do things get lost in there? Is it too much to try to do? If we really wanted to make differences, we could have taken each of these bills and done them in a detailed manner to ensure that we're truly getting the best legislation.

In a small, rural place like Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, what I hear from a lot of the single mom-and-pop shops that are the bulk of the employers in small, rural communities, particularly with regard to the minimum wage, is that it may make a difference whether that store—a

convenience store, a small market—stays open for extended hours in the evening or late hours on the weekends, when a lot of our tourists are up. And can they truly afford that? Is it actually going to be a case of whether they employ more people or are they actually going to employ less people? Are they going to have to pick up the slack and work more in advance of the 70 to 80 hours they work now? And, again, is that service going to be there? If that service isn't there, not as many people are coming to shop in those small communities, which, again, is a downward negative spiral. I think it's something we really have to look at, to see whether there truly is a balance at the end of the day by increasing.

We've had some of my other colleagues talking about the fruit growers, who have said—and I'll talk later today in my comments about one in my riding who has actually given a very good case, I think, for the concerns he has in regard to the fruit growers and increased minimum wages there. I think we need to ensure that anything we're doing is going to actually end in the result being that there is better employment.

The other concern I have is, are kids entering the workforce going to get that very viable job experience, that very first opportunity to get out in the workforce and truly learn what work is? I'm concerned that some of these changes may do that. Generally, overall, I'm in favour of anything that's going to improve. I look forward to getting to committee and seeing it in the detail there.

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

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** I enjoyed listening to my friend from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, especially when he was talking about the books that he's been reading lately. There was a book I almost bought. As you know, I was at Caesars with many of you last weekend when you were down for your Liberal council and there was a book there by a guy—Greg Sorbara, I think it was. I was going to buy it but I said, "I'll have my fun and have him sign it for me." So I said to the guy, "When is Sorbara going to be here to sign the book?" He said, "In a couple of minutes." I said, "Okay, I'll wait." So I waited and I waited. I said, "When is he coming?" "Oh, he's just around the corner. He'll be here any minute." I waited and I waited. Finally, I said, "Is he going to be here or not?" "He's coming; he's coming."

I just thought, okay, another broken Liberal promise; right? I really wanted to read the book. I wanted to find out what you guys have been doing.

1530

**Interjection:** Can you give a report?

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** It was a good book.

We lose a lot of our young people to the west because that's where the jobs are at the moment. Years ago, people from all over the world came to Windsor to work in the car plants, to work in the mines. We benefited from that. Now somebody else has a turn.

We're doing our part. My son's wife delivered a grandson on Friday night, Saturday morning. Let me take

this opportunity—my first grandson, Fletcher Andrewson Kristopher Hatfield. At some point I'd like to bring him to the members' gallery and introduce him to you all. That may take a couple months or a couple years—I don't know—but we'll get him here. I hope he can find a job in Ontario and make much more than minimum wage, because all young people in this province deserve an opportunity to advance themselves and to move on to greater heights.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes the time for questions and comments. I return to the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Thank you. That's on my to-pick-up list as well, Sorbara's book.

Listen, I want to thank the members from London West, Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound and Windsor–Tecumseh. The member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore mentioned comparing with the oil patch. Well, Manitoba is not quite the oil patch. Saskatchewan, Alberta—yes. BC is not quite the oil patch. Have they got some? Yes, absolutely. Even Newfoundland, they've got oil. But I think what that tells us is that some provinces are utilizing their resources in a much more effective manner than we are in this province.

We have no shortage of natural resources in this province. We talk about the Ring of Fire, but that's all it is—talk—because there's no jobs there. We have an abundance of forestry. We have an unlimited amount of pristine and beautiful lakes and rivers and lands in this province, but we don't seem to be utilizing our resources. That's one thing for the member for Etobicoke–Lakeshore.

I will just also mention the review. Absolutely, review is a good thing. However, if we wanted to be a truly responsible and open, transparent government—in this act, the review is only by the minister, not by this assembly. Let's change that aspect and have this act reviewed by this assembly every five years and not just by the minister, because as we've seen in the estimates committee, sometimes it's hard to get stuff out of the minister at any committee.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** As always, it is an honour to rise in the House and to join the debate. I'm particularly pleased to resume what was debate on the previous incarnation of the bill, Bill 146, from the spring prior to the election. I'm once again pleased to speak on behalf of our caucus as our labour critic.

Listening intently to all ideas and opinions throughout this debate today, this afternoon, I was just reminded why this place is so special by my colleague the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, because right at the end of his two-minute hit, his closing remarks, he gave me a nugget that I think we should all hold on to here.

I disagreed with, I guess, 99% of what he said prior to that, but in regard to reviewing the minimum wage on a

five-year basis, he's right. We should review the minimum wage in this chamber with all elected members on maybe a more condensed time frame. I am thankful to you for bringing that point forward. It reminds me why this is such a great job and it's such a great honour to represent and honour to speak to the bills, because all ideas can be put forward and shared and, hopefully, absorbed by the government of the day and implemented.

As I said, Bill 18 was previously introduced as Bill 146, and we as New Democrats are generally supportive of the measures. We see them as small steps moving forward.

Speaker, if I might interject, I will be sharing my time with the member for Kitchener–Waterloo. I forgot to mention that.

As I said, we are supportive of some of the measures. I'll go through them for the pleasure of my colleagues in the House, who I think would like to be reminded of how intricate this bill is.

Number one is the extended damages provision. The bill replaces the current six-month cap on back wages in section 111 with a two-year limit while also removing the \$10,000 cap on damages for unpaid wages. These changes will allow workers to recover a greater proportion of their actual lost wages when employers have violated the Employment Standards Act over an extended period of time.

I see this as coming not a moment too soon—or too late, depending on where you're at—because, of course, why would we limit wages to be recovered by an employee from an employer who is unscrupulous and is fighting that employee every step of the way? Let's ensure that if someone is owed more than \$10,000, they are afforded the ability to pursue those back wages to that full extent. Of course, extending the period of time in which they can go after that money as well will be a welcome addition to that.

Secondly, the new temp agency record keeping and joint and several liability for temp agency workers is an interesting component of the overall bill. I think what it attempts to do, as we've heard throughout the debate, is address some of the gaps that exist in who is liable when there is a transaction—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Yes, I am supposed to talk for an hour. Thank you. I see the 56 minutes left.

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Don't feel compelled.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** No, I will feel compelled. It's the first day. You guys can't get out of here too early.

Speaker, back to temp agency record keeping: As I said, there's a gap that exists in terms of who is responsible when a temporary worker is contracted by an employer through a temp agency. The gap exists in terms of who enforces the Employment Standards Act, who is responsible for training, who is responsible for benefits, who is responsible for all the measures and compliance under the Employment Standards Act. What this does is compel those two entities to both be responsible. So no longer will there be any ambiguity as to who is respon-

sible when someone is contracted through a temporary agency.

I think it speaks to the larger problem, however, that the explosion of temp agencies has become the norm for labour market supply in the province of Ontario. It was alluded to by our colleague from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, in terms of why do we have these temp jobs, low-wage-paying jobs, precarious work; why is it that we see such prominence of this in the province of Ontario?

I would say, and I would submit and argue, that it is primarily because of Conservative and Liberal policy at both the federal and provincial levels for at least a decade, and that has welcomed that type of employment, that sector of employment that typically provides no real net benefit in terms of what a manufacturing base would have done. These are more typically service-based jobs—not to say they are not important, but they are always less valued or devalued on the market in terms of labour supply.

When we use free trade agreements that outsource and allow cheap imports to flood our markets, there is no longer a demand for a resource-based economy, in the province of Ontario, where we establish higher levels of employment for turning our resources into products—value-added employment. That doesn't exist when you're flooding neighbourhoods and communities with call centres and fast-food agencies and Walmarts. Speaker, it is Walmartization, if that is a word—I believe it actually may be somewhere in the lexicon. That's what Liberal and Conservative policy has done. It has relied heavily on Walmart cheap labour, cheap-wage jobs to fuel our economy; you don't have a manufacturing policy in the province of Ontario, nor do we have one at the federal level—

*Interjection.*

**1540**

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** No, you don't. You don't have a strategy. You don't have a national or provincial food strategy, where we would implement domestic production policies through the province, and also through the feds. These are things that you have abdicated in terms of your responsibility to build a larger, more value-added economy.

I digress, Speaker. That's what I think about temp agencies and that's why I think there are so many of them, because you've stood idle as they've come into our communities and they become the go-to for cheap labour—all the more reason to applaud you taking some steps forward in closing those gaps.

The third provision is the new information disclosure requirement: posters and self-audits. It requires distribution of the employment standards poster to every employee and adds another tool: the employer self-audit. I have some questions about this, some serious questions. The self-audit is an interesting wrinkle. It gives the employment standards branch the power to order an employer to conduct a self-audit of its records to determine if it is in compliance with the act or regulations. The

employer must conduct the audit and report its findings to the employment standards office.

Speaker, I will tell you that if my grade school, my high school and my university professors allowed me the opportunity to fill in my own report card, I would stand before you today as a straight-A student. It would have been impeccable and so would my attendance. I would have been perfect, but unfortunately that wasn't the case. There were some areas in schooling that I did not succeed in and did not excel in. You can go back and check my report card.

I'm concerned that this is the tool that the government is giving to employers: "Conduct your own self-audit, tell us how great you are, tell us how you are in compliance with the Employment Standards Act, and everything will be all right." I'm interested to hear what the specifics are within that provision of the bill.

As you heard from my colleague the member from London West, who brought forward her own bill—she tabled Bill 22, the protection for interns and vulnerable workers act, one that I hope my colleagues across the way on the government side take the time to read, because it does go a lot further in terms of protecting the most vulnerable in Ontario. But as you heard her mention, she took the government's own numbers and those straight from the minister's comments today that the recent blitz that was conducted resulted in 56 inspections. They found 31 companies with interns who weren't a part of an educational program or a co-operative program, 13 of them breaking the law, which extrapolated means that 42% of those 56 inspections resulted in a violation of the Employment Standards Act. That's astounding, Speaker, and it begs the government to do more on the enforcement side.

We heard that a figure of \$3 million annually will be put forward to augment some enforcement provisions, but it's not nearly enough. It's not nearly enough when it comes to the Employment Standards Act, and it certainly is not nearly enough when it comes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act; I'll get to that. I do believe that the provisions in this bill that touch on health and safety might very well be the most important from the perspective of working people in this province.

Number four, Speaker: The bill introduces new protections for foreign nationals working in Ontario, and, by extending protections for live-in caregivers in the Employment Protection for Foreign Nationals Act to other foreign nationals working or looking for work in Ontario, such as temporary foreign workers, it replicates what currently exists for live-in caregivers, provisions that protect them similarly as if they were long-time employees or long-time residents of Ontario. That is good, fair and just, and we applaud that. However, there are some gaps that exist that we wonder on this side of the bench if the government couldn't bring forward—particularly the gap in terms of the three-month wait time for temporary foreign workers or foreign nationals who come here seeking employment, and who are then employed and retained by a company, to immediately begin to receive Ontario OHIP benefits.

I submit that there is no better time to examine this provision than right now, given the considerations of the Ebola epidemic that we see, where industrialized nations such as Canada, who have progressive health care systems and good health care systems, should play a role in ensuring that for anyone who comes here who isn't receiving or who hasn't received proper health care services in their home country, we can then play a role in ensuring that they get proper health care.

We've seen, just recently, 300 cases of tuberculosis. On March 2, 2011, 300 foreign nationals arrived in Canada with diagnosed cases of tuberculosis. We can play a role in stopping epidemics like Ebola and tuberculosis simply by expanding and extending our health care system to those people who come here. I think it's really a measure of humanity that the government has the ability to do.

