



ISSN 1710-9477

**Legislative Assembly
of Ontario**

First Session, 41st Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

Première session, 41^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

Monday 13 April 2015

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Lundi 13 avril 2015

**Standing Committee on
Social Policy**

Ontario Retirement Pension
Plan Act, 2015

**Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Loi de 2015 sur le Régime
de retraite de la province
de l'Ontario

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Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
SOCIAL POLICYCOMITÉ PERMANENT DE
LA POLITIQUE SOCIALE

Monday 13 April 2015

Lundi 13 avril 2015

*The committee met at 1400 in room 151.*ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION
PLAN ACT, 2015LOI DE 2015 SUR LE RÉGIME
DE RETRAITE DE LA PROVINCE
DE L'ONTARIO

Consideration of the following bill:

Bill 56, An Act to require the establishment of the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan / Projet de loi 56, Loi exigeant l'établissement du Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Good afternoon, everyone. We're here for clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 56, An Act to require the establishment of the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. Please note that copies of the bill, along with the package of amendments to the bill filed to date, have been distributed to the committee.

Are there any comments or questions before we go to section 1?

There being none, we'll go to section 1 and we have a PC amendment: Ms. Munro.

Mrs. Julia Munro: Thank you. If I could just introduce the notion that is being brought forward in this amendment, it is simply to reflect the concerns of many deputants, knowing that this requires a great deal of internal change in the private sector without any kind of cost-benefit analysis.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Could you actually read the motion first, and then I'll ask for commentary.

Mrs. Julia Munro: Okay. I was sort of waiting for your direction on that.

I move that section 1 of the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Cost-benefit analysis

"(3) The Minister of Finance shall prepare a cost-benefit analysis of the proposed Ontario Retirement Pension Plan and shall table the report in the Legislative Assembly before December 31, 2015."

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): And if you'd like to speak to that.

Mrs. Julia Munro: Certainly. I just would remind members that many people raised issues amongst the deputants, knowing that they had legitimate concerns with regard to the way in which the money was to be collected, the way in which people would participate, the definition of those able to participate and those pre-

vented. This reflects the concern of many of the deputations, that they have an idea that the government in fact has done its due diligence on this particular bill.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Any further discussion? Dr. Qaadri?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'd like to thank Ms. Munro for presenting PC motion 1. In a spirit of true co-operation and bipartisanship, the government will be pleased to support that particular motion. We certainly echo your sentiments with regard to the commitment towards transparency and accountability, particularly in view of the fact, for example, that stakeholders and experts, such as the economist for the former governor of the Bank of Canada, have completed an economic analysis and have actually pointed us in this very same direction.

We look forward to supporting PC motion 1, and I hope you will savour that moment.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I know. There's surprise all around the room.

Any other speakers? There being none, are members ready to vote? We're voting on motion number 1. Shall the motion carry? The motion is carried.

Shall section 1, as amended, carry? All those in favour? Carried.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): We go on to section 2, and we have NDP motion 1.1. Ms. French, would you read out the motion?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Yes. I'm just getting used to this process, so please correct me if I say this incorrectly.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): We will.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I move that section 2 of the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Independence

"(1.1) The organization of the administrative entity shall be similar in principle to that of the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board and its directors, officers, employees and agents shall not be part of the provincial public administration."

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Would you like to speak to that?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Well—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): You don't have to, but if you'd like to—

Ms. Jennifer K. French: No. I think it stands for itself at this time.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): That's fine. Is there any other commentary? Dr. Qaadri?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Yes. I thank Ms. French for the presentation of NDP motion 1.1. Regrettably, the government will not be supporting it.

I think we've been clear in our speeches and discussions and the consultation papers and the minister's round tables across Ontario that we will, in fact, be establishing an arm's-length agency. We will of course empower that agency to have a strong governance model, but we do take under advisement the issue of mirroring and building upon the success of the CPP and its various parameters. So the government will not be supporting that particular amendment.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Further discussion? Ms. French and then Ms. Munro.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm not sure if I'm timing this correctly, but I'd like to call for a recorded vote.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): When we get to the vote, then yes, we'll have a recorded vote.

Ms. Munro.

Mrs. Julia Munro: Yes, thank you very much. We will be supporting this. It has been clear; again, many deputants have remarked on the importance of making sure that it is stand-alone, and that by mirroring it to the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, they would, in fact, be doing so. Our concern is that other examples of agencies that the government has set up as arm's-length have not always been so, and they don't really have a good track record in that regard. So we support the notion that it be patterned after the CPP Investment Board.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Further discussion? There being none, members are ready to vote? You'd asked for a recorded vote, Ms. French? Okay.

Ayes

French, Martow, Munro.

Nays

Anderson, Lalonde, Mangat, McGarry, Qaadri.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): The motion is lost. We go to the next motion. Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that section 2 of the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Auditor General

"(4) The Auditor General may review any decision, operation or investment made by the administrative entity."

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Would you like to speak to that?

Mrs. Gila Martow: Yes. This is really for clarification. We want to make sure that the Auditor General has the full ability to audit the ORPP entity. We don't want to make assumptions. It's a huge plan. We just saw an OPP investigation into alleged fraud at the level of the Ontario Provincial Police Association pension board, and that is a much smaller pension plan than what we're discussing here. Federally, the Auditor General already has

this power over the CPP board and makes investment decisions, so there's no reason why the Auditor General of Ontario should not have the same powers.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Further discussion or commentary? Dr. Qaadri.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I thank Ms. Martow for presenting PC motion 1.2. The government will not be supporting this particular motion. We appreciate the sentiments and the issue of auditing, but we'll take that, at this time, under advisement for later consideration.

We do not believe that this bill is the appropriate place for the inclusion of this particular amendment. There are a number of details, including with regard to the administration, that we will present in subsequent legislation. I think it's understood by members of this committee and certainly by those in the Legislature that this is a framework bill, and that level of detail will be discussed subsequently.

I also note for the record that I understand that the motion that will be presented immediately after this particular motion is very similar in spirit.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you. Further discussion? Ms. French.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Yes. I'd be pleased to say that in this instance, the NDP would support this motion, and I think this bill is the perfect place for the Auditor General to be involved.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Any further discussion? People are ready to vote?

Mrs. Julia Munro: Recorded vote.

Ayes

French, Martow, Munro.

Nays

Anderson, Lalonde, Mangat, McGarry, Qaadri.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): The amendment fails.

We go to the next motion, number 2.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I withdraw, please.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Withdrawn.

We are now voting on section 2. Shall section 2 carry? Carried.

We go to section 3. We have NDP motion 2.1. Ms. French, do you want to move that motion?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I move that subsection 3(2) of the bill be amended by striking out paragraph 3.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Any discussion?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I have to find it.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Is there anyone else who would like to discuss this?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Mr. Tabuns, I would respectfully ask the NDP to comment on it. They're actually attempting to remove a fairly significant subsection of this particular bill, and I think the government and perhaps the people would like to know why.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm afraid I've gotten a little tangled with where we are, so if I can just ask for—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Can we have a brief recess to allow Ms. French to collect her notes? Five minutes? You're all agreeable? Fine.

The committee recessed from 1411 to 1416.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): We're back in session. Ms. French, if you'd like to comment.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Yes. I appreciate the government's question, because I think I have the same question when we are proceeding in an order that was a little confusing for me.

