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**Official Report
of Debates
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Tuesday 2 December 2014

Mardi 2 décembre 2014

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 2 December 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 2 décembre 2014

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 35, An Act to repeal the Public Works Protection Act, amend the Police Services Act with respect to court security and enact the Security for Electricity Generating Facilities and Nuclear Facilities Act, 2014, when the bill is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment, and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on General Government; and,

That the Standing Committee on General Government be authorized to meet on Monday, December 8, 2014, from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., for the purpose of public hearings on the bill; and

That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the committee Chair, be authorized to arrange the following with regard to Bill 35:

—notice of public hearings on the Ontario parliamentary channel, the Legislative Assembly's website and Canada NewsWire; and

—witnesses are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis; and

—each witness will receive up to five minutes for their presentation, followed by nine minutes for questions from committee members; and

—the deadline for written submissions is 6 p.m. on the day of public hearings; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 6 p.m. on Monday, December 8, 2014, and

That the committee be authorized to meet on Tuesday, December 9, 2014, from 9 a.m. to 10:15 a.m., and 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill;

On Tuesday, December 9, 2014, at 4 p.m., those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without

further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession, with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Wednesday, December 10, 2014. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the Standing Committee on General Government, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called that same day; and

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, two hours shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

The votes on second and third reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Mr. Naqvi has moved government notice of motion number 12. I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker, and good morning to you. Thank you for recognizing me to speak on this important motion. I'm very pleased to participate in this debate. I had the opportunity to speak on Bill 35 before, but I'm very happy to speak again on this particular motion.

It's an interesting position for me as I speak on this motion, because I'm wearing two hats: my hat as the government House leader and my other hat as the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, the ministry that brought forward this particular bill and has worked on this for some time.

I can speak from the point of view of the importance of the passage of this bill. I can, of course, share with the members, as I have done in the past, as to the history of this bill. I think members have a good understanding and recognition of what events precipitated this bill and, of course, the many times the bill has been introduced and

debated in this House, and I'll elaborate on that as well for your pleasure.

Of course, I very much look forward to hearing from my colleagues in the House, and I would urge them to support this important motion.

It is my hope that with the support of all members in this House for Bill 35, the reintroduction of the Security for Courts, Electricity Generating Facilities and Nuclear Facilities Act, 2014, will carry through and we would, before the end of this year, have this bill into law.

As many in this Legislature already know, this is the third time that our government has introduced this important bill—not once, not twice, but three times. As the saying goes, third time lucky, so I'm really hoping this is the time that this very important bill passes through this Legislature because, as we have heard in the debate in this House from many members, from all three sides of the Legislature, this is a bill that's needed. This is a bill that has been sought. The community at large, the partners that we have in policing and civil liberties, all have asked for this bill. So I think it is due time that this bill passes into law.

This bill first passed second reading on March 20, 2012. I'll repeat: The first time this bill passed second reading was March 20, 2012. It was over two years ago when this bill was introduced for the first time, passed second reading and was then, also at the same time, referred to committee.

While at committee, important feedback was provided—of course, as committees do important work—during public hearings by over 15 organizations that participated in the public hearing process back in 2012.

Some of those organizations that participated in the conversation that took place during the committee included organizations like the Ontario Bar Association, a very important organization that I have been a part of in my past life as a lawyer; the Canadian Sikh Association, another very active community group in our province; the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, an organization that we all listen to very carefully, because they represent all the chiefs of police in our province; and Ontario Power Generation. These are just to give you an example of the over 15 organizations that presented. They were part of the process that took place in the committee. As a result of that, a number of important amendments were also made before referring the bill back to the Legislature for third reading.

0910

The bill was then reintroduced a second time on April 10, 2013. The government has been very much committed to making sure that this bill becomes law. We first introduced it in 2012. We went through the entire process, we went through committee, got to third reading, and then I believe the House was prorogued and that's why the bill died on the order paper. Immediately, on April 10, 2013, we reintroduced the bill under our new Premier, Premier Wynne. That bill then was stalled for a year before dying on the order paper, when the NDP forced the election last May.

I know the NDP likes to think they didn't call the election, but we know how the system works. In a minority Legislature in particular, if you've got a budget tabled and both parties opposite, which at that time had the majority of the members, say, "We will not support the budget bill," the way the system works, that means the government falls. That is why, once we heard from the official opposition—they have said for every single budget, in fact, that they would not support it, and I respect their very consistent position on that—and then the NDP also said "No, we will not be supporting this budget," an election was called last May, which we all participated in.

After the election, after June 12, we were back, with the privilege of having the opportunity to serve Ontarians with a majority government. We are committed to the passage of this bill in this House. That's why we have introduced this bill for the third time. I just wanted to give you, by way of an example, the amount of work that has gone on, on this very important bill, over the last two and a half years, and the persistence the government has shown to ensure that this modern, very focused and balanced piece of legislation, which deals with the security of critical infrastructure like our courthouses, electricity generating facilities and nuclear facilities, becomes law. That's why we're keen to see that this Legislature approves this bill before the end of the year, so that this law can come into place.

Speaker, because we're talking about the fact that this bill has been tabled and debated three times in the House, you can imagine the number of hours of debate that have gone on, on this bill. By my last count, including, I think, the debate that took place yesterday, we are getting close to about 20 hours of debate on this bill, and—wait for it—how many speakers? About 40 speakers have spoken in this House on this bill, and the substance of the bill hasn't really changed much. The bill changed after the amendments that were made in committee, which was extremely important. But that's a lot of speakers. And I encourage debate, because that's exactly what we are supposed to do in the House, and I'm happy to see the kind of debate that has taken place.

I just noticed that our Attorney General is here as well. The first two introductions came from the Attorney General, who has done an incredible amount of work on this particular file, and I want to thank the Attorney General, the MPP from Ottawa—Vanier, for her great work on this file. I just want to get this done for her; I'm just the messenger. She has done incredible work and has met with many, many stakeholders. Be it the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, all the civil liberties associations or the Sikh associations, she has met them all and has struck the right balance that is presented in this bill that will ensure, as I said earlier—

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: With the help of the member for Nipissing.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: —with the help of the member for Nipissing, the Attorney General adds. It is important to know that that collaboration existed.

But as I mentioned at one point, I believe that the second time this bill was tabled, it actually went to committee as well, where we heard from many stakeholders. The member from York South–Weston was part of the committee, so she recalls the work that was done. Like I said, over 15 organizations presented at that time.

But there was a robust debate that took place within the committee as well, among the members, and amendments were presented to improve the bill. I'm very happy to note that 16 amendments were put forward by the opposition and were all incorporated into the proposed legislation.

Mr. John Yakabuski: All of those amendments were incorporated into the bill.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you to the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke; he's making my point right now. The three parties worked together, and the opposition introduced 16 amendments. All 16 were approved and are part of this bill. The bill that is before this House, Bill 35—

Interjection.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: We're looking for the opportunity to speak on this very important bill.

Bill 35 includes all of those 16 amendments. We did not change anything, Speaker, in the reintroduction of this bill since it was last at the committee. I think that's an important point. I want all the members to know this and, of course, I want all Ontarians to know this: that this bill reflects not only the point of view of the organizations that spoke on this bill, but that of other members as well.

I really strongly feel, and I think the members on this side of the House strongly feel, that it is now time to pass this bill into law.

Very quickly, just to share a little bit of the history of this bill, and I think everybody is quite aware of this—I was listening to the debate that has taken place on this bill: almost 20 hours now. This bill was developed in response to the recommendations that were made by Ontario's Ombudsman in December 2010 and also the very important work that our former Chief Justice of the Ontario Court of Appeal, Roy McMurtry, did and provided to the government in April 2011. I want to thank not only the Ombudsman, but most importantly I want to thank Mr. McMurtry for his incredible work on this particular file.

During the G20, the use of the Public Works Protection Act had become the subject of significant public concern. Both the Ombudsman and the former Chief Justice recommended that the Public Works Protection Act be repealed and replaced with more modern, focused legislation. Our government, under the leadership of then-Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, now our Attorney General, the member from Ottawa–Vanier, conducted extensive consultations while developing this bill to determine what measures would be needed to ensure security should the Public Works Protection Act be repealed.

We sought input and advice from nuclear operators and regulators, electricity producers, justice partners and

municipalities. We also consulted with civil liberties advocates to be sure that the appropriate balance was struck between security and civil liberty, including the organizations I mentioned earlier: the Canadian Civil Liberties Association and the David Asper Centre for Constitutional Rights. All of the legislative debates, amendments and extensive feedback that we have heard are incorporated in this particular bill.

If passed, this bill will (1) repeal the Public Works Protection Act; (2) amend the Police Services Act as it relates to our courthouses and safety and security in our courthouses; and (3) create a new bill that outlines a security mechanism for our nuclear facilities and large electricity generating facilities—all, you would agree, Speaker, critical infrastructure in our province.

I'm going to end at this point, but again, I urge the members that this is an important bill. This is a bill that is a result of extensive work that has been done over the last almost three years. That this is a bill that is tabled for the third time demonstrates government's goodwill and commitment to pass this bill into legislation. This is a bill that has gone through extensive debate, significant input and changes as a result of work that the opposition parties have done. I really urge, Speaker, through you, all members to support this bill and ensure its speedy passage before we recess for Christmas.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I want to get this morning started on the right foot. I want to pay a compliment to the House leader of the government. I remember when he was first elected here, and I say this with all due respect: He used to really get upset if you heckled him when he was speaking. But he has grown so much now that he ignores everything I say when he's speaking. Either I'm losing my touch or he has gotten a lot better at tuning out the noise from within. That's the compliment.

0920

Now I'm going to challenge him. I'm going to ask him why he won't work with the opposition on this. This is a bill that—my goodness, as he said—when the current Attorney General, the then Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, the Honourable Madeleine Meilleur, introduced this bill, I was the critic for that portfolio at that time. We worked closely to come up with a bill that would represent what needed to be done. I think we're there. But the House leader knows they're in a majority now. This bill will pass. What's the hurry? You see, since it was introduced in early 2012, the world has not fallen apart. We're still having courts, and the nuclear facilities are still operating. In fact, Darlington won an award for efficiency last year. It's not like the world has come to a stop. It's not like we've shut down our nuclear facilities, and it's not like the court system has been put into limbo; it's still functioning. Why would he not take this opportunity—on a bill that we're going to work with them again—and allow us to have the input at this stage to see if there's anything further that can be done to improve this piece of legislation? He seems to be on a time allocation mission.

Mr. Todd Smith: He's addicted to time allocation.

Mr. John Yakabuski: He's addicted to time allocation. I hope that when he comes back from the Christmas recess he has found a cure, or, perhaps, he's gone to "time allocation anonymous." He doesn't have to give his name there, either, he can just go to the meetings and he can, "I am"—one name—"and I'm"—how would you say that?—"I'm an allocation-olic. My name is such-and-such, and I'm an allocation-olic." Hopefully, when he comes back, he'll be cured of that addiction. It would be a good thing for his government as well.

You see, what has happened here is this government—and there are wonderful people over there. I know many of them fairly well now over the years, and the newer ones I'm getting to know a little bit, but they're falling into this trap.

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: Kool-Aid.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's not just the Kool-Aid, I say to the member from Barrie—it's called the idea that arrogance is okay.

I want to remind you, because you're all old enough to remember—do you remember David Peterson? He became the Premier in 1985 because of a deal that was made between him and Bob Rae. He became Premier even though he had less seats than the Frank Miller Conservatives—52 to 48. They had some legitimacy in calling for them to become the government because they actually had a slightly higher share of the popular vote in the 1985 general election.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: They also had more seats.

Mr. John Yakabuski: No, they didn't have more seats. They had 48; Miller had 52.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'm saying, between the opposition.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Of course they had more than—Miller didn't have a majority. Gilles, you just stick to what you're doing there. Look on the computer; you'll get the facts.

In 1985, they had a slightly higher popular vote than the Conservatives, so they took over the government. You know, it wasn't that bad. Obviously, the people in Ontario liked what they saw because in 1987 David Peterson won what was the highest number of seats, I believe, in Ontario's history—92 seats they won in the general election of 1987. But what happened then is, this all went to their heads. They thought that they weren't just elected but that they were deified, and that somehow they were governing from above the clouds and they were untouchable.

They became extremely arrogant and believed that under no circumstances would they ever lose government, because they had a divine right to rule. It was ordained from the heavenly host that David Peterson and the Liberals would rule in Ontario. But you see, what happened was he took that and he said, "Oh, I want to go for another mandate." So in 1990, only three years into his term, he said, "I'd like to secure another four years. We're going to win another big majority, and I'll be the Premier until at least 1994, or maybe longer. If I call this

election in 1990 and ignore what's been happening in Ontario—don't worry about the opposition. They don't matter. I've got 92 seats. Who cares about those people on the other side?"

Lo and behold, David Peterson, in his arrogance, decided, "Yeah, we're going to the polls." In September 1990, what happened? That 92-seat majority government that was held by the Liberals—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I would remind the member—I appreciate the history lesson, but I'm sure you're going to get around to the point in terms of speaking to the motion that is before us. Just to remind you to keep that focus. Thank you.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I most certainly am, Speaker. I think this is the crux of the matter, because it is absolutely unnecessary for this government to be bringing in this time allocation, and I'm reminding what can happen when your zeal to rule with an iron fist becomes so powerful that you lose sight of the fact that there are people elected on this side of the House, there are people whose constituents have sent them here to hold this government to account and they are being ignored by the government. That's what happened to David Peterson, and we all know what happened in the end. That's what I'm trying to explain, sir, and I think that speaks to the point precisely—precisely.

In 1990, the New Democrats, who had never formed government in the province of Ontario, threw a beating on David Peterson like you wouldn't believe. He couldn't have even got out of that one using the rope-a-dope. David Peterson was crushed. Why? Because he was too arrogant to believe that the democracy that gave him 92 seats in 1987—just as democracy giveth, democracy tooketh away. That is my reminder to the Liberals here—

Mr. Todd Smith: That's a good lesson.

Mr. John Yakabuski: That is a good lesson for you to learn and look back on. Don't think that somehow these actions of yours in 2014 will not come back to haunt you some day if you don't change your ways. The belief that you have this ironclad right or this divine right to rule as you see fit because you have a majority is very dangerous. It can leave you with the idea that you are untouchable, but you will find that in the end, the people are the final arbiter of whether or not you have governed properly.

You have the legal and the legislative right to do what you're doing here today. You've done it how many times, I say to my friend from Timmins—now I'm asking for his help. How many times, since we got here in October, have they brought in time allocation?

Mr. John Vanthof: As many times as possible.

Mr. John Yakabuski: As many times as there have been bills, they've brought in time allocation. Have we passed a single bill through the normal channels in this session?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Not yet.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Not yet, other than the budget bill. The budget bill was passed before we came back in October. That was passed back in July. But we have not

passed a single bill through the normal channels in this legislative session, and that really says an awful lot about the way the government is viewing the collaborative sense that was envisioned when Parliaments under the British system were developed in the first place. Each party has a role to play, each side of the chamber has a vital role to play, and they're freezing the opposition out.

0930

I will say this: The previous majority governments of Dalton McGuinty—and I know that's not a good word to say in here because I know that the Liberals don't want to use his name very much—didn't use this time allocation to the extent that our new Premier, Premier Kathleen Wynne, is using it, and I really do want to caution her that I think she is overstepping the bounds of parliamentary decency. That's what I'm appealing.

I've had about five different approaches in my speeches on time allocation in this session, because I am trying every angle I can think of to appeal to the sense of fair play and justice in the hearts and the minds of the members on the opposite side. I have come out and railed against them. I have come out and spoken of dreams that I've had about the House leader and the ghost of time allocation past, not unlike the Christmas Carol and Ebenezer Scrooge, which I talked about. But in the end, Ebenezer Scrooge came around. Not only did he find that being kind and generous was better, but it changed his life completely, and he became the most generous man in the city.

I've tried that approach. I've tried getting up and venting my anger at how frustrated we are on this side of the House, and now I'm trying to appeal to their sense of fair play, to their sense of what is right, to their sense of giving something to the other members who were elected. Look, I'm not arguing with the numbers; you've got your majority. Congratulations to all the new members who were elected—12 or 13 new members on that side of the House, and I've had a chance to say hello to every one of them—but I don't think this is what they believed they were buying into when they got here either. I think that they believed they were coming here to a House of debate, not a House of one side railroading the other, using its pure power, because in a democracy, 50% plus one gives you absolute power, but it is the wise ruler who uses that power benevolently.

You can choose to be as callous and to be as controlling and to ignore everything that the other side of the House has to say. You can choose to do that when you have the majority, but you can also choose to say, "Those are good people over there, elected by their constituents. There's a reason they got here. There are reasons they got here. They didn't run on our platform." Understandably, the people on the other side believed that that platform had everything in it that Ontario needs, and they won the election, but all the members on this side of the House ran on different platforms, yet we all got elected. There must be a reason that we all got elected; we must have been doing something right so that the people of our constituencies believed that we were the right persons for the job.

All I'm asking for is that the government take that into consideration. New members: Do an examination of your conscience, and ask yourself, "Should we simply take the orders from headquarters, that corner office on the second floor, right over there?" If I had a straight line that I could pierce walls and concrete, it would be right about there. Would they take this opportunity to vote against, to set a precedent that might set things right? We can't stop this time allocation motion. We're getting two hours to debate it, and essentially it's just fluff and just a waste of time in some regards, but we do have to fill the time. At the end of that two hours, there will be a deferred vote, and we're going to lose the vote. We're going to lose the vote unless those new members, who were also elected by their constituents, ask themselves, "Is this the right thing to do or the wrong thing to do?"

In my mind, Speaker, it's absolutely the wrong thing to do, especially since we haven't—and I'll talk a little bit about the bill, if I may. I spoke to the bill yesterday. There are an awful lot of good things in this bill, and we want to get it passed. I believe that absolutely we could have negotiated our way to passing this bill. We could have been part of that discussion; we could have been part of that decision. This government decided, "We don't need you. We're going to poke our finger in your eye once more and tell you when this bill is going to pass," because it's all outlined right in the motion, I say to my friends in the third party.

There it is, right in the motion. We know exactly when this bill is going to pass. It's like telling the future. The only thing that could change that future is if some of those members on the other side of the House decide, "You know what? It's Christmastime and we're going to do the right thing and we're going to show the kind of respect that people in the opposition should be given."

Mr. Todd Smith: They could do that at caucus today.

Mr. John Yakabuski: They could do that at caucus.

I say that the bill itself is not the problem. The world changed after 9/11. We needed to change the way we dealt with security around our large generating facilities, particularly nuclear plants. We got almost 60% of our power last year from nuclear power. It's vital to our economy. It's vital to our health and welfare. Everybody knows that if you're out of power, it's not a good life. Here in the Canadian winter, if you're out of power it's a matter of life and death. If you're out of power for indeterminate or long periods of time, your safety is in danger. We know how vital power is, and we've got to do whatever we can to protect those facilities that provide that power. This bill will assist in doing so.

In reality, the way we conduct security around nuclear facilities has changed already, and rightfully so, because we cannot leave those things to chance. There's a significant threat, because of the fact that we have radioactive materials in these facilities, that they could be used for nefarious purposes as well. So we do have to protect them, and that's what we're trying to do with this bill. We're working with the government on this bill. We have worked with the government on this bill. All we're

asking for is an opportunity to let this bill pass through negotiation and agreement as opposed to having it rammed down our throats every time we turn around.

I think what they're trying to do here is render the opposition irrelevant. Do you know how dangerous that would be? They're trying to set a tone here that as long as you have a majority, you might as well have an empty chamber on the opposite side because you do whatever you want. But everyone knows that unless they change the electoral system and make themselves dictators for life, there will be an election someday, and how they behave—not just whether or not their legislative agenda has been satisfactory to the people, but how they've respected democracy, the bedrock of our society. Democracy is what our society is founded on, so that the people always have the final say. How they respect democracy is going to go a long way to determine whether or not they'll be successful the next time they go to the people and the polls.

This is an opportunity, here on the 2nd of December, for them to change the channel, to switch—to do a 180 and show the people of Ontario that they actually are listening. To be fair, I don't think the people of Ontario pay that close attention to the machinations that go on in this House and to some of the things—they have a good eye on the big picture but they maybe don't understand the inside baseball. But if they knew and if they understood that every bill in this House is being rammed through without following the usual procedures of debate and input from third party stakeholders, they would be distressed. They would be upset. They would be asking themselves, "What government wants to operate that way? Why wouldn't a government want the input from those third party stakeholders and honest, constructive criticism from the opposition?"

0940

This is an opportunity for you to change the channel, so I appeal—I know I'm not going to get anywhere with the members of the cabinet, because they're not going to disobey the Premier. They would be out of a job the next day. They would be out of cabinet. Maybe I should say to the members in the backbench that if a few of those people in the cabinet get fired, you might get in. There are only two kinds of people over on that side: those who are in cabinet and those who want to be in cabinet. You see? So there's an opportunity there as well. But what happens either way, somebody on the other side has to see the other side and what they're saying. This is your opportunity.

I'm going to end now, because I know I have other members who want to speak to this as well. Thank you very much for hearing me this morning.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Just before I start my comments on this particular time allocation motion: I thought it interesting that the member from Renfrew–Nipissing talked about how the Liberals ran on their platform. I was thinking, and I would just like to share this with the member

from Renfrew, that they actually ran against your platform and now they're implementing it. That must be pretty frustrating, from your perspective. You may have had the winning platform, according to these guys.

No, it is kind of ironic. Liberals are really notorious for that; they profess something different in an election. They profess that they have these great values and they want to do the right things and are so progressive. Then they get elected and they do the complete opposite.

Remember Mr. Trudeau? Remember there was this guy by the name of Trudeau? He was Prime Minister of Canada. Remember Mr. Stanfield?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Stanfield ran during the general election and said, "I think that because of the high inflation in this country, we need to have wage and price controls." Mr. Trudeau ran across the country and campaigned against Mr. Stanfield and attacked him viciously throughout the entire campaign, saying, "My God, this is terrible, and any Prime Minister and party that runs on wage and price controls shouldn't be elected by the people of Canada. That's terrible." What did he do when he got elected?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Wage and price controls.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Wage and price controls—and he got away with it.

You remember Joe Clark, who had that very short minority Parliament, Mr. Speaker? Joe Clark wanted to increase—

Mr. Mike Colle: Joe Who.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: They called him Joe Who.

Joe Clark—you remember?—wanted to increase the tax on fuel. So he brought in his budget, and one of the measures in his budget was increasing the taxes on fuel. The Liberals voted against it, along with the NDP, because they said, "This is not fair to the economy of Canada." What's the first thing Mr. Trudeau did when he got re-elected?

Mr. John Yakabuski: No, not Trudeau.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: He raised the price of fuel.

Now, in this last provincial election, Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals—oh, my God, Tim Hudak was going to take away jobs in the public sector. He was going to cut services and cut budgets. Oh, my God, it was the end of the world. "If you vote Liberal, everything will be fine. We'll do the opposite."

What are these guys doing?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Chop, chop, chop.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: They're doing exactly what Tim Hudak suggested doing: chopping jobs in the public sector and really reducing expenditures. We look at hospitals in our communities. All of them are losing ER time. They're shutting down physiotherapy at the Timmins and District General Hospital. If you look at social services across the province, this government is actually doing what the Tories said they would do.

I've always said Liberals are just Tories in a hurry. The quicker people recognize it, the easier—

Mr. John Vanthof: They're Tories on the fly.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Tories on the slide.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I digress. I had to point that one out, because I find it very frustrating, from my perspective as a New Democrat, that Liberals continually get away, with the public, with saying one thing in an election and doing completely the opposite.

The wonderful thing is, the Liberals think it's a virtue. They really think it's a virtue. They call it pragmatic and practical. Well, I would call it something else. I would call it something that's non-parliamentary, and I'm not going to use that word in this House.

Mr. Speaker, this is the seventh time allocation motion this government has brought in in this fall session. This is number 7. What is really unfortunate about this is that, in fact, because we're time-allocating everything, there's actually less business being done for the government than there would be if they negotiated with the opposition.

We said to the government at the beginning—because the government House leader came into the House leaders' meetings at the beginning of this fall session and he said yes, in fact, he wanted to work with the opposition. "If you could only tell us what you want as far as time on these particular bills, or time in committee on these particular bills, let us know and maybe we can let some of the other ones go fast."

So he came originally with a package of four bills. Was it four?

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Yes, it was four initially. He said, "Here are the four bills that we want to have passed at the end of the session."

Both the opposition parties agreed. We said, "Yes, okay, not a problem. We understand you want your four bills, but we want to be able to have some time in committee on some of the bills that you're bringing before the House."

The Conservatives had indicated that they wanted some public hearings on the daycare bill, and we obviously wanted time for public hearings on other bills. After making the offer and having the opposition House leaders go back to the government with, "Okay, this is kind of what we were looking at"—there was no deal, but we were starting to have that discussion—the government House leader came in and said, "All bets are off. I'm time-allocating everything," by way of his actions.

My argument is simply this: If government backbenchers think this is a great, wonderful strategy that your House leader has come up with, and that you're getting your agenda, that is so important, through the House lickety-split, there's a lot to learn about parliamentary democracy. In fact, things are slower this way than they would be if we just did them in the normal way that Parliaments are supposed to.

Here's how it works. Mr. Speaker, you've heard me say this before. At one time, there was no such thing as time allocation in this Legislature. It was a completely foreign concept. Majority governments met in this very Legislature for over 100 years. Majority governments did not have time allocation, but they passed their business

through this House, because what they eventually were able to do was sit down with the opposition House leaders and work out an agreement on whatever it was that they wanted to do in that session or that year.

This is the way it worked: The Premier would go to the government House leader and say, "Here is what cabinet would like to have done in this calendar year—12 months. I don't care how you work it out at House leaders'. Just go work it out. But here are the things that I want: I want Bills 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 done by Christmas and I want Bills 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 done by spring. These are must-dos; we have to get them done." But of course, the government had probably double and triple that amount of bills that they were going to put on the order paper through those sessions. So the government House leader knew what his marching orders were.