Under that provision—number 4 on my list, at least; I don't know if the government has labelled it as such—it does speak about the banning of recruitment fees. Specifically, I believe, it is targeted among the migrant worker population in Ontario.

If you can imagine the prospect of leaving your home country, leaving your family, for a job that has been presented to you at a certain wage and benefits, being sold a bill of goods and arriving there—putting your life on hold in your home country and coming to a foreign country, having to leverage everything you have, borrowing from unscrupulous lenders just to be able to get that job, and having your citizenship documents held in order to secure that employment—unbelievable.

I commend the minister and the government for addressing this issue. It's one that I think can send a clear message to other jurisdictions that people deserve to be treated fairly, that no matter where you come from, this place, Ontario, is a safe place, one that values fairness, one that values protection and the work that each and every one of us does—no matter where you're from—to provide for our families and to make our province a better place. With that, it requires some responsibility from the government to ensure that those rules are enforced. I do salute, certainly, this provision of the bill.

Advocates are calling for some measures of strengthening. Of course, New Democrats are anxious to hear testimony at committee, if this bill is indeed passed and does end up in committee. Some of those advocates are calling for the strengthening of Bill 18 to give the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration the power to create registries for employers and recruiters. Let's know who is bringing in foreign nationals, who is bringing in temporary foreign workers or migrant workers. Let's understand where they are so that we can assist them in learning about these laws.

I mean, my goodness, if we are to enact provisions of security and provisions of protection for migrant workers, let's know where they are, and let's ensure that our employment standards officials and our labour officials know how to access them and to give them the information that they need to be safe and to be treated fairly.

They're also calling on recruiters to be required to put forward mandatory financial security in the form of a bond, an irrevocable letter of credit, or a deposit before being licensed, and that recruiters and employers are jointly and severally liable for any and all exploitative recruitment practices in Canada and abroad.

That would make sense, considering that you're applying that same mandate to temporary work agencies that are based in Ontario. In essence, recruiters who are bringing in temporary foreign workers are doing the same job. Let's extend that same joint and several liability to those folks as well. I hope this is something that the government considers.

**1550**

Also, another provision that the government might want to consider is that employers be prohibited from charging any fees to migrant workers, and that the onus of fee non-payment be on the recruiter, not the migrant worker; that the time limit on complaints be at least five years so that workers can seek justice after their contract finishes; also, that all migrant workers coming into Ontario have full access to full immigration status, access to social benefits, protections from reprisal and meaningful labour protections. Speaker, that would certainly go a long way in terms of levelling the playing field—access to justice, access to fairness for migrant workers who toil in our province every day—but, as we are here and as we speak, they are not protected the same way that other workers are in the province. I think it is a shame.

That was number four. Number five of this bill, Bill 18—I'll just take a little sip of water and wet my whistle. That's good. Thank you, Speaker. I forgot how great the water was in here. Could you imagine that? It's wonderful.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Public services.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Public water, public service water. It's very good.

Speaker, number five: It changes the definition of "worker" in the Occupational Health and Safety Act to include people who are performing work for no pay, such as unpaid trainees, commonly called unpaid interns. This closes a loophole in the Occupational Health and Safety Act that protected only workers who are paid. This change is an obvious one to make since there's no reason why unpaid workers should not be covered by the Occupational Health and Safety Act, but it certainly won't spark any great revolution in the treatment of unpaid workers.

That's how we feel, Speaker. We only have to look at the tragic deaths of two co-operative students in the last year, while they were on their co-ops. In early October, 17-year-old Adam Keunen, a Niagara-area student—17 years old—died in the first week of his co-op at an auto-recycling facility. Minister of Labour, I implore you: If you do nothing else, if no other provisions of this bill pass and there's no other movement within the extension of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, ensure that our unpaid interns, our educational interns, learn it, that they go through the steps of learning the Occupational

Health and Safety Act. That's the most important thing. I can tell you—

*Applause.*

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I thank my colleagues from both sides.

If they go through a co-op for eight weeks, 12 weeks or 14 weeks, I don't care what they learn as long as they learn how to be safe at work, as long as they learn their protections at work: the right to refuse, the right to participate, the right to know. Those valuable principles are the most important things they need to learn early on in their careers. I believe that this goes a long way, but let's make sure that we put the resources behind it so that it is common knowledge; you don't step into a co-op without at least knowing your rights and you are fully trained and fully protected. That's absolutely something that I hope is championed through this bill. You have my full support on that. We can avoid any other young person being harmed, certainly. So I welcome that provision and I thank the government for putting that in here.

Number six doesn't really belong in terms of the theme of the bill—the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act—but I understand the need for it, and I don't necessarily disagree with it being in here. It reduces the open period for decertification in unions, which are called "raids" in the construction industry, from three months to two months at the end of a collective agreement. I understand what this means; I understand what it does. It eliminates confusion on work-sites. I can tell you that as a trade unionist and as someone who has been involved in organizing workplaces and involved in certifying workplaces, you know when that open period is and you've prepared for that open period months and years in advance. If you can't get the job done in two months, then you probably don't deserve to represent those workers.

I think it will aid in some stability in those workplaces. I think it's welcomed on both the labour-union side and the employer side. I don't see it as being anything that isn't reasonable. I certainly will look forward to hearing from my friends in the trade union movement who will have a new reality to deal with, and we'll see how they make do with it.

Number seven amends the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act to clarify responsibilities for workers who are injured during a job placement arranged by a temporary health agency by attributing the cost to the employer where the injury occurs and assessing wages by reference to income earned from the agency. Again, a welcome baby step forward, something that I believe clarifies and closes a gap that only exists because of the enormous prevalence and exponential growth of temporary work agencies that have flooded our labour market here. We welcome that, but you've got a bigger problem on your hands, members of the government. It is within the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.

You have injured workers out there who have been failed by successive governments, who are losing hope,



who are injured and who are being run through a system that is not functioning in the way in which it was designed and has been subsequently designed to fail those injured workers. You have a massive problem on your hands, one that I don't think you've grasped and one that leaves many people behind, eliminates their hope and then pushes them onto our social assistance rolls, where a program that was not and is not designed to support them is the support of last resort, for lack of a better term.

Your system, in terms of the WSIB, is broken. The steps that you've made will only compound the problem. Again, I implore this government to take tangible steps to ensure that the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, or, as it was previously known, the workplace compensation bureau, compensates injured workers fully, fairly and adequately for the injuries that they receive while at work through no fault of their own. It's a massive gap within our labour system here in this province that is not being addressed.

My goodness, I know we're four years out until the next opportunity, but I can't wait. I would love that opportunity, as the Minister of Labour, to fix that issue.

**Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** You'll get your chance.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I'll get my chance: Thank you. I feel that and I will work towards that. You have my word on it.

The fifth provision within Bill 18 is that it indexes the minimum wage. Currently the minimum wage is set out in a regulation made under the act. The act is amended to provide that each year the minimum wage is adjusted according to the consumer price index, the CPI.

Kudos; well done; congratulations. You have finally acknowledged that the minimum wage in this province of Ontario has to go up, that people are falling behind, that the gap, which is commonly known as income inequality, that gap between the rich and the rest of us, is widening and it's creating a massive problem. It's being acknowledged even in the United States as one of their most pressing problems. The Obama administration regularly acknowledges income inequality as being one of the drivers of a stalling economy.

So thanks for coming to the table finally here, after New Democrats have pressed hard and fought for some indication or inclination from this government and others to address that issue. I can tell you that I remember being out there and thinking, "Man, this \$7.25 an hour is really not getting me any further ahead." That's when New Democrats proposed a \$10 minimum wage in 2006—in 2006, \$10 an hour. Imagine, had you understood at the time that that gap was increasing, and had we had even an annual raise afterwards according to the consumer price index, people would be far better off, I submit.

**1600**

So you're playing catch-up is what I'm saying, and not in the Leamington tomato sense, Speaker. You're playing catch-up in the sense that even today, in today's dollars, \$11 an hour isn't going to get you very far.

I heard again one of the things I totally disagree with from my friend the member from Lanark-Frontenac—

Lennox and Addington: I believe he said that we really shouldn't even have a minimum wage. I'm reminded of the words of Chris Rock, the famous American comedian—

**Mr. Steve Clark:** He's quoting Chris Rock.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I'm quoting Chris Rock. He said minimum wage—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I'll watch my language. He said we have minimum wage because if they could pay you less, they would. If it was legal to pay you less, they absolutely would.

Speaker, we need to close that gap in a whole host of ways: the employment standards, the enforcement of employment standards, the information provided to workers, particularly vulnerable workers, the expansion of the ability for people to certify as unionized, organized. That's another reason. If you look at statistical data, when you see an annual decrease in terms of median income, you see parallel numbers in terms of decreasing rates of unionization, particularly in the private sector. Those correlations cannot be ignored; I guess they are being ignored. If you're not going to fill the gap, which governments of the day for more than decade have proven not to be able to, then at least allow workers to organize and to be represented by trade unions that are going to fill that gap and protect them at work and negotiate good wages and benefits. Let's make sure we do that. Outsource your responsibility to the trade union movement. They can do that. They've been playing that role and actually helping the economy for quite some time.

I don't think you will go that far. I don't think we will see anti-scab legislation ever come out of this government, and I don't think we will see card-based certification come out of this Liberal government. Prove me wrong, please. By all means, do it. Do it.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** We did it last year.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** No, you never did it.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** In construction.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Yes, okay. Well, one pony for one kid at birthday time isn't really all the fairness in the world.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** What about the other kids?

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** What about the other kids? One component of our economy—and believe me, those workers definitely benefit from card-based certification; I'm one of them. But we can do more. We can extend that so that it is easier for workers to be represented and it is easier for them to negotiate a higher wage. Maybe in the utopian society of the member from Lanark, we won't need a minimum wage because we will have folks who are represented in the workplace. They'll be safe, they'll be prosperous, and they'll be valued and protected.

Speaker, I think I feel good about what I've said here today, and I think the government has a sense of where we're coming from on this bill. We do look forward to seeing it go to committee, and I do look forward to

hearing from stakeholders in terms of their perspective. I do hope that it passes swiftly, because it's high time that we do protect those vulnerable workers in the province.

I cede my time to my colleague the member from Kitchener–Waterloo.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Does the member for Kitchener–Waterloo wish to speak?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Sorry; it's the first day back.

But it is always a pleasure to get up and talk about a piece of legislation which has some potential to actually make the lives of people in the province better and workers safer. It was referenced that this piece of legislation died on the order paper with the election, but there was an earlier version, an early variation of this piece of legislation actually that died on the order paper as well when the former Premier of this province prorogued Parliament—over a hundred pieces of legislation died as well then.

We've seen this several times, and there are some themes that are recurring, but every time a piece of legislation like Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act comes before us it does provide an opportunity for us to make the legislation stronger. As my colleague pointed out, there are some things that are actually good in this legislation, and I think I'm going to start with that.

The issue of banning recruitment fees, for instance, has been a long-standing issue in the province of Ontario. Migrant workers, women in particular, have been asked to pay unscrupulous recruiters tens of thousands of dollars to gain access to Ontario, to gain access to employment opportunities, which, in turn, turn out to be something other than what they were promised to be.

The problem with a recruiter going to a foreign country, for instance, and saying, "For \$10,000 you can access this country and this province," is that it gives that job opportunity the illusion of being a credible job opportunity. We've actually just seen this recently in the news last week. There was a horrific death, the murder of a woman who came into this province as a nanny and was also, of course, being recruited into the sex trade field. I have to tell you, this is one of those issues that is subversive and undermines the very principles and values that we have, I think, as a province and as a country, and yet it has been going on for quite some time.