The section that we're asking about—

Interjection: Section 3?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Section 3, subsection (2), "Information concerning Ontario's population, labour force and economy...": This is the gathering of information which we recognize would be necessary if there are going to be plans that are considered exempt. One of our amendments certainly to come is that none be exempt, so we consider this section to be hopefully redundant—or, rather, unnecessary. We're hopeful that a later amendment will be adopted and there will not be plans that will be considered for exemption.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you. Further discussion?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Mr. Chair, I thank Ms. French for her elaboration of that. I might just respectfully ask that, if they find that it's redundant—would she care to remove it or withdraw it now?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: When I said the term "redundant," I corrected that and said it would be—

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: It would be unnecessary?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: That it would be unnecessary when, hopefully, our amendment will be considered and adopted and there won't be plans—

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I will take you at your word. If it's unnecessary, shall we remove it?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Remove this section?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Remove your motion.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Speak to me, please.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: In any case, we'll—

Ms. Jennifer K. French: No.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I will announce right now that the government will not be supporting this particular amendment, redundant or unnecessary as it may be. I think the operative issue right now is that that would remove the capacity of both the minister and the Ministry of Finance to essentially collect the information from employers, public bodies, the federal government and any other agency with regard to the status of the pension plans that are currently available to the public and are in operation. That would really, I think, handicap a government that is attempting to establish a new pension plan.

The other operative issue is that we need to have precisely that information and have a deeper understanding of the comparable plans that are available in order to mesh it with the new pension plan that we are now proposing. This is precisely, I would respectfully remind

my colleague, what the Associate Minister of Finance was engaging in during her province-wide consultations and the paper that was published in December 2014, as well as her consultation with 10 municipalities across Ontario.

We need that information on what's available to employees through different employers and, of course, helping us to solidify and strengthen the definition of the comparable plans that are out there. To remove this entire paragraph, I think, would be—at her word—both unnecessary and, perhaps, redundant.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Any further commentary? Ms. French?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I maintain that we are hopeful that this ORPP, going forward, will be universal and therefore no one will need to be exempted. Therefore, I continue to move that this subsection be stricken.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Okay. Further discussion? Seeing none, members are ready to vote?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Recorded vote.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): You want a recorded vote?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Yes.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Okay.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Chair, could I respectfully ask that, when we're moving forward to vote on a motion, you actually identify the motion?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Ms. McGarry, I think that's a fair request.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): It's motion 2.1.

Ayes

French.

Nays

Anderson, Lalonde, Mangat, Martow, McGarry, Munro, Qaadri.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Okay. Now we can move to vote on section 3, as a whole.

Shall section 3 carry? Carried.

New section 3.1, and we have PC motion 3: Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that the bill be amended by adding the following section:

"Regulations

"3.1 The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations governing the procedures for eligible employers and eligible employees to opt out of the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan."

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Any discussion? Ms. Munro.

Mrs. Julia Munro: This amendment would obviously give the opportunity to have an opt-out clause. The rationale for that is listed under motion number 19, and we'll debate it then.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Any further discussion? Ms. McGarry.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: We know that there's an undersavings issue in Ontario. Study after study has shown that. The motion here, as written, would contravene the intent of this bill as well as the language contained within the bill. It states that eligible employers and employees must contribute to the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan and, by inference, cannot opt out of it.

This is a problem across Ontario. The government is not going to be supporting this, because it is felt that we need to make a robust Ontario Retirement Pension Plan, and this is how it should go forward.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Further discussion? Ms. Martow, and then Ms. French.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I just want to comment on that. We know that the best way to be able to save for your retirement is to have a job, and a good-paying job, and not to have high expenses, so that there's some money left over at the end of the month to invest in RRSPs and tax-free savings accounts, and to put money down on your mortgage.

We're seeing energy costs rise. We're seeing good jobs vanish. In fact, when people are unemployed, they won't be part of the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. I would want to remind everybody of that.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Ms. French.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: No, we will not be supporting this, because I think that the focus should be on more people included in a defined benefit plan and able to opt in rather than opt out.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Okay. Further discussion? Dr. Qadri.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Yes, Mr. Tabuns, I would simply add that our honourable colleagues from the PC side are in fact on record as originally wanting kind of an amalgamation or perhaps an expansion of the CPP.

I would simply say, from the government's point of view, in the absence of being able to acquire a meeting with Prime Minister Harper for more than a year, and, as the Premier said, if he will not lead the way, he ought to get out of the way. I think we'd like to proceed.

The government will not be supporting this particular motion.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Any further discussion? Seeing none, if members are ready to vote, we'll be voting on motion 3. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is lost.

We go to section 4. There are no amendments. Shall section 4 carry? Carried.

Section 5: There are no amendments. Shall section 5 carry? Carried.

Then we get into more interesting territory.

Section 1 of the schedule, and we have PC motion number 4: Ms. Munro.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I move that subsection 1(4) of the schedule to the bill be amended by striking out "between the minimum threshold and the maximum threshold" and

substituting "between \$30,000 and the maximum threshold".

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Discussion?

Mrs. Julia Munro: This reflects the idea that, again, came out in the discussions of our deputants with regard to—currently, it is set at less than \$3,500. We think that this is more realistic for people.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Any further discussion? Dr. Qadri.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I thank our honourable colleagues for presenting PC motion 4.

I might just, at the outset, respectfully ask if they'd like to consider amendments 4 to 9 as a block because, interestingly, the only variation that I can detect is the minimum threshold—and it seems they're trying every avenue from \$30,000 to \$25,000 to \$20,000 to \$15,000 to \$10,000. I think the spirit of each of those is precisely the same. So I just wonder if they'd consider voting on PC amendments 4 to 9 as a block.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Is there any further discussion?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I think that the discussion should be focused on why you think that it's acceptable to take money out of the pockets of students, because that's what it will be if it's \$3,500—a lot of students are making \$3,500 and just trying to get by and pay their tuition and their expenses. Why would you think that it is somehow fair to expect somebody who is still in school to now be losing income towards their retirement? It's a noble cause but we all know that part of that income that they will be losing will be going to expenses to run a huge administration. I think that that's what we're addressing. It's just low-income people—to actually look at people in the face and say, "You're making \$10,000 or \$20,000 a year, and you can afford to lose a chunk of that."

I think that's the reflection; that we feel that it should be \$30,000, but if you're comfortable looking at somebody who's making \$30,000 and saying, "No, you can lose \$1,200 a year off your family's budget," and if you're comfortable looking at someone who's making \$25,000 or \$20,000, then I'd be interested in hearing your answer to that.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Sure—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Dr. Qadri, I have Ms. McGarry and Ms. Mangat ahead of you on my list.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you. It's hard to see along the row here.

Thank you for your comments. I believe that we're looking at trying to address motions number 4 through 9, but I think overall it's just a premature discussion right now. The minimum income threshold hasn't been set yet. There are still consultations and analyses going on. That minimum income threshold is one of the key design issues under discussion right now. So it's just a little bit premature at the moment because that analysis has not been completed yet. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Okay. Ms. Mangat.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Thank you, Chair. I'm going to reiterate what my good friend Kathryn McGarry has said:

We have not set that threshold. We are consulting on the final details. So this design detail will be outlined in future legislation.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you. Dr. Qaadri.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Yes, thank you, Mr. Tabuns. My original request, actually, was to have PC motions 4 to 9 considered as a block as they seem to be—I'm not sure if we want to call it gamesmanship or just kind of a random draw. As I say, the only material difference between these amendments is the amount specified: \$30,000, \$25,000, \$20,000, \$15,000, \$10,000 and \$5,000.

I should mention that individuals who are employed, whether they be students or otherwise, do already contribute to the CPP. Obviously, the longer they contribute to either of the pension plans, whether it's the ORPP or the CPP, by the magic of compound interest, they will of course accrue more benefits.