That actually meant to say that the Premier's office had to manage, had to figure out what they wanted and had to be able to figure out a way of what it was they wanted and when they needed it. They really had to manage it in the sense of being clear with their House leader about what they wanted.

Then the government House leader would come in to the House leaders' meetings and say, "Okay, here's what I need. What do you guys want?" The opposition would say, "Well, on Bill 2 and on Bill 7, we want more time at second reading. We want to be able to travel the bill on committee across Ontario in the intersession."

The opposition would give its wants when it came to how much time we were going to have on bills and debate. That was a good thing, Mr. Speaker, because the bills that really needed public attention were the bills that were being flagged by the opposition for more time—not all of them, but some of them, the key ones.

Here's the kicker: The bills actually travelled outside the Legislature so that the people of Ontario—do you remember those people, Mr. Speaker, the people that we work for, the citizens of Ontario? Well, they actually got a chance to come to places like Thunder Bay, Ottawa, Cornwall, Sarnia and Timmins and to be able to speak to the bill and say, "I like this. Please change that. I don't like this. Please don't do it." They just gave their views.

The committee would come back. All members on all sides of the House would sit at committee. They would do clause-by-clause. They would amend the bill, based on what they heard. What you ended up with was a better product at the end. That's the way that it worked.

But here's the thing: Not every bill was debated at full infinitum at second reading, and hardly a bill was even debated at third reading.

It was Jim Bradley, the member from wherever, St. Catharines—

Mr. John Vanthof: St. Catharines.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: —St. Catharines, I think it is, who was the opposition House leader at the time I was in government, in the early 1990s. When time allocation was brought in, Mr. Bradley pointed out correctly that third reading would completely change as a result of time allocation. Prior to time allocation, there was no debate at

third reading—hardly ever. But he said, “I guarantee you now, we will debate everything at third reading as long as we can,” and that’s exactly what’s happening.

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What the government has done by bringing time allocation to this House on these bills is that they’ve forced the opposition to debate every bill entirely at length as long as we can by the standing orders, which is six and a half hours at second reading; to use all the time in a time allocation motion, which is two hours each; and use all the time we can at third reading, which is two hours per bill—so far, unless the government changes that in the time allocation motion, which they probably will at one point.

My question to the government members in the backbench—you’ve been told this is a great strategy—and for cabinet ministers who are here as well: Are you really saving any time by using time allocation to deal with these bills? I would argue not.

The government moved Bill 18 by way of time allocation. Now, I need a little bit of help because I don’t have it. That was which one? Ah, there we go. My House team is—

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I got it. It was the Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Bill 18 was a bill that was brought through the House. Bill 15, Bill 10, Bill 21, Bill 7, Bill 35—without referring to each one of them because I don’t have the list in front of me, the issue is that a lot of those bills probably would not have been debated any longer than two or three hours at second reading. You probably would have had a lead by the minister on the bill. You probably would have had an hour, maybe a little bit less, by the critics of each party, a couple of speeches and done, into committee.

In fact, out of the seven bills that the government has brought before us, these seven bills, I will argue, would have not had six and half hours each of debate at second reading. Some of them would have had less. But here’s the thing: In exchange, we would have said, “Let’s travel some of these bills.” The government told us, and we found out through this fall session, that they didn’t want to have the bills travelled in the intersession because they wanted the bills passed by the end of the session this December.

Well, okay, if that’s what the government wanted, the opposition would have said, “Okay. We have a constituency week coming up in there. Let’s use the constituency week to do the hearings outside of Toronto”; and possibly we might have been open to the idea of travelling the bill while the House sat. But at least there would have been an opportunity for the public to have their say on the bills and the government would have gotten its entire agenda through the House. But instead, the government says, “I’m going to time-allocate it.” My point is this: By the very nature of going the time allocation route, it’s less efficient use of this time than it would be if we just did things the way we normally should, by negotiations with the House leaders.

And the other thing is that it’s a failure of management on the part of the Premier and the House leader. If they can’t manage seven little bills through the House by way of an agreement with the opposition, both the Premier and the opposition leader, well, then it’s a failure of management on their part. What does that say about the management of government overall? If they can’t manage a little agenda—a legislative agenda is seven bills on time allocation, and they’ve got Bills 6, 7, 9, 13, 37, 40, 45, 49 and 52, so they’ve got about 10 other bills on the order paper to deal with. If you’re going to tell me that as a government you can’t prioritize those 10 plus these seven for a total of 17 bills, and prioritize at the beginning of the fall which of these bills you wanted passed by the end of December and which ones you wanted to get done in the intersession, it’s a failure on your part. It means to say that the Premier is not taking the time to seriously look at her legislative agenda as to what it is she, along with her cabinet, actually needs passed by the second week of December, and it’s a failure on her part to decide what her priorities are, which stifles her government House leader to be able to do his job. I don’t think the government should be proud that time allocation is solving anything, because what it does is, it exposes the government’s inability to manage. If you can’t manage 17 bills through the House, how are you going to manage the Ministry of Health? How are you going to manage the Ministry of Education, if you can’t even manage 17 bills through the House?

I say to the government across the way, I listen to the comments, especially the new backbenchers within the government caucus, and I don’t begrudge your comments. I used to be a government backbencher, elected in 1990, and I used to think that everything my cabinet did and my Premier did was the bee’s knees to everything. My God, we had the God-inherent right to govern. I believed all that pap at that time, too. It took me a while to figure out that, in fact, the only people being disserved were the constituents that we represented. It took the wisdom of certain members of this House—remember Bob Nixon? He was a Liberal, by the way, in case you don’t know who he is. But guys like Bob Nixon, Mr. Scott, Mr. Bradley, Mr. Rae, Mr. Pouliot, Mr. Laughren, Mr. Eves—it took listening to the speeches that they had in this House and the conversations I had with those people around the committees and around this House to slowly understand that the British parliamentary system is an amazing system if you allow it to work.

You know, it was at one time a king who decided everything, decided literally life and death. At one point, the British, with the amazing history of the British parliamentary system and how it developed, created a Parliament in order to limit the power of the king. That’s what Parliaments were all about. Initially, it was to stop the king from being able to utilize his complete authority to the detriment of the people of England. You know, why did they bring the Magna Carta around King John? It was to stop the excesses of King John. So we created a Parliament. Parliament was around before King John, but

Parliament started exerting its authority and its power over the years so that we could limit the authority of the king so that it is measured and done for the good of the people. Now we have kings, or in this case a queen, but the real executive power no longer resides with the monarch. It resides with your Premier and with your cabinet.

So this Legislature, essentially, is here to make sure that we approve the budgetary measures of the government and we deal with the money issues—because anything that has to do with money has to be approved through this House, and that's the way it should be—and the policies of the government. And if you think, as a member of this House, either on the opposition side or the government side, that time allocation is a wonderful tool that allows you to do your jobs and makes Parliament more efficient, well, I just suggest that you go back and read your history of Parliament and how it was developed. You'll learn an appreciation that the British parliamentary system, as Winston Churchill said, is the best of the worst systems of democracy that we have, because over almost 1,000 years, we've developed this check and balance system in which the legislative and the executive are able to cohabit in a way that complements each other. So if we allowed Parliament to work the way that it was, I think we'd probably be in a much better position to be able to actually get the agenda of the House done through here.

Let's look at what's left. I'm going to leave the rest of the time in a few minutes for my colleagues who want to speak to this. But the government's got a couple of more bills that I imagine might be time-allocated. They've got Bill 6, the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act. I would not be surprised to see the government time-allocate that. They've got Bill 7 to enact the Burden Reduction Reporting Act. They might time-allocate that. I'm not going to go through the 17 bills, but the point is, there are a lot of those bills that would have gotten no debate time, or hardly any, if the government had actually negotiated with the opposition to be able to get things done.

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: There goes the new government member. My God, he's a parliamentary authority already. You remind me of me when I used to be over there as a new member.

Mr. Grant Crack: How many bills did we get passed last session?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: No, no. Listen, I admit it. I freely admit, when I got elected in this place, I was in a majority government and I thought just like you. But it's taken me a lot of years to figure out that, in fact, the government is doing itself a disservice. The reality is that we would not have debated all of these bills ad infinitum, because we would have had to give something to the government. That's how it works. If the government had come in and said, "We have 17 bills that we're going to have on the order paper this fall; here are the three or four that we want passed, third reading, by the end of

December, and here are the ones that can go into the intersession," we would have sat down and worked something out. And yes, the government would have been forced by the opposition to travel a couple of bills in committee, maybe in the November 11 break and maybe in the intersession in January or February. But that's what Parliament is all about.

I would only end on this point: We have not travelled bills in this House in a long, long time in the way that we used to. We've had some travelling committees, but not anywhere near what we used to. The great thing about committees was, when members of all sides of the House were forced to share the plane, share the bus, share the hotel—not the rooms but share our meals and stuff—members actually sat down and got to know each other.

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You know what? There's not a person who is elected to this place who is not an honourable person. There's not a person who is elected to this place who has a monopoly on anything. All of us are trying to do the right thing on all sides of the House. But what committee did was it showed us the human side of the relationship as parliamentarians and it allowed us to do our jobs better, because some of those people who were on committee eventually ended up in positions of leadership, in both parties. You grow together as far as learning and getting to appreciate each other's position, and it allows this place to work a lot better.

I would argue that the government is doing a great disservice by doing time allocation and should heed the advice of the opposition and actually sit down and try to negotiate how we get the agenda of the government through the House. I accept, as an opposition member, that the government has to have its way in the end. That's the way the system works. But the government has to accept that we have the authority and we have the responsibility to give scrutiny to those bills.

With that, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to other people who have something to say in this debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Jim McDonell: It's unfortunate that I have to stand to talk again about another time allocation bill that has come before us. We have a government here—this is about the seventh bill they've brought through, and you've got to wonder why, especially with this bill, because the last time they introduced it, it was over a year before it came back up for debate. Obviously in that time there was nobody really opposing it. We were debating it, but they never even called it for debate for over a year. So why, all of a sudden, does this one have to be rushed through?

I think it's become clear, because I remember speaking on it the last time—it was one of my first debates in the House, actually—that it was an embarrassment to this government. They didn't want to talk about all the details around the G20 conference that was held. When they enacted kind of a secret regulation, they didn't even tell all the police forces about it, and it led to a lot of con-

fusion, more arrests in this country than have ever happened in the history of it. I know it's only coming up to 150 years old, but this government's claim to fame is over 1,100 arrests. It just talked about a fiasco and really about not thinking things through.

We see this is another bill that, yes, I guess restricts some of the powers of the minister, which we see now from the G20 was well overdue. We saw some of the talks about the Ombudsman at the time. André Marin said that it was an illegal regulation that resulted in a massive breach of civil liberties. I saw some of the videos that went on there, and it really was an embarrassment. This looked like a Third World country. The one instance where the amputee's leg was pulled off and he was arrested because he wouldn't move—those are just things that you're really not very proud to see happen in this province, let alone this country, but that was happening under the Liberal watch.

Roy McMurtry's comments in the independent inquiry found the act "beyond troubling" and recommended that it be repealed. Of course, we agreed with that. At that time, the bill was introduced—I guess it was Bill 51—and it sat there. They didn't want to debate it because any debate that we had pointed out major failings of this government. That's something they have found a way around now. With time allocation, they can push this through and get it through without debate and without our pointing out some of the issues that we saw with this bill.

I look through long lists—I guess this is seventh bill that they're pushing through on time allocation. Every one seems to have a common agenda: They don't want the debate that we think would be important. Bill 7, the Better Business Climate Act: Could there be anything worse than the regulation we have in this province? We would like to see it pass, anything that will take down regulation. But there is no debate on it. We have no say on what comes down, what this bill will include. I know they say it goes for amendments. There is no realistic public consultation.

Bill 8, public sector and MPP accountability: A laughable bill, and, of course, I can see why that, again, was time-allocated, with the failings of this government: the gas plant violations, the deletions—anything but accountability.

If you go around my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, people talk about this government and just can't believe that a government that acts this way is actually in the free world, let alone in Canada, and now they're talking about an accountability act.

Talking about the Advocate for Children and Youth Services, he was trying to get some investigative powers—negotiating with this government for six years. Somebody that was appointed by them, a commissioner of this Legislature, had restricted powers. The bill comes out and, my God, they forgot to include him in the bill. They sent him to amendments, if you can believe that.

He talked about how he's the only advocate for child and youth services in this country that has no investiga-

tive powers. Why wouldn't they do that? Why wouldn't they want to know where there are issues? I guess, again, anything that is a threat to them, anything that points out an issue with wrongdoing or just a lack of oversight just comes back to haunt them, so the easy way around is to make sure it doesn't happen. We're going to be working through amendments on that bill to see that we can get this important role—what is more vulnerable than our youth? He talked about getting phone calls from children in trouble but was not allowed to investigate—a sad state of affairs. For a government that seems to be encouraging that, it's hard to believe.

Another bill we looked at: child care modernization—the loss of 140,000 child care spots. Again, no meaningful discussion with independent child care providers, which welcome being licensed. Now they have to join either a franchise or an association. All that does is drive up costs and make it—the people they should be helping, the people who are on low incomes who are having a hard time finding meaningful work, especially when they have children, now will be taxed even further by increased rates—again, certainly not working for them. When will this government start looking around and seeing how much trouble there is?

I attended the new mayor-elect's swearing-in last night in Cornwall—a very nice ceremony. Mayor Leslie O'Shaughnessy—I sat with him in the counties, actually, in Charlottenburg township, before. He was a great mayor there, and we're looking for great things in the city of Cornwall.

Employees in social services came up, and they talked about—they were asking, "What can we do about hydro? We've got people in our riding who aren't getting services. They can't afford their hydro bills." They said that, generally, they used to have a way of covering some of these costs—United Way used to have money. We're starting at the beginning of the winter; there's no money there. What are people doing? I know, legally, there is a regulation that after December 1 you can't cut their power off, but they can limit the power with power limiters.

I talked to somebody just last week who had their power cut off. You know how expensive it is now to get it reconnected? These are people who can't afford their bills, especially after last year, where we went through and saw places where hydro went into people's bank accounts and took money out—more money than they were owed, and then refused to pay it back. Again, this is something that you wouldn't expect in a province like Ontario, where a government crown corporation had the ability to go in, overcharge people and then have the gall not to pay it back. We're talking, sometimes, well over \$1,000. You're looking at seniors that had cheques bouncing, rent cheques bouncing, because the government, in their wisdom, overcharged them and then refused—until it blew up last—it's funny how bad publicity changes things. When people became aware of how bad it was, all of a sudden all the things they couldn't do were just changed. All of a sudden there was no problem

to change it. Change was very quick—between bills, actually; less than a few weeks.

It's our job here to really bring scrutiny to this government, to provide a meaningful opposition. We're being cut off; we're not allowed to provide that service. In our system, that's a very important service. The member from Pembroke talked about the eagles and the owls. This is an eagle that seems to be ready to pounce on anything he can, and not always very favourably sometimes. I think we need a little more of the owls here on this side to point out some of the issues.

This bill will go through with no debate again, with a problem that was so international. This was a huge embarrassment to this country, the way this province, this government, ran the security around the G20, and now they're going to push through legislation without debate. I think that alone points out that this is a bill that should be allowed to move around in committee—should be able to talk to the experts and look at some of the fallacies or faults of this bill, because I'm sure there are some; there always are. Nobody gets everything perfect. But time allocation will push through a bill that this government had no hurry at all to put through just a year ago. Now, all of a sudden, it's a panic.

I think that speaks to the way this government is running things. This is the seventh bill now in a row that we see being pushed through—just introduced. Meanwhile, the province, as I say, is going to hell in a hand wagon, with youth unemployment at one of its highest levels. It's a sad shame. We just need to get back to properly running this government, having the opposition providing meaningful opposition, going through committee and actually being listened to.

I'm very curious after the ministry pointed to our Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth and suggested they will go the amendment route, because if the amendments actually get adopted, that will be a first that I can see. I sat through the last Legislature and this one as well, and amendments are just voted down, without any regard—and in some cases, when the bill was introduced, the amendments that they so strongly voted down were actually included in the new legislation.

Everybody remembers when the House was prorogued by former Premier McGuinty when things got too hot the last time. Bills that were sitting on the table with amendments that we had proposed were turned down, but when the bill was resurrected, they were put in. There's a case where there's no working together. I think that's a strong indication—and I remember that in the cellphone bill we were looking at the original bill that had your cellphone service cancelled on the day that your contract ran out and you lost your number, which I think was ridiculous. We tried to point that out to the minister of the day. We tried to put an amendment in, and both were turned down.

When we came back after prorogation, we were surprised that that very amendment was included in the bill. All of a sudden, it was a good idea. This is a government that doesn't seem to want to listen to the opposition, even

when it's an idea that obviously they thought was worthwhile. It speaks to what we're likely going to see going through committee on this bill. We're going to see a government that's likely not going to adopt any of the recommendations of the hearings that we go through, the amendments we would make and any of the amendments that are suggested by outside parties or by the third party.

I would encourage them—part of this—we've been very successful. We used to be the engine of Confederation until this government came to power. Everybody remembers that. People came to work in Ontario, but now it's not that way. I think that's because we're not running the government the way it should be run. The opposition does have some good ideas, some merit, and I think we should work together to put those amendments, or at least listen to them.

My son came back from working out in Fort McMurray for two years. One of his classmates in Toronto as a civil engineer out of Queen's couldn't get work—working as a waitress. She finally gave up looking for a job in her home province, moved out to Alberta and got a job within two days of moving out there. That's the difference. That used to be Ontario: where people got their jobs. Maybe not in every degree but some degrees like engineering, that's the way it used to be.

My time is up for this morning, so we will look forward to further debate.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): It is now 10:15. This Legislature stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1014 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'd like to acknowledge that Wendy Eaton, who is the mother of page captain Nicole Eaton, will be here today, and she'll be in the public gallery this morning.

Mr. Granville Anderson: It's with great pleasure that I announce the mother and friends of Hannah Hamilton: her mother, Jennifer Hamilton, and friends Renee Homenuck, Halley Gavey, Grace Marlow, Lilly Tuck and Ashley Best. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Vic Dhillon: I am very happy to introduce the family of page Tyler. They're here today: mother, Jennifer; father, Rodney; sister Hannah, sister Abby, brother Carter; and grandparents Kathy and Andy Jakiwchuk. Welcome. Tyler is doing an excellent job.

Mr. Arthur Potts: From the excellent riding of Beaches–East York, I have Canadian Martyrs Separate School in the House today. Parents Mila Viray, Kim Shum, Mark Hahn and Marjorie Lee are here with teachers Kelly Waywell and Robert Mycoot. Welcome to the House.

Mr. Han Dong: It's my pleasure to introduce to the House staff and delegates from the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance: Danielle Pierre, Jen Carter,

Rodrigo Narro Perez, Phil Lloyd and Sam Lambert. They're sitting in the members' east gallery. Welcome.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: We've got some distinguished guests from the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters who are visiting Queen's Park today: Jayson Myers, president and CEO, Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters; Craig McIntosh, executive chairman, Acrylon Plastics Inc., who is the CME's national board chair; Mathew Wilson, vice-president, national policy, Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters; David Fowler, CEO of Wescast Industries Inc.; Rory McAlpine, vice-president, government and industry relations, Maple Leaf Foods; Ian Howcroft, vice-president, Ontario, Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters; Rick Jamieson, CEO of ABS Friction Inc.; Bob Masterson, vice-president, responsible care, Chemistry Industry Association of Canada; Nancy Coulas, director of environment and energy policy, Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters; Steve Gushie, president, Carquest Canada Ltd.; John Margeson, manager, business and economics, Chemistry Industry Association of Canada; Jennifer Steeves, director of industry and consumer affairs, Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers' Association; and Norm Huebel, regional director, Ontario, Chemistry Industry Association of Canada.

We welcome them to Queen's Park.

Mr. Yvan Baker: This morning I had a chance to meet with three students from the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance. I'd just like to welcome them here to the members' gallery. We have Rebecca Little, academic affairs commissioner; Philip Lloyd, vice-president, university affairs, the Alma Mater Society at Queen's University; and Shawn Murphy, vice-president, university affairs, at Trent Oshawa Student Association. Welcome.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ABORIGINAL LAND CLAIMS

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is to the Premier.

The government is one that frequently suggests that it is open and transparent. In fact, recent initiatives, whether it has been Open Government or Bill 8, were designed to leave the public with the impression that your government listens. Unfortunately, with the Algonquin land claim in much of eastern Ontario, that hasn't been the case.

What's concerning here is that while there has been an agreement in principle, many people in the public, particularly in Ottawa, feel left out of the process.

Given that an entire region of Ontario will be impacted by the land claim, could the Premier provide an update on the status of public consultation?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I appreciate the question from the member opposite, and I know that the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs will want to comment. Let me just say that my understanding of the process that has been

under way for many years, actually—I was just checking; 20 years—in order to get this modern-day land claim right has been very comprehensive. I know when I was in the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, we were working with First Nations and working with community groups and municipalities to make sure that we landed in a place that would work for everyone.

Again, I appreciate the questions from the member opposite, but this has been a decades-long process and it is still under way.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: No one disputes that the land claim should be between the Algonquin peoples and the federal and provincial governments. I respect that and I know all Ontarians respect that. However, no public consultation was held until after the fact and only to “infill the detail of what will be contained in a final settlement.”

I'm sure that the Premier understand that a claim of this size impacts 117,000 acres, over one million people and the city of Ottawa, including other residents and municipalities across this province and anglers, hunters, cottagers and landowners. All they're asking for is transparency in the process moving forward with the additional agreements that will be in place.

Will the Premier review the government's plan for public consultation and provide Ontarians with the opportunity for further input into this process?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As I say, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, in the final supplementary, will give us exactly where we're at on this.

More than 20 years of negotiations, Canada, Ontario—and remember, the Canadian government, the Ontario government and the Algonquins of Ontario have consulted with stakeholders, with legal tenure holders, with adjacent landowners, with cottage associations and members of the public. My understanding is that there has also been an advisory group that has been part of this process, that has been a parallel part of this process. So it has been very thorough.

I appreciate the concerns of the member opposite that everyone who needs to have input have that input, but I would just reassure the member opposite and, quite frankly, the people of Ontario that this process has been extremely thorough. It is ongoing. The process has not been completed at this point.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Again, no one disputes the importance or length of this land claim. What is concerning, however, to people across the province, particularly those in eastern and northern Ontario, is that you're not allowing residents the opportunity to have input on harvesting, land use and waterways. This government once committed to the public that it would be consultative on negotiations of this type.

Premier, my question is: What has changed? Why won't the Premier update the public? We've given her two opportunities to do that today. Why is this govern-

ment refusing to allow public consultation on the Algonquin land claim, particularly in eastern Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Aboriginal Affairs.

Hon. David Zimmer: Thank you for the question. The fact of the matter is that this treaty negotiation has been going on for some 20 years. In the last two years, we've been approaching a draft agreement in principle. When that draft agreement in principle became available, we intensified the negotiations. There have been negotiations with municipalities. There have been negotiations with individual owners. There have been consultations with cottage owners. Anybody in the Ottawa River watershed on the Ontario side of the Ottawa River has been given an opportunity to attend these consultations.

I myself, as the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, have conducted three consultations here in the Legislature to which all members—Liberal, Tory and NDP—have been invited, and a number of you have attended or have sent staff. We have been open and above board with these consultations.

Mr. Crane, who is our principal negotiator, is continuing to have those negotiations—

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

ENERGY POLICIES

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is to the Premier, moving from one set of secret and private negotiations to another. The Green Energy Act has increased hydro rates; has been harmful to wildlife, animals as well as birds; and, according to the Auditor General, has lost us jobs. For every one created, we have lost four. Many municipalities oppose wind turbine developments in their communities because the government has stripped them of their locally based decision-making power. They are now forced to host these wind turbines despite the fact that they don't want them.

The leader of the official opposition has reintroduced legislation in order to ensure that locally based decision-making is given back to municipalities across the province. The question remains: Will the government support the leader of the official opposition's motion and allow us to give back locally based decision-making to our communities?

1040

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Just before I answer the first part of the question, I understand that Norm Sterling, our former member—where is he? He's somewhere. Where is—

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

Premier, I'm not happy with that one. I will even tell the Premier: Don't step on my job. I'm just going to do that. That's my fun opportunity. I do always want to introduce former members to give them the due respect. You've done that, but I want to make sure that people are aware of a sterling example in the west public gallery: from Carleton–Grenville in the 31st, 32nd, 33rd; Carleton

in the 34th, 35th and 36th; Lanark–Carleton in the 37th and 38th; and Carleton–Mississippi Mills in the 39th, Mr. Norm Sterling.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Now that she's stepped on my job, but—

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I apologize, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Premier, you're now in the middle of your answer.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Yes. I apologize.

To the member opposite: I think the member opposite knows full well that when I took on this role as Premier almost two years ago, I made it clear that we were going to change the process. That's exactly what has happened, Mr. Speaker. Mayors spoke to us, communities spoke to us, and we have changed the process so that there is increased control over decision-making by those local communities. That is built right into the process.

We are very proud of the clean renewable energy sources in this province. We're also proud of an industry that was jump-started because of our focus on clean renewable energy, but we knew that there were some changes that had to be made, and we made those changes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Norm Sterling here today was the first to tell me I should run for the Ontario PC leadership, and I support his determination.

I also supported Norm Sterling back in 2009, when we on this side of the House all unanimously opposed the Green Energy Act, which, by the way, overrides 21 different pieces of legislation, including the Ontario Heritage Act and the Planning Act, so wind turbine developers can build wind turbines in communities that don't want them without any pushback by local residents.