What Bill 18, I think, proposes to do is to ban the recruitment fees and thereby, perhaps and hopefully, end the illusion that if you're paying a huge amount of money to get into this province to access an employment opportunity, it's a credible and legitimate and legal opportunity when the evidence actually proves otherwise.

In the same vein, around recruitment fees and around the power that a recruiter has over a temporary worker, a migrant worker, there is the issue, also, of them withholding citizenship papers, undermining their rights. This is really an emerging trend in the country and in the prov-

ince. We saw it at the national level with the temporary worker program when the Harper government created this huge loophole where large corporations could pull in very vulnerable people and have them work at corporations like McDonald's, for instance; this was very recent, in the spring. We were horrified, as citizens of Ontario and as citizens of this country, to see that primarily these were young women who were being housed in local motels, who were working extremely long hours, who were not aware of their own rights as employees in the province of Ontario, as temporary citizens even. Also, they were pushing out long-standing employees of those corporations. The federal government has made some progress on that file, but I think that the two issues are very much connected.

What advocates have been saying on the recruitment fees is—they have asked for the strengthening of Bill 18 as follows: They've asked that the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration have the power to create registries for employers and recruiters. For us as legislators, as this legislation moves forward, we need to know where those people are, so there needs to be a registry. You have to understand the problem at hand in order to address the risk or to mitigate the risk or to protect those workers. This is something that we're going to be looking at very closely. Obviously very connected to that is that all migrant workers who come to Ontario must have access to full immigration status, social benefits, protections from reprisals and meaningful labour protections.

We have all come from outside of Canada, except for our First Nations, Métis and Inuit people. We all have a history of being immigrants to this country. In the past, though, when we came to the country we had the potential, the opportunity, to be full-fledged, respected citizens with all the rights that ensued. Disturbingly enough, the trend has been to essentially use people and then dispose of them. This is something that we have to be cognizant of. We have to acknowledge that it's a problem, and we have to be cognizant of the fact that in order to prevent this from happening, you need strong oversight. Oversight, and the lack of oversight, has been a long-standing issue with the Ministry of Labour in this province. I cite the safety inconsistencies, for instance.

**1610**

For those of you who heard the petition read into the Hansard today, we on this side of the House, in this corner, have been fighting for better training for working at heights. This is long-standing. This stems from the Dean report of 2010, which determined that the safety regulations, the training, the oversight, the standards in this province were not up to a standard which was acceptable. There were almost 38 recommendations that came from that Dean report. Eleven of them were priorities. One of them specifically called for a mandated working-at-heights training standard. To date, that standard is not in place in the province of Ontario, which is ironic, because the government talks about building Ontario up, and actually Ontario is building up. We actually are intensifying, so we have more skyscrapers and more

cranes across this province than we have ever had, so the need to train workers who are working at heights has never been more important.

In fact, I just published a local op-ed piece on this very issue. If you're not going to do it for the right reason, then do it because it makes financial sense. I costed out falls in the province of Ontario, the 800-or-so serious falls, and I costed out the cost of a claim to WSIB, and then countered that with the cost of actually putting in a training program which would prevent people from being injured in the workplace. This is not really rocket science at all; it's just common sense—and I hesitate to use that word, for other obvious connotations. But it makes not only a compassionate case for bringing in the working-at-heights training program, but there is a strong financial case, a strong economic case, if you will.

You can connect it to productivity or what have you. For me, it's a little more personal, though, because a young man who was 23 years old fell to his death in my riding on October 10, just over a year ago. His name was Nick Lalonde. He had only been working on that site for five days, and he was a temporary contract worker. There was no workplace safety committee. There was no training. There were no posters. Posters have some purpose, I guess, and I think that Bill 18 calls for that. He went up to the 12th storey. He was not harnessed in, and he fell to his death. He left a child and a mother and a father and a whole community that, seriously, could not understand how this young man got to be in that position without being appropriately trained. This is after 18 workers died last year in the province of Ontario. They fell to their deaths.

What Bill 18 has the capacity to do, and what we are charged with, I think, in this House, is ensuring that the legislation meets the emerging and current needs of workers in the province of Ontario.

Certainly, as we look at the growing temp agencies that have, unfortunately, filled a huge gap in this province—in my mind, because of the lack of a cohesive employment/jobs strategy for the province of Ontario—because that has happened, we have more temporary workers working in agencies who are without the power to be strong advocates for themselves.

I think that Minister Flynn was actually recently in—the Brantford Expositor reported that he was in Brantford. It's interesting to know that in Brantford, the average for use of temporary workers is between 21% and 22%. So almost a quarter of the workers in Brantford look to a temp agency as the primary place of work, whereas the provincial average is 18%.

So it's good that he went to Brantford; it's good that he sat down. The headline, though, reads, "Minister Gets Earful on Temp Agencies." This had to do with the consultation on G18.

This is what the people who are on the front lines said to the minister at the time. They said that they want transparency provisions so that workers could check a temp agency, its record, and whether there are violations of the Employment Standards Act.

They want transparency in advertising. All of us in this House have examples of advertising which is misleading to workers, promising a certain rate, promising certain hours, promising certain conditions, sometimes benefits and perks, which turn out to be lies.

This is what the front-line people have said to Minister Flynn—and, actually, the Speaker was also there that day. They want agencies to be required to get employees safety training. They do. Because they recognize that when these individuals actually are hurt in the workplace, they have no recourse, because they have no rights.

They want stronger language to protect a worker's right to refuse unsafe work, without the fear of reprisals. There is a huge power imbalance when you have a person who is—and I want to point out that a large number of these workers are women. They are marginalized citizens in the province of Ontario. They are new immigrants; they're people without a high level of post-secondary education or education at all. Really, those who live on the margins are forced to work on the margins in the province of Ontario.

In this consultation with the Minister of Labour they pointed out these weaknesses in the legislation as it's presented right now. There's obviously room for improvement. The minister at the time, based on this article, said that the increase in temporary help agencies is "a moving target." Actually, I do agree with him on that. It is a moving target because there's no true oversight over temp agencies. There's an opportunity to strengthen so that they can't come into one area and then leave really quickly, abandoning their responsibilities as an employer. He acknowledges that we need to have rules and laws in place to deal with that.

An interesting piece, though, which I find not overly surprising, is that during this same round table with the minister and the Speaker on Bill 18, Garry MacDonald of the Brantford and District Labour Council noted that 72% of agencies had Employment Standards Act violations. That's 72%.

In Brantford, for instance, you have 22% of the population working for temp agencies, and 72% of those agencies have violations against them, around safety. So this is—it's hard to actually find the words for it because Brantford, obviously, is a microcosm of what is happening in other jurisdictions, but it tells a very important story. It tells why the legislation is so important. It tells us that oversight has not been a priority for this Liberal government for 12 years now.

Earlier, the Minister of Labour referenced the importance of hiring a Chief Prevention Officer. Well, I'd like to remind this House that this is the second Chief Prevention Officer that has been in this important role. The last one left. He just threw his hands up in the air. He said that if this government is not going to follow through on training-at-heights standards—that's a benchmark. It's a low-watermark level. This is basic common sense, that you train people when they are working in risky situations. He just left.

We have a new Chief Prevention Officer, and we are still waiting, for four years. I'm told it's coming, though.

I have to tell you, all politics aside, if the regulation comes in through this Legislature, through Bill 18 or otherwise, around ensuring and mandating training for working at heights workplace safety, I will be the first person to stand up in this House and say, “Congratulations.” Let’s just make sure it’s strong; let’s make sure it’s good. Let’s keep the workers in this province safe.

I totally agree with my colleague from Windsor-Essex. The opportunity for those paid internships and those co-op programs—the value of them is not only for skills acquisition. It’s also so that those young people who are having those experiential learning opportunities—and we know that students are hungry for those opportunities and we know that sometimes liability and litigation prevents those opportunities from happening. But why not build in some safeguards to ensure that when students go to a workplace, they know what their rights are, they know that they can refuse unsafe work, and they know that they will be protected through legislation if they stand up for themselves in that workplace?

1620

The work that’s before us, it’s a huge amount. You’ve really got a lot in this piece of legislation, which I find interesting. I know that there is a push to get some things done very quickly, but our interest is also to get those things done quickly and well so that there aren’t unintended consequences and so that the intent of the legislation actually is realized.

Bill 18 also addresses curbing wage theft, and now this has come up in the House several times. In particular of course, we always talk about the tip-out bill which was brought forward by the former member of Beaches–East York, I think maybe three or four times, and now has been brought forward by the new member for Beaches–East York. There has to be some control for employers to not essentially steal from their employees. I think of the good people who serve us downstairs in the parliamentary restaurant, In Camera. I’ve asked them, Jenny and Candy and Richard—and of course Joseph is no longer there. We used to talk about the fact that they pool their tips as a collective. That’s very, very different than the employer taking those and distributing what he feels those employees should be garnered. There are ways to protect workers who depend on those gratuities, quite honestly. The minimum wage will obviously strengthen some of that temporary, part-time, precarious work.

What we are seeing, actually, more and more in the province of Ontario is something called involuntary part-time work. We are seeing people who really do want to work more than 15 hours a week, but their employer is sort of capping and spreading it around a lot of people so that they don’t have to add to the benefits or whatever other secondary costs those employees bring to the table.

We, of course, support a strong minimum wage. We did call for the increase to \$12. We did also cost it and tie it to the cost of living, and then we also built in some supports for businesses so that they could transition to that place for Ontario’s workers. But in the work that’s before us with Bill 18, there are some basic places that

need direct attention, and there are some places where we can strengthen this piece of legislation. I look forward to it getting to committee so that those conversations can be open and transparent for everyone in the House.

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

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** It does give me great pleasure to respond to the comments made by the member for Essex and the member for Kitchener–Waterloo. I particularly want to congratulate the member for Essex for the gift that he received from the honourable member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington. You mentioned earlier about receiving a nugget, such a rare gem, from the member, and I wish the member were here right now where he could actually give you the gem—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I would warn the member we don’t speak about people who are not in the Legislature.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** Oh, I’m sorry. I heard the other member do it, and I completely forgot. That’s right; my apologies.

What I would like to say is I do hear great consensus amongst the members opposite, support for this bill in a general sense. It will, of course, be going to committee to refine some of the details of it. But I can’t help but wonder, with all this co-operation, what life would have been like, how different it may have been, had we not gone through this process of an election, because that bill was in front of us before.

**Interjection:** It wasn’t there before.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** It was there before, and we would have had a chance to get it there faster.

**Interjection:** You wouldn’t be here if we didn’t have an election.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** I know. I’m not really begrudging the fact that we went through the election; I don’t want to give that wrong impression. But we could have worked so co-operatively together as a minority government with this kind of support, and now I’m delighted to see that we do get this support from the members opposite on this very important piece of election.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** And there’s no election.

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** And there’s no election to have to worry about.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** Of course.

Now, one of the things that I think we see in this piece of legislation is the Minister of Labour has gone out and consulted very broadly with a wide range of stakeholders, and I think that reflects the kind of approach we will be using as a government, that we will be engaging knowledgeable experts in their field, but not just engaging them; we will be listening to the recommendations, and we are going to great strides to implement those recommendations when they make sense for the government of Ontario.

Part of us going through and consulting—and that will be with members opposite from both the official opposition and the other members. We look forward to your

constructive comments on issues like high workplaces and OHIP benefits. There may be some areas that we might want to refine and make this a better piece of legislation. Thank you for your comments.