As my colleagues have stated, whether it's the consultation paper, the round tables or the various discussions that are under way internally—by the way, the consideration of, I think, probably several hundred written submissions that we've received from the people of Ontario—this issue of the minimum threshold is still to be decided upon.

So I would urge PC motions 4 to 9 to be considered as a block so that we can get to substantive work, and not just play numbers here.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): The members have the right to move motions and they can move them in order as they see fit. They're moving them one at a time, I understand, and that's the way we will go forward. Ms. Munro?

Mrs. Julia Munro: I just wanted to say that this amendment demonstrates the importance of the kind of conversation that the government has indicated that it's going to have. We want to give more clarity to the process right now so that people potentially could have a sense of where this government is going. Instead, it's obviously going to be left, as we've heard, for a later date.

1430

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Okay. Further discussion? Mr. Qaadri.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Mr. Chair, just before we proceed to the vote, am I to take it, with the number of amendments being presented by the PC Party, that they would be agreeable to set this minimum threshold anywhere from \$30,000 to \$5,000 in just a kind of random lottery draw here? Is that financial planning? What is that?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I think that it's fair to say that our first choice is the first number, which is \$30,000. We understand that you may not support that, so we weren't going to give one number and then just leave it at that. So \$3,500 is not acceptable to us. We feel the minimum should be \$30,000. The closer we get to \$30,000 the happier we'll be. I think it's fairly obvious—I'm not sure why you're finding it so difficult to understand.

In terms of your earlier comments, I would just add that people are paying taxes, and if somebody is paying 30% income tax—well, let's just make it 31%. That shouldn't hurt them; they're already paying 30%. They're already contributing to CPP and losing part of their paycheque, so let's take another chunk away. Well, they're already paying 31%. Well, let's make it 40%, let's make it 50%. Why don't we just charge people 99% income tax and call it a day, and they will have nothing left to live on. You know, that kind of logic escapes me.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you. I have Ms. McGarry and then Dr. Qaadri.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you, Chair. I just wanted to remind the member opposite that there are hundreds of submissions and there is an extensive consultation process under way. It hasn't been completed; the analysis hasn't been completed.

I would think that if we moved forward, as a committee, to pass these amendments on a minimum income threshold, it wouldn't respect the public process that's already under way. We would negate the submissions and the public consultation in moving forward before that analysis was completed. That's what worries me. I'm going to move against this.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): You're going to vote against it?

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Yes. Sorry, vote against it.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Okay. Dr. Qaadri?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you. I would echo my colleague. Proceed with the vote now.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Let's proceed with the vote.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): You're ready to vote? We are voting on motion 4. All those in favour? All those opposed? It is lost.

We go to PC motion 5: Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that subsection 1(4) of the schedule to the bill be amended by striking out "between the minimum threshold and the maximum threshold" and substituting "between \$25,000 and the maximum threshold".

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Further discussion? None? Seeing none—

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Same vote from the government side for precisely the same reason.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): We are voting on motion 5. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is lost.

We go to PC motion 6.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that subsection 1(4) of the schedule to the bill be amended by striking out "between the minimum threshold and the maximum threshold" and substituting "between \$20,000 and the maximum threshold".

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Discussion? I've got Ms. French and Ms. McGarry. Ms. French?

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: I don't need to speak.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I think, as we've seen with motions 4 through 9, setting this higher minimum income threshold is going to mean that lower-income workers are

not going to have the same level of benefit, which is why we're not supporting it. I'd also like to, of course, be on record saying that the minimum income threshold should mirror the CPP, which is why we won't be supporting it.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Okay.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Any of them.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Any further discussion on this matter? Then you're ready to vote? We are voting on motion 6. All those in favour? All those opposed? It's lost.

PC motion 7.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that subsection 1(4) of the schedule to the bill be amended by striking out "between the minimum threshold and the maximum threshold" and substituting "between \$15,000 and the maximum threshold".

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Any further discussion? There being none, are members ready to vote? We're voting on motion 7. All those in favour? All those opposed? It's lost.

We go to PC motion 8: Ms. Munro.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I move that subsection 1(4) of the schedule to the bill be amended by striking out "between the minimum threshold and the maximum threshold" and substituting "between \$10,000 and the maximum threshold".

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Any further discussion? Seeing none, members are ready for the vote on motion 8? All those in favour? All those opposed? It is lost.

PC motion 9: Ms. Munro.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I move that subsection 1(4) of the schedule to the bill be amended by striking out "between the minimum threshold and the maximum threshold" and substituting "between \$5,000 and the maximum threshold".

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Any discussion? Members are ready to vote on motion number 9? All those in favour? All those opposed? It's lost.

We go to PC motion 10.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that subsection 1(6) of the schedule to the bill be amended by striking out "3.8 per cent" and substituting "0.2 per cent".

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Any commentary?

Ms. Martow, did you want to speak to it?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I just want to comment that by reducing the overall contribution rates from employers to employees, we would reduce the amount of money both groups would have to pay.

The logic is similar to what my colleague down the table from the NDP just said: that if the minimum for the CPP is \$3,500, then we should have the same minimum. The same logic I'm saying is that people are already contributing to a pension plan—the CPP is taking part of their income. They're paying higher energy costs. They're paying tuition. They're paying expenses. They're paying for their kids. So to say, "Well, you're already paying towards CPP. So even though you're a low-income earner, then you should be able to pay for an

Ontario pension plan" is really a little bit of silly logic, in my opinion, and the same reason here: that people of such low income then should lose a percentage of their income again is really hurtful to a lot of low-income earners, I believe.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Any further discussion? Ms. McGarry.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you very much. Really and truly, the intent of the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan is to supplement the existing retirement savings of all Ontarians by providing a predictable, lifelong stream of retirement income for all the eligible workers. So in order for the pension plan to be fully funded, the rate must be based on sound actuarial analysis. Therefore, we need to continue with the bill as written.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thanks, Ms. McGarry. Any further commentary?

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Yes, Mr. Tabuns.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Dr. Qadri.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: I have to say, with respect to my colleagues opposite, this seems to be another series—nine, in fact—of motions being presented by the PC side which seem to be, once again, a random lottery draw. They're now asking for the ORPP contribution to range, in these nine motions, from 0.2% to 0.6% to 1% to 1.4% to 1.8% to 2.2% to 2.6%. I don't think this is really sound financial planning.

The retirement plan eventually is striving to replace something on the order of approximately 15% of pre-retirement income, and there has to be a certain reasonable percentage divided, as you know, between employers and employees, 1.9% each, that will establish that, will achieve that. So the government will not be supporting either this or the subsequent nine motions.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Okay. Further discussion? Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'll continue to say that we want to read in our motions and vote on our motions separately.

Again, it was this government's choice. They're convincing people to lose part of their income to put away for retirement savings. They still need money to live on today, and it may be that they're going to step up to the plate and find that magic money tree that apparently some people seem to think they have hidden somewhere and maybe top up people with some kind of credit, some kind of income tax reduction, some kind of free transit plan to help them make it through their monthly payments, because I look people in the eye and I can see a lot of scared faces looking back at me these days.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you. I don't see any further discussion—Ms. French.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Just a comment: that certainly 0.2% would make this a miniscule benefit, and we hope that this plan, and any pension, is going to be worthwhile in terms of benefit.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: I would salute the NDP voice of reason.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): We're ready to vote? Okay. We are voting on PC motion number 10. Shall the motion carry? All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is lost.

We'll go to PC motion 11.