Now, despite what the government claims, their new procurement process promises more community input, but it hasn't really changed. Just ask the 72 unwilling host communities across this province. The only way to truly allow municipalities and their residents to have their say on wind turbine developments is to support the leader of the official opposition's bill. So will the Premier listen to rural Ontario and restore locally based decision-making once and for all?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me just be clear on what the member opposite is suggesting. What she is suggesting is that we tear up contracts that are already in place, we enter processes that are already under way—

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I do.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I think the volume of the reaction is in direct proportion to the veracity of what I'm saying. The reality is that I came into this office and said we were going to change the process. We have changed the process. There is more local control, Mr. Speaker. We have built that right into the process so that communities

can have that control that, quite frankly, I think is a good thing. I think it's a good thing for there to be that kind of local control.

I also think it's a good thing that our clean energy policies have created more than 42,000 jobs. That's a very important aspect of our economic recovery. We will continue to work with communities and make sure those decisions are made locally.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: With a response like that, there's no wonder, of course, that to find a Liberal in rural Ontario is a rare sighting indeed. One of the biggest challenges that this government has is credibility with rural and remote communities across all of Ontario. The rural-urban divide is caused by disastrous policies like the Green Energy Act.

If the Premier is serious about enfranchising rural Ontarians, she will support the leader of the official opposition's bill. It is reasonable. It is never too late to admit you are wrong. Will the Premier reverse her decision to override 21 separate pieces of legislation and make wind turbine developers go through the same processes any other developer would have to go through in the process of Ontario? Yes or no?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Because of the policies that we have put in place, the air is cleaner in Ontario. We have 2,700 clean tech firms that employ 65,000 people in the clean technology sector. Because of the policies that we have put in place and because of the industry—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Huron-Bruce, come to order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: When I travelled to China with the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment and the Minister of International Trade, we were able to take clean tech companies with us and talk to leaders in China who are desperately looking for solutions to the terrible pollution problems they have in that country. We live in the world; we do not live in isolation from the rest of the world. It is our responsibility to do everything we can to have a cleaner environment. That's the side that we're on.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. People who rely on social assistance count on every penny, but when a family sees a cheque for nearly \$200 reduced to \$1.70, or a family of five gets a support cheque for \$5, that means they're stuck.

The Premier and her minister yesterday insisted that this was only an issue with overpayments and that people weren't hurt. Now we know that that's not true. Will the Premier correct her record?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I actually said that my understanding was that there was about 1% of the

500,000 cheques that go out every month where there was a problem, and I didn't actually know, in that 1% of cheques, what the issue was, whether it was underpayment or overpayment. But what I asked first thing yesterday morning was that we check into that and we make sure that people were getting money and that those situations were rectified.

I am absolutely in agreement with the member opposite that people who are dependent on the social assistance system need our support and we need to make sure they get the money that they rely on, because it is imperative that they have that every month. So the minister is working on that. You know, I wish that this technological issue hadn't happened, but the system will be better for those clients in the long run.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Some of the most vulnerable Ontarians are being hurt by a computer problem that the government was warned about last February. The Premier was saying that problems with the Social Assistance Management System are just minor glitches, but this is what people were facing: One parent was owed \$170.35 for the Transition Child Benefit, but instead she got \$1.79; a family with five children got an assistance cheque for \$5. That minor glitch might be the difference between making rent or not for that family.

Will the Premier make sure that she does absolutely everything she can to make sure all of the issues that are outstanding are addressed immediately?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Absolutely. I absolutely will do that. The minister and I have spoken this morning, and she is in communication with municipalities. She's going to be talking to some of the offices to get a handle on exactly what is happening at the local level. She has already spoken to some of the municipalities' leadership.

I am not minimizing in any way the impact on individual families. I understand that this is a very serious problem for an individual family. But we are introducing a new system that will help those individual families and all the families like them to get better service because caseworkers will be able to spend more time with them once this system is updated.

It is not acceptable that certain families would have had to undergo this problem, and we are working as hard as we can to make sure that those situations are rectified, but I want the system to work better for them in the medium and long term.

1050

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Those very same problems that the Premier has insisted are just minor glitches have meant that people's support cheques were going to their exes, to non-existent bank accounts, or to former trustees for those people.

The Premier was warned about these problems nearly a year ago. Why did she ignore the concerns that were being raised and rush into a computer system that wasn't

ready, causing havoc for hundreds and hundreds of Ontarians?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: There was no rushing into this process. It was a very well-thought-through process, and it has not been perfect. Every month, \$570 million worth of cheques is sent out in Ontario Works and ODSP payments—\$570 million in cheques. The outstanding overpayments, the issue that we're dealing with right now, is in the order of \$123,000.

Mostly the system worked, but there were some situations that I have already said are unacceptable, and for those families that was not a minor glitch. For those families, it was a very serious thing. We are working to rectify it. As I said, in the long term, in the medium term, the system will be better for all of those families because their workers will be able to spend more time with them.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The next question is also for the Premier. The Premier and her minister have insisted that they acted as soon as they learned about problems with their new computer system, but the government got a letter from front-line workers back in February 2014. That's nearly a year ago. In fact, I'll send it over to the Premier as a reminder.

Will the Premier come clean and admit that she was warned nearly a year ago in that letter, and that she did nothing until the whole issue blew up just a couple of days ago?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The fact is that this implementation has been ongoing, and as there have been concerns, those concerns have been addressed. It did not mean that there was no problem with the implementation; we've already acknowledged that there were problems. But I have no way of knowing whether this letter sent from OPSEU was identifying issues that actually were addressed in the implementation. My suspicion is that they were. I certainly will double-check that with the minister.

The reality is that this is a system that needed to be updated. The new system will allow caseworkers to spend more time with their clients, and that is the objective. The objective is to have better time spent with the clients.

I am absolutely clear that it's unacceptable that some families have had an issue with this implementation. We are working on making sure that it's corrected for everyone.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It wasn't just Ontario's front-line workers who were warning the Liberals. They were consulting with Minnesota and Maryland, two states in the US who use the same software. Last December, the governor of Minnesota wrote to the makers of SAMS and said, "Your product has made it impossible to provide Minnesotans with reasonable customer service." That sounds familiar.

Why didn't the Premier listen when red flags were being raised by other jurisdictions using the same software that failed Ontarians just so recently?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let's just look at this situation. This system is actually used. It's state-of-the-art software that's used by Australia, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Germany and New York city. This system will deliver social assistance programs more efficiently. It will give clients 24/7 access to a portal that will allow them to get their case information. I think that is a very good thing, that people are able to get their case information; they can get it online at any time of day.

Kira Heineck, who is head of the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association, said this. She said it's "going to be a better system than the one we had before." It seems to me that that has to be the measure of the changes that government makes: Are the systems that we put in place better than what we had before? Are the implementations as smooth as they can be? Yes. Do we have to correct when there are problems? Absolutely, and that is what we're doing.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The fact is, when the alarm was sounding about a computer problem that would mean major problems for the most vulnerable Ontarians, the Liberal government stuck its fingers in its ears.

People on social assistance have a difficult time making ends meet already, and with the holidays around the corner, it's even more difficult. The problem that was created by the Premier meant that some people got only 1% of the money that they were counting on.

The Premier is out of touch. This isn't a glitch. It's an issue that's affecting people's lives in a very, very serious way. Will the Premier immediately call her minister into her office and haul her on the carpet about why this went so wrong?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, that may be the way the leader of the third party deals with people, but on this side of the House, we work together, we find solutions, and we make sure that when there's a problem, we solve the problem. So the minister and I have had a number of conversations. I know that she is working very hard to make sure that this situation gets addressed.

Here's what I'm focused on today. I'm focused on making sure that next month, this doesn't happen; making sure that whatever the issues were, they don't happen next month; and making sure that this month—because I agree with the member opposite that this is a time when families are gathering, and we want people to have their resources—people get what they are entitled to in this next round.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Mr. Bill Walker: My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, in response to the scandal brewing with your quarter-billion-dollar so-

cial assistance management system, SAMS—or scams—that resulted in \$20 million in overpayments to 17,000 individuals last week, you stated yesterday it was nothing, a small glitch that you fixed in an effective way.

The front-line staff disagree with you. They made over 6,000 calls to report problems with the new system. Again, it's your word against theirs. Clearly, they don't want you to sweep this under the rug. Minister, will you be transparent and accountable and commit to re-striking the estimates committee so we can get to the bottom of this and prevent any more nightmares for these people?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Thank you to the member opposite for this question. I certainly want to thank our front-line workers and our municipal partners for their very hard work on this issue. I know that they're working overtime. I want to acknowledge that adapting to the new system has been stressful, and we do thank them all for their patience.

We will continue to support local offices as they get comfortable with the new system, and they have our support. We have sent out additional staff to local offices. As we've said so many times in this House both yesterday and today, when an error was identified by those front-line workers, we immediately took action to reverse the impact of that particular error so that within 24 hours approximately 99% of payments were stopped or retracted immediately.

We know that cheques went out yesterday. I would simply like to say, in terms of those vulnerable people, if they notice an error, contact their caseworker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Bill Walker: Again, my question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Your own confidential ministry documents show that problems were identified last October, a year ago. You had to delay implementation in March and then again in July. You knew there were problems. It's obvious they weren't fixed, but you went ahead anyway. The front-line workers who knew about these problems should be able to be in estimates and identify these and testify.

Minister, if you really want to thank the front-line staff and respect them, you'll commit to re-striking the estimates committee and allowing them to testify. Minister, will you do the right thing? Will you re-strike the committee and allow those front-line workers to come and tell the truth?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: While we acknowledge that adapting to the new system can be stressful, we have been working with caseworkers and our service delivery partners to help them learn the new system and support them in this transition. When I received the letter from OPSEU and from CUPE, I actually visited a couple of offices to see the training first-hand. I attended at the Hamilton office, the municipal office. I went out to the Newmarket ODSP office. I could see that there was a need for more training, and I immediately took action and instructed my officials to ensure that everyone would feel comfortable when we went live in mid-November.

Even before implementation, the ministry made significant investments in training to help front-line staff

prepare for the transition. Over the past three years, we have been working with our service delivery partners, including front-line staff on the requirements, design and testing of the new system. We have trained some 11,000 users in approximately 257 offices, and we know that at the end of the day, we will have a very—

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

New question.

1100

POVERTY

Ms. Cindy Forster: My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services.

Each month, Speaker, 375,000 people in this province turn to food banks. That is a 20% increase since this government launched its Poverty Reduction Strategy in 2008. When it comes to putting food on the table and a roof over the heads of every family in Ontario, the Liberals have failed to get the job done. The government's inaction has left hundreds of thousands of people in poverty.

Will the minister admit that this Liberal government has failed to address the desperate needs of Ontario families living in poverty and has failed to reduce the use of food banks in our province?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Thank you to the member for Welland for the question. As I'm sure she's aware, we have re-struck our Poverty Reduction Strategy, under the very capable leadership of the President of the Treasury Board, to address a number of issues as they relate to poverty. In particular, I think the member should know that our government is committed to making long-term improvements to social assistance programs. It's in my mandate letter, and I will continue to work in this regard. We have made it a priority to improve the social services system and help people in need to participate fully in our communities and our economy.

Building on the rate increase—I believe you probably voted against it in the 2013 budget—our government will increase social assistance rates again in 2014, voted against twice by the member of the third party. We are adding an additional 1% for adults, Ontario Works recipients and people with disabilities receiving—

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: The minister can make excuses, but the numbers speak for themselves: 130,000 children rely on food banks each and every month. That's a staggering number of kids going hungry in this province. Seven hundred thousand meals are served by our amazing food banks—who do a lot of fundraising—each and every month. And the numbers of families turning to food banks for the first time increased by over 20% this year. That's the reality of poverty in our communities. That's the reality of failed Liberal policies and promises.

Will the minister admit that with no target, no timeline and no urgency to reduce poverty, this Liberal government still has no real plan to improve poverty for many Ontarians in this province?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Minister responsible for the poverty reduction strategy.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I completely reject the argument being made across the way that our Poverty Reduction Strategy is not making a real difference in the lives of people. Let's take, for example, a single mom with two kids who is working full-time at a minimum wage job. When we took office, her income would have been less than \$20,000. It is now almost \$35,000. That family is doing far, far better now because of the changes we have made. But we are by no means finished. We are just beginning our work on poverty reduction.

In our first strategy, we identified eight indicators, because poverty is also about breaking the cycle of poverty and improving outcomes for kids in schools. All of our eight indicators have demonstrated that we have made progress. Our new Poverty Reduction Strategy is looking very, very closely and strategically at the issue of homelessness. We can eliminate homelessness. We can eliminate chronic homelessness, and that is what we are going to do, Speaker.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: My question is to the Associate Minister of Health, Long-Term Care and Wellness.

Minister, the health, safety and satisfaction of our long-term-care-home residents is a high priority for this government. Indeed, the fact that you have been appointed to oversee our long-term-care homes is evidence of that. We are well aware that the government is obligated to ensure residents' rights and safety and the quality of life for those in long-term care. Part of how we do that is through the inspection system for long-term-care homes. Although I'm familiar with this process, the people of my riding of Ottawa-Orléans in Ontario may be interested in hearing about this government's inspection initiative.

Mr. Speaker, could the associate minister provide us with some background on the essential purpose of long-term-care-home inspections?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: Thanks to the member from Ottawa-Orléans for this very important question.

The member is quite right. The Premier has indeed charged me with providing a laser-like focus on long-term care. In particular, my number one priority is the safety of all 77,000 residents in Ontario's long-term-care homes. And it is in this context that we have committed to performing a comprehensive annual inspection of all of the 632 homes. The inspections, which are unannounced, ensure that long-term-care homes in Ontario are indeed providing the highest levels of care. The inspections serve not only to find out if there are any weaknesses, but also to work with long-term-care homes to improve our processes so that our residents continue to feel truly at home and safe in their homes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: The people of Ottawa-Orléans will be glad to know that the Associate Minister

of Health and Long-Term Care and Wellness is concerned with senior safety and is making long-term-care-home inspections her top priority. However, speaking as someone with a background in senior and long-term care, I'm apprehensive about the sheer number of inspections that have to occur in a one-year period.

Speaker, through you to the minister: Can the associate minister assure us that the ministry has properly trained staff to deal with the volume and to enforce these inspections at 630 long-term-care homes per year?

Hon. Dipika Damerla: Thanks again to the member for this important question. I want to reassure the member and the House that indeed, we do have the capacity at the ministry to conduct inspections at all 632 homes. That is why we have hired and trained additional long-term-care inspectors. In 2003, the ministry only had 59 inspectors working; today we have 170. The supplementary inspectors hired will enable my ministry to ensure that every single long-term-care-home inspection is scheduled by the end of 2014.

My ministry has taken concrete steps to ensure the accuracy and depth of new resident quality inspections. These inspections are resident-focused, with an emphasis placed on quality of care and quality of life. All inspections will place a high importance on interviewing the residents, family council and staff of the establishment.

FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

Minister, yesterday your government levied a new tax grab in the form of service fees to hunters and anglers of this province, an increase of 23% in certain instances. Minister, this isn't a basic one-fee-for-all-services but a fee for each and every service. It means \$2 is added to each of a multitude of licences a hunter-angler must purchase, such as an outdoors card, various fishing and game licences, and tags for the harvest. This comes in addition to the yearly price increases to licences. This isn't a simple \$2 increase, as you like to portray.

Minister, you justify these new fees based on your claim that the special purpose account is declining. However, nobody knows the details of the special purpose account because you're ignoring legislation and refusing to table the documents.

Minister, instead of introducing new fees, why will you not release the details of the special purpose account to show hunters and anglers how their money is being spent?

Hon. Bill Mauro: I thank the member for the question. I would say that when the Conservatives brought in the special purpose account, the intention of the account was to be funded to the tune of about \$100 million annually. About 66%, or \$66 million, of that would come from the licences and fees that were paid by hunters and anglers in the community across the province of Ontario. It's our intention to continue to try and meet that percentage base from the hunters and fishers from the

fees that they pay. If we don't do that, the very programming that the account was intended to provide for can't be met.

I know that the member opposite has a very keen interest in that. I know he's had briefings where he's asked about expenditures from this account within his own riding.

It's the intent of this account to be able to continue to meet that mandate, providing hunting and fishing, good programming, and fish and wildlife management in the province of Ontario. That's the intention, Speaker. I would say as well—well, I'll provide the further information on this in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Minister, I've asked the questions; I just want an answer.

Minister, if only the hunters and anglers knew how their money is being spent. I've recently just found out that over 14%—or \$9.9 million—of the special purpose account money that is to be used in the management of resources like deer and fish goes to administering the burdensome licensing system that your government has created. Over half of that money goes to the United States, none of which is invested in our economy or resource management. In fact, over the course of the contract you signed, over \$34.12 million of the special-purpose account will go to the United States. Instead of finding efficiencies in the administration of the system, you create new fees.

1110

Minister, hunters and anglers, like most Ontarians, do not trust this government with their money. Why will you not show some good faith, repeal the new fees, release the special purpose account documents and bring the licensing system home to Canada where it belongs?

Hon. Bill Mauro: Before the fees that the member refers to came into effect on December 1 this year, there was a significant period of consultation that was undertaken, going back at least one to one and a half years ago. The decision was made then that the fees would come into effect on December 1.

It's not as if these fees just came forward and were forced down the throats of anybody. There was significant consultation undertaken, and I know that OFAH came forward with the view that, rather than having a little bit every year, perhaps this was the approach they would prefer on a go-forward basis.

The member raises a fair point: I said in a response to a question he asked last week that those reports he has been asking about will be brought forward in very short order. I can't speak to why they haven't been brought forward in the past over three years; it's our intention to have them tabled within the Legislature in the very near future.

COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: This past weekend, I met with people in my riding of Windsor West to hear stories about how CCAC service cuts have impacted their lives.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister, please?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Sorry. To the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

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

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: The round table was hosted by our leader, Andrea Horwath, and I was accompanied by my colleagues from Essex and Windsor–Tecumseh. We heard from people like Sandra Havens and Sharon Mueller, who had their home care services reduced or cut off completely. These are the same service cuts that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care has been denying for weeks.

Now that the minister can no longer deny that these service cuts are affecting real people, will he finally commit to ceasing further reductions in CCAC services and restore services to all those affected by the cuts?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm aware of the leader of the third party hosting this meeting and rally this past weekend in Windsor and speaking to some of the individuals concerned. It's unfortunate for this meeting that the CCAC was not invited to attend as well, so that they could actually hear some of these concerns from the public.

On November 10, I know that the member opposite and two of her colleagues met with the CEO of the local Erie St. Clair CCAC and talked about the plans going forward to address the deficit. It's important to understand the challenge that the Erie St. Clair CCAC is facing. There was a review done by the LHIN and by the CCAC some time ago, leading to the projection of a deficit, and part of that was evidence that showed that the level of nursing services provided by Erie St. Clair was actually 33%—

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

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: The same day that the CCAC received an influx of funding, people in my riding continued to be told that their services were being reduced or cut off. Peggy Hoover was told that the CCAC would no longer be administering IV treatment to her diabetic husband, and that this duty now fell to her. Sandra Havens, who suffers from MS, was told last month that her assistance from the community care access centre was being completely cut off.

While I'm relieved that the CCAC is less burdened by debt, the issue has always been more than spreadsheets. Will the minister apologize to my constituents and commit to providing them with adequate home care?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: The member opposite knows that I'm working very closely with the LHIN, as well as the CCAC. But I mentioned that when Erie St. Clair did the analysis, they found that the level of nursing services was actually one third higher than for the province, despite similar demographics. In fact, for patients who are in the mild needs category, it's twice as high as it is in the provincial average.

The CCAC CEO—responsibly, I think—undertook a review to see how they could bring that CCAC more in sync with the rest of the province in terms of what is

being provided, and in fact it was on my instruction last week that an additional \$4.1 million was provided to the CCAC. That actual process was in process long before the member opposite raised her concerns here in the Legislature. We'll continue to make sure they get back to balance, and it may take an additional year to do that. We're going to make sure that patient care does not suffer.

IMMIGRANTS' SKILLS

Mr. Vic Dhillon: My question is to the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade. Minister, Ontario is consistently ranked the number one province for immigrants to call home. Many of my constituents tell me that one of the biggest challenges facing new immigrants is the transition to a new workforce. For many highly skilled newcomers, the qualifications needed in their field differ from their home country. In order to start providing for their families and integrating into their communities, these newcomers need assistance to find a job in their field.

Minister, could you tell the House what action Ontario is taking to help our immigrants transition?

Hon. Michael Chan: I want to thank the member from Brampton West for asking. As an immigrant myself, I know how critical it is for Ontario to develop programs that will help newcomers. Ontario recognizes that nearly three of every four working-age immigrants arriving in Ontario have a post-secondary education. When we can effectively engage them in our workforce, everyone will benefit. This is why we have 92 active bridge training projects in place to help highly skilled newcomers access licensure and employment in their field. So far, our projects have assisted close to 50,000 newcomers in over 100 professions to continue their career in Ontario. We are proud that the Ontario bridge training program is working.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Vic Dhillon: Thank you, Minister, for the answer.

The minister is not the only immigrant here today. In fact, many members from all sides of the House came here from another country or are the children of Canadian immigrants. We should be able to agree that newcomers are a vital part of Ontario's economic and cultural fibre. They need and deserve our help to integrate and adapt, particularly in the workforce, but instead of what should be a united front, we too often see newcomers being treated as a second priority.

Speaker, will the minister tell us what the government of Ontario is doing to ensure that the programs newcomers need are being protected?

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you again for the question. Our bridge training programs help highly skilled immigrants from a variety of fields, and we are committed to continuing these services. We have budgeted to contribute over \$63 million over three years. In 2014 alone, we provided over \$26 million to these programs. Without this funding, bridge training services would not

be able to operate. We are making sure that highly skilled immigrants from around the world can obtain the fast-track training and customized services needed to quickly and effectively transition into our workforce.

Ontario, Canada is the land of hope and opportunities for newcomers. Our goal is to help them succeed because we know that when newcomers succeed, Ontario succeeds.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Rick Nicholls: My question to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, on the same day the Erie St. Clair LHIN gave millions in bailout dollars to one group, they told another group that they need to prove their worth. The community care access centre has managed to run a \$5-million deficit only eight months into this current year. The CCAC CEO's salary has jumped 37% in the last five years, and the number of employees making more than \$100,000 has more than doubled to 21 from nine during that same time period. This agency was given a multi-million-dollar bailout. Now, compare that with the Leamington District Memorial Hospital, one of the province's most efficient small hospitals, whose obstetrics unit's future is unsure.

My question, Minister, is this: Why is the Leamington District Memorial Hospital left hanging while the CCAC is given bailout after bailout?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I don't know how the member opposite can say that the CEO's salary has increased that dramatically over five years since she only started at the CCAC in May of this year. But I have to say that, apart from the fact that Bill 8, which is making its way through the Legislature, addresses this specific issue, I think one part of the question that the member opposite asked, which is the issue of executive compensation—and I do want to say as well that the proportion of CCAC funding that goes to executive or management-level compensation has actually decreased substantially since 2007. The administrative costs that are attributed to our CCACs have also declined over a similar period. So we're taking those steps and putting them in place but, importantly, Bill 8, I think, is going to give us additional tools so that we can address that issue of executive compensation.

1120

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Minister, back in December 2012, the Erie St. Clair LHIN was forced to postpone knee and hip replacement surgeries because it had used up its budget. The same scenario happened last year, and this year we're waiting with bated breath just to see what happens.

In 2013, the CCAC had to ask for an additional \$4.5 million in funding, and now the CCAC is forcing your hand, forcing the Ministry of Health to actually give them a \$4.1-million bailout. Yet Leamington District Memorial Hospital remains with a \$2-million shortfall, forcing obstetrics to close.

Leamington residents cannot understand why this government has millions to spare each time the LHIN or

CCAC runs out of money, but can't spare the needed funding for the highly efficient Leamington District Memorial Hospital obstetrics clinic. My question, Minister, is this: Why are your appointed health bureaucrats held to a different standard of accountability in the rural hospitals—

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I guess what I'm beginning to understand is that the third party wants an increase to the budget to the CCAC, and the official opposition wants to see a decrease to the funding to the CCAC in Erie St. Clair.

With regard to the Leamington hospital specifically, I know that the member opposite has been involved and concerned about the impact on potential changes to the obstetrics unit there in the hospital. He does know that the Leamington District Memorial Hospital is working closely with the regional LHIN—it's the LHIN, not the CCAC—to look at various options. There was a meeting on November 27 as well between the hospital as well as the LHIN and community members to enable all sides, really, to speak to and address this important issue of obstetrical services. Roughly half of the residents in the Leamington area currently choose to deliver in Windsor at the regional hospital already, but I'm committed to making sure that we have an open and transparent process led by our LHIN, overseen by the ministry, with community involvement and certainly with the hospital, to determine what the best outcome should be.

GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA

Ms. Catherine Fife: To the President of the Treasury Board: Yesterday, this government rammed through amendments to Bill 8. That's 11 pieces of distinct legislation all in one Harper-style omnibus bill. Liberal committee members voted against granting the children's advocate investigative powers over his entire mandate. They voted to open up questions over the Ombudsman's jurisdiction to court rulings. Shockingly, they voted against making the patient ombudsman a true and independent ombudsman. They won't be able to investigate infectious disease outbreaks that happen in private clinics, when we know that this happens.

All of this happened in fewer than three hours. How can this government say they're open and transparent and then ram through legislation that is so deeply flawed?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I am delighted with the progress of Bill 8. As you know, it's been a long time coming. We introduced this legislation long before it came in this form and, unfortunately, it was blocked when the NDP forced an unnecessary election.

So we're moving forward. I want to thank the committee members for having done an excellent job. They actually accepted amendments from the opposition parties, and I was very pleased to see that the bill actually was improved thanks to the work of the members opposite, so that's good news.