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

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'm pleased that I'm able to provide a couple of minutes. I know that these two-minute questions and comments don't really give you the opportunity to get into any deep trains of thought, but I do want to acknowledge the member for Essex and the member for Kitchener–Waterloo. The debate today with the minister and my good friend the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington does give us an opportunity to put on the record a number of comments.

As a House leader, I'm concerned about omnibus bills, bills that have two different acts that are combined. I'm sure that will come as no surprise to the government House leader, that I get concerned when we mould bills together. I know there's a couple of cases—Bill 21 is sort of the same thing where the government has put a couple of bills together. Regardless of how other governments have done it, I think this government—at least they claim that they're open and transparent; we heard again the government say one thing and do another this morning in question period. It gives an opportunity for the government, regardless of what happened at the ballot box, to help educate people, and I'm a firm believer that we need to educate a little more and maybe legislate a little less.

As someone who worked in a constituency office, and now my own office which takes a tremendous amount of calls, I know one of the concerns that I have is the volume of people who don't understand their rights and don't understand what's in some of the labour legislation. In my office, we've never done anything like an unpaid internship. We do work with some of the local high schools and deal with a co-op placement, but you know what? It's very, very important that each and every one of us, no matter what bill gets tabled, do our job as legislators and make sure we advocate for people so that they understand what's in the laws, so they understand their rights in the workforce. I think if we can put more emphasis on education, we'll do a good job here in the Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Joe Cimino:** I'm really enjoying this debate as I'm listening to members from around the House. My dad immigrated to Canada in the early 1960s and was a construction worker—a cement finisher and tile setter. I hear talk of a newcomer registry and occupational health and safety; further to the whole piece on education, I think that's extremely important for us to know, and I'm going to watch how this bill plays out to ensure that the education piece is there. So when we have newcomers to our community—let's say it's Greater Sudbury—and they're working, we need to know that they are there. We need the outreach—the multicultural and folk arts association does a great job with outreach—and we need

to educate them on their rights. Hopefully, those rights include an expanded ability to access social services and health. I think that's extremely important.

In terms of occupational health and safety, whether it's interns, co-ops or new workers to our communities, they need to know that they can turn down work that's not safe. If they don't feel safe, they shouldn't be there. We see that in the mines. To that, I hope that the government shows its progressiveness and brings in anti-replacement legislation. That is extremely important and it's productive. It gets people back to work quicker, and I look forward to that.

I commend my colleagues here, the members from Essex and Kitchener–Waterloo, for their comments—very, very passionate when we talk about heights and we talk about internship rights. Those are things that are extremely important to our community. I can assure you that from our side, and I'm sure from folks across the floor and to the side of us, we'll look at this legislation as it goes through committee and we'll make further comments as necessary. Again, thank you very much for all the comments.

1630

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

**Mr. John Fraser:** I'm pleased today to stand and respond to the members from Essex and Kitchener–Waterloo, and to congratulate the minister for bringing forward Bill 18 and for his work in consulting and taking the advice of a wide group of stakeholders.

This is a combination of two bills from the last Legislature. I'm not sure, as the member from Leeds–Grenville asserts, that this is an omnibus bill. I believe that the provisions on tying minimum wage to the CPI are very straightforward and can be easily debated inside this bill, and debated at committee. As well, there's a provision there for that to be reviewed after five years.

I'm not sure that I bought the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington's argument about increasing the minimum wage by CPI every year having that dramatic an effect on our economy.

The bill also removes the \$10,000 cap on recovery, and has an increased statutory limit of two years for recovery, of wages for workers who have been treated unfairly by an employer. I think that's a very important change. It's about fairness—and I did listen very closely to the member from Essex when he spoke about fairness and protections extended to temporary foreign workers. It was very well said. All of us in this Legislature want Ontario to be known in the world as a place that's fair and that treats people equally.

I also listened very closely to his comments on closing the loophole for students in co-op placements. I think that's very important. Our children, our young people, need to learn how to work in a safe environment and what their rights and responsibilities are in that regard.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** One of the New Democrats has the opportunity to reply.

The member for Essex.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Thanks to my colleagues the members from Beaches–East York, Leeds–Grenville, Kitchener–Waterloo, Sudbury, and Ottawa South. There are lots of really important provisions within this bill. We all look forward to seeing them move along through the process.

The member from Beaches–East York was wondering what it was like prior to the context of a majority government. Well, we had the ability to compel testimony. We had the ability to compel documents. We had the ability to prolong debate. There is no longer that ability; you have all the power now. It's a new reality. But you also have an enormous responsibility, and guess what? If you don't get it done, it is all on your shoulders.

There are people who are waiting for these provisions: health and safety provisions, augmented wage protection, protection for temporary foreign workers and through temp agencies. It's on you. You'll prove your merit now. You'll prove your worth in this place. If you don't get it done, we get another chance, and we certainly won't waste it.

Speaker, I mentioned the disparity between the lowest wage earners and the richest in North America. It's a very, very important issue that has yet to be tackled, I believe, in any substantial way in the province of Ontario. Even Janet Yellen, the head of the Federal Reserve in the States, said that it is the most detrimental problem facing the US economy.

The baby steps that are made in terms of this bill are just that: one step. There are so many more that we've put on the table. We hope that you'll find it in your vision, and also in your mandate, to address those in a substantive way, because our economy and the people of the province beg you to do so.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** It's a delight to be able to speak to this bill for a good 20 minutes. It's a very important bill, and we've heard some very good thoughts from members opposite.

I know that in my riding of Newmarket–Aurora there are a number of people and a number of businesses that, specifically if we think about the minimum wage, are very concerned that it hasn't been at a significant rate. So I'm delighted to see that the government will be addressing that, has addressed that and will be tying that to inflation.

I know there were some interesting comments made about the minimum wage really only applying to people who were entering the workforce, but my experience from many years ago is not that. My experience as a high school student working in a lumber yard or working in a gas station was that there were a large number of adults who were trying to support themselves and support their families. They were only making minimum wage. I don't think that has changed. In fact, I think there are more people in that situation today. So it certainly just isn't people who are entering the workforce that we need to deal with.

Our government, through this bill, is committed to standing up for Ontario's workers. That means strengthening workplace protection and increasing fairness for both employees and business. It's truly a pleasure, as I said earlier, to support this proposed legislation, the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act. It really builds on, I think, this government's strong track record of raising living standards for workers.

It's important to remember that when we came to office, the minimum wage had been frozen for eight years straight.

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** How long?

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** Eight years straight.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** It's like Siberia.

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** Worse than Siberia. That was not fair to workers who saw their cost of living increase while their wages stayed frozen.

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** Whose government did this?

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** We know whose government did that, yes: the government previous.

That's why our government has increased the minimum wage from \$6.85 per hour to the \$11 per hour it is today. As my colleagues mentioned, our proposed legislation, if passed, would establish a fair and predictable means of increasing the minimum wage to keep pace with inflation. It would take important steps to ensure that every Ontarian gets the paycheque they have earned at the end of the day. It would help safeguard temporary foreign workers who have come to our province and deserve workplace fairness, and it would better protect the interns and other unpaid learners from dangerous work situations. Importantly, it would increase competitiveness for businesses that obey our laws and play by the rules.

I just want to take one second to talk about my own work experience. When I was in school I went on a co-op placement. It was one of the best experiences I ever had, because it taught me, hands on, how to do my job. I was paid a small honorarium. I was also paid for mileage. I had to drive around as a cub newspaper reporter. It led to a full-time job. I've seen that repeated with my children, and friends of my children, who have been in co-op programs and have reaped the benefits of hands-on learning. So I'm delighted to see legislation that will strengthen the protection for those co-op workers, those co-op students.

If passed, this legislation would establish a fair, predictable and transparent approach to setting minimum wage in the future. This legislation would require all future adjustments to the minimum wage to be annual and tied to increases in Ontario's consumer price index. Personally, I think that's the least we can do. This would ensure that Ontario's minimum wage keeps pace with the cost of living in a way that allows our businesses to plan for the future and continue to create jobs. We heard some good news about that earlier today.

Mr. Speaker, people in this province work hard, and at the end of their shift or rounds they deserve to be paid for that work. If they're operating a business they deserve to

know their competitor isn't undercutting them by not paying their workers. Unfortunately right now, there are both time and monetary limits on claiming unpaid wages. So we're making it easier for workers to get the money owed them by proposing to remove the \$10,000 cap under the Employment Standards Act on the recovery of unpaid wages through a Ministry of Labour order to pay. That means employees would no longer be forced to pursue larger claims to the courts, saving both workers and businesses time and money.

**1640**

If passed, Ontario will also increase the time limit for recovery of wages under the Employment Standards Act to two years, so that older claims are dealt with fairly and workers get the money they're owed.

The number of temporary foreign workers in Ontario has risen from 91,000 in 2008 to 130,000 in 2013. Now is the time to act. Speaker, no one should ever have to surrender their passport to be promised a job that doesn't exist or be charged inappropriate recruitment fees. That's why the proposed changes would amend the Employment Protection for Foreign Nationals Act our government passed in 2009, to apply to all temporary foreign workers in Ontario who are here through an immigration program like the federal Temporary Foreign Worker Program. That would mean temporary foreign workers would have protection against being charged recruitment fees and having personal documents such as passports withheld by employers.

Speaker, many of us in this House often hear from workers who are unable to find a permanent job but, rather, are working through a temporary help agency. Our government was the first in Canada to introduce legislation specifically addressing temporary help agencies in 2009. That legislation made sure employees were not unfairly prevented from being hired directly by employers. It prohibited agencies from charging fees to workers for such things as resumé writing and interview preparation, and it required agencies to provide employees with information about their rights under the Employment Standards Act. I'm glad that these new protections, if passed, will better protect workers recruited through the temporary help agencies by establishing joint and several liability between agencies and their clients for failure to pay wages. This will help level the playing field for good employers. Clients of agencies would be liable for regular wages and overtime pay if the agencies don't pay up, encouraging those companies to use agencies that treat their employees fairly.

Speaker, we also know safe workplaces come down to people looking after one another. I said earlier, as a father of three children who have been through co-op placements, I'm very concerned that my children are safe and all young people are safe as they enter these programs. The Ministry of Labour has been undergoing its largest transformation in the last 30 years, creating a culture that puts health and safety at the centre of every workplace. Our job is to make sure workers go home to their families at the end of the day. That's what people

expect when they go to work or they go to a co-op placement, and that's what they deserve.

Speaker, Ontario has very clear rules that if you are performing work for someone, you are entitled to rights and protections under the Employment Standards Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Act. That means you must be paid at least minimum wage, no matter what your job title is or what you agreed to when you started working there. Currently, the Occupational Health and Safety Act clearly covers paid workers. This bill, if passed, would ensure that coverage for unpaid co-op students and other unpaid trainees and learners performing work for course credit as part of a secondary or post-secondary school program—it would ensure that such unpaid students would have the same rights and protections as other workers.

Speaker, the proposed Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act is about taking action to protect workers, especially the most vulnerable, and levelling the playing field for businesses that play by the rules. We want to ensure that employees are paid for the work they do and that temporary help agency employees are provided the fairness they deserve. We want to ensure that foreign workers have the protection they deserve. We can and must work together to protect the most vulnerable in our province. This proposed legislation is about standing up for some of the most vulnerable workers in our province and providing them with the safeguards they need and deserve.

As I said earlier, this proposed legislation will establish a fair and predictable means of increasing the minimum wage to keep pace with inflation; take important steps to ensure that every Ontarian gets the paycheque they've earned at the end of the day; and help safeguard temporary foreign workers who have come to our province and deserve workplace fairness.

Again, it would better protect the interns and other unpaid learners from dangerous work situations; and, importantly, it would increase competitiveness for businesses that obey our laws and play by the rules.