1440

Mrs. Julia Munro: I move that subsection 1(6) of the schedule to the bill be amended by striking out "3.8 per cent" and substituting "0.6 per cent".

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Any discussion?

Mrs. Julia Munro: I would just add that if we had begun with a fully costed business plan, we wouldn't need this conversation.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Fair enough. Any other discussion? People are ready to vote on motion 11? All those in favour? All those opposed? It is lost.

We go to PC motion 12.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that subsection 1(6) of the schedule to the bill be amended by striking out "3.8 per cent" and substituting "1.0 per cent".

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Any discussion? Members are ready to vote? All those in favour of motion 12? All those opposed? The motion fails.

We go to PC motion 13.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I move that subsection 1(6) of the schedule to the bill be amended by striking out "3.8 per cent" and substituting "1.4 per cent".

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Discussion? Seeing none, members are ready to vote? All those in favour? All those opposed? It's lost.

PC motion 14.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that subsection 1(6) of the schedule to the bill be amended by striking out "3.8 per cent" and substituting "1.8 per cent".

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Further discussion? Members are ready for the vote? All those in favour of motion 14? All those opposed? Motion 14 is lost.

Motion 15: Ms. Munro.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I move that subsection 1(6) of the schedule to the bill be amended by striking out "3.8 per cent" and substituting "2.2 per cent".

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Further discussion? Seeing none, are members ready for the vote? We are voting on motion 15. All those in favour? All those opposed? It is lost.

We go to PC motion 15. Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Fifteen? We just voted on 15.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Oh, sorry. My apologies—16. My apologies, colleagues.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that subsection 1(6) of the schedule to the bill be amended by striking out "3.8 per cent" and substituting "2.6 per cent".

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Further discussion? Members are ready for the vote? We're voting on motion 16. All those in favour? All those opposed? It is lost. Some things become predictable.

We are moving to PC motion 17: Ms. Munro.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I move that subsection 1(6) of the schedule to the bill be amended by striking out "3.8 per cent" and substituting "3.0 per cent".

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Any discussion? Members are ready for the vote? We're voting on motion 17. All those in favour? All those opposed? It is lost.

We'll go to PC motion 18: Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that subsection 1(6) of the schedule to the bill be amended by striking out "3.8 per cent" and substituting "3.4 per cent".

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Further discussion? Mr. Qaadri.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Mr. Chair, I would just simply add that I think the government does find it remarkable that the PCs were willing to settle for a percentage that varied from 0.2% to 17 times that: 3.4%. I really have to wonder about the economic stewardship of the numbers that you're running there. In any case, the government is not going to support this.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Well, that's your option.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Any further discussion? None? Are members ready to vote? We're voting on motion 18. All those in favour? All those opposed? It is lost.

We now go to PC motion 19: Ms. Munro.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I move that section 1 of the schedule to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Opting out of Ontario Retirement Pension Plan

"(8) The obligations in this section do not apply in respect of eligible employers or eligible employees who opt out of enrolment in the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan in accordance with the regulations."

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you, Ms. Munro. The Clerk has a comment.

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): We need to check with legal counsel for one moment.

Interjections.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Excuse me, members? Could I call for a brief recess? I need to talk with legal counsel. Five minutes, maximum.

The committee recessed from 1446 to 1451.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Members of the committee, I've been advised that this motion is indeed out of order. One of your previous PC motions that lost would have been required for this motion to actually have consequence. Given that the previous one failed, this is redundant and out of order.

We then move on to NDP motion 19.1. Ms. French.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Yes, thank you. I move that section 1 of the schedule to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Defined benefit plan

"(8) The Ontario Retirement Pension Plan shall be a defined benefit plan."

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Any discussion?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Certainly we know that defined benefit plans are preferable and are going to

provide the most stability to more workers. We know that even with defined benefit pension plans—they're not always secure, so we'd like it to be as secure as possible in making the ORPP a defined benefit plan.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Any further discussion? Dr. Qaadri.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thanks to Ms. French for her presentation of NDP motion 19.1. Though the government will be voting against this, we do take the spirit of her motion under advisement.

I think what can be said is—I refer you, by the way, to the preamble of Bill 56. A number of the features of a defined benefit plan, whether it's, for example, pooling longevity risk, investment risk; the mandatory contributions, which will be shared equally between employers and employees; of course, the setting of the threshold; and a cost-effective, arm's-length administration—these are, in fact, key features of most defined benefit pension plans. Some of the specifics are yet to be worked out. Again, as my colleagues have referred to, that is part of the ongoing public consultations, the screening and the codification of the massive number of submissions that we have been receiving.

So we take the issue under advisement. We do see the value in the defined benefit plan, and that's why we've attempted to institute a number of its key features in the ORPP. But the government will not be supporting this.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Madame Lalonde.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I just would also like to remind everyone that when you think about the ORPP and what the plan is about, it's about that predictability of a stream of income that is paid for life. That's what we want, right? We want to make sure that the people who are contributing know and can depend, at one point in their life, on being able to continue contributing to our economy. I just want to make sure that this is noted.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Ms. French.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: In the spirit of some of what we read in the government's discussion paper, comparing different possible options, we could see that the defined benefit plan was really the preferred route. We were just hoping to make it official and go forward. So that's disappointing.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Further discussion? There being none, members are ready to vote?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Recorded vote.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Recorded vote. We're voting on motion 19.1.

Ayes

French.

Nays

Anderson, Lalonde, Mangat, McGarry, Qaadri.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): The motion fails.

Shall section 1 of the schedule carry? All those in favour? Opposed? It's carried.

We go to section 2 of the schedule, and we go to PC motion 20: Ms. Munro.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I move that paragraph 1 of subsection 2(1) of the schedule to the bill be struck out and the following substituted:

“1. The individual is 25 years of age or older and under 70 years of age.”

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Any discussion?

Mrs. Julia Munro: The motion represents the concern about age exemption. Young people, particularly, are in the position of perhaps educational debts and various things like that. This would serve to recognize that they have special financial issues at this point in time.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Further discussion? Dr. Qaadri?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. A number of issues to state at the outset: It is the intention—quite deliberate, of course—of the government to mirror in the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan certain parameters of the Canada Pension Plan, the CPP, meaning the age spread being 18 to 70 years of age.

This is done deliberately, not only for administrative purposes but also for data collection and perhaps also for future potential amalgamation of these two plans.

The other thing is, I would just simply cite that the seven amendments that are coming forward, motions courtesy of the PC Party, seem to once again be a sort of random lottery draw. As far as I can see, the only difference between motions 20 to 26 inclusive is the age eligibility set at 25 years, 24 years, 23 years, 22 years, 21 years, 20 years and 19 years.

Once again, you know, I really question—I'm not sure that I can question the motive or at least the sensibility of it, but in any case, the government will not be supporting this.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I'll start with Ms. French. I'll go to Ms. Martow and then Ms. Munro.

Ms. French.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: No, we would not be supporting this next series of motions. By disqualifying more and more people, then you'd have fewer people in the plan, and that's the wrong direction. Also, it hurts young workers, so that isn't something we can abide by.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Ms. Martow?

Mrs. Gila Martow: Yes, it certainly does hurt young workers, but not for the reason that you're mentioning. It hurts young workers because they're already contributing to the CPP, and they are already having to face higher tuition and higher living expenses than we had to when we were students.

I don't think it's a random draw. If you feel that the age of 18 is too young and the age of 26 is ideal, I think it's not a stretch to imagine that while you would prefer it to be 26, your next choice would be 25 and the next choice would be 24. I don't see that that as so difficult to understand.