What we're doing is moving forward with important accountability legislation. It has been discussed for many, many, many months because it has been before the House before. I'm pleased that this bill has gone through committee and will be back in the House very soon for third reading.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Again to the Treasury Board president: You called the election, just for the record. This government can say—

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Finish, please.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So this government can say what they want about Bill 8, but it won't change this fact: Yesterday they voted to limit the powers of the child advocate. Yesterday they limited powers in oversight over the patient ombudsman, a \$52-billion budget item. And they have actually opened the door for oversight by invitation only in the health care sector. Mr. Speaker, how can this government say they're open and transparent when they've created a patient ombudsman designed to fail?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Well, Speaker, I am actually looking into a nomination for the Stephen Leacock award for MPPs, because that might be the funniest line we have heard in this House in a long time, Speaker.

I'm very pleased, as I said, that Bill 8 is moving forward. Actually, I correct my record: The legislation around Ornge oversight has been before the House for three years; we couldn't get it passed. So I'm delighted that this necessary legislation is being passed.

Let's just remind ourselves what we're getting in this legislation. We're expanding the role of the Ontario Ombudsman to include municipalities, school boards, publicly funded universities. We're establishing a patient ombudsman. This is a fantastic step forward, Speaker. We're giving the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth new powers, new investigative powers. That's very good.

I know you're trying to justify why you won't support the bill, but I tell you that this is very, very good and important legislation.

IMPAIRED DRIVERS

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Ma question est pour le ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels, the Honourable Yasir Naqvi.

Speaker, as you'll appreciate, Ontario has, and continues to aspire to have, some of the safest roads in North America. But even so, with the holiday season fast approaching, my constituents in Etobicoke North, and Ontarians across the province, are worried about the potential road safety related to impaired driving caused by drugs or alcohol, or often a judicious combination of both.

It's unfortunate to say this, but during the past decade in Ontario more than 2,000 lives have been lost and more than 50,000 people have been injured in collisions involving impaired driving. These numbers are intolerable, and there is absolutely no room for impaired driving of any kind in this province.

Recently, I attended I kickoff event for the 2014-15 holiday RIDE campaign to remind my own constituents about the importance of this issue.

Will the minister please explain to this House some of the details that we're taking to the discourage the very serious problem of impaired driving in Ontario?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I first want to thank the member from Etobicoke North for attending the kickoff event in his riding for the holiday RIDE campaign. The RIDE campaign is a year-round initiative that seeks to discourage impaired driving and catch drivers who drive while intoxicated. During the holiday season, police in Ontario conduct more RIDE spot checks.

Our government is committed to supporting this important initiative and to keeping Ontarians safe from impaired drivers. Since 2008 and 2009, we have doubled the RIDE grant program funding, from \$1.2 million to \$2.4 million annually, to support more spot check activities across the province. During last year's campaign, 1,059 impaired drivers were taken off the road, making our streets that much safer.

I look forward to providing more information on specific initiatives we have taken in law to make our roads safer as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: I believe all members of this chamber will be encouraged to hear about the success of last year's holiday RIDE program and about the number of impaired drivers taken off Ontario's roads, but I think it's clear and objective to note that our government's targeted funding of the RIDE program, thus increasing the number of spot checks, has saved lives.

However, while they are very important in catching impaired drivers, Speaker, RIDE checks are only one tool that police have to fight this problem. Unfortunately the statistics continue to demonstrate that many people in Ontario find themselves, or choose to find themselves, driving while intoxicated. Minister, would you please share with us what else our government is doing to prevent people from drinking and driving these holidays?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I agree with the member 100% that the RIDE program is one way of making sure that people are not driving while intoxicated, but unfortunately, the reality is that some people do still drink and drive during the holiday season, which is totally unacceptable.

1130

That is why we have some of the toughest measures in North America to further discourage impaired driving, including things like immediate 90-day driver licence suspensions and ignition interlock devices.

Our government has also made penalties for impaired driving even stiffer. As of December 1, 2010, individuals can have their vehicles impounded for seven days on the spot if their blood alcohol level is above the legal limit.

Speaker, I ask all of our members, through you, to keep a vigilant eye, to encourage friends and neighbours not to drink and drive, and make sure we have a safe holiday season and a merry Christmas.

DISASTER RELIEF

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

Minister, winter has started, and areas from Buffalo to the east coast have already been hit with massive storms. But here in Ontario, municipalities still haven't seen a single dollar of assistance for the ice storm that hit them a year ago. It turns out that the delay is that your ministry took nine months to produce an application, and it didn't give them training on the forms until 11 months after the storm.

Minister, is this your idea of emergency assistance?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, we don't control the weather. I'm tempted to say that it's a federal responsibility, but that would be rude, so I wouldn't say that.

I can say that when the ice storm hit, we moved very, very quickly to meet with a number of municipalities to put in place an unprecedented allocation of \$190 million to help respond to that. We met with AMO and the big-city mayors and others around how we would determine the distribution of that. We got some good information, some good guidance from that, and we used that information to frame the approach around the application for assistance.

There were a number of municipalities' conservation authorities that qualified. They are working at getting the information together. As that information comes in, we will respond as quickly as we can to get that money out to our beleaguered municipalities and conservation authorities.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Well, Minister, according to your ministry, you've only received, so far, one completed application, and we're less than a month away from the deadline.

Minister, that's not the only problem with this program. You hired an Alberta company to help with the accounting and the processing of 58 municipal claims and your claim to the federal government, at a cost of \$2.8 million, so they are getting \$46,000 per application to review in this process. A year later, not a single dollar has gone to help municipalities, but nearly \$3 million went to an Alberta company. Would you call that a great success of the disaster program?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I think the disaster relief program is going to be a great success precisely because we're insisting on accountability and making sure that—the party on the opposite side often calls for accountability and transparency, but when we practise it—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. The member from Oxford asked the question.

Hon. Ted McMeekin:—largely in response to the federal regulations—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Oxford, come to order—third time. And you asked the question.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I have a lot of respect for the member, particularly when he lets me answer the question.

There are accountability mechanisms that are part of this program. Every single dollar that's being paid to the accounting firm assisting us in this important task will be retrievable from the federal government, and the regulations and accountability mechanisms in place are largely as a result of the federal requirements.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. John Vanthof: My question is to the Minister of Health.

In just a few minutes, at noon, caregivers and hospital staff will rally in Temiskaming Shores against this government's cuts to our local hospital.

It has been reported that the Temiskaming Shores hospital will have to cut 18,000 nursing hours, cut cleaning hours, cut their operating room hours by half and close the cafeteria. It's hard to know what's going to be left.

Why is this minister pushing ahead with cuts to our hospital? Northern patients deserve more care, not less.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: We're not making cuts to Temiskaming Hospital, but I do understand the concerns that are being raised by the citizens of that area, and they're concerns that I'm taking very seriously. In fact, I've met with the North East LHIN myself. The deputy of my ministry will be travelling as well to meet with the North East LHIN leadership shortly to understand better the concerns in the Timiskaming area and the catchment of that important hospital.

We currently are funding the hospital to the tune of \$19 million this year. As the member opposite knows, a new CEO was hired in February of this year. She has initiated a voluntary operational review to identify areas of improvement in the hospital—I think something we should all get behind and agree with. My ministry and the LHIN will continue to work closely with the LHIN to find a positive solution.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: We know what the government has been doing to small and rural hospitals: Their budgets have been frozen for three years. But when you freeze a budget for three years, that is effectively a cut, because nothing else has been frozen. There's no way that the government can axe nursing hours, cut operating time by half and still expect the patients to be served, especially—and I'm glad the minister recognized northern Ontario—when the closest full-service hospital is at least two or three hours away.

Once again, Minister, do the right thing: Look at the effects on the hospital and act, please.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: That's exactly what we're doing. In fact, apart from what the member opposite is alleging, we're actually investing more in our small and rural hospitals. Our small and rural hospitals, because of their unique characteristics, were exempt from the quality improvement—the funding transformations; not from the quality, but from the funding transformations that we've made over the last few years. We've created a dedicated \$20-million fund which goes specifically to our small and rural hospitals, as well. In fact, since 2003, we've invested more than 115 million extra dollars—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Deputy House leader can move his chair, but he cannot hide.

Hon. Eric Hoskins:—specifically to our small and rural hospitals. These are hospitals that we take very seriously. They provide an incredible high-quality service to their communities. We're working closely with them. We know our LHINs take this as seriously as I do and as my ministry does. We'll continue to work with Timiskaming.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

Ms. Catherine Fife: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'd just like to correct my record. I mentioned in the first part of my question—infectious diseases happen in private clinics. Thank you.

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

VISITORS

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I invite all members of the House to join me in welcoming three special guests to the House: Mejjindarpal Kaur, who is the international legal director for United Sikhs; Ranbir Singh, who is the Canadian director for United Sikhs; and Gurpreet Singh, who is a teacher and a reservist with the Canadian Forces. United Sikhs is a United Nations-recognized organization doing humanitarian work around the world.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We welcome our guests.

DEFERRED VOTES

CHILD CARE MODERNIZATION ACT, 2014

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

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 10, An Act to enact the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, to repeal the Day Nurseries Act, to

amend the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007, the Education Act and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act and to make consequential and related amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 10, Loi édictant la Loi de 2014 sur la garde d'enfants et la petite enfance, abrogeant la Loi sur les garderies, modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les éducatrices et les éducateurs de la petite enfance, la Loi sur l'éducation et la Loi sur le ministère de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités et apportant des modifications corrélatives et connexes à d'autres lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1138 to 1143.

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

On December 1, Ms. Sandals moved third reading of Bill 10. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	French, Jennifer K.	Meilleur, Madeleine
Anderson, Granville	Gates, Wayne	Milczyn, Peter Z.
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gélinas, France	Miller, Paul
Baker, Yvan	Gretzky, Lisa	Murray, Glen R.
Ballard, Chris	Hatfield, Percy	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hoggarth, Ann	Naqvi, Yasir
Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Natyshak, Taras
Bradley, James J.	Hoskins, Eric	Oraziotti, David
Campbell, Sarah	Hunter, Mitzie	Potts, Arthur
Chan, Michael	Jaczek, Helena	Qaadri, Shafiq
Chiarelli, Bob	Kiwala, Sophie	Rinaldi, Lou
Colle, Mike	Kwinter, Monte	Sandals, Liz
Crack, Grant	Lalonde, Marie-France	Sattler, Peggy
Damerla, Dipika	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Del Duca, Steven	MacCharles, Tracy	Singh, Jagmeet
Delaney, Bob	Malhi, Harinder	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dhillon, Vic	Mangat, Amrit	Taylor, Monique
Dickson, Joe	Mantha, Michael	Vanhof, John
Dong, Han	Martins, Cristina	Vernile, Daiene
Duguid, Brad	Matthews, Deborah	Wong, Soo
Fife, Catherine	Mauro, Bill	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McGarry, Kathryn	Zimmer, David
Forster, Cindy	McMahon, Eleanor	
Fraser, John	McMeekin, Ted	

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

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Hudak, Tim	Pettapiece, Randy
Bailey, Robert	Jones, Sylvia	Scott, Laurie
Barrett, Toby	MacLeod, Lisa	Smith, Todd
Clark, Steve	Martow, Gila	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dunlop, Garfield	McDonnell, Jim	Walker, Bill
Fedeli, Victor	Miller, Norm	Yakabuski, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Munro, Julia	Yurek, Jeff
Hillier, Randy	Nicholls, Rick	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 70; the nays are 23.

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

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

Third reading agreed to.

BETTER BUSINESS CLIMATE ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 VISANT À INSTAURER UN CLIMAT PLUS PROPICE AUX AFFAIRES

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 7, An Act to enact the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, 2014 and the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, 2014 / Projet de loi 7, Loi édictant la Loi de 2014 sur l'obligation de faire rapport concernant la réduction des fardeaux administratifs et la Loi de 2014 sur les partenariats pour la création d'emplois et la croissance.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 7, An Act to enact the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, 2014 and the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, 2014.

Interjection: Same vote.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Same vote?

Interjection: No.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1147 to 1148.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On November 18, Mr. Duguid moved second reading of Bill 7. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Gates, Wayne	Miller, Norm
Anderson, Granville	Gélinas, France	Miller, Paul
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gretzky, Lisa	Munro, Julia
Arnott, Ted	Hardeman, Ernie	Murray, Glen R.
Bailey, Robert	Hatfield, Percy	Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Baker, Yvan	Hoggarth, Ann	Naqvi, Yasir
Ballard, Chris	Horwath, Andrea	Natyshak, Taras
Barrett, Toby	Hoskins, Eric	Nicholls, Rick
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hudak, Tim	Oraziotti, David
Bisson, Gilles	Hunter, Mitzie	Pettapiece, Randy
Bradley, James J.	Jaczek, Helena	Potts, Arthur
Campbell, Sarah	Jones, Sylvia	Qaadri, Shafiq
Chan, Michael	Kiwala, Sophie	Rinaldi, Lou
Chiarelli, Bob	Kwinter, Monte	Sandals, Liz
Clark, Steve	Lalonde, Marie-France	Sattler, Peggy
Colle, Mike	Leal, Jeff	Scott, Laurie
Crack, Grant	MacCharles, Tracy	Sergio, Mario
Damerla, Dipika	MacLeod, Lisa	Singh, Jagmeet
Del Duca, Steven	Malhi, Harinder	Smith, Todd
Delaney, Bob	Mangat, Amrit	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dhillon, Vic	Mantha, Michael	Taylor, Monique
Dickson, Joe	Martins, Cristina	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dong, Han	Martow, Gila	Vanhof, John
Duguid, Brad	Matthews, Deborah	Vernile, Daiene
Dunlop, Garfield	Mauro, Bill	Walker, Bill
Fedeli, Victor	McDonnell, Jim	Wong, Soo
Fife, Catherine	McGarry, Kathryn	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McMahon, Eleanor	Yakabuski, John
Forster, Cindy	McMeekin, Ted	Yurek, Jeff
Fraser, John	Meilleur, Madeleine	Zimmer, David
French, Jennifer K.	Milczyn, Peter Z.	

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 92; the nays are 0.

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

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 27, the bill is ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

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

The House recessed from 1151 to 1500.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

GIVING TUESDAY

Mr. Robert Bailey: I rise today to announce the kickoff of the Giving Tuesday campaign in my community of Sarnia–Lambton. Giving Tuesday is a new movement that is all about giving and volunteering, and will take place each year on the Tuesday following Cyber Monday.

Using social media messaging, you will be able to support charities in the community through text donations. From December 2 through December 31, people can make a \$5, \$10, \$20 or \$25 donation by texting SLgives to 20222. Donations can also be made through the website at www.sarnialambtongives.ca.

In my riding of Sarnia–Lambton, 26 Lambton county charities are joining this movement for giving and volunteering. Together they have set a goal of raising \$100,000. This is the largest show of support for the Giving Tuesday movement of any community across the country.

I encourage all of my colleagues in the Legislature today to participate in their local Giving Tuesday campaign. I challenge all the municipal councils in Sarnia–Lambton to join in and support the great charitable work done in our community.

Again, show your support by texting SLgives to 20222 or visiting www.sarnialambtongives.ca.

MUNICIPALITIES

Ms. Catherine Fife: Today, I would like to congratulate the newly elected mayors and city councillors in Waterloo region and across Ontario who took office on Monday.

I would like to congratulate the new faces: Dave Schneider and Sarah Marsh, elected in Kitchener; Bob Mavin in Waterloo; Karen Redman and Wayne Wettlaufer are familiar faces but new to regional council. I would also like to congratulate the new mayor of Kitchener, Berry Vrbancic; and Waterloo's new mayor, Dave Jaworsky. As well, I would like to thank all of the re-elected members of council and regional council. Finally, I would like to congratulate all of the newly elected public and Catholic school board trustees, along

with the returning trustees, who will work together for a stronger education system in our region.

I wish them the very best as they embark on their important positions to represent their constituents at the closest level of government to the people.

Municipal councils play such a vital role in our society. The services provided by municipalities directly affect the lives of citizens and their communities. Ontarians rely on water, roads and waste removal. And, of course, what could be more important than public education?

In the 2014 budget, the government announced accelerated cuts of \$35 million to the Ontario Municipal Partnership Fund for 2015; 245 of the 388 municipalities that receive OMPF support will face a reduction in funding. In July, AMO asked that the government defer the cuts to the OMPF.

We must remember the importance of working with municipalities and their elected councils in order to ensure Ontario's shared prosperity. Let's start by offering our congratulations, and let's end by respecting local governments.

LARRY WALKER

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Larry Walker was known as an exceptional athlete, his family's Superman, a hero and the ultimate family man. He was humble, well known, well liked and well respected. Larry was a fireman.

Born and raised in the country with four brothers and three sisters, Larry was a friend to all. He was married to his best friend for 66 years and made sure that his family wanted for nothing. He built his home from used lumber and fieldstones as he began a remarkable career serving the citizens of Cambridge.

Larry was a police officer for eight years before embarking on a 30-year career as a firefighter in Cambridge. He was known as "the king of ping," playing Ping-Pong at the station between calls. He retired in 1988 and, sadly, passed away from occupational disease in 2013.

I met his son Randy and granddaughter Alex at the tribute to the fallen ceremony held at Queen's Park last week. Randy was very emotional as he accepted a plaque from the Premier.

Fittingly, Randy's dad was honoured in Colorado at the Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial, and the firefighter memorial and tribute to the fallen ceremonies at Queen's Park.

Randy could not be more proud of his father Larry Walker's exemplary service to the citizens of Cambridge. Neither could we.

DR. DOUGLAS A. MacINTOSH CANCER CLINIC

Mr. Todd Smith: The oncology clinic at Belleville General Hospital finally has a name, and it's a fitting tribute to the man who made cancer care a reality in

Quinte. The new state-of-the-art clinic, which opened in 2011, comes from extremely humble beginnings, and it's the vision of Dr. Douglas MacIntosh.

Back in the 1960s, cancer treatment simply wasn't taking place in small community hospitals like Belleville. Residents in Prince Edward and Hastings counties had to travel to Kingston or Toronto to get their chemotherapy. But in 1972, Dr. Mac found a drafty room just outside the emergency room in Belleville General Hospital; he affectionately described it on Saturday as the broom closet. That's where he and his staff—there were three of them, actually: Nurse Donna Holoway, Sylvia Buskard and Ruth Webber—took care of cancer patients at Belleville General Hospital. The first cancer and hematology clinic was a very small organization, as you can see. Doug also mentioned his close working relationship with Belleville doctor Bruce Cronk on Saturday.

From the day that clinic team started their work, the atmosphere lent itself to a lot of great camaraderie. There were long hours, there were heartbreaking moments, and there were some great successes in that oncology unit as well.

Along the way, there has been a lot of progress made in our health care system.

When Dr. MacIntosh joined the medical profession early in the 1960s, his goal, like that of so many others, was to cure cancer. Now he is actually a cancer patient at that oncology clinic that bears his name.

The new 10-treatment-chair facility couldn't be named for a more fitting or a more deserving person than Dr. Douglas MacIntosh.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I would like to start by thanking this government for taking the first step in ensuring that there is a bright and prosperous future at the Fort Frances mill by undertaking negotiations with the mill's present owner to preserve its assets this winter. This is the first hurdle we needed to clear to ensure that negotiations may continue so that we may find a successive buyer and see a restart in the near future.

But more needs to be done to ensure that a deal can be struck, and this government has a crucial role to play in the future success of the Fort Frances mill. What is widely seen as the next step is making changes to wood allocation, and the wood allocation of the Crossroute Forest, such that it maximizes the benefit to the people of the Rainy River district. The ball is in this government's court.

With a clearly stated call from the people of the Rainy River district, where the Crossroute Forest is located, as well as recent media reports that the present wood licence holder supports a change in wood allocation, it is difficult to understand what the minister's holdup is. People across the country are keeping a very close eye on this situation to see how it plays out. Time is of the essence, and we are collectively asking this government to make the necessary changes to wood allocation that will allow

a future deal to be struck to get the Fort Frances mill operational once again.

PORTUGUESE CULTURAL CENTRE OF MISSISSAUGA

Mr. Bob Delaney: In the year 1974, a group of visionaries from the Portuguese community in Mississauga came together to create a centre for the Portuguese Canadian community as an outlet for the cultivation of Portuguese language, culture and tradition. The centre plays a crucial role for first-generation Portuguese Canadians as they arrive in Canada, and for second- and subsequent-generation Portuguese Canadians, to give them exposure to their parents' and grandparents' heritage, culture, values, tradition, and certainly food.

The first Portuguese Cultural Centre of Mississauga was located on Dundas Street, and it has since moved to Streetsville. The Portuguese Cultural Centre of Mississauga is an active participant and a terrific pavilion at Carassauga, Mississauga's annual festival of cultures. Each year I always enjoy visiting the Portuguese pavilion and certainly indulging in the lovely Portuguese food and wine and enjoying the entertainment.

On November 22, I had the pleasure of being a guest at the annual Portuguese gala dinner in Mississauga. The milestone dinner celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Portuguese Cultural Centre of Mississauga. I'd like to congratulate Gilberto Moniz, soon to retire, the president of the Portuguese Cultural Centre of Mississauga, and the board of directors for putting together a wonderful event showcasing music and entertainment native to Portugal, accompanied by good food and great company.

MUNICIPALITY OF CALLANDER

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I'm bringing two issues from the municipality of Callander.

They have concerns about the discovery of unauthorized gillnets in Lake Nipissing, which undermine efforts by partners such as the Lake Nipissing Stakeholders Association and Nipissing First Nation to increase the declining walleye population on the lake. This has an impact on everyone around the lake, especially those whose livelihood depends on it.

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On July 22, council passed a resolution requesting that "the Ministry of Natural Resources provide additional resources dedicated towards consistent enforcement of regulations and daily catch limits, including unauthorized netting."

At the same time, Callander council also expressed concern about the impact of the Ontera sale, which will result in 66 lost jobs in northern Ontario. They're concerned that the government "has not communicated or announced a long-term plan for the ONTC or concrete plans for investment" in the ONTC. Their resolution "requests that the government of Ontario immediately consult with local municipalities, stakeholders and

regional economic development organizations to develop a long-term strategic plan to sustain and grow the ONTC and minimize job loss.”

Speaker, we look forward to the government’s response to northerners.

SENIORS COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAM

Ms. Soo Wong: I’m pleased to rise today to speak about the seniors community grant. The seniors community grant is the first grant in Ontario dedicated solely to seniors. The program focuses on projects in the non-profit sector that promote greater social inclusion, volunteerism, education and community engagement for seniors across Ontario. In its inaugural year, a total of 179 projects were recommended for approval. These recommended projects have an impact on 43,000 seniors across Ontario.

In my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt, two organizations will be receiving funding from the Seniors Community Grant Program. The Mon Sheong Foundation will offer social and cultural programs for seniors in the community. The Happy Time Community Association will conduct dance and musical performances in the various seniors’ homes and apartments across the city of Toronto.

Given the overwhelming response by the community this inaugural year, I’m confident the Seniors Community Grant Program will continue to expand in the years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the minister responsible for seniors affairs for his championing for seniors across Ontario and keeping them safe, healthy and active in their golden years.

INSIDE AND OUT CONFERENCE

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Mr. Speaker and members of this House, I want to tell you about a unique conference that was convened to mark World AIDS Day, which, as you know, was yesterday. Called Inside and Out, it focused on the impact of HIV on people who have come into contact with the correctional system, its institutions and service agencies that serve them.

The conference discussed recent research and interventions in treating and preventing the spread of HIV, hepatitis C, STIs and other similar diseases. Included were experts from CSC, Queen’s University, Ontario HIV Treatment Network, Hotel Dieu Hospital and Kingston General Hospital. It outlined strategies to engage with affected prisoners during and after incarceration. Inspiring presentations also examined mental health, addictions, end-of-life and indigenous care models within correctional facilities.

This conference was eight months in the planning, and considerable congratulations are due to the organizers: the Ontario HIV Treatment Program—funded, I’m proud

to say, by the government’s long-term strategic response to the AIDS epidemic.

I would also like to highlight and applaud the incredible hard work and dedication of John MacTavish, Diane Smith-Merrill and the amazing staff and volunteers at HIV/AIDS Regional Services Kingston, who collaborated and volunteered to make the conference a considerable success. You have done so well in our community for 25 years. Thank you.

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

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Niagara Falls on a point of order.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Speaker, I’d like to welcome a couple of young ladies from my riding: Kaitlin Cain and Jessica Turgeon. They’ve been touring Queen’s Park all day, so I’d like to welcome them.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We welcome our guests.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Mr. Grant Crack: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on General Government and move its adoption.

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

Bill 8, An Act to promote public sector and MPP accountability and transparency by enacting the Broader Public Sector Executive Compensation Act, 2014 and amending various Acts / Projet de loi 8, Loi visant à promouvoir la responsabilisation et la transparence du secteur public et des députés par l’édiction de la Loi de 2014 sur la rémunération des cadres du secteur parapublic et la modification de diverses lois.

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

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated November 18, 2014, the bill is ordered for third reading.

MOTIONS

APPOINTMENT OF TEMPORARY INFORMATION AND PRIVACY COMMISSIONER

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Good afternoon, Speaker. I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to

put forward a motion without notice regarding the mandate of the temporary Information and Privacy Commissioner.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I have a question just before we agree: Is there not supposed to be a time limit on this?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I will sit down for a moment and ask for a short opportunity for clarity.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Now we'll get back at it. I am all for working together.

I will now hear the motion from the government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you, Speaker. Thank you for your patience. Thanks to the third party House leader for the interjection.

I move that an humble address be presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council as follows:

“To the Lieutenant Governor in Council:

“We, Her Majesty’s most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, request the appointment of Brian Beamish, current temporary Information and Privacy Commissioner, to continue to act as temporary Information and Privacy Commissioner until June 30, 2015, or the effective date of appointment of a permanent commissioner on the address of the assembly under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, whichever comes first.”;

And that the address be engrossed and presented to the Lieutenant Governor in Council by the Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Naqvi moves that an humble address be presented—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Dispense.

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

Agreed? Agreed. Carried.