We're all aware of growth in precarious and temporary work that has taken place not only in our province but across Ontario, and that includes employment where workers are in temporary jobs. It's also a key factor in poverty and near-poverty. As my colleague alluded to earlier today, a recent report from the United Way and McMaster University, *It's More than Poverty*, brought attention to the problem of this precarious work. The government has also taken note of a report on vulnerable workers and precarious work from the Law Commission of Ontario.

That's why I'm happy to be here today to talk about our bill that would help enforce our laws and protect the vulnerable, especially vulnerable workers who are owed money by their employers.

Our bill also reflects that we have heard from Ontarians about the need they have, due to the changing nature of work in our province, which is also occurring throughout Canada.

I've touched on a few of the basic provisions of the bill. I appreciate highly that, if passed, it will amend the Employment Standards Act to remove that \$10,000 cap on recovery of wages and increase the limit of recovery from six months to two years. It would provide that additional protection for temporary help agency workers, as well as requiring employers to provide workers with a free copy of information about their employment standards rights.

I heard a member opposite talk about how important it is. I think all of us here agree on how important it is for us to know—for all of our employees to understand what their employment standards rights are, especially when it comes to health and safety.

They will do this when this bill passes and, if requested, translate it into their language, if it's available from the ministry. It will enable the Ministry of Labour to require that employers complete a self-audit of their records and practices, to determine compliance with the ESA.

I think it's a very important provision of this bill that would provide fairness and justice to temporary foreign workers and that would amend the Employment Protection for Foreign Nationals Act—that's the 2009 bill I mentioned earlier—and extend the protections that currently apply to live-in caregivers to all foreign employees who come to Ontario under an immigration or foreign temporary employment program.

For those employed by temporary help agencies—we know that employment in this sector has increased in recent years—the proposed legislation builds, as I mentioned, on that 2009 legislation by ensuring temporary agency assignment employees aren't charged fees for things like resumé writing or taking a job with an agency client, and they are not prevented from becoming permanently employed.

If passed, Bill 18 will amend the Employment Standards Act to make temporary help agencies and their clients jointly and severally liable for certain unpaid wages owed to the agency's employees.

As I mentioned before, as someone who was at co-op and has children who have been through co-op programs, the bill will also amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act to extend to unpaid co-op students and other unpaid learners the same health and safety rights as paid workers have. Even if you're a co-op student in a university, college or other program where you're receiving educational credits, you deserve the same health and safety protections as every other worker, and that's exactly what the government is intending to ensure with the proposed amendment. Under our bill, unpaid students, learners and trainees would be defined as workers under the OHSA and would have the same rights and duties as the paid workers they work alongside.

**1650**

Let me point to an example: They'd have the right to know about workplace hazards, the right to participate in joint health and safety committees and have safety representatives, and the right to refuse unsafe work.

Unpaid learners such as co-op students would also have the same duties as paid workers. Again, as an example, they would have to work in compliance with the OHSA and regulations, operate equipment safely and report any hazards or contraventions to the employer or supervisor. These explicit obligations would enhance their accountability to the employer and other workers. As participants in co-operative education programs, co-op students, like other workers, receive basic health and safety instruction, including information on the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System before entering a workplace.

I can only say, as a summer student who worked in hazardous situations, that I welcome this. I sometimes look back and wonder how I made it through those high school years working in environments that were clearly not safe. I think it was because I managed to find mentors who stuck by me and guided me through the dangerous situations.

We must build and strengthen our province's economy and businesses, but we must also protect Ontario's most vulnerable employees. I want to take just a second to describe some of the work the Ministry of Labour is currently undertaking to protect those vulnerable workers, including the temporary foreign workers.

This past September, as my colleague alluded to earlier, the ministry began a three-month employment standards blitz focusing on vulnerable employees. The ministry employment standards officers are conducting inspections to determine compliance with the Employment Standards Act, focusing on sectors known to hire a high proportion of vulnerable or temporary foreign workers, including restaurants, building services and personal care services—for example, hair, esthetics and massage services.

Our inspectors are also focusing on business support services such as collection agencies, call centres and horticultural businesses like nurseries and greenhouses. Employment standards officers will check for compliance with core employment standards under the Employment Standards Act, with particular focus on public holidays, vacation pay, minimum wage, record keeping and payment of wages.

Our government is taking major steps to fulfill its commitment to protect vulnerable employees by enhancing enforcement of the Employment Standards Act. As part of the 2013 budget, the government invested ongoing funding of \$3 million for additional employment standards officers and staff.

Our government is committed to building a more prosperous Ontario while creating the jobs of today and tomorrow and providing more opportunities for all. It's important to remember that when we came to office, the minimum wage had been frozen for eight years straight. That was not fair to workers, who saw their cost of living increase while their wages stayed frozen. That's why our government has increased the minimum wage by 50% since 2003. We increased it during good times and during the depths of the recession because it was the right thing



to do. Ontario went from having one of the lowest minimum wages in Canada to one of the highest because that's what hard-working families deserve.

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

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's a pleasure to make comment on my colleague from Newmarket–Aurora and the words he shared with us. As I've said each time I've stood here today, the key, absolutely, for any legislation that I look at is health and safety, so we support that wholeheartedly. Anything that is going to improve health and safety—how could we not vote for that and try to find those improvements?

I'm supportive, of course, of making employees and employers as knowledgeable as possible. I think my colleague from Leeds–Grenville said that he certainly experienced a lot of people calling his office who don't really understand their rights and obligations. So anything, again, that can help that, to make all of us safer, certainly is a good thing.

He talked a lot, the member from Newmarket–Aurora, about co-op programs, and he was very supportive of the value of those and the benefits of having co-op programs. Certainly in reading this legislation originally, I have a concern, and I'll extend it to interns as well: What happens if we actually, as a result of this legislation, because companies or businesses, or in my case—I used to be a municipal recreation director and employed a lot of people—engaged a lot of people, I should say—in co-ops. We didn't have the budget; we didn't have the ability to pay those students. Without the budget, you just wouldn't offer those. So now those young students' career opportunities are going to be missed. I have very much concern.

Similarly, interns—I had an intern here, Domna Theodorou, a fabulous young lady. In fact, she came to me and asked for the opportunity to have some experience. She didn't want payment. In fact, we didn't even talk about payment. She just really was extremely wanting to be able to have that opportunity to work here. And it was great. She stayed with me longer than her actual placement of her own volition. I think that's wonderful.

The concern I have, really, with this bill is that there are a lot of things when they've combined them into an omnibus. They're taking two pieces of legislation and combining them into one. I'm fearful. What things might just get swept through without proper debate? Have the stakeholders been widely enough consulted to ensure that everyone who is looking at this legislation truly knows—in a lot of legislation, there are unintended consequences. Have they looked at it from a rural perspective? Again, in a case like my area, are we going to lose out on co-op and internships that may provide the only opportunity for those people to get some valuable training?

Mr. Speaker, I'm very supportive of this and look forward to it going to committee so we can scrutinize every piece before it gets put into legislation.

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

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** It is indeed a pleasure to stand and make comments on the member's comments from Newmarket–Aurora. I firmly believe his heart is in the right place on this issue. The one thing that stood out for me was when he talked about tying the increase to the minimum wage to the cost of living. He said, "It's the least we can do." I agree; it is the least you can do, because I think you could do more. I think you could do a lot more. If that means making the minimum wage \$12 and then tying it to the cost of living, that would be doing more.

In my way of thinking, Speaker, I'd like to come to work every day in this chamber with the other 106 members of the Legislature and say to myself, "What's the best we can do today? What's the best we can do for the people of Ontario today?" Not "What's the least we can do for the people of Ontario today?"

He also talked about doing this in a fair and predictable manner, which is good. That's why we as New Democrats had proposed a \$12 minimum wage with annual increases but balanced by a tax reduction in the rate for small business owners, which would make it more affordable to pay the higher rate.

I know, as I was a former municipal councillor, and the member from Newmarket–Aurora was too, if somebody came to him, a constituent came and said, "My basement is flooding;" or "I've got potholes on my street," in that career, he would have said, "What's the best we can do?" Not "What's the least we can do to resolve those problems?" So I know his heart is in the right place. I know he wants to do more. I would hope that within his caucus, he would champion the cause for doing more for the people of Ontario, because I think we can do that and I think that's the right thing to do, the best we can do.

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

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very delighted to rise today to speak in support of the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act. I want to commend the member for Newmarket–Aurora for his very supportive words. I also want to commend the Minister of Labour for working with a long list of stakeholders who crafted this legislation together. It's going to stand up for workers in Ontario. You have heard us talk about how this bill is not only going to increase wages, and that is for people in our society who need the help the most, but it's also going to protect vulnerable workers who face dangerous situations.

I've been sitting here listening to some discussion about immigrant workers, and I'm reflecting on the experiences of my own family. My parents came to this country in the late 1950s. They were in their early twenties. They took whatever work they could. My mother was 23 and went to work in a dry cleaner's in north-end Toronto and spent 18 years pressing shirts. She used to tell stories about how, before air conditioning, it could get up to 120 Fahrenheit in the dry cleaner's in July and August. My father worked his entire life in construction.

1700

I remember that they would come home and often talk about the poor working conditions and the poor pay, so we're very familiar with this in our family. They are now in their 80s, and I am certain that they would champion this very important piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, we want to get on with the job of investing in working people in Ontario. We want to improve on our dynamic business environment and do this in the great province of Ontario. Again, I support this legislation and think it is going to go a long way toward helping people in this province who are the most vulnerable, who are looking for better wages and who are looking for a much safer working environment.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments? The member for Sarnia–Lambton.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is a pleasure to rise in the House today and comment on Bill 18, the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act. As a number of speakers have said, this legislation, if passed and probably improved at committee—if we get it to committee and can take a look at some suggestions from the industry and from the workers themselves, and of course from the different members and their experiences, I'm sure it will be better legislation at the end of the day.

I certainly applaud a number of recommendations in there. The one about removing the \$10,000 cap on retrieval of wages is certainly something that is probably long overdue. The trouble with the bill, if there is any, is that when you combine a number of different acts and have an omnibus piece of legislation, there can be issues that you find out later. I'm sure that when we get to committee we'll be able to iron all those out.

It's been interesting listening to the different stories from different people from different backgrounds about their experiences with interns and students and that. I'm certainly in favour of stronger workplace rules for young people—young men and women—who come into the workplace. We've seen too many tragedies in the past.

I come out of heavy industry, and safety was always foremost there. But I know that there are a number of industries that still don't have that luxury, that don't have that type of training. I applaud and would like to support anything that will improve the conditions for those young men and women, and actually the adults who still work there, so I'll speak in favour of the legislation today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our opportunity for questions and comments. We now return to the member for Newmarket–Aurora for his two-minute response.

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** Who scrambles quickly for notes.

I think the comments from members across the House are well thought out. I may not agree with all of them, but I certainly think that everyone's heart is in the right place.

We understand that we need to protect workers, especially our most vulnerable workers. We need to make sure that business is protected, as well, and that it knows

what it can plan for. So I'm quite happy to see this legislation move forward. I'm quite happy to see that vulnerable workers and inexperienced workers, as I've mentioned before, especially those who have experienced working in dangerous places with chemicals or heavy equipment, will be better protected. We know that when our youth and our vulnerable employees are not protected, it leads to tragedy, and that's just absolutely not right.

I look forward to this legislation moving forward and being passed. I look forward to the minimum wage being indexed, so that employees will be treated fairly and so that our marketplace will be fair for all.