I would remind everybody once again that just because somebody is contributing to CPP, and they're paying municipal taxes, provincial taxes, federal taxes, gas taxes and now they're going to pay a carbon tax—that it means that they have money left for an Ontario pension plan. Unfortunately, too many people are struggling, and this is going to be another hardship.

I think that if we made the economy robust, if we made a lot of great-paying jobs out there, if we lowered people's expenses that they had to pay per month, whether it be taxes or hydro bills or whatever, then if we wanted to have this kind of discussion, that would be fair game, but I think that we're just putting another nail in the coffin of Ontario.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Ms. Munro?

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'd just like to comment on a couple of points that were made earlier. The notion that these numbers are perhaps random, and "Is this a lottery?", I guess, demonstrates what the fundamental concern is that we have, and that is, there is no business plan. If there was a proper business plan, the government would have no difficulty in providing an accountable program and model that would take care of the conversation that these amendments represent. These amendments come out of the lack of knowledge and the lack of transparency that this bill represents. That's why they're here.

1500

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you, Ms. Munro. Further discussion? Seeing none, the members are ready to vote? We're now going to be voting on motion 20. All those in favour? All those opposed? It's lost.

PC motion number 21: Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that paragraph 1 of subsection 2(1) of the schedule to the bill be struck out and the following substituted:

"1. The individual is 24 years of age or older and under 70 years of age."

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Discussion? No further commentary—Dr. Qaadri, sorry.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I would simply say, Mr. Chair, that our honourable opponents on the PC side have themselves said that they would like to, first of all, see not only the expansion but, perhaps, this thing eventually—the ORPP—be subsumed within the CPP. We're actually at least setting one of the parameters to potentially eventually do exactly that. That's why the age spread here mirrors the CPP: 18 to 70. So it seems to me that they're undermining their own supposition made previously.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you, Dr. Qaadri. Ms. Martow?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I think that if that is your logic and you feel that it has to mirror age requirements exactly then maybe you can make the adjustment so that people aren't contributing such a big chunk of their income to the plan.

Until you achieve your final goal, which is some kind of amalgamation, it boggles my mind that you feel that

students can contribute to a CPP and contribute to an Ontario pension plan on top of their rising expenses.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you, Ms. Martow. Seeing no further discussion, are members ready to vote? We're voting on motion number 21. All those in favour? All those opposed? It's lost.

We go to PC motion 22: Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that paragraph 1 of subsection 2(1) of the schedule to the bill be struck out and the following substituted:

"1. The individual is 23 years of age or older and under 70 years of age."

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Discussion? Seeing none, the members are ready to vote? We're voting on PC motion 22. All those in favour? All those opposed? It's lost.

We go to PC motion 23: Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that paragraph 1 of subsection 2(1) of the schedule to the bill be struck out and the following substituted:

"1. The individual is 22 years of age or older and under 70 years of age."

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Discussion? Seeing none, members are ready for the vote? We'll be voting on motion 23. All those in favour? All those opposed? It's lost.

We move to PC motion 24: Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that paragraph 1 of subsection 2(1) of the schedule to the bill be struck out and the following substituted:

"1. The individual is 21 years of age or older and under 70 years of age."

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Discussion? Seeing none, the members are ready for the vote? We are voting on motion number 24. All those in favour? All those opposed? It is lost.

We go to PC motion 25: Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that paragraph 1 of subsection 2(1) of the schedule to the bill be struck out and the following substituted:

"1. The individual is 20 years of age or older and under 70 years of age."

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Any discussion? Seeing none, the members are ready to vote? We are voting on motion 25. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is lost.

We go to PC motion 26: Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that paragraph 1 of subsection 2(1) of the schedule to the bill be struck out and the following substituted:

"1. The individual is 19 years of age or older and under 70 years of age."

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Discussion? Mr. Fedeli?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Recorded vote, please.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): You'll want a recorded vote?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Yes.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Any further discussion? Dr. Qaadri?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I commend the PC Party for, perhaps, in the evolution of their thinking that we are witnessing here, to come closer and closer to what our original stated plan was, which is 18 to 70.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you, Dr. Qaadri. Any further commentary? Seeing none, the members are ready to vote? We are voting on motion number 26. Recorded vote.

Ayes

Fedeli, Martow.

Nays

Anderson, French, Lalonde, Mangat, McGarry, Qaadri.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): The motion is lost. We go to PC motion 27: Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that paragraph 5 of subsection 2(1) of the schedule to the bill be struck out and the following substituted:

“5. The individual is not a member of a group registered retirement savings plan.”

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Would you like to comment further?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I think it's fairly self-explanatory. If somebody is already a member, they should be exempt. What we were hearing from a lot of deputants in the last couple of weeks is that people are terrified, because they have some very good plans which are topped up by their employers, very well run and very well invested. They're terrified that they are going to be forced to either have two Ontario plans of some kind plus a federal CPP plan, or they're going to have to give up what they consider a lucrative retirement savings plan that's performing well for something that's going to be a big dinosaur.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Further discussion? Ms. French, then Mr. Fedeli.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Yes, thank you. There isn't anything that's comparable to the CPP, so I don't think that there should be anything comparable to the ORPP in terms of plans eligible for exemption. Certainly, in this case, RRSPs are a tool for savings and investment, but they can't be considered pensions, especially in the case of being considered exempt, so we wouldn't be supporting this.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Mr. Fedeli?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you. Many of the RRSP pension plans are higher than the 3.8% contribution, and I think that's why they should be exempt from this.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Further discussion? Dr. Qaadri?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Mr. Chair. To my colleagues I would say that, as you know, the pension

landscape, with the complexity that it has—it is precisely for this reason that the government is currently consulting on this issue, considering the thousands of written submissions and essentially processing all of the information that we've received on stakeholders to precisely define what is or is not a comparable plan, and therefore would be including or excluding individuals from the ORPP. I think at this point this motion and motions 27 to 31 inclusive are premature, and therefore the government will not be supporting them.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you, Dr. Qaadri. Any further comments? There being none, are people ready for the vote? We are voting on PC motion 27. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is lost.

We go to PC motion 28: Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that paragraph 5 of subsection 2(1) of the schedule to the bill be struck out and the following substituted:

“5. The individual does not have a registered retirement savings plan.”

I think that's sort of what's apparent. We had a Mr. McEwen visit us just last week—the week before the break, sorry. He has cleaned out his retirement savings, pretty much, because he had a stroke. He was under 65, he needed a lot of rehab and the government wasn't covering it. He wasn't aware that he had to take out special insurance in case he had a stroke under the age of 65, and he's not going to be covered until he is 65.

That's the crux of the matter. These are people who invested well. They had RRSPs, but they've lost their jobs. They have high expenses. They lost their company because of high expenses. They've had a stroke under 65. The list goes on and on, and they're having to cash in their RRSPs. That's the real crux of the matter: People are retiring without their full RRSPs that they planned on.

It was a great investment. They had employers who topped up—perhaps they put in \$5,000 a year and their employer put in \$5,000, or some plans are even more generous than that. It was fantastic. It was a fantastic savings model, but the problem is we're giving with one hand but taking away with the other. That's the real crux of the matter.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I have Dr. Qaadri, and then Mr. Fedeli. Dr. Qaadri?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Mr. Chair. At the outset, as mentioned, the government will not be supporting these particular motions, 27 to 31 inclusive. I would just simply say, with respect to my honourable colleague opposite, that by citing an individual who has outlived his retirement savings and is therefore subject to either health risk or longevity risk would seem to my humble mind a reason to actually establish the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan as an additional source of guaranteed income streaming.