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

FISHING REGULATIONS

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

“Whereas the Ontario Fishing Regulations Summary is printed each year by the Ministry of Natural Resources and distributed to recreational fishermen throughout the province to inform them of all the relevant seasons, limits, licence requirements and other regulations; and

“Whereas this valuable document is readily available for anglers to keep in their residence, cottage, truck, boat, trailer or on their person to be fully informed of the current fishing regulations; and

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“Whereas the MNR has recently and abruptly drastically reduced the distribution of the Ontario Fishing Regulations Summary such that even major licence issuers and large fishing retailers are limited to one case of regulations per outlet; and

“Whereas anglers do not always have access to the Internet to view online regulations while travelling or in remote areas;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately return the production of the Ontario Fishing Regulations Summary to previous years’ quantities such that all anglers have access to a copy and to distribute them accordingly.”

I’ll send this to the table with Nicole.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I have a petition here signed by hundreds of people across the Rainy River district which reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario’s crown forests belong to the people of Ontario;

“Whereas the Ontario government has a duty and an obligation to preserve and create jobs;

“Whereas ministers of the crown have a duty and an obligation to act in the interest of the whole of the province;

“Whereas the forestry licences and wood cutting rights in Fort Frances should be allocated to the local processing facility and employ local workers;

“Whereas in May 2014, the holder of the sustainable forest licence (SFL) for the Crossroute Forest ceased operation, yet retains control of the wood basket; and

“Whereas freezing winter weather will soon destroy the assets within the processing facility if it is not heated, or resumes operation immediately;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry to stop delaying and take immediate action to ensure the wood rights of the Crossroute Forest remain tied to the continued operation and benefit of the Fort Frances mill.”

I wholeheartedly support this, will affix my signature and give it to the page to deliver.

HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Ontario is home to over 400,000 first-, second- and third-generation Hispanic Canadians who originate from the 23 Hispanic countries around the world; and who have made significant contributions to the growth and vibrancy of the province of Ontario;

“Whereas October is a month of great significance for the Hispanic community worldwide; and allows an opportunity to remember, celebrate and educate future generations about the outstanding achievements of Hispanic

peoples to our province's social, economic and multi-cultural fabric;

"We, the undersigned, call upon members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support proclaiming October of each year as Hispanic Heritage Month and support Bill 28 by MPP Cristina Martins from the riding of Davenport."

I agree with this petition, will affix my signature to it and give it to page Albany to bring to the desk.

HYDRO RATES

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

"Whereas household electricity bills have skyrocketed by 56% and electricity rates have tripled as a result of the Liberal government's mismanagement of the energy sector;

"Whereas the billion-dollar gas plant scandal, wasteful and unaccountable spending at Ontario Power Generation and the unaffordable subsidies in the Green Energy Act will result in electricity bills climbing by another 35% by 2017 and 45% by 2020;

"Whereas the soaring cost of electricity is straining family budgets, particularly in rural Ontario, and hurting the ability of manufacturers and small businesses in the province to compete and create new jobs; and

"Whereas home heating and electricity are essential for families in rural Ontario who cannot afford to continue footing the bill for the government's mismanagement;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately implement policies ensuring Ontario's power consumers, including families, farmers, and employers, have affordable and reliable electricity."

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

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Mr. Michael Mantha: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas northern Ontario will suffer a huge loss of service as a result of government cuts to ServiceOntario counters;

"Whereas these cuts will have a negative impact on local businesses and local economies;

"Whereas northerners will now face challenges in accessing their birth certificates, health cards and licences;

"Whereas northern Ontario should not unfairly bear the brunt of decisions to slash operating budgets;

"Whereas regardless of address, all Ontarians should be treated equally by their government;

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

"Review the decision to cut access to ServiceOntario for northerners, and provide northern Ontarians equal access to these services."

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition and present it to page Joshua to bring down to the Clerks.

FRENCH-LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Mr. Arthur Potts: I have a petition here signed by hundreds of people from east Toronto. It says:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees access to publicly-funded French-language education; and

"Whereas there are more than 1,000 children attending French elementary schools in east Toronto (Beaches–East York and Toronto–Danforth) and those numbers continue to grow; and

"Whereas there is no French secondary school (grades 7-12) yet in east Toronto, requiring students wishing to continue their studies in French school boards to travel two hours every day to attend the closest French secondary school, while several English schools in east Toronto sit half-empty since there are no requirements or incentives for school boards to release underutilized schools to other boards in need; and

"Whereas it is well documented that children leave the French-language system for the English-language system between grades 7 and 9 due to the inaccessibility of French-language secondary schools, and that it is also well established that being educated in French at the elementary level is not sufficient to solidify French-language skills for life; and

"Whereas the Ontario government acknowledged in February 2007 that there is an important shortage of French-language schools in all of Toronto and even provided funds to open some secondary schools, and yet, not a single French secondary school has opened in east Toronto; and

"Whereas the commissioner of French-language services stated in a report in June 2011 that '... time is running out to address the serious shortage of at least one new French-language school at the secondary level in the eastern part of the city of Toronto'; and

"Whereas the Ministry of Education has confirmed that we all benefit when school board properties are used effectively in support of publicly funded education and that the various components of our education system should be aligned to serve the needs of students; and

"Whereas parents and students from both French Catholic and French public elementary schools in east Toronto are prepared to find common ground across all language school systems to secure space for a French-language secondary school in east Toronto;

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

"That the Minister of Education assist one or both French school boards in locating a suitable underutilized school building in east Toronto that may be sold or

shared for the purpose of opening a French secondary school (grades 7-12) in the community by September 2015, so that French students have a secondary school close to where they live.”

Mr. Speaker, I wholeheartedly agree with this petition, and I will leave it with page Jenny.

ASTHMA

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'll be brief to make up some time here.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas on October 9, 2012, 12-year-old Ryan Gibbons unnecessarily died of an asthma attack at school;

“Whereas one in five students in Ontario schools has asthma; and

“Whereas asthma is a disease that can be controlled; and

“Whereas it is the responsibility of Ontario schools to ensure asthma-safe environments;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Education to take measures to protect pupils with asthma by ensuring all school boards put in place asthma-management plans based on province-wide standards.”

Mr. Speaker, I support this petition, and Bill 20 takes care of this action the minister should take.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr. Wayne Gates: “Our trees: Our jobs!

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario's crown forests belong to the people of Ontario;

“Whereas the Ontario government has a duty and an obligation to preserve and create jobs;

“Whereas ministers of the crown have a duty and an obligation to act in the interest of the whole of the province;

“Whereas the forestry licences and wood cutting rights in Fort Frances should be allocated to the local processing facility and employ local workers;

“Whereas in May 2014, the holder of the sustainable forest licence (SFL) for the Crossroute Forest ceased operation, yet retains control of the wood basket; and

“Whereas freezing winter weather will soon destroy the assets within the processing facility if it is not heated, or resumes operation immediately;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry to stop delaying and take immediate action to ensure the wood rights of the Crossroute Forest remain tied to the continued operation and benefit of the Fort Frances mill.”

LEGAL AID

Ms. Ann Hoggarth: “Whereas Mississauga Community Legal Services provides free legal services to legal aid

clients within the community of nearly 800,000 population; and

“Whereas legal services in communities like Toronto and Hamilton serve, per capita, fewer people living in poverty, are better staffed and better funded; and

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“Whereas Mississauga and Brampton have made progress in having Ontario provide funding for human services on a fair and equitable, population-based model;

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

“That the Ministry of the Attorney General revise the current distribution of allocated funds in the 2012-13 budget, and adopt a population-based model, factoring in population growth rates to ensure Ontario funds are allocated in an efficient, fair and effective manner.”

I affix my name to this and give it to page Hannah.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Todd Smith: An oldie but goodie here:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Auditor General of Ontario defines the global adjustment charge on hydro bills as ‘mostly consisting of the difference between the market price and the price paid to generators as set by the board for OPG or under contract with the government or the OPA’; and

“Whereas the Auditor General says the global adjustment has been rising steadily over the last few years and is expected to continue to rise...; and

“Whereas the Liberal government's 2010 fall economic statement stated that hydro bills are expected to rise 46% by 2015, and that new renewable power generation would account for 56% of that increase; and

“Whereas small to mid-sized businesses across Ontario are seeing the global adjustment portion of their monthly hydro bills increase significantly to the point that it is now larger than the actual energy portion of their bills; and

“Whereas many of those businesses are now delaying investment or hiring, or both, and considering either closing or moving outside of the province of Ontario as a result of delivered-to-market industrial energy rates that are now the highest in North America;

“We, the undersigned, do hereby petition the government of Ontario to reverse course on its expensive energy policy by cancelling the feed-in tariff (FIT) subsidies and treating Ontario's energy as an economic development tool so that it once again is a competitive advantage for Ontario in retaining and attracting jobs and investment.”

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

GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Ms. Sarah Campbell: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas northern Ontario will suffer a huge loss of service as a result of government cuts to ServiceOntario counters;

“Whereas these cuts will have a negative impact on local businesses and local economies;

“Whereas northerners will now face challenges in accessing their birth certificates, health cards and licences;

“Whereas northern Ontario should not unfairly bear the brunt of decisions to slash operating budgets;

“Whereas regardless of address, all Ontarians should be treated equally by their government;

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

“Review the decision to cut access to ServiceOntario for northerners, and provide northern Ontarians equal access to these services.”

I strongly support this petition, will affix my signature and give it to page Elijah.

MIDWIFERY

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas midwifery care in Ontario is perfectly aligned with transforming the health care system toward quality care that uses resources effectively;

“Whereas midwives, who are primary care providers, ensure the provision of the right care, in the right place, and at the right time;

“Whereas the Minister of Health expressed commitment to work closely with midwives to ensure they have the support they need to carry out their work as well as grow the profession;

“Whereas midwifery in Ontario is currently being destabilized by negotiations that have broken down, a contract that expired on March 31, 2014, and a compensation structure that has not addressed pay equity;

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

“That the government resume negotiations with the Association of Ontario Midwives and enable midwives to continue to provide the highest standard of primary ... care to women and their families.”

I sign this petition.

GASOLINE PRICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have petitions from the people of Nickel Belt that read as follows:

“Whereas northern Ontario motorists continue to be subject to wild fluctuations in the price of gasoline; and

“Whereas the province could eliminate opportunistic price gouging and deliver fair, stable and predictable fuel prices; and

“Whereas five provinces and many US states already have some sort of gas-price regulation; and

“Whereas jurisdictions with gas-price regulation have seen an end to wild price fluctuations, a shrinking of

price discrepancies between urban and rural communities and lower annualized gas prices;”

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario” to “mandate the Ontario Energy Board to monitor the price of gasoline across Ontario in order to reduce price volatility and unfair regional price differences while encouraging competition.”

I couldn’t agree more and will give it to Moiz to bring to the Clerk.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Resuming the debate adjourned on December 2, 2014, on the motion for time allocation of the following bill:

Bill 35, An Act to repeal the Public Works Protection Act, amend the Police Services Act with respect to court security and enact the Security for Electricity Generating Facilities and Nuclear Facilities Act, 2014 / Projet de loi 35, Loi abrogeant la Loi sur la protection des ouvrages publics, modifiant la Loi sur les services policiers en ce qui concerne la sécurité des tribunaux et édictant la Loi de 2014 sur la sécurité des centrales électriques et des installations nucléaires.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Mr. Naqvi has earlier today moved government notice of motion number 12.

Further debate?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: It’s my pleasure to rise today to add my voice to this debate. First and foremost, we’ve all mentioned this, and I want to add my voice to this concern as well: The government seems to be time-allocating every single bill in this House. Whether there is opposition to the bill, whether there is agreement to the bill, it doesn’t matter; they’re just time-allocating everything.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Terrible.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: One of my colleagues shouts out that it’s terrible. I agree. It is absolutely terrible. It flies in the face of democracy. To time-allocate everything indiscriminately doesn’t really make sense. I mean, if there’s a reason, if there’s a strategy behind it, you could make your case, but to just blanket time-allocate every single bill isn’t really encouraging democracy and isn’t really productive.

But in this case, there’s a specific concern. This bill is deeply flawed, and I want to raise a concern that the House leader brings up. The House leader brought up and named a number of organizations and said that the government had consulted with a number of groups. I hope the deputy House leader is paying attention to this. The House leader said that he had reached out to the Ontario Bar Association, an association that he is a member of, being a lawyer, and reached out to and consulted with the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, which is a wonderful organization, and said, “We’ve done these consultations.” Well, you certainly did consult with them,

but you're not paying any heed to what they said. Both of those organizations clearly indicate that there are some serious problems with this bill. So when the government talks about protecting civil liberties, they're not. You're not protecting civil liberties, because two organizations well respected for understanding civil liberties clearly indicate that your bill runs roughshod over the civil liberties of those people who wish to enter a courthouse.

In fact, your bill is so draconian in nature that the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, the CCLA, did a comparison of other jurisdictions. They looked at what else is out there in terms of other laws that govern courthouse security. They compared nine provinces and one territory, so they did a comparative analysis. They looked at these other jurisdictions, and I'll have you know that you should be very proud as a government: Your legislation is the only one, the only piece of legislation out of nine provinces and one territory, that gives security officials general power to demand information, the only one out of nine other provinces and one territory. None of them have this power to demand information from someone who wishes to enter into a courthouse. There is no requirement for it. Nine other provinces know that you don't need to demand information from someone who wants to come into a courthouse.

In fact, of nine other provinces and one territory, none of those has any authorization to have warrantless searches of vehicles. There's really no need for that. That's a clear violation of a charter-protected right. It's a charter-protected right that you should not be subject to arbitrary search and seizure. However, this government, which touts itself as and claims to be a transparent and accountable government, is bringing forward legislation which clearly violates the charter. On your charter-protected right to protect you from arbitrary search and seizure—this government has said those charter rights don't matter, those freedoms don't matter. “We will impose”—the only one of its type out of nine other provinces and one territory. This government is imposing warrantless searches on vehicles. For what reason? These other jurisdictions didn't need to do that. These other jurisdictions have safe courthouses. Why? What's the evidentiary basis for this? There is none. This government is clearly showing that it doesn't respect civil liberties.

1540

It raises the question of why this bill is being brought forward in the first place. Well, surprise: It's being brought because there were civil liberty violations with the pre-existing law.

So let me get this straight. There was an existing problem, the PWPA, which was responsible, because this government implemented and used this PWPA to create broad and vague power—it has broad and vague powers within the PWPA—and made amendments and regulation changes that allow the police to violate civil liberties. There were a number of reports that said this is a problem. You have a problem with a piece of legislation based on violations of civil liberties. What do you

do? You get rid of that piece of law, which is a good step, to replace it with another piece of legislation that also has civil liberty violations. Why are you doing that? How does that make any sense?

It's great to be able to stand up and say you're the only province that has something worthwhile—“We're the only province that has an Integrity Commissioner” or “We're the only province that has accountability in our health care system.” That would be a good thing to get up and say—but in this case, you're the only province that violates civil liberties when people enter a courthouse. That's not something you should be proud of. You're the only jurisdiction that does that, out of those nine. You're the only jurisdiction that violates the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, particularly section 8. Again, this is not something that you should be proud of. This is one of those cases where you don't want to be the only one that does that.

One other very telling comparison that the CCLA did is—the purpose for the search, if you're entering a courthouse, should be very clear. The purpose is that we want to make sure that our courthouses are safe. How do you make sure they're safe? Well, you make sure that certain materials which are dangerous—weapons, chemicals, explosives—aren't brought into the courthouse. If you tailor the legislation and you make sure that it's narrow, specific; not broad or vague or general—if it's a narrow, defined reason that you're invading someone's privacy, and it's specifically for the purpose of screening for these dangerous materials, that would make sense. In fact, in every jurisdiction that the CCLA compared, except for Saskatchewan, searches upon entry are explicitly and exclusively for the purpose of checking for weapons or other specifically prohibited items. That's clear legislation. That's defined legislation. That's not overly broad. That's not general. That's not vague. That's the type of legislation that we need here.

We will be bringing forward some amendments to this bill. We understand that you have a majority, so the end result is not really a guess. We know which way it's going to go. But we will make sure that, as New Democrats, we continue to raise the concerns of civil liberties, which this government clearly doesn't care about, and we will make sure that there are amendments raised that address this issue, because we believe—and I'm sure you don't believe, because this law clearly shows it—in an open courthouse. We believe in transparency in our justice system. These are hallmarks of democracy.

I personally have experienced this, in the sense that I learned from going to a courthouse. I saw things when I was still a student in law school.

It's important that we encourage people to come into our courthouses. It's important for people to feel that our courthouses are accessible. So you shouldn't put up barriers that impede someone's ability to go to a court. That's what your legislation is doing.

Another area that was touched on by this legislation, which was initially very problematic—and I have to give you some credit for this. You've definitely improved on

the initial two iterations of this bill, so this was definitely a win for the attorneys in this province. There was a request to protect the privileged documents that lawyers bring into courthouses, so that their sensitive materials that are important for the defence of their client or for the proper representation of their client—that that documentation, those files, that privileged information remains privileged and is not something that is subject to a search.

The lawyers in this province were able to apply pressure; the Ontario Bar Association was able to suggest amendments that were adopted—as well as other community advocates in this area, particularly the organization representing the lawyers across the communities, the county and district lawyers' association. They have advocated effectively to allow for privileged documents to be protected. That's definitely a win not only for lawyers but also for their clients, for the people of Ontario: to ensure that their documents, their personal files that lawyers are representing them on, are kept privileged. That was definitely a good piece, a good amendment, that we brought forward and that the government finally also acknowledged.

One other area, though, that's left to regulation and I think needs to be strengthened is, if a courthouse is to function effectively and efficiently—anyone who has been to a courthouse knows that there are significant backlogs, there are significant delays, and this is a problem. We also have a charter right to have a speedy trial; a trial within a reasonable amount of time. For the proper functioning of justice, you need to be able to get your matter brought to court in a reasonable amount of time. That's in the interests of justice.

To make sure that our cases are heard effectively, heard efficiently, heard in a speedy manner, it requires that the individuals who are actually running the courts, the people who work in the courthouse—the reporters, the clerks, and the lawyers—and the judges, for that matter, are able to access courts in a quick and efficient manner.

Judges often have separate entrances, so they're generally not concerned about this issue of access to the courthouses. But lawyers sometimes are subject to the whims of particular courthouses. What happens is, it creates delays. If a lawyer can't get into the courthouse, can't get in front of the judge to have the matter heard, it will delay cases.

On behalf of the Ontario bar, on behalf of the lawyers of Ontario, this piece of legislation needs to include clear legislation that ensures that lawyers can get in and out of courthouses in a quick manner, that they are not subject to any delays, so that the process of justice can unfold in a way that's quick, that's not delayed. There are already enough delays in the court system. To create a further delay by impeding lawyers from accessing the court would certainly be a problem. So this piece of legislation doesn't have enough to clarify that right of access for lawyers, so that they are able to access in a quick manner.

One other major victory in this legislation that I have to raise is that, initially, when the government brought

forward this bill, this bill had nothing in it that clarified an obligation on behalf of the courthouses of Ontario to accommodate individuals based on their creed or disability. That was a serious flaw. Again, we clearly believe that courts should be accessible. We clearly believe that a courtroom should be somewhere where everyone who wants to, who needs to, should be able to access it.

Whether that individual is a witness in a case who is performing their civic duty or their civic responsibility and has been subpoenaed to appear in court; whether it's someone who wants to be an observer, who wants to just go into court and watch what happens; whether someone is individually an accused person or subject to a trial matter or a lawsuit, all of these classes of people need to be able to access the court, regardless of their disability or their creed. In fact, put in a positive way, they need to be accommodated for whatever their creed is or whatever disability they're facing.

We're very proud, as New Democrats, that we put forward this amendment—this was a New Democrat amendment that we put forward—and we requested that the government accommodate this. We put this forward in committee. It was supported in committee and passed and made its way into the legislation. Now, in this bill, we proudly have, in accommodation, a requirement that courts accommodate people based on their creed or their disability.

This means that people, whatever their faith may be, if they wish to express it by wearing a hijab, by wearing a yarmulke, by wearing a turban or a *dastar*, by wearing a *kirpan*—these articles of faith should be respected and they should be accommodated in a courthouse.

That's a definite victory and something we're very proud of. I personally am very proud of being in that committee and being able to raise that issue and raise that amendment so that we could see that now in this piece of legislation. And for those folks who face disabilities, it's important that they also are accommodated, so that the courthouse, again, is accessible to all people. That's something we're very proud of and that's an amendment that's here in the bill.

1550

I just want to go back to the issues around the PWPA. What did the PWPA do? Schedule 1 of this bill seeks to repeal the PWPA. What that bill was, was essentially a law that applied generally to all public works in this province. Effectively what it does is, it's a blanket piece of legislation that allowed for certain powers—for the state, for the province, for police—to ensure that certain areas were safe.

The problem with that piece of legislation is that it was written a long time ago. It had broad powers that were no longer relevant to this time, and Justice McMurtry said we needed to have a more modern piece of legislation.

The problem with this law is that it allowed the minister and the cabinet to make changes to the powers that the police had in cabinet, through regulation. The problem with that is that there's no accountability. If you can

make changes in regulation, those changes aren't brought before the House. They're not debated in the House. There is not the same level of scrutiny. People can't stand up and say, "Listen, I think there's going to be a major problem if you give police the power to arrest somebody for no reason, if you give people, if you give police the ability to go into someone's backpack or into their bags and start searching around without any grounds"; that if you give these powers to the police, it's going to result in some serious problems.

The opposition could have stood up and said, "Hey, there's a problem with that." But because these changes were made through regulation in cabinet, there was no scrutiny. There was no ability to shed light on the problems that could have arisen from this and that in fact did arise. That's a serious problem.

And it's a trend. If you notice the legislation that comes before the House, more and more the majority of the powers conferred by many of the pieces of legislation we see—much of the power is kept in the regulation-making. What that means is, in terms of public scrutiny, in terms of what we can vote on, what we debate on—we debate on a bill, and some parts of the bill, in terms of the substance of the bill, are out there in the legislation, but a lot of the bill is left in the regulation-making. What that means is that we don't really know what the government will do with it. There is a lot of discretion, and that's a problem in the sense that the public, and particularly the opposition, doesn't have the same amount of say in terms of what's going on. In terms of the scrutiny, in terms of the accountability, there is a great deal less when decisions are made through regulation and not made in the House here.

This bill is interesting in the fact that we all agree that we should repeal the Public Works Protection Act. It certainly needs to be repealed. What happened in the G20 was one of the worst civil liberties violations in the history of Ontario, and arguably in the history of Canada, so we certainly need to see some remedy on it.

But if you look very carefully at Justice McMurtry's recommendations, Justice McMurtry clearly states that the problems with this bill were vagueness and overly broad legislation. Back in 2012, when the Ontario Bar Association made their recommendations with respect to this bill, they talked about that problem. They looked at the problems of this bill and they said, "Listen, the problem with this bill is that it talks about overly broad powers and vague powers." Now you're doing the same thing with this bill. And on top of doing it with this bill, you're time-allocating this bill, so you're compounding the mistakes that you're making. You're bringing in a piece of legislation that's going to deny civil liberties, that's going to create the same mistakes that the Public Works Protection Act did, and on top of that you're time-allocating this.

What does time allocation seek to do? It just seeks to silence debate, it seeks to silence dissent; and it's utterly not necessary. My colleague the member from Timmins–James Bay brought up a great point: that if you actually

look at it and look at bills, you could negotiate a settlement or negotiate with the other House leaders and look at the timeline it would take to get a bill from start to finish that way, and compare that with how long it takes to time-allocate everything. And if you measured how long it was taking, I think the member from Timmins–James Bay makes a great point when he says that at the end of the day, you might find that time-allocating everything is actually going to take longer, that you could actually streamline some of these bills and they could actually get through quicker if you actually negotiated and worked out a deal that was respectful to all the other members of the House.

At the end of the day, you have a bill before the House that, again, you're time-allocating. You're time-allocating everything indiscriminately. There's no rhyme or reason; there's no strategy behind it. Bills that we agree on, bills that we disagree on—all of them—are being time-allocated. It seems nonsensical. It seems illogical. I invite you to explain to me what your idea and your thought process is behind that. I also invite you to explain to me why you're stripping people of their civil liberties in this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Todd Smith: It's a pleasure to join the debate. Something we don't get to do often enough these days in the Legislature is actually debate the bills the government is bringing forward, which the people of Prince Edward–Hastings or the people of Elgin–Middlesex–London or the people of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry sent us here to do to, to be their voice in this Ontario Legislature, to bring their concerns with government bills to light and actually hash them out.

I thought the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton said a couple of interesting things. He said there have been some changes to this bill, much to do with the fact that we actually maybe got the bill to committee. We had opportunities in this Legislature to talk about various bills, including the one we're facing right now, here today, and that's where positive changes can occur. The member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton challenged the government to maybe tell us what their motivation is, but I think it's quite clear what their motivation is. They don't want us standing up here and dissing the legislation they are bringing forward, pointing out the flaws in the legislation.

I think it would serve the members of the government extremely well to hear those faults and those oversights here in this Legislature, because it will help them in passing bills that are going to have a harmful effect on the people of Ontario. We've seen examples of that over the years, none larger than the Green Energy Act.

You'll recall, Mr. Speaker, that when that was passed it was in a Liberal majority government, much like we have in this Legislature right now. They haven't learned a darned thing, apparently, because they hammered that through the Legislature as quickly as they possibly could, in spite of the fact that the official opposition and, I'm sure, even members of the third party had some concerns

about the Green Energy Act going forward. I wasn't here during that time, Mr. Speaker, as you were not either. But I know there were some concerns, on behalf of this side of the Legislature at that time, about the effect the Green Energy Act would have on manufacturers in the province of Ontario and driving up energy costs in Ontario for our residential homeowners.