We rely on so many temporary foreign workers. I can think of the riding just to the north of me, which includes the Holland Marsh, with a lot of industrious people helping us to harvest vegetables from that fantastic salad bowl of Ontario, as we call it. We need to make sure they are taken care of, as well. I think this is a great bill. I look forward to moving it through.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Bill 18, the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act, 2014. I will give the government credit for being very creative with the titles of their bills.

I understand that this bill is actually a combination of two bills from the last Legislature—Bill 146 and Bill 165—and you have heard some concerns that they perhaps shouldn't be combined.

Some of the things that it sets out to do are to provide more protection under the Employment Standards Act, to remove the \$10,000 cap, and to increase to two years the time limit on the recovery of wages through a Ministry of Labour order to pay. It introduces joint and several liability between temporary help agencies and their clients from paid regular wages and overtime pay. It requires employers to provide all employees with a copy of the Ministry of Labour employment standards information in a language that they can understand. It gives the Ministry of Labour employment standards officers the authority to require employers to conduct a self-audit to determine compliance with the Employment Standards Act. And of course, the previous Bill 165—it changes the minimum wage to tie it to the Ontario consumer price index future increases.

I would like the opportunity to speak to some of these parts of the bill. I'll start off with the comments the minister made. He said that employees who do the work deserve to be paid, and I completely agree with that. He mentioned that it would make the Employment Standards Act apply to interns.

That made me think of my daughter, Renee, who went to school for marketing at Guelph. She took a four-year marketing program. One summer, she got a job as an intern down on Bay Street at a marketing company. They didn't pay her much money. To make ends meet, she took a second job a few hundred metres away at a

cooking store. As it turned out, she discovered that she liked cooking a lot better than marketing. That led her to change careers and go back to George Brown College and do a chef's course. I'm happy to say that she's happily employed and very passionate about cooking now. Unfortunately, she's not in this country. That's the only problem. She's over in London, England, working at a fancy restaurant called Le Gavroche, and very, very much has found her passion.

In terms of the minimum wage, I think we all want to see people earning as much money as possible. It was pointed out by the critic that Ontario seems to have a much higher percentage of people earning minimum wage than other provinces. I pose the question, what do we need to get people earning more money? I'm not sure that minimum wage is the only tool. I think it has a lot more to do with skills development and giving particularly our young people, but all residents, the ability to improve their skills so they can get the jobs that are out there.

In the last couple of weeks, I met with a business owner in the Parry Sound area: Bill Connor, who owns Connor Industries in Parry Sound. They produce Stanley boats that are shipped around the world. You see lots of them around Georgian Bay and Parry Sound. They're quality boats that are used by the OPP and the coast guard and are shipped literally around the world. One of the main reasons he wanted to meet with me was the fact that he's not able to fill all his orders because he can't get enough skilled workers. In the case of building aluminum boats, that tends to be a lot of welders and other people who work in metal. It was actually affecting his business. That's one of his biggest challenges: He's forever training welders, and then either losing them or needing more welders. It actually affects his ability to—he'd be able to do more business and employ more people, if he could find more skilled people. These are good jobs that pay very well—much above minimum wage. I think we need to find ways to get people the skills so they can take advantage of these good jobs.

**1710**

One of the points that he brought up in the meeting: The Near North District School Board has made their capital priority for this year—and I'm pleased to see the Minister of Education here today—the JK-to-grade-12 school proposed for Parry Sound in the recent proposal.

Bill Connor from Connor Industries said, "Can there please be a shop class at that school to get more young people interested and get them some skills so that they can become future employees at Connor Industries and stay in the Parry Sound area?" I said, "I think you're asking at the right time, seeing as the school hasn't been built or designed or approved." So I would certainly make that suggestion. I think it is an opportunity to get more people those skills so they can get the good jobs.

On the other side of the riding, I attended a session at the Almaguin high school, and they had businesses there. Again, there were a number of businesses that want to hire people but they're having difficulty getting people

with the skills. I recall that Kent Trusses was there. They needed people that knew how to run the computerized equipment used in truss manufacturing, and they're having difficulty finding the skilled people necessary to do that.

That makes me think of the report that was done in February of 2010 by Dr. Rick Miner, the former president of Seneca College. The title of that report was *People Without Jobs, Jobs Without People*. It points out that in the next few years, if we don't—I look at it as an opportunity, but the report pointed out that by 2031, there would be one million unskilled people in Ontario without jobs, and at the same time, one million skilled positions going unfilled. So I look at that as a tremendous opportunity, a way that, if we can get those people the skills, they're going to earn way above minimum wage and have good jobs and the ability to provide a good living for themselves and their families.

I think that increasing minimum wage is not the only answer. Having said that, I think business likes to be able to plan. Tying the increases to the CPI does give business the opportunity to plan towards increased costs.

I think business also wants to be treated fairly. I recently met with a company that makes firewood. The complaint of that small company was that their competitors are not charging tax on their firewood. He's a bigger firewood company, and he's playing by the rules, and charges the HST as he should be doing, but he says he loses all kinds of business because he'll have someone inquiring and, "It's this price plus HST," and they want to do it for cash. He says, "No, I've got to collect the tax." There are a lot of his competitors that aren't. So I would say that the government has a job making sure it's a level playing field for all the businesses so that it's fair for them all. Of course the benefit should be that the government, which is in great need of revenue, would end up with some more revenue to help address that big \$12-billion deficit.

I guess I'd say about this legislation that I do have some concerns that it continues with the trend that government has had for many years, and that is being very, very prescriptive versus trying to set goals and trying to educate.

As an example, it prescribes that employers must have a poster with the most recent rules, I believe, given to each employee. Sure; I don't argue with that, but it seems awfully detail-oriented. You wouldn't think you'd need to have quite that detail. When you talk to businesses or organizations like independent business, small business, they'll point out that the cost of regulation is some \$11 billion a year, and particularly for small businesses, which are the big job creators, I think that's very true. If you're a small businessperson, you cannot possibly know all the rules you're governed by, all the laws you're governed by. It's just impossible. If you have three people working in your company, you'd have to spend all your time trying to learn the rules and you have no time to run your business.

From my own experience of being in business back a few years ago now, in the resort business for 25, 30

years, I've seen a change, and not in a good way. I think most businesses are not out to break the rules; they want to be within the rules, but they also want to be successful in their business, make money and employ people. If they're spending all their time trying to learn about the rules and comply with government regulations, they don't have time and/or it's very expensive, so it makes them uncompetitive.

I think back to the way it formerly was when government was willing to take some risk and accept some liability on themselves. I think back to even something like applying for a septic licence to build a new septic system back about 1998 in my former resort business. At that point, I didn't know a lot about septic systems, but I walked into the Ministry of the Environment, they gave me a form and the person there actually helped me fill out the form. Then they actually came on the site of the resort and walked the property with me. I assumed I was going to have to build some huge septic system. They pointed to an area and said, "Well, what about this area?" which was a much smaller area. "You could put a Whitby bed." I said, "What is a Whitby bed?" They actually explained it to me and, in that case, myself and an employee ended up building the septic system ourselves. It's still in operation and it's still functioning. Government was helpful, willing to take some risks and actually providing assistance to you.

To the end of my time in the resort business, when we were going to apply to build a new septic system, you had to hire a consultant just to fill out the form. There's no way you could possibly do it. It just has become so much more complicated and the government is not willing to offer any advice, I assume because then they would be considered to be liable for that advice.

I think back to the first time we saw a fire inspector at my past business, which was, I think, about 1976 or 1977. Before that, they just didn't exist in the province, or didn't exist in Muskoka anyway. The fire inspector showed up. I worked with him for about 20 years. His name was Glen Medland, and unfortunately he's passed on now at far too young an age, but he was very helpful for me as the operator of this business. He would actually call me and say, "By the way, did you know the rules have changed? You're going to have to put five eighths fire code gypsum up in the hallways of your lodge. You're going to need fire doors." He knew the business was relatively seasonal at that point, so he said, "I'll come around and inspect in September. That way, you'll have all winter to actually make the changes." But he helped to educate me on what I needed to be doing. If they came around, inspected and they'd find violations, then you'd comply with them and have them done for the next season. That changed over the 20 years I worked with him in that at the end of his time, he had absolutely no leeway. He couldn't offer suggestions. He couldn't offer help to the businessperson who's trying to comply by the rules. He could just come in and write violations.

I think that's been the tendency of government. They're hiring lots of inspectors to find businesses in

violation and give them the ticket, whereas most businesses are trying to comply with the rules. They could use some help in complying with the rules, but that's not the way we've been going in my experience in recent years. So I think you could change and be much more goal oriented with the rules that we have and provide a lot more assistance to businesses that want to comply. I think it would be far more productive and cost far less for everyone in society if we did that.

As I say, that's not been the trend, and I think it's disappointing. But I think education is certainly far more important than just writing the rules for how we're going to fine you next in terms of the individual business. So it is something that I would like to see changed over time.

#### 1720

How else can we create more jobs in this province? Well, we need an electricity policy that makes affordable electricity part of the goal. I mean, we just need to look at a place like Timmins: I think it was Xstrata Nickel that lost 700 good-paying jobs just a couple of years ago that moved across the border to Quebec. They're still doing the work, but unfortunately it's not being done in Ontario anymore because of our high energy costs. So that's another part of the puzzle: If we want to keep good jobs here, we need to have affordable electricity prices.

I'm concerned about Kimberly-Clark in Huntsville: a couple of hundred people employed—good jobs—making Kleenex tissue products. You know, they've come to me, and I've met with the Minister of Energy. They're concerned with the reliability of electricity and the cost, and the fact that of all their mills doing similar work in North America, they have the highest electricity price of any of the mills. That affects their ability to compete, even within the company, for capital that's available to expand and create more jobs that are not minimum wage jobs, but jobs that pay far above that. I think those are the sorts of things that we need to do in order to create more good-paying jobs that will provide more opportunity here in the province of Ontario.

I did note that our critic, the member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, was okay with some of the aspects of this bill. We haven't had it at caucus yet, so I'm sure we'll want to do that. I think it will be important that it goes to committee, because we've heard people talk about unintended consequences, I don't pretend to know all the nuances of the bill. I think it will be important to hear from people who are involved in some of the businesses that will be affected and from employees as well—both employers and employees—that they can come before committee and maybe point out things that we as legislators might not be aware of.

It is interesting that Ontario currently does seem to have a far higher percentage of people earning minimum wage. I think that's something we need to change and work toward changing. I don't know whether this bill is actually the bill to make that happen, but there are some aspects of it that we will look forward to supporting. I think that's about all the comments I have for today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnett):** Questions and comments? The member for Kitchener-Waterloo.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to comment on the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka's response to G18. It's always interesting to get a sense of where people speak from, really. Usually we can find some commonalities, and in this case, we can.

I certainly agree with the member's comments with regard to the minimum wage versus good jobs debate. We of course support an increased minimum wage. I think ours was \$12, tied to inflation. But I do agree with the member on the skilled trades piece. He references the new K-to-12 school for that riding and the importance of having tech and industrial programming, because very soon there is going to be a skilled trades gap, which is key to our economy, to our transportation file and to our infrastructure file. It's key to our economy. We share his concerns with future generations having the skills—acquiring skills through the education system—in order to move forward and get good jobs.

Where I don't agree with him and his comments—specifically his comments around this piece of legislation—is providing some of the latitude for employers around workplace conditions and standards. I think that the key thing he referenced is that education is pretty much good enough. But in areas around safety, we wouldn't have such a high injury rate in the province of Ontario if education was good enough. As I referenced earlier, our falls from heights continue to be a growing concern.

So there are some instances where oversight and compliance are needed, and it needs to be prescriptive. It shouldn't be optional. Safety should never be optional. The employer should never have the right to overrule in that regard. But on the skilled trades, he's right. We need a plan for this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments? The member for Northumberland–Quinte West.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** It's my pleasure to rise for two minutes to make some comments about Bill 18.