1510

Perhaps I'll reread this and see what your format was, but that really would, I think, support the creation of this

particular plan and also not support this particular motion, where you seem to be handing out exemption after exemption and therefore decreasing the viability, strength and funding of this particular plan.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I have Mr. Fedeli and then, Ms. Martow, I'll go to you.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you, Chair. This group of amendments is supported by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. We've heard from them countless times, almost to a point of concern and panic that this will go ahead without these amendments. This is, by the Ministry of Finance's own documents, going to cost Ontario 18,000 jobs for every \$2 billion taken out of the system. By their own admission, this could be about a \$6-billion play, which would make the job loss about 54,000 throughout Ontario—and that statistic comes from the Ministry of Finance.

You recall, during the gas plants hearings, when you and I sat in these very chairs, we got that document that was quite revealing, which is why we're so shocked that this program is still being entertained, even after their own ministry deputation.

This particular chapter of changes we're looking at is meant to enhance RRSP use. In many instances, RRSPs have a higher contribution rate than the 3.8%. We know that they also historically pay a higher dividend than what is planned in this ORPP. So I would respectfully ask that we begin to take some of these amendments seriously as we work to try to come to an understanding of what is about to happen to our economy in Ontario.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: It brings us back to how, again, we lack a complete business plan. What I'm talking about are dire experiences that people are facing, where they're facing becoming homeless or not getting rehab after having a stroke, versus at least being able to access their registered retirement pension plan and perhaps improve their health enough to be able to go back to work, save their business, save their house if they've lost their job and need to pay their mortgage.

What this government is doing is, it's going to move people from having registered retirement savings plans—because that's going to be the crux of the matter. A lot of people are contributing because their employer is matching or topping up their contributions. They will not have access to an Ontario pension plan if they're 61-years old and have had a stroke and don't get rehab until they're 65. What is it that the members opposite are suggesting for somebody who is facing dire consequences, who's facing tripling energy costs in their business, and they need to get some new equipment or close? What are they suggesting those people do if they no longer have an RRSP to go to?

Yes, it's not ideal. Yes, I see the sort of sarcastic comment, "Well, you see, we needed to lock up that RRSP so he wouldn't have had access to it. He would have been better off being left in a wheelchair for the rest of his life or not having his rehab than being able to access his retirement savings."

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I have Madame Lalonde and then Mr. Anderson. Madame Lalonde.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: It's interesting, what the member opposite is discussing. It's a very unfortunate situation for this particular individual, but let's not forget what this ORPP is all about.

I've heard—and I'm sure you were in the same hearing that I was—several organizations. We've heard from different organizations stating that there was over \$280 billion of unused RRSP contributions on a voluntary basis.

When you talk about who we want to help and why we're doing this ORPP, it's exactly for the reason of the case that you're bringing forward. By having a young generation contributing into a plan—at this point, according to all our stats, most individuals in Ontario do not have access to a pension plan in their workplace—we want to make sure that as they're aging, they have the capacity of continuing to contribute to this economy.

I also heard, during the same deputation, that individuals at age 60, when it becomes time with their current plan, it was not sufficient for retirement and they had to go back to work because, unfortunately, the plan they're on is based on a volatile market which changes every day.

If I'm going to think of the people of Ontario and make that enlightened decision, I'm sure that when 18-year-olds retire at 65 and when they'll have a predictable source of income that they can contribute back to the economy, I would say that they'll be on our side.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Mr. Anderson.

Mr. Granville Anderson: Yes. Just to elaborate: Mr. McEwen is a constituent of mine, and we understand. No one understands his situation more than me. I do. Actually, he's a parishioner at my church as well.

What happened is that he wants additional physiotherapy. After you reach MMR, doctors will tell you that there's nothing further to be gained by having further physiotherapy. The same principle applies if you're on WSIB. After reaching MMR, you don't get any more physiotherapy. So it's not that we are taking his situation lightly. It's just a reality that if it's not going to do anything further to enhance his ability to recover, then it's cut off at that point.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you, Mr. Anderson. Ms. French and then Ms. Martow.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I just think it brings us back to the point that more people need more security in their working years and in their retirement. This group of motions focuses on exclusion rather than inclusion, I think, and of course we can't support that. But we're recognizing that there are individuals who, if they have savings now, they're still at the mercy of the market, and so to give more people the opportunity to have something that is secure—and even when we consider some plans like Nortel and SKD, those were very secure plans but they went bankrupt and the pension was wound up with a shortfall and then they found themselves with futures that were insecure. So whatever we can do to provide more

people with security in their retirement is what we should do.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I think that there's still no business plan, and that's maybe why we can't properly explain to some people that there are people who have fantastic retirement plans and who have contributed to their RRSPs. Actually, the majority of people are saving for their retirement and are doing quite well.

I would respectfully say to the member opposite that the reason people between 20 and 65 aren't getting physiotherapy is not because the doctors are deeming that they don't need physiotherapy; it's because they're just not covered. This government is assuming that everybody has private health insurance that will cover them between those ages, and it is completely false. People are not covered. This is a gentleman who was told by his doctors that he needed rehab, but OHIP does not cover it and he's paying out of his retirement savings. If he did not have retirement savings that he could access, he would not be able to have the rehab that his own doctors are recommending.

We're hearing a lot of discussions that are within little tiny compartments and are not looking at the big picture. The big picture is that nobody is going to be part of the Ontario pension plan if they don't have a job. As my colleague just said, business is terrified. They say that with high energy costs and now this extra tax plus cap and trade, another tax that's being added on, we're going to be losing tens of thousands of jobs. Those are tens of thousands of people who are now working and who will not be working. On top of that, they certainly won't have an Ontario pension plan. I'm wondering what everybody in this room who's speaking so smugly is going to be saying to those people.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you, Ms. Martow. Dr. Qaadri.

1520

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: At the outset, first of all, a number of issues: I would have to respect but also defer the individual who's suffering from stroke and requiring rehabilitation. I don't think this is quite the forum for that discussion. That's one aspect.

Secondly, once again I salute the voice of reason emanating from the NDP side. We have talked about health risk. We have talked about longevity risk. The saviour of the RSP, almost to the tune of \$300 billion of unused contribution room and all its various parameters here, is still subject to market risk, and I think those of us who have RSPs can share stories with regard to how—and perhaps an entire generation of individuals who are going to rely on that RSP and then various crashes—whether it's the dot.com crash etc., have led to kind of an evaporation of a number of those savings.

That is precisely the reason why we are introducing the ORPP in order to pool the risk, to cover against longevity risk, which of course subsumes things like the health risk and the market risk. The government will not be supporting this particular amendment.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you, Doctor. Ms. Mangat.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Actually, Chair, Bill 56 is all about encouraging young people to have a secure future. I can understand that young people between 25 and 35 are not saving enough. We also understand that they have to pay their student loans and they have to accumulate money for the mortgage. They have to buy homes and they have to raise families. But as we all know, little drops of water make the mighty ocean. If we save a little bit of money, right at the end you can have a secured future. Many people are not doing that. It is all about encouraging young people to have a secure future. We can imagine the accumulating impact of turning a snowball into a snowman. This is what our government is doing, and we are addressing the problem we see on the horizon.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you, Ms. Mangat. Further discussion? Seeing none, members are ready to vote? We will be voting on motion 28. All those in favour? All those opposed? It is lost.

We go to PC motion 29: Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that paragraph 5 of subsection 2(1) of the schedule to the bill be struck out and the following substituted:

“5. The individual is not a member of a pooled registered pension plan.”