I can tell you right now that the net effect from the Green Energy Act has been people being cut off of their electricity in Prince Edward–Hastings riding. They have been cut off of their electricity because they can't afford the bills, because they have gone up 56%. As I read in a petition earlier, the Auditor General reported that a large part of the increase in electricity was because of the global adjustment. That is something that could have been corrected had they had proper debate in the Legislature.

We're seeing it on the daycare bill, which was time allocated by this government. It passed third reading earlier today, as a matter of fact, because the government time-allocated this bill. They refused not just to hear from the official opposition or the third party; the government refused to hear from independent child care providers in Ontario. They refused to hear from those people and listen to their concerns when they are telling the government, through petitions and through our critic from Simcoe North—who has done a fantastic job at least getting their voice on the floor of the Legislature, outlining the concern that that bill is going to reduce daycare spaces by well over 100,000 in Ontario. Why they wouldn't listen to that before the roof caves in and people can't afford to put their children in daycare, Mr. Speaker—it's beyond me why they won't listen. As the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton just indicated in his speech, there are times when we can offer very constructive criticism and make a bill better, and very clearly, it could happen in this case.

1600

Instead, they're doing exactly what they did when the G20 hit Toronto. They went into their little bunker—I don't know where they were; if they were in Premier McGuinty's office or they were back here somewhere in their cabinet room—and they designed a secret bill that gave our security officials, our police officers, wartime powers, Mr. Speaker. They did that then. They're doing the same thing with every bill that comes before this Legislature. Day in, day out, they're time-allocating bills. They're muzzling the official opposition. They're muzzling the third party. Why are they doing it? They're trying to silence their critics, Mr. Speaker. And there are many critics out there, because they are passing an awful lot of flawed legislation.

In four years' time, the public will have their say.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member from Prince Edward–Hastings. Saved by the bell.

Further debate? Further debate?

Mr. Naqvi has moved government notice of motion number 12. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion, please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): We have a note. Sorry.

"Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on government notice of motion number 12 be deferred until deferred votes on Wednesday, December 3, 2014."

That's signed by the chief government whip, Mr. Delaney.

Vote deferred.

ENDING COAL
FOR CLEANER AIR ACT, 2014
LOI DE 2014
SUR L'ABANDON DU CHARBON
POUR UN AIR PLUS PROPRE

Mr. Murray moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 9, An Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act to require the cessation of coal use to generate electricity at generation facilities / *Projet de loi 9, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection de l'environnement pour exiger la cessation de l'utilisation du charbon pour produire de l'électricité dans les installations de production.*

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I will be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the great member from Mississauga–Brampton South.

Mr. Speaker, this is very timely. Just in the last 24 hours, the council of parties to the UN agreement on climate change has now started meeting in Lima, Peru, leading up to the next important meeting in Paris next year of the council of parties, which may be the last chance before it's too late to actually get an agreement on climate change.

This measure that the government undertook, and has now completed in 2014, to close coal plants was the single largest reduction of GHG emissions in the history of North America and quite probably the largest single GHG emissions reduction in the world. I looked today to try to find some other reduction; I can't. We're the only jurisdiction that has completely closed coal. In 2003, 25% of our generation was coal; today it is absolutely zero in the public utility. The only coal- or coke-generated is for steel, for purposes for which there is no substitute, but that is a relatively minor part of our emissions. Particularly as we move toward our target of 80% reduction by 2050, we realize that there are certain parts of the economy that cannot completely eliminate coal, so we have to make sure of those parts that can.

We will be going to Lima with our fellow provinces—with Quebec, British Columbia, Alberta, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Manitoba and others—with a very

united front as Canadian provinces, both the energy ministers and the environment ministers. Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, you know that would be ministers from all of Canada's political parties at the sub-national level with a very common purpose: to see deep reductions in GHG emissions.

It was interesting when we were in Charlottetown and I had the great privilege to represent the government of Ontario and this Legislature in discussions with other ministers. The federal government had blocked and prevented a discussion on climate change for five years in a row; the federal government exercised its authority to not allow ministers of the environment to even discuss climate change. Pretty bizarre.

It's also interesting—I have to say it as an aside—that I've been hearing from members of the official opposition that they wanted to debate this and that it's very serious, and they're not paying any attention. It's kind of interesting that this debate is so important to them. I want to commend the members of the third party, who are actually paying attention.

This is particularly important, because I don't think there's an issue more important to us, to my four-year-old grandson, than getting this right. I was reading an editorial in the *Toronto Sun*, and the person writing for one of the more Conservative organizations said that I was exaggerating, that we're not on track for four degrees Celsius. Well, the last five years in the world, quite frankly, had the largest emissions of GHGs in our history. We are emitting more greenhouse gases every year, not less, and breaking records. And 2014, as of this date, if the year ended now, will go down in history as the warmest year ever recorded. We have just lived through the warmest year ever recorded, and the last 20 years have been the two warmest decades since anyone has been recording this in millennia.

This is a very serious problem. I talked about California. Our food prices are going up 20%. There is no tax increase I can think of in the modern history of the country that is going to hit people more than the fact that California's three years of drought are going to bump our food prices by 20%. Nothing hurts middle-income families more than that. And next year, after this continuing pattern of drought, it will go up again.

From a conservative political philosophical perspective, you want to maintain an effective market, and you don't want to have unnecessary scarcity of essential goods. Food is pretty essential, and it's becoming scarce because of inaction on climate change. Even that blessed Tim Hortons Canadian coffee went up 10 cents on Friday, and will be going up a lot more, because the impact of burning coal around the world is causing massive droughts in Brazil, and the biggest reason is that that's where Tim Hortons gets most of its coffee from.

Mr. John Yakabuski: And they've never had a drought before? There's no proof of that whatsoever.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Okay. I want to put on the record that the member said I'm making this up and there's no proof of climate change. I'll take that as the

position of the official opposition, which is extraordinary, after all of that.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I'd ask the member from Elgin–Middlesex–London to withdraw.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I withdraw—still, not making the truth up.

Interjections.

1610

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I'm sure he meant that with a great deal of kindness in his heart. I'm not taking offence by it, Mr. Speaker.

But we do not burn coal anymore. We, Quebec and British Columbia—and California, I think—are about the only jurisdictions in North America that are below 1990 GHG emissions. Almost everyone else is out there.

The government of Canada will not meet national standards as we go forward. It will not meet its greenhouse gas emissions reductions. Even with Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia's massive reductions, increases in the other provinces will continue to make Canada one of the highest emitters and will see Canada's greenhouse gas emissions go up faster than most nations.

It's really interesting, because my federal counterpart—what is the government of Canada saying as they go into the next round of international meetings, where we've been a standing joke as a country because of our emissions? My federal counterpart, the Minister of the Environment, says things like, “Canada has one of the cleanest electricity systems in the world, with 79% of our electricity supply emitting no greenhouse gas.... We have taken action on two of the largest sources of emissions in Canada, the transportation sector and the electricity generation sector. Canada was also the first major coal user to ban the construction of traditional coal-fired generation units” and close its coal plants.

No, it wasn't Canada, Mr. Speaker; it was Ontario.

Interjection: It was Ontario.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: It was Ontario, because New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan and Alberta still rely on, on average, 70% of their generation from coal. It is only Ontario.

This year was an interesting year because, for the first time, green energy in Canada and the clean-tech/green-energy sector exceeded the oil sands for employment. Some 23,700 people now work in green energy, and 22,340 in the oil sands.

The oil sands are the most subsidized industry in Canada. There is no place where more tax dollars go to subsidizing industry than the oil sands. Ontario had zero federal support—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I would ask the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke that, if he chooses to engage in this debate, he would at least do it from his seat. Thank you.

Continue, Minister.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've always learned that politics is about addition and not

subtraction, so I'd welcome any member who wants to find a seat over here in the centre of the political spectrum.

Why is this so important, and what was the hope of the Ontario government in closing coal plants? To create momentum globally, so that other jurisdictions that burn coal could see a pathway forward.

We did that without a cap-and-trade system. We did that without a price on carbon. Any other jurisdiction that has done it—Alberta has a price on carbon; the Alberta Conservatives brought it in. BC has a price on carbon. Quebec has a price on carbon. Mexico has a price on carbon. California has a price on carbon. If you closed coal plants in any of those other jurisdictions, you would have gotten money back through those cap-and-trade systems to recapitalize it.

When I was with Resolute Forest Products—it's interesting, because when they actually make investments in Quebec now to reduce their GHG and modernize their plants, they take those reductions, put it on auction and get money back. They said to me, "You know, we realize that right now the opposition parties are making that a difficult conversation, but it's a market mechanism, and maybe someone should come up to Thunder Bay or go to Dryden and come and sit in our boardroom like you have, because we haven't seen opposition members up here having a conversation with us about that."

We've had a cap-and-trade system now in Quebec, and they think it's a terrible thing, but none of them operate a cement plant or a pulp and paper mill. They'd better get smart about this, because, you know, the member from the Pembroke area—I don't have his riding right in front of me; I apologize—is telling me that I don't know anything. Well, I would suggest that that member go talk to some of the heavy emitters that are operating in other jurisdictions that have those. The steel industry is asking us to actually start putting a price on imported rebar, because they've cleaned up their act, and then we get stuff from Turkey that has high emissions, because it doesn't matter where in the world greenhouse gases come from, whether it's Turkey, Canada, Chile or China—they do the same damage. So what our strategy with Quebec and British Columbia and Alberta, with Premier Prentice—who I give a big shout-out to; he's going to be arriving in the next few days. He has taken on this idea. He has said that the future of Alberta has to move beyond oil because we're getting into the age of unburnable carbon. We can now only burn 20 years' worth of oil in this century before we exceed the unburnable carbon. That means that two-thirds of all the coal and fossil fuels out there cannot be burned, because they cannot be burned without the massive destruction of our ecosystem. Jurisdictions right now like the Conservative government in the United Kingdom—I would say to my friends in the official opposition, look at what your cousins in the UK have done. They have a five-year carbon budget, Mr. Speaker. In the UK, you are only allowed to burn carbon within a very restricted budget, and every five years they shrink that budget. They have

actually exceeded their greenhouse gas emissions and they're a pretty conservative party, Mr. Cameron's.

When we get into a trade agreement, I'd ask my friends opposite, especially my friend the honourable member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, how are you going to have a free trade agreement with the UK and Germany? Do you think they're going to allow us not to have a carbon budget? We're just going to burn all the carbon we want and we're going to be able to trade into California and New York and the UK when they all have cap-and-trade systems and they have carbon budgets? Nonsense. They're going to put a price on Canadian products, and you can have other people write it or we can actually have an intelligent conversation in this House, because we actually have some moral authority in Ontario, as do Quebec, Alberta and British Columbia, because we've done the heavy lifting. Alberta, while it is the largest source of emitters, now has a government with a new Premier that's taking this issue seriously. China has gone to a cap-and-trade system, Mr. Speaker.

But on seven different occasions in the federal House of Commons, the federal Minister of the Environment has—the exact same sentence I just read. She stands up in the House and she says, "Well, what has Canada done? Why should Canada be taken seriously?" Because we're not being so right now in the courts of public opinion around the world and at the negotiating table. Why? "Because we closed coal plants and we reduced transportation sector emissions."

It wasn't so, Mr. Speaker. It was California that set the auto emissions and gas standards, and Canada adopted them because you can't sell cars into the United States without meeting those standards. It was California that took the political heat. It was Governor Brown and Governor Schwarzenegger who ran on that and forced it on other jurisdictions, including us. That's what they're taking credit for, and they are taking credit for our coal plan, because they've got nothing.

Mr. Speaker, they then said that they were going to pass legislation that was going to force all of the other provinces to reduce their coal emissions. They ran on it, and then in 2012, the previous minister, Minister Nicholson, stood up in the House and withdrew that. So here is the government of Canada taking credit for coal when the only thing they've done is that they actually broke their promise and did not adapt any clean coal standards in Canada. We do not have federal clean coal standards, so it's pretty nifty and pretty ballsy to actually take credit.

You know what Ms. Aglukkaq, my federal counterpart, said? She said, "Well, you know, emissions are down and they wouldn't have gone down if we had a Liberal federal government." It was actually a Liberal government under Gordon Campbell in British Columbia, a Liberal government under Jean Charest in Quebec and a Liberal government under Dalton McGuinty in Ontario that reduced the GHGs that they're taking credit for. The only thing the Conservatives have done is

exactly what they're doing in the House, catcalling and saying that they don't believe in climate change, that they don't think it's a problem, and they think the world will come to an end if we take any of the reasonable actions that others did—and their federal counterparts.

So you know what's happening right now, Mr. Speaker? I now serve on an international body established by the Climate Group and by the UN. All of us at the subnational level are actually outmanoeuvring, if I have to say that, the US Congress, which has gone crazy on this, and the federal government here and the federal government in Australia, which have withdrawn from this. Subnational governments across North America and through the Americas are teaming up with the Netherlands, with Brazil, with China to actually get these agreements in place. When I'm in Lima next week, I'm doing what the federal government should be doing. While they are out there trying to convince other countries not to sign on to deep decarbonisation, almost every single subnational in Canada save Saskatchewan is out working on Deep Decarbonization Pathways.

1620

Here we have the federation—and when we existed it was the provinces that went to Charlottetown to create the federal government; the federal government did not create the provinces. So how does the federal government go internationally when nine out of 10 provinces and three out of three territories all want deep GHG reductions and want to seize the opportunity of the \$6-trillion expansion of the economy to a low-carbon economy?

The other thing that's coming out in Lima, if you've been following it, is that the economics are saying that when we went to the tech boom with ICT, the thing that made Jim Bradley, one of the smartest guys in the world because he just embraced the BlackBerry and the iPad, and no one does it like Jim, transformational, my predecessor in this thing—thank God for people like Jim Bradley, who helped us drive that IT revolution. That was a \$1-trillion expansion of our economy.

This low-carbon economy: When General Motors makes better cars that are made in China, when we have these things that last forever and use almost no energy in our solar panels, when our houses have thermal and have low heating costs, when we do these kinds of things, when we do things like what Guelph has done in reducing the amount of energy to move water within the municipality, when we've created the next generation of products and exported them to the world, we are going to lead. Quebec is going to lead, British Columbia is going to lead, Alberta is going to lead. My friends in Manitoba, governed by the third party in this House, are going to lead. Nova Scotia is going to lead. Why? Because we disagree with the federal government. We're not afraid of this issue and we recognize this that is the biggest economic opportunity that we've ever seen in the world. The federal government not only is neutral, it's actively campaigning to avoid getting the tough decisions made now to give our kids a future.

The honourable member said—and I'm going to conclude with this—that I don't know what I'm talking

about. I took my bicycle two years ago, in year 2 of the drought in California—and my friend the Minister of Agriculture and Food, from the great community of Peterborough, has talked about this. The farmers down there said something to us: “You need pollinators and you need water. Right now, we don't have a lot of pollinators and we have almost no water,” because they were draining their aquifers. If you think that we can live in this—because every time you talk about trade with China, they get up and object that the Premier's in China, like there are no jobs there. She brought back over \$1 billion in investment and over 1,000 jobs—because we're not afraid of the world and the party opposite is.

But it is the downside of this: If we don't solve this problem—where do you think food comes from? One third of all the food in North America comes from California, billions of dollars of trade, and we actually are now becoming, I think, the third—and the Minister of Agriculture will correct me if I'm wrong. We are now going to emerge out of his leadership and out of the Premier's leadership to become the new centre of food security. Why? Because we have the Great Lakes, we have a water supply, and we probably have a little bit more stable climate, as much as our temperature will change by about five degrees in this century. We have to look for these new opportunities. Whether it's in corn or whether it's in market garden vegetables, we need to do that. Because the one thing we know is that the economy is going to change and agriculture is going to change, and while land doesn't move, what you can grow on that land is going to change.

When the federal government continues, in seven different statements in the House of Commons—the only thing the federal Minister of the Environment could point to that Canada has accomplished was closure of the coal plants in Ontario. That's it. That's all.

Mr. Speaker, what I would like to leave you with is this little thought: If you don't want any part of the solution and you're going to continue to be part of the problem, get out of the way. Because right now, the federal government is undermining the reputation that Canadians have for good environmental stewardship.

I will conclude so that my parliamentary assistant can step up and make me look not quite as smart, because she's a lot quicker about this than I am.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. Now I recognize the member from Mississauga–Brampton South.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: To begin with, I would like to thank my minister for his comments. Actually, he's smarter than me; that's what I would say. He delivered a very eloquent speech about environmental issues and climate change.

Mr. Speaker, coming back, I really appreciate you giving me the opportunity to speak on the merits of Bill 9.

Strong environmental policy is necessary for us to continue to be patrons of this planet. We are blessed to live in the beautiful province of Ontario, and the best

country in the world. We must ensure that our future generations inherit a clean and green Ontario.

I read an article in a 2009 issue of the *Lancet*, a respectable medical journal. The gist of the article was that climate change is the biggest global health threat, even bigger than cancer and heart disease. By eliminating coal power, the Liberal government is creating history by reducing sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide emissions that pollute our air and cause diseases. Cleaner air means healthier citizens. By taking positive steps in this direction, we have already realized an estimated \$4.4 billion in associated health, environmental and financial benefits from eliminating coal power in Ontario. To the average citizen, this means that we have had fewer smog days since closing coal plants. This means more sunny days that we can enjoy with our families.

As this House already knows, this government's strategy of eliminating coal power is equivalent to taking seven million cars off the road—considering the fact that there are approximately 10.4 million registered vehicles in Ontario, we can take pride in this accomplishment.

In eliminating coal power as an energy source, Ontario has become a leader in combatting climate change in North America, and we have no plans to stop. We are not alone. Even international agencies such as the WHO, the IMF and the UN are also asking all governments to take action in this regard. By putting this law into effect, Ontario will be sending a strong signal both nationally and internationally that we are serious about the fight against climate change. It will be the first of a series of steps that will lead to a full strategy to combat climate change.

The great thing is that with coal power gone, we have the ability to pursue better alternative energy options: cleaner, renewable and future-oriented. Already 80% of our energy options come from clean sources such as water, nuclear and renewables.

As we shift away from fossil fuels—dirty, non-renewable sources—Ontario has the prospect of becoming a leader in clean technology. Even the United States and China are becoming more serious about environmental issues and how the environmental changes are adversely affecting our planet. However, it is sad to see that our federal government is still in denial. They are not stepping up to the plate. US Secretary of State John Kerry has stated that the clean technology revolution will be a \$6-trillion industry. Ontario can and should be a leader, not just because it is morally right; it's a step in the right direction and it's sound economic policy.

The importance of this bill is to ensure that the health and environmental benefits that come from eliminating coal power are protected by this legislation. This is an important piece of legislation. This bill must be passed for the sake of our children's health, for our economy and our environment.

1630

I hope all members of this House will help to get this bill passed swiftly.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I think climate change, the extinction of species, the devastation of our environment—these are some of the most pressing issues that our society will face, ever. These are some of the most serious issues that we're facing right now, and we need to have the courage to be able to address it. So I really appreciate the comments made by both the Minister of the Environment and the parliamentary assistant, particularly talking about humans as stewards of this Earth.

This is our home, and I was just thinking about it: We have an obligation and a duty to make sure we keep our own personal homes in good order and we take care of them. We kind of nurture our home in a way, right? We want to make sure it's a place where our families feel safe and secure, that our children feel it is a place that they can enjoy and where they're safe. Similarly, we should have that same responsibility and that same obligation with the planet that we live on. Our community is broader than just our neighbourhoods and our homes; it's the place we call our home in a broader sense, and we have a fundamental responsibility to make sure that we leave it better than we found it.

We've failed in this obligation. If you look at the impact we've made on this planet, we've failed so far. But that doesn't mean that that's our future. It doesn't mean that we don't have any hope and it doesn't mean that it has to always be that way. We can make changes. We can actually change the direction that we've gone in. There are very optimistic signs. We can move away from the dead end-type of technology that requires fossil fuel burning. There are alternatives out there, and we can pursue those if we have the conviction to do so. I think more than anything we need to really look at, on a broader scale beyond just coal, what we can do as a society to move towards a more sustainable future.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further comments and questions?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I'm pleased to participate—at least with the two minutes allocated to us in this particular debate.

This is an important piece of legislation in that I think there's a recognition that the burning of coal has produced tremendous environmental and health problems in all the jurisdictions in which it's been undertaken. We want to ensure that by regulation some government can't further make a change, so we want to place it in legislation, so that you could not have, for the purpose of producing electricity, a circumstance where you would have coal being burned in the province of Ontario.

I was glad to hear my colleague from the NDP speaking about this because I was looking for it in the NDP platform. I look at the platforms, and I looked in the NDP platform and saw no reference to it. I remember in the old days, when I would talk to people like Ruth Grier and Bud Wildman, environment was way up here in terms of the concern. So I'm encouraged by the fact that the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton was able to raise that specific issue. I know he will say to his colleagues in the NDP, "We need more environmental emanations

coming from the New Democratic Party,” the way it used to be in the good old days.

Our federal government brags about this. John Baird, who once sat in this particular Legislature, goes around saying, “Look at what Canada has done in terms of our contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.” He does fail to say that it was the policy of the government of the province of Ontario that ensured this is happening. I’m sure he just didn’t have time in his speech to make that reference because, knowing John as I do, he would normally have given full credit to the province of Ontario for this initiative.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Mr. Speaker, I’m pleased to rise and make a few comments about An Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act to require the cessation of coal use to generate electricity at generation facilities.

As I was listening—I listened intently to the minister making his presentation—I thought that usually when we have legislation in this place, it’s to do something going forward. I listened to this presentation, and this was all about, “We have completed the task,” that we don’t have any coal generation in the province of Ontario today. I will be researching the bill more to find out why we would need a piece of legislation to say that we did what we already had finished. That usually doesn’t need to be regulated.

I do want to say that, as I was listening—and I appreciate that that was done—the whole process of doing it when, in fact, we were talking about building wind generation to replace coal generation seems to be a little bit of a problem area, because the wind doesn’t blow whenever we need the energy that was generated by the coal. So what they have been doing is building gas plants to supplement it, when we need energy and the wind isn’t blowing. All the capacity we have to replace coal now has to be gas generation, because we can’t depend on wind generation.

Now, wind is generating when the wind is blowing and our air conditioners are not working and we don’t need that power. That’s where we get the challenge of what we do with the power we’re producing that we’re paying premium dollars for but can’t in fact use in our grid. I think that’s why we end up having to sell power at a very low price or, at times, we even have to pay them to take that power. I think the minister should have talked a little bit more about that and how we’re going to fix that problem.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I would like to add a couple of minutes on this. I’m especially thankful to the member from St. Catharines, who mentioned Bud Wildman. As we in this House all know, or should know, it was Bud Wildman, as Minister of the Environment back in the Bob Rae government—February 15, 1994—who introduced the Environmental Bill of Rights.

Not a lot has been done on the environmental file for the past 11 years or so. We’re running out of time. I

really appreciate the passion that the new Minister of the Environment and Climate Change brings to the table and brings to this debate, because previous members—I know the member from St. Catharines is a former Minister of the Environment and was pretty good at what he did in that portfolio as well, but the issue of climate change never really came to the fore as we’re dealing with it now.

We’re dealing with it now because we’re talking about the four coal-burning power generation plants that have been closed in the past number of years. The bill itself speaks to the cessation of coal-burning plants which, I guess, is a retroactive pat on the back for what we have done in the past as opposed to moving forward, because we don’t burn coal anymore. It’s not like saying, “Here is the deadline; we’re going to meet it,” because we know the deadline—well, there were four or five deadlines on the cessation of coal-burning plants, and they came and went and came and went and came and went.

But we’re there now, and that’s a good thing. It’s a good thing that we’re not burning coal in Ontario anymore. Don’t get me wrong; I support what the bill is intended to do, even though, in my opinion, it’s a retroactive pat on the back as opposed to legislation we could be moving forward instead of putting time allocation on any number of other bills.

Speaker, thank you for the time this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change for final comments.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Thanks to my parliamentary assistant and to the members from St. Catharines, Oxford, Bramalea–Gore–Malton and Windsor–Tecumseh. I appreciate their interventions.

Mr. Speaker, this bill does more than simply mark a very historic moment in being the first jurisdiction—the member from St. Catharines and I have a little secret. I gave him the last piece of coal from Atikokan in appreciation for his leadership.

This is actually making it illegal to ever open a coal plant as a free-standing utility again in Ontario. So we’re actually making it illegal, and if you look through this, it makes it almost impossible to extend coal.

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That’s particularly important—and I do respect my friend from Windsor–Tecumseh—because there are jurisdictions that have gone back to coal, which is a problem. That’s impossible, and that’s it. We are doing a lot of other things. We’re electrifying the entire GO system. There are a number of climate change initiatives, and we will be launching a new strategy, starting consultations very early in the new year. But I think this is a foundation to sort of close the door on this.

I do want to say, particularly to my friends in the third party and to my friend from Oxford, in places like Denmark and the Netherlands you’re getting to a point now where more than 50% of the energy is renewables, and it’s, interestingly, from wind and solar. This mythology that wind and solar isn’t as stable—you’ve got

northern European countries right now that are actually getting past the 50% in these new, clean technologies and advancing batteries.

But, you know, Norway and New Zealand decided that this was an issue above politics, and their Parliaments decided that if they didn't get this right, nothing else they did mattered because there wouldn't be much of a planet left to do anything on. I'm hoping—I want to thank the members of the third party—that maybe we, at least two of three parties in here, can just lift this up beyond politics to do something that we'll be proud of one day.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change.

Further debate?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It's my pleasure to stand here today because there's lots to talk about, and I will be sharing my time with my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, as he has lots to say, and I know the party opposite always appreciates his eloquent comments.

With that, I have to revisit the fact that I really do appreciate the chance to join the debate because, as my colleague from Prince Edward–Hastings said earlier, we don't get a lot of chances to debate in this House, unfortunately, because the government of the day is time-allocating many bills, essentially shutting us out of debate. They're not only shutting us out, but they're shutting out stakeholders and concerned citizens from sharing their voice and concerns about the type of legislation that is being rammed through this House prior to the Christmas break.