To the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka: My son lives in this great part of the province, and I always enjoy visiting those communities, like Bala and so forth.

My sense, not from the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka but from other members from all sides of the House, is that there seems to be substantial support for this piece of legislation, and I think it's long overdue.

I, too, come from an immigrant family. I'm an immigrant. I remember my mother working in a factory. It was a machine shop where they made little widgets of different kinds. My father, like many other Italian immigrants of the day, worked in construction.

When I was 13 years old, I had the pleasure of working every Friday, Saturday and Sunday at the local butcher's shop at St. Clair and Dufferin, for the whopping amount of \$3 a week for those three days after school.

When you talk about the health and safety of a workplace, I think—not that I knew what that was back

then, but certainly some of the conditions that we worked in, that my mother worked in and my father worked in, weren't probably what we're trying to do here.

I think we've come a long way, and this is certainly long overdue. I hope that, with whatever tweaking we have to do, we get this passed. Let's move on for the health and safety of the workers, who really provide what Ontario is today, which we truly enjoy.

I encourage this to move on swiftly and quickly.

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

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** It's always a valuable expenditure of time to listen to the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka. He knows the hospitality industry, and he had to make a payroll for a number of years in a tourism-dependent business. You depended on the vagaries of the weather and consumers' tastes and where they wanted to go for their holidays.

It's interesting that he made mention of his daughter being in the food business. My daughter has been in the food business for a number of years, in the kitchen trade. It's something that many people do now, after they get a university degree. You go where the work is, and you go where the money is.

Obviously, this kind of legislation is of great importance for people working in those kinds of industries, but also for the people who are creating the jobs in these kinds of industries.

I want to refer to section 23.1(10). It's interesting, if people haven't noticed this, that every five years, we take a look at wage rates, in addition to the annual CPI:

“Before October 1, 2020, and every five years thereafter, the minister shall cause a review of the minimum wage and the process for adjusting the minimum wage to be commenced.”

We know there has been a call for a \$12 minimum wage, a \$14 minimum wage. I assume this opens up that five-year window for those kinds of decisions to be made in conjunction with the annual CPI adjustment, which I think is a good idea. It provides certainty for business and for the people we've been talking about during this debate who are working at a minimum wage.

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

**Mr. Joe Cimino:** It's good to speak on this topic again. There were very interesting comments from the member to my right in terms of trades. I believe we need a strong minimum wage policy—a strong, high minimum wage. If we take a look, for example, at the youth who are in school, who may still live at home, a strong minimum wage would also allow them to have more spending power, and they're the ones who are going to buy their first car and rent an apartment, etc.

There were very interesting comments about trades. We do need to go back, because the trades do provide good wages. A unionized trade or non-unionized trade, I think, is very important to the economy of this province and the buying power of those who pick up a trade. As an educator for 20 years, I spent a lot of time really preach-

ing that, just as my dad did—and many of my friends and relatives—and many new people are going into the trades. University, college and maybe the workplace are options, but trades and apprenticeship programs are extremely important.

**1730**

We take a look at Algonquin Road Public School in Nickel Belt, just on the other side of the Sudbury riding. Darren Foy is a grade 7 and 8 teacher with the Rainbow board who has brought back—and now the other boards are coming on board—shop programs, if you will, to grade 7 and 8 students. This is spurring those, then, to go on to the new programs that are happening at the high schools and getting into apprentice programs when they are 16 and 17, and then moving on to a really rewarding career. So those trades jobs are important.

Members of this House, I think we can never lose sight of the fact that the trades are vital to the economy of this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That's it for questions and comments. I return to the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka to reply.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I want to thank the member from Kitchener–Waterloo and the members from Northumberland–Quinte West, Haldimand–Norfolk, and Sudbury for their comments. I certainly agree with the member from Kitchener–Waterloo that safety should not be optional.

The member from Haldimand–Norfolk commented on his daughter also being in the food industry. Certainly I was more surprised than probably anyone when my daughter, Renee, got into the cooking business. Having grown up around a commercial kitchen I would have thought she would never want to be around one ever, but it's certainly her passion.

The member from Sudbury talking about our youth: I think part of the problem is we have pretty much the highest unemployment category with youth, roughly around 20%. That is a big challenge. I think sometimes if you have too high a minimum wage you'll have fewer jobs. I know I've spoken to owners of businesses who say, "We have this budgeted for wages, and when it's used up, it's used up." Or "I don't make any money, so it just means I hire people for less hours." That certainly is a concern.

I agree with Dr. Miner in his report, *People Without Jobs, Jobs Without People*, where he says we need a change in attitude towards post-secondary. We need more people in college; we need more people in trades; we need more people apprenticing. I think that should be a priority of the government.

I'm not so sure that their College of Trades helps. I think it actually does the reverse, but I think it should be the priority to take advantage of that opportunity and get our young people, in particular, the skills they need so they can get good jobs in the province of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's always an honour to be able to stand in this House and talk about important issues and these are definitely important ones.

Before I start my comments on Bill 18, Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act, I'd like to say this is Agriculture Week, and we're going to do a more formal announcement on it tomorrow. In my former life, when I made my living with my hands—I still talk with my hands, but I used to make my living with my hands; I was a farmer for 30 years. I'd like to recognize all my colleagues out in the fields who actually support the agricultural industry and those 700,000 jobs. I don't know about the rest of the province, but this year in Timiskaming–Cochrane it's been our wettest year since 1966; there are crops rotting in the fields. If there's one thing that defines a farmer, it's when he sees his work drowning in front of him and deep down he's wondering, "How can I stop it? I hope it's better next year." That's what defines a farmer. That's why we will always have food security in this country because farmers are like that. They're always looking ahead. They will go over any barrier to grow their crop for next year.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I could talk about tile drainage, Minister of Northern Development and Mines. There's a program in northern Ontario right now for tile drainage, and tile drainage makes a huge difference.

The reason I wanted to start with agriculture is because this bill has a lot to do with agriculture, if you think about it, both from the minimum wage side and from the workplace safety side.

Often I talk to my colleagues, and sometimes, when they listen—some farmers, some of my colleagues actually listen to the House, and other employers also—sometimes employers feel a bit beaten down, because when they hear legislators talk about the bills, it's always that they're doing everything wrong. I'd just like to make it clear: One thing that I think we've agreed on, on all sides, is that the vast majority of employers are good employers. They want to do things right. The reason we're having to talk about legislation to fix things is the minority who, for whatever reason, don't do things right.

But the vast majority of employers—the vast majority of farmers, contractors and people like that—want good employees. They want to pay their employees well. That's how they keep them. I know that when I had my farm, the best thing I could do was to have a long-time employee, and the way you keep a long-time employee is a happy employee, a healthy employee with a healthy family; and that's what this bill is about.

As far as the minimum wage, this is two pieces of legislation put together, and they do fit and they don't fit. Our party strongly believes that we should have a higher minimum wage. We campaigned on that. We have always pushed for that. We always will push for that. We fundamentally don't believe—and there is lots of documentation to prove it—that making the minimum wage higher destroys jobs or makes for less work.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It doesn't.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It doesn't. But there are caveats to that, and we recognize that, because in sectors—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Vanthof:** The vegetable and fruit sector is one; they're competing against imported product, which is produced at lower wages.

Something else—this isn't exactly related to the bill, but it is in a way: Buying Ontario food is fantastic. It's fresh, it's local, but it's also grown under much more stringent conditions. The red tape that some people complain about in a way makes things a lot safer, a lot better. I could go on for a long time about the things they can grow in Mexico, the things they can use there and which we can't use here. People should have a better understanding of that. But the growers here have to compete with the stuff coming in from Mexico. So if the minimum wage goes up, they can't just tack that onto their price, because they won't sell their product.

Now, we recognized that in our platform. We wanted to put in some kind of mechanism to compensate businesses that could not accommodate that in their business structure. We still think that's something that should be brought forward. It's very important.

On the minimum wage issue, one thing: I had the opportunity of being here the whole afternoon. Maybe because it's the start of a new session—

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** First day.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** —it's the first day and it's Monday, and we're all bright and chipper, it was a great debate, actually, this afternoon. We had a great speaker—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Vanthof:** —and great staff. No, but it was, and there were a lot of good points this afternoon—even one from the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington. I disagree with almost everything he stands for, but he's very articulate, and he makes very good points.

One of the points that he made—and I believe another member made it as well—is that this is going to be reviewed in five years, but by the minister, not by the Legislature. We have a fundamental problem with that, not just in this piece of legislation, but in a lot of pieces of legislation. We've just gone through an election where we spent a lot of time talking about transparency, and yet I come back here on the first day of this session, and again, what we're trying to do is to get information from the government. That shouldn't be that hard, and yet it is.

When you have to work that hard to get a business plan for a loan that happened three years ago, then you start to wonder, really, shouldn't this be brought back to the Legislature to discuss? A lot of these issues should be brought back to the Legislature, and on that fundamental issue, I fully agree with the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington. More power should be brought back to the Legislature. We would spend a lot less time fighting to extricate information that belongs to the people of Ontario.

1740

He brought up another good point. If the minimum wage is indexed to the CPI, which we agree with, why

wouldn't ODSP and OW be indexed, as well? The answer to that is, because that would cost the government money, whereas increasing the minimum wage costs the employer money. In farm talk, what's good for the goose is good for the gander. Sometimes the things that we deal with—and we deal with it in all of our constituency offices. Is anyone in this House going to tell me that the ODSP rates are high enough? They're not. We could do much better.

One thing that struck me in this debate, and a couple of members came at it in a couple of different ways—I don't think we have a lot of argument with the basic premise of this legislation. We could make this a little bit better or make that a lot better, but the basic premise behind the legislation is good. But the people who are impacted most by this legislation—temporary foreign workers, people like that—there's something they don't have that the people in this House do. It's called privilege. I can stand here and say I have been aggrieved, and I can make my case, and I try to occasionally. But if I'm working at an insecure job or I'm a temporary foreign worker, it doesn't matter how great this legislation is, if I'm afraid to speak—and I don't see anything in this legislation that is going to help that. Actually, I heard things coming from the government side that made me even more wary. I heard, "Well, we're having a blitz." What about the people who were missed by the blitz? If you can do a blitz and get a whole bunch of, "Oh, there's someone who's doing it wrong, and there's someone who's doing it wrong"—and again, the vast majority of employers are doing things right. I'd really like to make that clear. Blitzing is not going to help with the employer who doesn't get blitzed who isn't doing it right. It's certainly not going to help those employees, because they don't have what I'm exercising right now. They don't have the ability to stand up and know that they won't be punished for it by losing their jobs.

Actually, if I don't stand up, I'll be punished by losing my job, but that's a whole different ball of wax.

It's something I would really like to focus on and something no one has really answered, in my opinion.

Again, I go back to the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington. He brought forward that there were personal hygiene inspectors and made light of it. I had never heard of a personal hygiene inspector.

I do hope that there are actually enough people who are approachable, because otherwise—one of the reasons I ran for this job is because there are all kinds of pieces of legislation that sound really good in this House, that make great press releases, but that don't work on the ground.

I was fortunate enough to listen to the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka's presentation, as well. He made the same point. It has been my experience that government used to be there to help, and that has fallen by the wayside. When people come to our office, it's hard to get government to help. It's either nothing at all, or when you push hard, then the hammer comes down. But what

about the people who don't come to our offices? That's the part that, with this legislation, and with a lot of legislation, we really should stop and think about. Because it's fine to pat yourself on the back and feel good that we've protected this insecure worker. But have we? Have we? Because they don't have the privilege that we do. Those employers who don't want to do things right can make sure that they don't have those privileges. That hurts us all.