If I just may—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Yes, please, and then Mr. Fedeli.

Mrs. Gila Martow: If I just may say that we've heard from some real experts in the field—financial planners, people who manage enormously successful pension plans—that actually pooled pension plans are fantastic vehicles. They're terrified that people are going to be moved out of pooled registered pension plans and moved into a lesser retirement savings vehicle. I also want to touch on the fact that, again, there is no business plan to really concretely look at what effect this is going to have on jobs, job growth and the Ontario economy.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you. Mr. Fedeli.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: This is an oddity, when you think about the fact that the government themselves are in favour of a PRPP, a pooled registered pension plan, which my colleague and I are also in favour of and Julia Munro, our colleague who is at another function at the moment, brought as a private member's bill.

Bill 57 was actually brought forward by the government, and it is a bill to bring a pooled registered pension plan forward. I have absolutely no idea, Chair, how Bill 57, the PRPP, which we support, can ever be utilized if you're also forced into paying into an ORPP.

We believe that this should be voluntary. We fully support the PRPP. The government supports the PRPP on one hand and, today, takes it away on the other. It just makes no sense to me, Chair, and that's why we'll be supporting amendment 29.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you, Mr. Fedeli. I have Ms. French and then Ms. Martow.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: It seems to be the theme of today that we're repeating some of our same points.

To focus on exclusion rather than inclusion is not something that we support, but specifically, as my colleague from the PCs said, the PC Party and the Liberals both support the idea of pooled registered pension plans. I might sit here alone in the fact that the NDP does not, and so certainly we wouldn't support them as a comparable—and therefore eligible for exemption—plan for Ontarians.

Certainly, pooled registered pension plans—I see that as a misnomer, because they aren't pension plans. They don't oblige an employer to contribute. While they might be a step in the right direction from an RRSP, in that they are pooled—we've heard a lot this session about choice and options for investment. There may be choice for the employers, but not for the employees when it comes to whether or not they're forced to save in these vehicles if their employer—I don't want to use the term “offers”; it's not an offer—commits them to pay into these.

No, we don't support them, nor do we support this motion. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Ms. Martow and then Madame Lalonde.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I just want to mention that we've heard quite a few comments about how this plan is going to be so well invested. We heard from the government themselves that the plan seems to be to invest in infrastructure, which might be great for the government, because they made the promise to invest in infrastructure, and they're looking for where to find that money tree to actually pay for the projects.

But the experts who we should be looking at to decide how any money is invested might not think that infrastructure in Ontario is a great investment, unless it's more toll roads where the average person is going to have to be paying.

So on the one hand, they're going to be putting that money away for their retirement, and then they're going to be spending all this extra money, paying for trains or whatever plan the government has for infrastructure, and private investment is going to need to recoup their investment.

Again, where is the business plan? Where is the proof that this pension plan is going to be better invested than many of the other pension plans?

I think that part of the problem is, it's a little bit like the media, where you don't read in the newspaper, on the front page, about good parents and good teachers. It's not exactly eye-catching and, I suppose—and it's sad to say—it's not considered news. Similarly, we don't hear from constituents who have great savings plans, who have been putting away for their RRSPs, who bought RESPs for their kids and who are just paying down their mortgage and doing all the right things.

The government should be leading the way and showing people how to live debt-free and invest in the right things and follow a budget.

Instead, we're hearing from constituents who are facing problems. We all know that, a lot of times, it's not

problems of their making, but sometimes it is that they didn't put away for a rainy day, and they had to have the boat or the cottage and things like that. I think that we're adults. I think that we should recognize that, a lot of times, the constituents we're hearing from are the ones who are having problems. We shouldn't use a sledgehammer when we could just use a fly swatter.

Yes, there are people who maybe need some help saving, and maybe we have to look into how we can sit down with people, one by one. Maybe we can have some type of social workers. We need to employ people and farm them out and sit down with people, one by one, and have those discussions.

The people who are saving and doing it all right, or who have great pensions that are locked up tight, and they're investing in their RRSPs and paying down their mortgage—great. But for the others, maybe the government has to provide some financial advice.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Madame Lalonde.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I would just like this committee to go back to motion 29 and maybe refer to the PRPP as being a complementary and certainly not a comparable plan.

When you talk about retirement and retirement security, it is a complex issue. People have choices as to how they're going to invest their money. As you know, unfortunately, they're not always choosing to save on a voluntary basis.

For me, this plan, the ORPP, is definitely something that we need to focus on, not make complementary. We have to make sure that people choose to retire, and choose to pay into their retirement. I hear all the time that you're referring to how we're going to use this money. It's an entity that's going to be at arm's length from the government. For that reason, certainly, I don't feel comfortable in supporting motion 29.

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The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I have Dr. Qaadri, then Ms. French and then Ms. Martow. Dr. Qaadri?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just to offer the codification, meaning the actual clauses in which it specified what Madame Lalonde just said regarding the administrative entity that will be created to administer this particular pension plan, I refer you to paragraph 2 of subsection 2(2). It says, “Collection of contributions: The administrative entity shall collect from eligible employers the contributions on behalf of the eligible employers and the eligible employees.” Dropping down to paragraph 4 of subsection 2(2), with reference to holding the contributions, “The administrative entity shall hold the contributions, and any accruals from the investments, in trust for the members and other beneficiaries of the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. The contributions and the accruals shall not form part of the Consolidated Revenue Fund.”

We will not be supporting this particular amendment.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I have Ms. French and then Ms. Martow. Ms. French?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I just appreciated hearing the government say, a speaker ago, that the PRPPs should

be considered complementary, not comparable plans. I just wanted to hear that again. I like that. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you. Ms. Martow?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I would just mention that Ms. Lalonde—I guess we're allowed to say each other's names here—mentioned choosing. She said the word "choose." I just want to remind her that there is no choice here. That's the whole point. That's what the whole concern is on this side of the room—or in our corner—is that there is no choice. You said that people should be able to choose for their retirements. Well, I would want you to go back and maybe look at what you just said, because I'm pretty sure that—peut-être mon français n'est pas excellent, peut-être c'est une question de vocabulaire. Maybe it's a question of choosing the words—there, choosing.

In terms of arm's-length, I would also remind her that it was your government who said that you're looking into an Ontario pension plan so that you can invest in Ontario infrastructure projects. Well, as soon as we hear that, even if it's arm's-length—obviously the people who agreed to manage it have already been told, "This is what we're expecting of you." If we really, truly wanted it to be arm's-length, then we shouldn't have been making those kinds of announcements.

We heard during election campaigns that taxes will not be raised, that there won't be a carbon tax. Here we're seeing taxes being raised, we're seeing a carbon tax, and we're seeing hydro possibly being sold off. This is reason for concern for the average resident of this province.

I haven't said it to this committee, but I know I've said it to other committees, that when I canvassed I met a gentleman who was renting a house, a small bungalow, in Markham. He said to me, "What a mess! Is this province in a mess. When I first moved here from the Maritimes, I moved here because this was the best province economically. I could get the best rates per hour for my job." He was a plumber or an electrician—I'm not sure that I even asked him. He paid the lowest taxes, so it was, "What a great place," and he could rent a house and he didn't pay high electricity bills.

Well, everything has turned on its head, and now he feels that maybe it's time to move somewhere else. His attitude is, "I don't care what kind of debt they rack up. I'll just move somewhere else." I think that's the problem. That's why too many people don't care and don't really understand what it means that every man, woman, child and baby being born today owes over \$20,000 now, that we're paying \$29 million a day just to service the debt, and their attitude is that they're going to move. That's their attitude, for a lot of people. They will move somewhere else.