I think it's so important to take time to debate what really matters, and when I say that, when we debate and we talk about going forward as the province of Ontario, we need to make sure we separate emotion from science. Unfortunately, this government proves time and time again that they're more interested in political science as opposed to sound science, just as we saw last week with the introduction of a huge, huge restriction on neonics, but I'll touch on that in a moment or two.

It's an interesting time in Ontario. Phasing out coal-powered electricity has been a commitment made by all three parties, starting with the regulation—I'd be remiss if I didn't touch on it—issued by Elizabeth Witmer and the PC Party. Elizabeth Witmer is a great Huron-county-born and bred and proud rural resident who has demonstrated leadership on this particular issue for years and years, more than a decade ago, actually. She did so by closing down the first coal plant in Ontario, the Lakeview generating station. We certainly appreciate the vision and commitment that she had in that regard.

But, you know, it's interesting because we have to ask, really and truly, when you take a look at Bill 9, why do we even need this new legislation? It's really very thin, Speaker, as you can see, and anyone who goes to Hansard or goes online can find out for themselves.

It's interesting, again, because we just have to get the job done. Action speaks louder than words. Even our

own Minister of the Environment and Climate Change said himself that it's time to stop applauding coal plant closures and move on, yet today, through the introduction of this bill, we still see this Liberal government posturing and pontificating about issues that they tend to use to further complicate things. Let's talk about that in a moment.

The bottom line is, for Ontario to be prosperous once again, we need jobs. We need viable energy sectors; we need viable manufacturing sectors; we need viable agricultural and food sectors, to move forward.

But unfortunately, so much of what this government is doing is being based on political science versus sound science, and they're handcuffing our manufacturers and our job creators. What's happening as a result? They're moving south of the border, where coal is used. They're moving to other jurisdictions where energy sources are cheaper. That is a problem, and I invite the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change to wake up to that and wake up his caucus to say, hey, Ontario can't afford any more ill-conceived plans, visions—legislation, if you will—that handcuff us in putting Ontarians to work.

Again, it's interesting, in terms of the pontification that we've been having, because the current minister acts like there's so much urgency when it comes to climate change, yet it's important to point out that this Liberal government has had over a decade to do something. But they've virtually sat on their hands with respect to climate change.

I say to the party across the floor, if you're serious about protecting the environment, then why did the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario warn that the Liberal government is dismantling environmental protections, which could have disastrous results for the province? You have to look at the big picture, Speaker, as opposed to just picking pet projects, if you will.

Again, I go back to the Environmental Commissioner's report that was released in October. He described Ontario's current pollution-fighting efforts as an embarrassment, elaborating that it was only a mere two decades ago that our province had a world-class pollution control system. The report goes on to say that the government has taken very little action to implement its own environmental plan. That is an embarrassment to this government, and they need to stand up and own it.

So much of the legislation that has come out of this government over the last decade actually is an embarrassment and a job dismantler that puts all of us in an embarrassing situation.

Going back to the government's track record, I have to share with you, Speaker, that the Ontario Liberals are not on track to meet their very own 2020 greenhouse gas emission targets, targets which they set for themselves.

The Environmental Commissioner has slammed this government time and again, yet the Liberals ignore all of his suggestions. Even the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario estimates that up to 250 deaths every year are directly related to burning coal.

We've been warned by health professionals. Now this government, as well as all of us, have been warned by the

Environmental Commissioner that this government needs to perk up, stand up and do the right thing, do the honourable thing, and start meeting their own greenhouse gas emission targets.

There's an issue with Bill 9, because it fails to address how they're going to reduce private sector coal use. It's one thing to lead by example, in terms of coal power generation, but we need to take a look at reducing the source of coal pollution, and that, Speaker, is where a real opportunity lies to clean up Ontario's air.

Again, I'll share this with you: The cement industry has been calling on the Liberal government for quite some time now to make regulatory changes that would allow them to use alternate fuels in cement kilns. Yet they have had no action from this government.

There are alternate fuels that include non-recyclable materials, like shingles and certain plastics, that could be used as a fuel source—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I would ask the members in the House, in fairness of debate, to please keep your discussions at a minimal level, so that I am able to hear the speaker and give her the respect that she deserves. Thank you for that.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I appreciate that very much, Speaker, because not only do we want to be heard in the House, but stakeholders across this province want to be heard as well. Stakeholders and those on the front line know the most about it, and they need to be included in the conversation and included in plans to go forward to address this.

But again, as I say, time and time again, over the last decade and, most recently, in the last few months, we've seen where this Liberal government literally shuts out stakeholders and industry organizations, just to go along their merry way. It's a travesty, what's happening in this province because of that.

1650

Going back to Bill 9: Bill 9 sets out no plans to convert existing coal plants into natural gas or biomass facilities. We need to catch up and realize the opportunities that lay ahead of us. Again, Bill 9 is very thin. It's nothing but an opportunity for our Liberal government to stand up and pontificate.

The reality is that the rest of Ontario is struggling to meet energy costs, and we need a government that is dedicated to research and true science in order to move this province forward and again make energy affordable. I'll talk about making energy affordable in a moment, because we have a very good suggestion in that regard, and it's called IWTs. I will come back to that.

The Liberals have no idea how to balance growing our economy and protecting our environment all at the same time. Any serious piece of legislation would have addressed how to preserve jobs by converting coal plants to natural gas and biomass power generation, just like the former Auditor General recommended.

This energy file has been severely mismanaged by the Liberals, and—here we go—we've seen clear evidence

of this through their failed Green Energy Act. The Green Energy Act, introduced in 2009, is absolutely horrendous, first of all stripping all autonomy from our municipalities and paying subsidies that no jurisdiction in this world could ever sustain, nor should they perpetuate.

But yet, we have a Liberal government that closes their eyes, shuts their ears and goes on their merry way, even though time and time again we stand in this House and express voices from our constituents saying how they're finding it so hard to make ends meet. Even the organizations and agencies that are in place to assist people to keep their lights and heat on are having trouble as well. All the while, this ministry just ignores it, carries on and has the audacity to actually think and propose a 2.0 version of the Green Energy Act.

We can't afford this. We're selling our energy at a loss. It's been estimated that taxpayers have paid \$2 billion doing this—\$2 billion wasted in paying other jurisdictions to take surplus energy we don't need off our hands. Honestly, this is where political science needs to be brought to an end. The economy and true science need to be founding pillars for all of us to build our future upon.

Ontarians, as I said, are paying some of the highest prices for hydro in North America, driving businesses across the border. The decision to move the gas plants cost taxpayers another \$1.1 billion. A billion here, a billion there—it seems like this Liberal government doesn't care how much their scandals are costing Ontarians. But we in opposition do, because we are close to our constituents and we hear what they're saying. We meet with our constituents, and we try to elevate their voices. But unfortunately, the party opposite continues to prove they have deaf ears to true concerns from Ontarians.

The decision to move the gas plants, for example, was supposed to facilitate the transition from coal to alternative energy sources, yet we know that this did not happen. Further, we see failures in the use of industrial wind turbines and how they've devastated rural Ontario. Speaker, I could go on and on about how the failed Green Energy Act has totally destroyed my riding in terms of relationships between families, neighbours, constituents and municipalities—and between neighbouring municipalities, as well. That's just a start. Then this government continues to perpetuate the farce when they go against their own Environmental Review Tribunal—when an ERT decision ruled against the Ministry of the Environment of the day with regard to planning hurdles.

It just goes to show that the only way this Liberal government today knows how to rule is with a huge stick. They don't care what's happening across the province. They don't care how their decisions are negatively impacting Ontarians. Really and truly, I hope that at some point—we've got members in the Liberal caucus who surely can't agree with all this legislation and all the heavy sticks that are being used right now. I hope with all my heart that around their caucus table, they have enough confidence from us opposite, as well as from their constituents, to stand up and say, "Enough is enough."

We can talk about how wind farms are popping up everywhere across the province, yet all the while, the people that own the wind projects are changing their plans. They don't have to go back to the Environmental Review Tribunal at this point, and that needs to be addressed as well. They don't care about setbacks. They don't care whether a municipality is a willing host or not, and it's just a shame.

It shows that this government lacks foresight: the investment in industrial wind turbines where storage technology has not yet made this type of energy profitable or sensible for Ontario's needs.

It makes me come back to the Fraser Institute, and specifically, a report that recently confirmed electricity rates are skyrocketing under this government's continued mismanagement of the electricity file. "Wind and solar power systems provide less than 4% of Ontario's power but account for 20% of the cost paid by Ontarians, yet the government wants to triple the number of wind and solar generators. That's a good deal," in terms of the subsidies being paid out for wind and solar producers, "but a raw deal for consumers." That was specifically said by Tom Adams. He is a co-author of the study I just quoted and also an independent energy analyst.

This particular report also recommended that a solution to any electricity shortfall is not more wind, but recommissioning the four units that have pollution abatement equipment at the Nanticoke and Lambton generating stations. That was a recommendation that had come forward.

Interjections.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: That was a recommendation that came forward—but you know what? When people are coming forward with so many various reports at different levels, it shows how Liberals have failed Ontarians on so many levels. They lack the leadership to address priorities, including the debt and deficit and, again, soaring electricity rates, a failed green energy plan, gridlock. This list is seemingly endless.

But you know what? The real band-aid that the Liberals continue to pull out of their tool box is tax. When there's a problem or they need more money, they just think nothing of taxing Ontarians once again. Time and again, during the last election and leading into this fall and another winter season—we hear time and again that there is nothing left in so many pockets, and it's a real concern. With that, we issue a concern that the Liberals' climate change initiatives have come out of left field, really and truly. They have come out of left field and have essentially proven that while this government has sat on their hands for years and years, now they're jumping on the bandwagon, again to pontificate a sudden concern when there's a possibility of finding them another revenue source, or rather, another way to empty Ontarian pockets. That's what this is really coming down to, Speaker. It's about finding another revenue source to offset their mismanagement and costly decisions that are driving jobs out of Ontario.

Recently, Quebec, who the government seems to be following the lead on on a variety of issues, has an-

nounced they will introduce a carbon tax, starting January 1. It's predicted to generate \$500 million. Again, we raise concern over the fact, does this government really, really care about climate change, as we all should, or are they seeing it just as another opportunity to take more dollars out of Ontarians' pockets to help their Liberal deficit and the debt that's amassed over the last decade?

It's interesting and very curious that in the recent Liberal economic statement, this government just revealed that they are short \$500 million in revenue. There are parallels here. Quebec has generated \$500 million in revenue through a carbon tax, and we have a shortfall. I think this government is going to try to do anything they possibly can to fix their fiscal mess, all on the shoulders of Ontarians.

1700

Recently, PC interim leader Jim Wilson questioned the Premier on a carbon tax, and she would not rule it out. We see this government getting money any way they can to make up for their mismanagement, and this concerns me. As I said before, Speaker, how much more can Ontario families take? In 2017, this government will introduce an Ontario pension plan, which we all know will kill jobs and take yet more money from Ontarians. Ontarians are overtaxed as it is. Our business environment is already unfriendly. The Premier claims she is concerned for the future of Ontario's children with regard to climate change, but she doesn't seem concerned at all by the debt she is leaving those very same children. This will be a burden for future generations.

Today our debt is \$289 billion. That is \$21,356 for every man, woman and child. We shouldn't have a revenue problem in this province with the amount of taxes and money that is taken in. Yet we do; we have a huge debt that this government chooses to carry because they can't find a fix to their spending problem. That's underscored by a total disrespect for the taxpayer.

The amount of scandals we've seen from this government underscores and emphasizes the disrespect. Gas plants, eHealth, Ornge, MaRS: It shows us time and time again the blatant disrespect for the taxpayer and the serious lack of concern for future generations who will hold this debt.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Move on; move on.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I love the fact that I'm being encouraged to move on, and I won't forget that comment was shared because I would like to move on and talk a little bit more about Elizabeth Witmer. As mentioned, this initiative began with the PC Party years ago. Witmer served for Kitchener–Waterloo for more than 20 years and, as I mentioned before, she's a good Huron county gal. She led the closure of Ontario's first coal plant, and it would be the only one closed until recently.

In 2001, Elizabeth Witmer, as the former Minister of the Environment, issued a regulation requiring the phase-out of coal burning at the Lakeview generating station, which reduced the province's total coal-fired electricity generation capacity by 15%. However, for the Liberals,

this has been an issue on the back burner for the last 11 years. Liberals, once again, cannot even meet their own goals.

In 2003, the Liberals ran on a campaign promise to end coal-fired electricity generation in the province by 2007. Well, 10 years after the announcement and six years past the deadline, they're just finishing up the job. So, yes, it's nice to cheer about the elimination of coal-powered plants, but we must also acknowledge how poorly this file has been managed and just how behind they truly are. Because of the Liberal mismanagement, Speaker, the hard-working people of this province continue to pick up the tab, paying considerable financial costs, and health costs as well.

I recognize the importance of clean air and the need and the importance of breathing easy. Last week, on COPD Day, we were reminded of the importance of lung health. Today, more than 780,000 Ontarians live with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, COPD. It is a life-altering disease, and more actions need to be taken in our province. As a proud supporter of lung health, I'm actively involved in advocacy and action on this issue and support those who are helping Ontarians breathe easy. I sit on the lung health caucus, which is dedicated to developing a lung health strategy and promoting it through all parties in the Legislature. Just last week, I joined the Ontario Lung Association and was pleased to have my own lungs tested through a simple test called spirometry—

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Spirometry.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you. I got that out eventually.

I encourage all people to do that. It's a quick, easy test. It was non-invasive. It was quick, as I said. It's extremely important for those women and men over 40 where—and for women, actually, it's important not to overlook this because the signs of this disease in women particularly show up earlier.

I also was pleased to sign the lung health action plan this past summer. It called on the government to establish an action plan focused on health promotion and on disease prevention, detection and management. And I advocated for a constituent of mine who suffers from IPF, idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, to have Esbriet, a vital drug and the only medication currently available for the treatment of the disease, to be funded through the Exceptional Access Program. I was thrilled because I had advocated for this for years and it just became effective for qualified individuals this past August. In fact, I've received many different forms of appreciation, and I want to thank everyone who took the time to send me their kind notes and appreciation, as it's why we're here. We're really here to try and make a difference. I'm very passionate about this issue, and I will continue to advocate for lung health, as we did with the passing of second reading of the Lung Health Act.

However, Ontario's industries, be it manufacturing, be it agri-food, be it restaurants or small business—those sectors need to breathe easy as well, Speaker. All parties

have committed to phasing out coal, but it's the PC Party that recognizes specifically that there's a delicate balance that needs to happen to ensure we maintain the much-needed manufacturing jobs in Ontario that keep our economy moving.

As the Premier said earlier this morning, we do not live in isolation from the rest of the world. With that in mind, we should be mindful of the cross-border pollution and the need to not overburden Ontarians with hefty regulations. We should be creating a more competitive environment for our industry and manufacturing sectors, but in order to do so, this government needs to work alongside industry to help create a clean environment and a healthy economy. Frankly, Speaker, recent events suggest—and prove, I dare say—that this is not how this particular government operates.

Last week, the farming community was blindsided with the government's decision for an 80% reduction of neonics used for soy and corn crops by 2017. This industry, we heard time and again, was under the assumption that they were working alongside this government in addressing the issue of bee mortality, which we all care about. Focused on best practices, they were working on innovative solutions to contain the residue and reduce the exposure of bees to dust. Further, the recent Health Canada study that very same afternoon that the introduction was made indicated that the number of incident reports associated with neonic pesticides during the planting period in 2014 was 70% lower. That means bee mortality had dropped 70% lower than in 2013.

Despite all of this, though, and further, the fact is that nowhere in the Liberal recommendations did they consider what the industry was doing with regard to bee mortality. Again, I repeat: Nowhere in their announcement last week did they take into consideration the advancements that industry had taken to help in the reduction of bee mortality in Ontario. I might also add that the Health Canada report did not suggest a ban either, yet the Liberals again went in their own direction.

This has to stop. We need to base regulation and legislation on science and fact, not just a knee-jerk reaction. Again, this type of knee-jerk activity has the potential to seriously affect the economy and drive jobs and industry out of our province.

When it comes down to where we're going with Bill 9, I would suggest to you again, Speaker, that we don't need this legislation. We've already phased out coal plants for power generation. I would suggest that if this Liberal government was truly concerned about this issue, they would be meeting their own targets for greenhouse gas reductions.

This bill does not address how to reduce private sector coal use, and there is no plan to convert existing coal plants into natural gas or biomass facilities, as suggested by the Auditor General.

I would close off at this time, before I pass the baton over to my colleague, by saying and suggesting that this government should be inviting industry and other stakeholders to work alongside them in creating policies

that will help our environment but will also ensure that we foster a strong and inviting business climate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member from Huron–Bruce. She is sharing her time with the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. I recognize the member.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's a pleasure to join this debate. I didn't realize this was a rather long debate today—one hour. My goodness gracious. But I want to congratulate my colleague from Huron–Bruce for a great beginning to the debate. I only hope I can be as strong and as eloquent in my closing. I realize she has an important engagement. I wish you the very best with that as well.

1710

That's one thing about being in this chamber. We can be here for part of the day, but we've all got meetings going on continuously here as well, and I thank my colleague for taking the time to come down and lead our charge on this piece of legislation. I say it kind of tongue-in-cheek—this important piece of legislation. It barely makes up the page. It's a good thing we do work in two official languages or we could probably do this on the back of a napkin. You know how they say, "This bill was written on the back of a napkin"? This could be written on the back—you don't see them anymore, but they used to have these penny matches, as they called them, where you flipped it open; you could have written the bill on the inside of that.

It brings me to the point that my colleague was making. Why do we really need this piece of legislation? I'm going to be as kind as possible here. I know the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change is not going to like this, and he's certainly not going to like me for it, but I'm going to be blunt. I remember when the new government was sworn in and he was made the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. He was none too happy. He was none too happy, and you saw it in the media, where on that day or the day after, he announced that he wouldn't be running in the next election, that this would be his last term in the Legislature. He may change his mind on that, but do you remember how angry he was that he got what is viewed by most people as a demotion in cabinet? He was upset.

Mr. John Fraser: Nice guy.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, it's the facts, John. You might not like it, but we all read the media stories, and what are we supposed to do? Rub people's shoulders and just tell them what they want to hear?

So he brought out this bill—this worthless bill that does absolutely nothing. You might as well be banning steel wheels on tractors or the old crank telephones. They don't exist anymore. There's no reason, no need for this piece of legislation. We've burned the last piece of coal. The minister said himself that he gave that last lump of coal from Atikokan to the member from St. Catharines for his work on the file, and presumably for the great work that he's done in this Legislature since 1977.

Mr. John Fraser: He should have saved it for you.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I've already said I'll be getting coal for Christmas, and I'm not too concerned. It wouldn't be the first Christmas that I got a lump of coal.

So why are we debating this? Here we are ramming through pieces of legislation, using time allocation to put through legislation because the government doesn't want to debate it, but we're going to debate a bill that does what's already been done. It should be like we're going to have a bill that determines that "yesterday" will forever from now on be known as "the day before today" or that "the day before today" will forever be known as "yesterday," and we're going to get that into legislation so nobody can change it, so that if somebody comes here after me—somebody who just might try to do something really strange—they cannot change the name from "yesterday" to something else. We need to have this put into legislation perhaps. So this could be the bill of redundancy or the minister's axiomatic piece of legislation—

Interjection: Piece of what?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Piece of—yes; I'm being polite. My friends in the third party are finding this a little bit funny, because they're coming to the same conclusion. What in the name of Sam Hill are we doing with this piece of paper?

I recognize that because he was upset the Premier said, "Look, bring out a bill." Now we're getting near the end of the fall session and they said, "Well, we better debate this bill." It's Bill 9, and we're already debating bills up in the 40s or 30s. Today we had time allocation on Bill 35, a bill that ironically, Mr. Speaker, has, in one form or another, been before this Legislature since 2012. I know that my friend from Bramalea–Gore–Malton spoke to the time allocation on that bill today. I remember him sitting on committee with me on that bill when it was Bill 34 in the previous Parliament. It died on the order paper because Dalton McGuinty decided that, even though winter hadn't arrived yet, he was taking a walk in the snow.

The next time it died because Kathleen Wynne, Premier Wynne, called an election, sought a new mandate from the people. Congratulations to the Premier. Congratulations to all the new people who were elected. Good for you.

It now comes back in this Parliament as Bill 35. We need to ram that through the House, Speaker, because we're running out of time. We've got to get moving on this stuff. Now we're going to spend the Legislature's time debating this one page. We could make a little paper airplane out of it and throw it exactly where it belongs. If there was a basket over there, maybe I could hit it.

People out in TV land ask themselves, "What do they do down there?" My brother—I shouldn't repeat this, but I talk to him quite often on the phone, and he will say things like, "So what did you do down there this week? Nothing, right?" He's kind of cynical in that way, but I think he says it a little bit in jest. He says, "Did you guys do anything productive down there in the Legislature this week?" When he reads about this, I'm going to have a

tough time arguing with him, because he's going to look at this Bill 9 and he's going to say, "Wow. You guys actually are debating that piece of legislation?"

Here's a bill that accomplishes what has already been accomplished. Wow. That's quite a feat. So let's get back to the beginnings. The Liberals go on and on and on about eliminating coal, and you know what? Congratulations, because you did close the last coal-fired generating station, but it was only after breaking your promise several times. In fairness to the minister, he wasn't in the cabinet or he wasn't even in the—I think he was in Manitoba then.

Back in 2003, Dalton McGuinty campaigned on a commitment, which nobody that knew anything about the energy sector in the province of Ontario or how easy or difficult it was to accomplish things—no one believed for a moment that they could actually accomplish this, which was a promise to close all coal-fired generation by 2007. That was four short years away.

That seems like eons ago. At the time, we had about 6,500 megawatts of coal-fired generation in the province of Ontario: about 4,000 at Nanticoke, 2,000 at Lambton, 320 or so at Thunder Bay and about 160 or so at Atikokan. That was your coal-fired generation here in the province of Ontario. They were going to close all of that within four years.

You know what? Sadly, I believe it actually helped them get elected, because they won a lot of seats in Toronto. They won a majority—I think it was 72 seats at that time. They haven't got there yet again. It was about 72 seats they won.

Mr. Han Dong: Three.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Was it 73?

Mr. Han Dong: I think so.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, whatever.

Mr. Han Dong: I'm younger than you are.

Mr. John Yakabuski: So 72 or 73 seats—I don't have the encyclopedia in front of me; I'm just going on memory. But they won a majority with around 72 or 73 seats, and a lot of it, I think, had to do with their promises, particularly to the urban people, that they were going to close these coal plants because they convinced them that the coal plants were killing people here in the province of Ontario.

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So they won their election, and then, lo and behold, "We're not going to be able to do that by 2007." By that time, people had become conditioned that Liberals will make a promise and it has the shelf life of a quart of milk outside the refrigerator. That's the shelf life of a Liberal promise. As soon as you put that carton of milk on the shelf, Dalton McGuinty was, "Oh, we're not going to be able to do that." But then again, that's not the real kicker, because they also gave you another promise, and that was that they wouldn't raise your taxes, and then they brought in the biggest single tax increase in Ontario's history, the health tax. Do you remember that, the health tax? "We will not raise your taxes," and then they brought in the health tax. So, unfortunately, it became something that

people became accustomed to, that a Liberal would promise something and then they would break it.

Then they talked about running on principles. I have always said that Liberal principles—I'm trying to be kind, but they change. They change. It's sort of like, you know, you're wondering what you're going to do to make some supper. You open the fridge and see all these vegetables in there. There's some turnips and some carrots, there's some corn and some peas, and there's some potatoes or whatever. You blend that all together with a broth—I wouldn't know how to start—but you make a soup out of it. Okay?

But for the Liberals, if you went back into that refrigerator a couple of weeks later, there could be a whole different group of vegetables in that refrigerator. You take them out—because you don't want to throw them away; you don't want to waste them—and you make a nice soup out of them. You might have a ham in there as well. You might put some chicken skeleton in there to get some broth—whatever.

That could be called Liberal principle soup, because every time you open that fridge, you're going to get a new recipe. Every time you open that fridge, it's going to be different. That could be Liberal principle soup, because every time it's going to be different. And they're going to stand by them. They're going to stand by them, because those are the principles they're going to govern by.

Let's get back to the coal plants. Then they said, "We're going to close the coal plants by 2009." No, no. Then it was 2012. No. And then it was 2014. Finally, if you say something often enough and keep moving the yardsticks every time—Liberals talk about achieving, overachieving. You hear the finance minister always saying, "We've overachieved. We've beaten our targets every year." It's like they've lowered the bar every time you turn around. It's like if they're making the 100 metres 90 metres and then they're rejoicing because they're setting new world records. Let's just make the race shorter. The marathon becomes 24 miles, and we've got a new world record. Roger Bannister would turn over in his grave if he realized what you guys were doing.

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: You know, the guy who broke the four-minute mile.

Hon. James J. Bradley: You're not that old.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'm not quite that old, but I read about it. But, Jim, you are. You might have been there. You might have been watching the race, I say to my friend from St. Catharines.

That's the problem with them. They're always moving the yardsticks to try to make it appear that they have accomplished something when, in fact, they've accomplished nothing, and this bill is a good example of that. They're now going to enforce in legislation that we're not going to burn coal. Wow, what a victory. I'm sure they're celebrating on every street corner right now, because the Liberals are now bringing in a bill that they're not going to burn coal. But they couldn't have

been in that big a hurry to pass it either, because it's Bill 9 and we're already passing bills that are—Bill 35 is going to time allocation and some of the other bills—

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Bill 10 is already in law.

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Jim Bradley is showing me something that says “beer” on it. Now, don't tell me they're going to ban beer. You won't get away with that one. You might get away with banning coal in the province of Ontario, but you're not going to get away with banning beer. We'll fight you tooth and nail on that one; I'll tell you that right now. I don't care how many times you move the yardsticks on that one; you're not going to get it through.