It hurts our economy as well, because our economy, especially in the case of temporary foreign workers—they're in the Holland Marsh; they're also in Timiskaming-Cochrane. Why? Because as the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka said, in a lot of cases, we cannot find skilled workers to do the jobs that need to be done. In our case, in Timiskaming-Cochrane, a lot of the people who could work, who would be skilled at working in agriculture, can make more money working in a mine right now. And I don't blame them. If I was their age, I would be working in a mine as well. So we have to bring in workers to actually get the work done.

By far, the majority of our employers do a great job, but again, I'm not sure the help is out there to actually make sure that the employers who aren't doing a good job get reprimanded.

One part of this bill that I would have thought odd before I got this job: There's a part in there about how you can go after more than six months' wages. I'm thinking to myself, "Really?"—before I got this job, when I was an employer and before, when I worked on a farm—"Well, why would anybody work if they're not getting paid?" But again, if you're in a precarious position—and now that I'm an MPP, I deal with cases like this in my office. So it has changed my perspective incredibly. Hopefully, we can change a lot more people's perspective incredibly.

On the issue of jobs, just raising minimum wage isn't going to create jobs, and having had the pleasure of being here the whole afternoon, I've heard a couple of nice points. I've heard a couple of times that the minimum wage was frozen, and since this government has been in power, we went from the lowest minimum wage to the highest minimum wage. Congratulations. We also went from the lowest hydro costs to the highest hydro costs in the country. And if you're going to tell me that that's not true, then you tell me why the companies in my riding like Resolute Forest Products, like Xstrata in Timmins, just north of my riding—that ore is still being processed. It's being processed in Quebec, where the electricity costs are a lot cheaper.

If you're going to create jobs, let's talk about the real issues. Minimum wage is one of them. But if you're going to trumpet that the minimum wage is that much higher, let's look at everything that is that much higher.

Another issue is education. I've been listening this whole afternoon—and if you haven't figured it out yet, I don't have any notes. I'm kind of just going off the cuff, because I wasn't planning to speak today. The member from Parry Sound-Muskoka talked about a shop class.

We have in TDSS, Timiskaming District Secondary School, and I believe the Premier came to see it, a high school excellence class in agriculture; and it's a great program. Right where I live, it's primarily an agricultural area, and this gives students a crash course in stuff like how to change a bearing. Not too many people in this room could probably change a bearing, but those kids can, and that's a big part of agriculture. You can have a half-million dollar machine, but if a bearing goes, it's sitting there. If no one knows how to change it, it's sitting there. It's little things like that.

I want to go back to one thing, and I think it's really important: I find it an incredible privilege to be able to stand here and speak my mind on behalf of my colleagues, especially with this bill. We're talking about people who don't have that privilege. So we're going to have to find a way, when this bill goes to committee and when it passes, to actually make it work on the ground, because if we don't make legislation that works for people on the ground, we're never going to be as successful as we want to be.

**1750**

Good legislation and good legislators: It's more than putting out a fancy press release. I like the titles. Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act: great title. But it's more than just the title. It's about making programs that actually work.

I'm going to go back to the Minister of Northern Development. A program that actually works: tile drainage in northern Ontario. There is infrastructure—you want to talk about local food? You put tile drainage in the ground that will last for 100 years, and regardless of who farms that ground, it will make a huge difference. The people who don't have tile drainage in northern Ontario this year are not going to get a crop off. That's a great program. I'd like to commend the minister. I bet you he didn't think I was ever going to do that, but I'd like to commend the minister for really pushing that program. The farmers in Timiskaming-Cochrane have been pushing that for 20 years. That's the kind of program that makes a huge difference. That's infrastructure; that's bricks and mortar and tile.

But for this type of legislation to make a difference—I know I'm being repetitive, but it's an important point—it has got to make a difference to people on the street. It has got to make a difference to people in the Holland Marsh. It has got to make a difference to people in Timiskaming Shores right now, or in Evanturel township, who are milking cows. It has got to impact—it has got to be available to them. If we're successful at doing that, it will be a successful piece of legislation.

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

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** I'm glad to be given the opportunity to stand and add a few of my comments to this particular bill.

As it has been said around the chamber several times, this is a bill by the Minister of Labour. Some people seemed to comment that he combined two bills that were



before this Legislature before, and they're calling it an omnibus bill. But the interesting thing is that the minister is combining two of his own ministry's bills, and it's all related. So I kind of, when we look at that, take a little bit of—we're a government; we're here to serve the public. Here is an opportunity to get two pieces of legislation, that are important to that public out there, that has been vulnerable for a long time, resolved once and for all. I really hope that we don't spend too much time debating this bill.

I just want to make a comment about the minimum wage. In this bill, the government has done something that is extraordinary—I think it's a good thing, and it should be done in several other areas of government—which is to tie something to inflation, so then the public out there knows what's going to happen and when.

This is one of the situations where the minister went out and consulted with the business community and the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. They came back and recommended that we do this with CPI. They recommended and supported the amount of minimum wage that we were proposing at the time. So in my mind, that's very progressive, because it has been done with consultation, it has been done with the workforce, it has been done with the business community, and they're all supportive of it.

I congratulate the minister for bringing forward a great bill.

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

**Mr. Norm Miller:** It's a pleasure to add some comments to the speech from the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane.

He was talking about the farming school, I believe, in his riding and how useful that is and how it's helping to develop skills. He gave the example of how to change a bearing. It made me think of my brother Ross, who was fresh out of high school and, asked by my father what he wanted to do, said he wanted to be a farmer. Then he ended up going to Guelph for a couple of years and learning from a farmer and buying a farm. He was a dairy farmer for 10 years.

I still recall all the skills he had to learn in that business of being a farmer—and he was 20 when he started—thinking of things like how to weld when the combine broke, and you're right in the middle of trying to harvest. Of course, I still remember having to drive him to the hospital because he didn't use the safety goggles when he did weld his combine back together, so perhaps the school would have been good for him for some of the skills you need—or how to deliver a calf, or how to fix various broken equipment when it would break right when you really needed it, and you had very little time to actually get the job done. There certainly is a huge variety of skills required.

Coming back to some of his other points, I certainly believe that, with most things that government does, there needs to be some flexibility for the inspectors, not in the case of safety necessarily, but in lots of other areas.

It's not all black and white; there are grey areas. You need some inspectors who have common sense and who are willing—and it should be the policy of the government to help educate employees, employers and businesses so they can meet the objectives of the government and not be so much about being the police.

I see I'm out of time in my comments. It was a pleasure to have a chance to say something.

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

**M. Taras Natyshak:** J'aimerais féliciter mon collègue ici, le député de Timiskaming–Cochrane, pour son discours ici cet après-midi. Je crois qu'il apporte une sémblance, une mesure de raison et de balance avec ses idées. J'apprécie aussi qu'il nous rappelle que demain est la journée du fermier, qui est une industrie et une manière de vivre qui est très importante non seulement pour notre province mais aussi notre pays. Donc, j'apprécie qu'il nous rappelle ça. He brings a balance and some reason to debate every time I hear him speak, and today was certainly a measure of that.

Speaker, we are talking about a whole economy, and there is no portion, no quadrant of our province that isn't affected by any of the bills that we bring through this House. When he says that it should and must be effective in its delivery, that's what we're looking for, certainly, on this side of the House, something that responds to the problem at hand.

More so than ever, the mantra of “keeping up with the Joneses” is important for us to remember here. It has always been the goal: “Let's keep up with the Joneses”—meaning there's an average balance, a median standard that we can all strive for. I want to tell the government, these days, either through lack of policy effectiveness or otherwise, the Joneses are barely getting by. We must remember that initiatives through this House have to be effective in that regard. They have to keep focused on improving the livelihoods of the people of this province. That's what our job is.

It is our hope on this side, as New Democrats, that this piece of legislation does that. We certainly are looking forward to playing a role in making sure that it does.

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

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** What a unique pleasure it is for me to rise for the third time today to talk on this bill. It's almost as if I've scored a hat trick today, and having done it all within one session, in hockey parlance that would be a natural hat trick, like I did it all in the same period. But I appreciate so much the member from Timiskaming's comments—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** Come on over here. Get close enough, Gordie Howe style.

I appreciate very much the comments from the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane, particularly your shout-out to the farmers across the province. I attended the Argo game against the Ticats at the beginning of

Agriculture Week two Fridays ago, and it was wonderful to be there with the hard-working men and women of this province who work very closely with the temporary foreign workers who come to help us bring in the crop every year. That is one of the items that's being so clearly addressed in this bill, assisting, because we don't want to be known as a province, internationally, that allows unreasonable seizures of the important documents of our workers who come over here.

Hats off to the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, who happens to be the member for my mother's property up in the Dorset area—delighted to have you there representing us and helping us get that nursing station which we brought forward, which is coming forward.

And the member for Essex for his very informed comments, both in French and English, half of which I didn't really understand—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** I couldn't find the earplug in time.

But I do want to again thank and remind the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane that the blitzes that we've done have actually been very, very effective, contrary to your thinking. When you do a blitz, it informs the ministry about how rampant a situation or the problems are. It allows us to do better education. It also provides notice to those employers who may not be doing the job right so they get it right next time. They have been successful. So we'll hope to be able to continue that. That's not a weakness in this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Timiskaming–Cochrane can reply now.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** I'd like to thank the members from Scarborough–Rouge River, Parry Sound–Muskoka, Essex and Beaches–East York. Merci beaucoup.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** It's 6 o'clock. This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1801.*

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Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
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
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
<b>Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
<b>Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)</b>	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)</b>	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	Brant	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
<b>MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)</b>	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
<b>Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
<b>Miller, Paul (NDP)</b>	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
<b>Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)</b>	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
<b>Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)</b>	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
<b>Nicholls, Rick (PC)</b>	Chatham–Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
<b>Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)</b>	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
<b>Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	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	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	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	
<b>Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor  
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Grant Crack, Han Dong  
Cindy Forster, Michael Harris  
Randy Hillier, Sophie Kiwala  
Monique Taylor  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Victor Fedeli, Catherine Fife  
Ann Hoggarth, Monte McNaughton  
Peter Z. Milczyn, Daiene Vernile  
Soo Wong  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson  
Mike Colle, Grant Crack  
Joe Dickson, Lisa Gretzky  
Ann Hoggarth, Sophie Kiwala  
Eleanor McMahon, Lisa M. Thompson  
Jeff Yurek  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité  
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Wayne Gates, Marie-France Lalonde  
Harinder Malhi, Cristina Martins  
Jim McDonnell, Randy Pettapiece  
Lou Rinaldi  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

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Bob Delaney, Jack MacLaren  
Cristina Martins, Indira Naidoo-Harris  
Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qadri  
Todd Smith  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

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permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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Chris Ballard, Toby Barrett  
Garfield Dunlop, Eleanor McMahon  
Laurie Scott, Jagmeet Singh  
Soo Wong  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent  
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Vacant  
Han Dong, John Fraser  
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield  
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi  
Julia Munro, Arthur Potts  
Lou Rinaldi  
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: Vacant  
Robert Bailey, Lorenzo Berardinetti  
Jennifer K. French, Monte Kwinter  
Amrit Mangat, Kathryn McGarry  
Indira Naidoo-Harris, Daiene Vernile  
Bill Walker  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de  
la politique sociale**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: France Gélinas  
Granville Anderson, Vic Dhillon  
Christine Elliott, France Gélinas  
Marie-France Lalonde, Amrit Mangat  
Gila Martow, Kathryn McGarry  
Peter Tabuns  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim









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