So they're not getting these coal plants closed, and they're trying to take credit for all these things, so then they bring out this Green Energy Act. That's what was going to get us off coal, they said. “That's going to get us off coal.” We never stopped burning a single megawatt of coal because of the Green Energy Act. It was gas plants. They built 20 gas plants, and that's why we've been able to close the coal plants.

But gas plants emit CO₂—admittedly less than a coal plant, but climate change is all about CO₂. The minister of climate change says that we've got to reduce our CO₂ emissions, but we're burning more gas than we've ever burned in the province of Ontario. Are we burning coal? No, we're not, but we're burning more natural gas to produce power.

You see, all of those wind turbines that they've forced on people in rural Ontario, against their will—when those don't turn, when the wind doesn't blow, you've got to back it up with something. In most cases, it means that the gas plants have to be fired up, because the nuclear fleet is already running. The nuclear fleet does not have the flexibility that the gas plants have.

But what happens, then, when all of those windmills that we've built now, at an exorbitant cost, and have signed contracts with the developers that are breaking our electricity ratepayers—seniors who can't pay their hydro bills, because the hydro bills, especially in the winter-time, are more than their old age pension—well, we've got to pay those wind developers, because the Liberal government, under the Green Energy Act, authored by George Smitherman, compels them to pay ridiculous prices.

I've got friends who've got solar panels, and they've got contracts that pay them—get this—

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, you might want to sit down, Mario, because when I tell you this, you're going to want to be sitting down: 80.2 cents a kilowatt hour.

Interjection: Whoa.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes. I was talking to a friend of mine at a wake the other day. He's got himself and his three friends living in an area of Renfrew county—I won't identify them, but they've all got an under-10-kilowatt solar development on their property, and they're

all getting 80.2 cents a kilowatt hour for any power they've generated. He said, “You know, the neighbours and a lot of people were mad at us, because ‘Why should you be getting all that money for that power?’”

I've actually got to tell you: I helped them get hooked up, because they're my constituents. I helped them with their issues with the OPA to get them hooked up, because they're my constituents. So what he said to me was—and I'll paraphrase it afterwards—“If that Liberal government is dumb enough to pay me 80.2 cents a kilowatt hour for electricity, well, by George, I'm smart enough to take it.” I would say that if that Liberal government was dumb enough to offer 80.2 cents a kilowatt hour, I'm going to be smart enough to make sure that, if there are people benefiting by it, they're going to be the ones living in my riding.

At the same time, I said to every one of those people—and they agreed—“Do you think this is a good idea for electricity generation in the province of Ontario?” They said, “Are you crazy? It's insane to pay that kind of money to get power, absolutely insane.” But the Liberals decided that they were going to do that.

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Solar doesn't make up the bulk amount of our electricity; it makes up a very, very small percentage. But then let's talk about the wind, which makes up the bulk of the renewable portfolio.

You know this thing they call the global adjustment? A lot of people don't understand it. A lot of people don't understand the global adjustment, but they're all paying for it. Everybody pays for it. Whether it's embedded in your hydro bill or whether it's delineated separately on your hydro bill, you're all paying for it; and every time the Ontario Energy Board allows an increase in the price of electricity, which now, by the way, is at 14 cents a kilowatt hour at peak time—14 cents a kilowatt hour. When this government came to power, it was 4.3 cents a kilowatt hour; now it's as high as 14 cents a kilowatt hour.

When I talk to seniors on fixed incomes in my riding, they are beside themselves trying to figure out how they are going to pay their hydro bills under these circumstances, and according to the government's own statements, that price is only going one way.

Interjection: Up?

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's going up, 46% more over the next five years. When you're already against the wall, how can you pay 46% more?

They ask me, “Well, John, why do they keep signing more and more of these contracts for this expensive power? We can't afford it now. Why do they keep doing that?” I say, “I can't answer the why.” I cannot answer the why, but I think my friend from Prince Edward—Hastings pretty much coined it when he said “blind ideology,” because, you see, at this point they refuse to retreat. They refuse to say, “We've got to stop this,” because they are so committed to it, wrong as it may be, they don't want to admit the folly of their ways. So they keep plowing forward and hoping that somehow, somehow, this is going to change on its own.

The success of your economy is directly related to the cost of your electricity. This province was built on accessible, affordable, reliable electricity—accessible, affordable, reliable electricity. We simply don't have that anymore.

My colleague from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, last week at estimates, brought in—and I asked the minister about it later in the day—some hydro bills from Manitoba and from British Columbia. If you're in Manitoba, the all-in cost of hydro is about a third of what it is in Ontario, because when you add in all of the extras in Ontario—the debt retirement charge, the regulatory charges, the delivery charges, the HST—you add it all up together, it's just about crippling, the price of power and what it's doing to people. But this government just turns a deaf ear to it. They're not interested in hearing what the public has to say about the price of power. That's regrettable, because while we can argue till the cows come home, as they say, about electricity policy, what truly is wrong is when a government refuses to listen.

I'm getting a note here. I don't know exactly what it's about, but it certainly has to do with my friend from Algoma–Manitoulin, a Chappleau constituent: \$1,816 a month for their hydro bill, plus a \$10,000 invoice dating back to 2012. He's got in quotations, “smart meter.” I think what he meant was “dumb meter.” But I don't think I have time to begin to talk about all of the problems associated with billing here in the province of Ontario and the absolute mess that Hydro One brought upon their customers in the province of Ontario.

I had a resident who had a home of about 1,100 square feet—

Mr. Todd Smith: A small house.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, up where I come from, it's modest, but we don't live in the rich areas—and he got a bill for \$18,000 for a month for hydro. He had to argue back and forth that that couldn't be right. He ended up coming to our office. Fortunately we were able to straighten it out in fairly short order, but why should he ever have had to come to my office? If you know anything about electricity, you would know that you couldn't possibly burn that much electricity in 1,100 square feet. You wouldn't have enough service. You wouldn't have enough amps coming into that house to ever use that amount of power. If you had every circuit wide open 24/7 for a month, you couldn't do it. There's just not enough capacity within the home. There's not enough electricity burning devices or appliances in the home. But yet, somebody who was sitting in some bureaucratic office somewhere decided that if that's your bill, you're going to have to pay it.

That's what has happened under this government, these kinds of things that are just unfortunate. It was a senior citizen, by the way, on a fixed income. Can you imagine when they got that bill and then they were told by the utility, “No, you're going to have to pay it. It must be your bill. It must be right”? Well, I'm thankful that we got that straightened out, but it never, ever should have gotten there.

I guarantee you, there's not a rural member, for sure, in this Legislature who has not dealt with significant issues with regard to billing. Much of it was related to problems in the utility's accounting system itself, but a lot of them were failures in smart meters, inaccuracies and some kinds of other technical glitches. But when you're on the other side of a technical glitch, that's cold comfort when somebody is sending you a bill and threatening to cut your power off because you can't pay it.

But I don't want to spend the few moments that I have left going over hydro bill after hydro bill after hydro bill because that is not the real issue here. The issue is the tying up of this Legislature to debate this piece of legislation. Why? I say this to the minister: We all have to account for ourselves. We have to account for how we've spent our time. You'll be asked: Did you spend your day productively? Did you accomplish something for the greater good today? Did you do something that helped your fellow man, your neighbour, your colleagues, your family? Did you do something today that was positive? Was your time spent in a way that will be of benefit? The time in this Legislature today, I say to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, is not being used very productively. This bill was totally unnecessary. You know it yourself—in your heart of hearts, you know this bill was not necessary. We ceased burning coal in the province of Ontario. We know that this government is not going to burn coal. They're committed to it, and we know how Liberals honour their commitments. Ahem, excuse me.

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes.

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So we know they're not going to burn coal. We know also that they're going to be in government for the next four years, so those coal plants are going to sit idle for the next four years. They will be burning no coal. Does he really think that a piece of legislation was necessary to determine what might happen four years from now? Did he really think it was necessary?

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes. Did he really think that any other party was going to go back to burning coal? We've had that argument. We've lost that argument. We've moved on.

It is now our job to ensure that the electricity system that we do have—as much as you people have screwed it up, it is going to be our job to ensure that the system we inherit, to the greatest degree, is one that we can make the changes that ensure that those jobs that used to be ours in Ontario—maybe we can bring them back. Those industries that used to believe that Ontario was the right place to establish a plant because this is the place where we've got skilled workers, we've got a great transportation network, but we also have affordable, accessible, reliable electricity—maybe we can bring them back. That's going to take a while. We're committed to doing that.

But this piece of legislation is nothing but a waste of this Legislature's time. We should be spending it on more productive things and debating some of those significant pieces that you are ramming down our throats.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I was so excited to respond to the member from Nipissing-Pembroke that I stood up early; it was so exciting.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Don't forget about Renfrew; they'll be sending you a letter.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Oh, sorry. Let me get it right then: Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke.

Honestly, I've said this time and time again and I've got to say it once again; I'm sure the member already knows this and he has heard this: The member is one of the most entertaining speakers in this House. I think we can all agree on that. You may not agree with him, but you definitely have to admit that he is entertaining.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: And you can agree with him, too.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: And you can agree with him, too, if you like, but he's definitely entertaining.

A couple of things that he brought up that I think are quite interesting: One of the things he said—and I'm not going to say it nearly as eloquently as he said it—is there's a certain prioritizing in the bills that the government is choosing to bring forward that is somewhat questionable. The priorities of this government, in terms of what bills they're time-allocating, which bills they're ramming through, which bills they've chosen to proceed with given our limited time in the House, are somewhat questionable, and I think the member brought that up in a very eloquent manner.

I have other bills that I certainly think were not necessary or other bills that were very important that weren't brought up—and I might disagree on which of the bills they are. One of the bills I think was essentially important that we didn't see this House or this government take priority on was the bill that would protect public participation, that would protect our ability to have dissent, the anti-SLAPP legislation. The bill that the government did choose to move on before they brought forward the anti-SLAPP legislation was the better business climate bill, which essentially added no new powers, added no new regulation-making authority to the government, really didn't do anything that the government couldn't already do. The government could already release reports. The government could already make efficiencies.

This is another example of the government not prioritizing the bills, and that's an important point.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: First, I want to thank the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke for the career advice. It's always great to get career advice from someone who has such a lifetime commitment to a seat on the opposition benches.

I also just want to point out that this bill is very important because the question is being put: Would I trust his party, if it was ever sitting here, to start opening coal plants again? Absolutely. Your party federally—the wonderful member MP Gallant, your dear friend the federal member, who I know you have such a solid relationship with, is part of a government unprecedented in human history in subsidizing fossil fuels. The government of Canada takes more tax dollars to subsidize natural gas, to burn bitumen, to make oil, and then they subsidize the pipelines. It is the biggest greenhouse gas disaster.

So if you can vote for a party federally that is the big, big, big smoke of GHGs, it should not be much of a problem for you to go back and turn coal plants on, because I've heard members opposite say one of the dumbest things we ever did was do coal plants.

Actions speak louder than words, my friend from Huron-Bruce said. Yes, your total contribution was a 15% reduction in coal closures, which you talk up like it was parting the Red Sea. We closed 85% of coal production right now. We're electrifying our entire transportation system. We're working with manufacturers to be a world leader in net zero vehicles.

I have to tell you, my friend from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke is a great man with a great sense of a humor and a future in stand-up comedy like no one else in this House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Todd Smith: It's a pleasure to join this debate, one of the few debates that we're able to actually have here in the Legislature, because the government time and time again continues to muzzle the official opposition parties and muzzle members of the public as well.

Just a bit of a news flash for you—before I congratulate the members from Huron-Bruce and Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke for their well-thought-out one hour of debate on this bill—those coal plants are closed; right? They're closed. Nobody's going to open those coal plants again. We do not need this piece of legislation. This legislation is nothing. Look at this. I've seen hydro bills that are more substantial than this. Bill 9 has absolutely nothing in it.

The member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke brought up some incredible points. He's obviously not just a funny man; he has his facts right, too. The fact is that hydro bills, as a result of that government's actions, have gone up 56%. The Auditor General says so. I think at that time it was a him; it was Jim McCarter who said so. Now we have a female Auditor General in the province. But the Auditor General's office reports that those hydro rates are going to triple again. As a matter of fact, we're going to see that by 2020 those hydro bills are going to be higher than any CO₂ emission has ever made it into the atmosphere, because people in rural Ontario now can't afford their hydro bills. They can't afford them now. But the Auditor General is telling us, and the Ministry of Finance continues to tell us, that those energy

bills, the electricity bills, are going to continue to skyrocket.

This is a lot of sound and fury signifying nothing. There is nothing in this bill but a PR scam for the Liberal government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further questions and comments?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Indeed, a lot of fun to stand up here this afternoon on the behalf of the residents of Windsor–Tecumseh and speak to comments made by the member from Huron–Bruce, who gave a very serious interpretation of Bill 9, and then to listen to the very colourful member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke—always a delight, Speaker, to listen to the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. Sometimes I feel like I'm in the back row of an audience on Entertainment Tonight.

Mr. John Yakabuski: You used to live there.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I used to live there—in fact, as a reporter I used to cover your father when he was a member. He was a good member, a great member, but he was never as colourful an orator as you, sir. You have taken it to a new regard.

I have to say, I would move back to Pembroke tomorrow if, as a constituent of this member, he would get me 80 cents a kilowatt hour on a solar—I would put that on my home. Wouldn't you, Speaker? He helped his constituents get 80 cents a kilowatt hour on the FIT program for solar in their neighbourhood, and the rest of us of course are making that up because we're paying higher prices across the province because of that.

Hands up: Who wouldn't want to get 80 cents a kilowatt hour for a solar project in your home? Hands up. Who wouldn't want that? I think we all would, and only this guy can get it for you, if you live in Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, because he's the representative. He probably has it on his shed, too.

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Mr. John Yakabuski: No, I don't.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: How about on the outhouse? Is it on the outhouse, John?

No, seriously, Speaker, a real delight to listen to the member, and I certainly wish him and his family a very merry Christmas after receiving his very colourful Christmas card here in the House this afternoon as well.

Interjection: Does it have a solar panel on it?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It doesn't have a solar panel in the background on it. No, it doesn't.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Back to the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for his final comments.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I want to thank the members from Bramalea–Gore–Malton, the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, the member for Prince Edward–Hastings and the member for Windsor–Tecumseh, who used to be a resident of my riding—

Interjection.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I did say “Bramalea–Gore–Malton.” I said you first. Relax, Jagmeet. I would never forget you, but I can't forget Percy, either—Windsor–Tecumseh as well.

I want to thank them for their comments. I appreciate their views. I say to the Minister of the Environment that in spite of his two-minute criticism of my address, my views have not changed. We still don't believe that this bill was necessary, and I can assure you that if there are so many important pieces of legislation that the government wants to talk to us about to get through this House before the Christmas recess, we're all ears. But, unfortunately, that's not what has been happening. What has been happening is, we come into the House and the House leader stands up, takes the floor and introduces time allocation.

We have spent as much time debating time allocation as we spent debating legislation almost in this House since we came back here on the 20th of October. I somehow don't believe that that was what this chamber was designed for. We're here to debate the legislation itself—the merits, the pros, the cons, the weaknesses—to see if we can't make it stronger.

This bill—there's nothing we can do to make it stronger, but, Speaker, there is nothing we can do to make it any weaker, either. Why don't we just move on, tear it up, forget it ever happened and bring in some bills here to this House that the people of Ontario really need? How about a bill that does something about our economy? How about a bill that does something about employment? The government is lost when it comes to doing something that would actually help the average taxpayer in this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Further debate?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It's indeed an honour to stand here, as the member for Windsor–Tecumseh, and start talking for an hour—or five minutes, depending on your ruling. Do you want to break now, Speaker, or do you want me to start rolling?

Interjection.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I'll keep going?

I want to stand and speak to the bill, Bill 9. It's An Act to amend the Environmental Protection Act to require the cessation of coal use to generate electricity at generation facilities—“the cessation of coal use.”

Speaker, I have to tell you, I'm going to be a bit redundant, I guess, after listening to the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. I used to work at the CBC; I was declared redundant there as well. I won't be as funny and I won't be as eloquent as the member, but let me get started.

This bill is also known as the Ending Coal for Cleaner Air Act, and on this side of the House, we think of it as—perhaps it could be known as the “Why are we spending time on a bill when we've already taken the steps, already shut down the coal-burning power-generation plants in Ontario? Oh, yes. I guess we need to change the channel” act. Or the “Let's pat ourselves on the back and tell ourselves we've done a good thing here” act. Or how about the “Gosh, we missed our deadline for closing the coal-powered plants four or five times, so now that we

finally got there, let's pretend we knew what we were doing" act?

Don't get me wrong, Speaker; the bill makes sense, believe it or not. It made sense before the plants were actually shut down or converted to other fuels. We all know there are no more coal-burning power-generating facilities in Ontario, and there haven't been any coal-burning facilities for some time. Most people would agree that that's a good thing, so some of us are wondering why we're here today discussing this bill, as opposed to debating more topical issues.

Speaker, as you know, the government has been beating up on the opposition parties lately, shutting down debate, imposing time allocation, not willing to listen to further debate on matters and bills that were substantive. We've even gone to night sittings. Some of us were here last night till 9:30.

So why isn't the government putting on the table the issues and the bills that require lengthy, in-depth debate and discussion? Somebody wants to spin the news cycle. Somebody in some corner office down the hall wants the public to think that this is new. This isn't new; this is retro. This is dredging up the ashes, Minister, and fanning the flames. This is a Hail Mary pass, tossed in the hope that some of the people can be fooled into believing that this is all new and exciting.

This bill specifies four generating facilities that will never be allowed to burn coal again: the Atikokan plant, which stopped burning coal in late 2012; the Lambton Generating Station, which ceased burning coal in September 2013; in Haldimand county, the Nanticoke Generating Station, which used to be one of Canada's top 10 single sources of greenhouse gases, and hasn't burned coal since 2013. As a footnote to give some historical perspective, 201 years ago, in 1813, that's where the Battle of Nanticoke was fought. The Norfolk militia beat back a marauding band of Americans. The battleground was declared a national historic site in 1924. If we get back to the present day, the fourth one, the Thunder Bay Generating Station, specified in this bill, hasn't burned a piece of coal since April.

So why is this bill in front of us today? The smoke from those coal-burning emission stacks is long gone, but this bill seems to be based on—wait for it—smoke and mirrors. Coal used to provide 25% of Ontario's electricity, and the emissions from those plants were polluting—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Oh, you can do better than that. You're from the CBC. You can do better than that.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Minister, I told you I wouldn't be as erudite, as funny, as humorous or as engaging as the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

But still, we're dealing with this bill today. I expect that my friend the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change has his reasons. We don't always agree, but I respect the minister. I'll say that again: I respect the minister. He's very intelligent. He has great passion for the environment. His concerns about the challenges that

we face due to climate change are well documented. I respect the minister for expressing those views.

I'm still curious, if not downright suspicious, why this proposed legislation is on our desks at this time. Getting rid of coal was a good idea. Even Energy Minister Chiarelli admitted to knowing of four or five young girls on his daughter's hockey team that he used to coach about 10 years ago who had asthma so bad that they had to use puffers.

Asthma continues to be a problem for some people. I'll just give you a little background information, Speaker, or should I wrap up now? I see you're getting nervous over there. This is a good chance; I'm going on to another side topic. With your permission, Speaker, I'll end it here for now and try to pick up the hour someplace else in the week ahead.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member from Windsor–Tecumseh.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Pursuant to standing order 28, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

ANNONCES DU GOUVERNEMENT

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): The member for Wellington–Halton Hills has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given by the Premier. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the Premier or her parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

1800

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm pleased to be joined today with my colleague the member for Perth–Wellington. We asked a tag-team question in the House last week, and because of the standing orders, I think it requires that the first one who stood initiates the late show, so I'm speaking on behalf of my friend the member for Perth–Wellington, and together we're making our presentation this evening.

Last week, as I said, my colleague the member for Perth–Wellington and I raised an important issue with the Premier during question period. We asked the Premier whether or not she thought it was appropriate for a defeated Liberal candidate to be making public announcements on behalf of the government about infrastructure funding going to area municipalities when local MPPs had not been officially notified.

We further established that this clear breach of respect for parliamentary democracy had already taken place, as the former Liberal candidate in Perth–Wellington, who now works as a policy adviser in the office of the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, had sent out a news release on behalf of the local Liberal riding association, taking credit for the funding while at the same time

attacking the official opposition with false and misleading statements. And it gets worse when you consider the fact that the former Liberal candidate most likely had access to privileged information on the funding before it was released.

The Premier's replies in this House were not satisfactory either to the member for Perth–Wellington or to me. In her response to our second question, she indicated she had no “information on the specifics” of the news release. Hearing that, and having a copy of the news release in my possession, I immediately asked a page to deliver it to the Premier to back up and verify the points we were making. She glanced at the news release and then continued her answer by saying the news release wasn't an “announcement,” but instead, it was a “statement of something that is happening.” I think she believed that government staff had sent her the news release.

My quotes from the Premier are taken from Hansard, the verbatim, official record of debates in the Ontario Legislature. Mr. Speaker, any fair-minded, objective person reading the news release that the Liberal candidate had sent out would conclude that it was his intention to announce the funding on behalf of the government, take credit for it, and in the process, diminish the role of the official opposition.

Mr. Speaker, when I was first elected in 1990, this sort of thing never happened, to the best of my recollection, even though I served in the opposition to the then NDP government of the day. In fact, if municipalities in my riding were in line to receive roads funding from the province, for example, I would receive a phone call from the local Stratford office of the Ministry of Transportation, and I would be informed of the funding allocations they were providing to the municipalities before the municipalities were even informed. As such, the announcements of government funding were non-partisan, and rightly so.

How things have changed. Now, 24 years later, we have a defeated Liberal candidate making the public announcements, slighting MPPs who were actually elected by the people just a few months ago, and attacking our party for good measure.

In the past, when MPPs have raised points of privilege complaining about governments making key announcements outside of this House, a former Speaker, in his ruling, spoke of the “syndrome of casual diminishment of the legitimate and key role of the opposition.” This is one of those situations, another example of the syndrome of casual diminishment of the legitimate and key role of the opposition that the former Speaker lamented.

As someone who has been privileged to serve on both sides of this House, in opposition and in government, and having seen it from both sides, I would offer the government members my observation through the years that while we can always make a conscious decision to do the right thing, it is a breach of parliamentary tradition to show such lack of regard and respect to duly elected members and the democratic process that caused their elections. Indeed, it is an affront to the people who

elected them in the 107 ridings across this province, and it cannot go unchallenged.

I call upon the Premier, tomorrow, to rise in this House on a point of order, correct her record, and acknowledge and admit that the Liberal candidate's news release was in fact intended to be an announcement. I further call upon the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs to call in his new policy adviser and admonish him to never again use privileged information that that office possesses in that manner.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member from Wellington–Halton Hills.

In response, the parliamentary assistant to the Premier, the member from Etobicoke North, has the floor for up to five minutes.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Premièrement, je veux saluer my honourable colleague from Wellington–Halton Hills, speaking on behalf of the MPP for Perth–Wellington. Sir, your remarks are always taken under advisement. I salute you for the measured, balanced and generally respectful tone that you conduct yourself with in this Parliament.

Having said that, I hope to address your particular concerns in a moment. I would simply say that when you complain of the syndrome of casual diminishment, I have to say, as a physician, I feel like prescribing something, but hopefully these remarks will actually address some of your concerns.

I appreciate this opportunity. I think our government is still proud of our record when it comes to infrastructure investments in Ontario.

Notre gouvernement est fier de notre travail et de nos investissements dans les infrastructures en Ontario.

On November 14, the government announced that through the Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund, 426 communities across the province will receive annual funding to support improvements and repairs to roads, bridges, water and waste water projects.

Le 14 novembre dernier, notre gouvernement a annoncé qu'avec le support du Fonds ontarien pour l'infrastructure communautaire, 426 communautés à travers la province recevront un financement annuel afin de moderniser et réparer les routes, les ponts et les systèmes d'eau potable et d'eau usée, ainsi que d'autres infrastructures essentielles.

These improvements to local infrastructure, Speaker, will help revitalize the community while creating jobs and strengthening the local economy.

The press release directly referenced by my honourable colleague from Wellington–Halton Hills, by members opposite, was issued by the local Liberal association and links directly to this public Infrastructure Ontario announcement. It highlights positive action being done by the Ontario government. In fact, all of the information contained within the release was already public at the time that the Liberal association issued its press release. I repeat: All the information contained within the release was already public at the time the Liberal association issued its press release. There, of course, no doubt, is the nub of the issue, including the fact that the

PCs, by the way, voted against our budget and didn't support those particular vital investments.

The release also contained a link to the public website which lists all 426 communities that received this funding. So not only is it public, but it's generally broadcast across the province.

I would encourage all members of this House and the public to make their communities aware of such important investments. In fact, all parties generally do. I could come up myself with countless examples of riding associations, by the way, from all parties, including the Conservative Party, our honourable opposition, commenting on government actions. I would generally applaud anyone who highlights these vital investments for the public.

I applaud, Speaker, with your indulgence, Mr. Skinner for participating in political activities and supporting his local communities.

As the Premier said, to requote, if the Conservative member had wanted to talk about these investments that were being made in his riding, I think that would be a very good thing. We would, in fact, encourage it. I can't help but wonder if the only reason the member from Perth-Wellington is upset—perhaps there are others—is because he was caught failing to communicate this important information to his constituents.

Speaker, this is a great announcement and good news for communities across Ontario and Perth-Wellington.

I conclude with respect to my honourable colleagues from Wellington-Halton Hills and Perth-Wellington. Thank you, sir.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): This House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock.

The House adjourned at 1809.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
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Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
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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
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Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
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Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
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Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
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Gila Martow, Kathryn McGarry
Peter Tabuns
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