It's a sad reality that we were the driving force of Confederation and now we're lagging. We're bringing the country down in terms of unemployment. It's time to get our house in order and to demonstrate to people how to balance the books and how to save. That's what we're

here to talk about. We're talking about saving, so let's show them how to save.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I have Madame Lalonde and then Ms. French. Madame Lalonde.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Just for the record—maybe it is the French grammar or vocabulary; I'm not sure—certainly PRPP is voluntary, and I know that our ORPP is something that we're moving forward as mandatory. The reason, actually, as I said several times during this great moment in committee, is because of the unused portion that people on a voluntary basis do not commit—just for your record.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Members, I would just ask that everyone speak to me.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I apologize. I'm sorry, Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): No, no. That's—

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I don't want to undermine your role. You're doing a fantastic job.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I understand, and I appreciate your support. It will be more orderly; that's all.

Ms. French.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. It's nice to see you, and I'm certainly pleased to address you, but I would also like to address some of what we've just been talking about in terms of arm's-length.

While we appreciate the assurances we're getting from the government that the funds will be held at arm's length, assurances aren't guarantees. We want to be clear that we want the pensions for the people, not just for infrastructure or for the government—not only "not just"; we want it for the benefit of the people in terms of a pension. That's all.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you, Ms. French. I see no further discussion. Members are ready for the vote? Okay. We are voting on motion number 29. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is lost.

We go to PC motion 30: Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that paragraph 5 of subsection 2(1) of the schedule to the bill be struck out and the following substituted:

"5. The individual is not a member of a registered retirement savings plan that provides defined contribution benefits."

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you. Did you have any comment on that?

Mrs. Gila Martow: Just that this amendment would expand the definition of a comparable plan to include Registered Retirement Savings Plans that provide defined contribution benefits. Any employer or employee, respectively, providing or contributing to the said plan would be exempt from paying into the ORPP.

Just like we've been repeating over and over, people have some fantastic pension plans out there. Again, those aren't the ones who are showing up in our constituency offices to complain or to compliment their employer. We're hearing from the people who don't, and we're

very concerned that people are going to be trading a better plan for a lesser plan.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I have Mr. Fedeli and then Ms. French.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you very much, Chair. We have been putting in this last grouping separate amendments for each of these enhancements—what we would call enhancements—to the program. We've allowed the government an opportunity to include one of the amendments or one of the plans that they find most appealing to augment this program, if it passed, and they can reject the ones that would be deal-breakers, if you will. I would encourage the government, Chair, to seriously consider accepting this one, in light of the fact that they have rejected all of the other enhancements that we've proposed.

We know through their own documents, we know from hearing from experts. We all travelled—many of us travelled together—on the pre-budget consultations. We heard loud and clear from people, businesses, individuals, groups and associations about the folly of aspects of the ORPP. For instance, Professor Dr. Ian Lee from the Sprott School of Business in Ottawa sat in front of our committee and talked about the clawback of the GIS; 50% of the guaranteed income supplement will be clawed back. People who are at the lowest income right now, who could very least afford to pay another 1.7% of their salary, are the ones who will benefit the very least, because as they get to retirement, the GIS, the guaranteed income supplement, will be clawed back 50%. They will have paid into it when they can least afford it, and get the least out of it because of the clawback.

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Others, in higher tax brackets—perhaps ourselves included—don't have a GIS. We don't get the income supplement. We don't get a top-up. We're already there.

The ones who can very least afford it are the ones who are punished the most by it.

With this amendment and others, we're looking to the government to consider some of these enhancements.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Ms. French.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: While we recognize that there are many strong DC plans out there, and we did hear from a number of them during the hearings—to say, when we see this motion, that any or all should be excluded, that doesn't support the idea of a strong and reliable benefit into retirement. The contribution side of things isn't what we should be comparing, especially if we're going to look at plans to be exempt. We should be looking at the benefit.

As I mentioned earlier, to think that people and their plans are at the mercy of the market—I don't think that's what we should be focusing on, because defined benefit plans are going to provide that predictable, more secure benefit. That's the nature of them.

Ultimately, we do hope that the ORPP is going to be designed to provide the most secure and most predictable benefit to the most people.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Ms. Mangat.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: The definition of “comparable plan” was one of the key design issues in the discussion process when we consulted the public and the communities. The feedback that the government has received is being analyzed by the Ministry of Finance.

It would undermine the public consultation process, so I'm going to vote against that clause.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you, Ms. Mangat. Ms. French.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Sorry, just another thought: We did hear from a number of plans that brought up the point that, by excluding or exempting some plans and not others, it would perhaps create a field of disadvantage for some of the plans. It did come up during the hearings that perhaps not exempting any would solve that problem and keep it on an even and level playing field.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'll just comment on the level playing field. It's not really a level playing field if you're taking people out of very lucrative, great retirement vehicles and you're forcing them to go to a plan where they're going to have less monthly income in their retirement, in order to help the people who don't have a plan.

The idea is to help people without hurting somebody else. That should be our focus, and that should be why we're all here.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you, Ms. Martow. I don't see any other need for discussion. People are ready for the vote? We are voting on motion number 30. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is lost.

We now go to motion 30.1 from the PCs: Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that paragraph 5 of subsection 2(1) of the schedule to the bill be struck out and the following substituted:

“5. The individual is not a member of a group registered retirement savings plan, does not have a registered retirement savings plan, is not a member of a pooled registered pension plan and is not a member of a registered retirement savings plan that provides defined contribution benefits.”

I think we've been discussing a lot of these, and I'm not going to repeat what I just said, which is that you don't help one person by hurting somebody else.

Also, there's a lot of concern that I haven't mentioned. People have questioned me whether—when the plan starts, the benefits won't be rolling in. People are concerned that if they're, say, 55 years old or 58 years old right now and they're on a good plan and they're forced to give up their good plan to go into this plan, they're going to be contributing to this plan for the next seven years until it actually starts and never actually get any retirement income from this plan that they're going to be contributing to for seven years. In those seven years, they will not be contributing to the pension plan that they had before, so they're going to end up with far less income at their retirement than they would have if this Ontario pension plan wasn't brought out. There are a lot of people in their later fifties that are extremely concerned.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you. Mr. Fedeli.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: This is a culmination and a combination of our last several amendments. Perhaps if they didn't get passed individually it was because they were saving up the "yes" in support for all of them, Chair, which I'm hoping to see from here.

The only thought at this point that I would add that's different from all the other comments that I've made is that recently we heard from McKinsey, one of the world's most respected consulting and strategy organizations. They talked about the fact that 87% of people are prepared for retirement and 13% aren't. Chair, those 13% need our help. There's no hesitation to say that. But I think my colleague from Thornhill used the words earlier: You're using a sledgehammer to replace the work that a flyswatter can do. I genuinely believe that this is the case.

We are trying to be all to everybody. We're trying to fix the 13%, Chair, who absolutely need our help, but we're sacrificing the 87% who not only don't need our help, but this will punish them.

When I was in London on one of the pre-budget consultations this year or last—it's an anecdotal story—a guy has 15 employees. He said, "Vic, I can't have this in my business. Here's what I'm going to do: I'm going to fire one of my employees, take that money, and use it for my share of the 1.9%. I know that my employees can't take a haircut on their paycheques of 1.9%; they're going to want a raise. So I'll be generous. I'm going to fire one and use that whole salary to take care of this ORPP problem that the government is presenting, and I'm going to make the 14 work harder."

That was his response. That is the exact answer that we hear from all kinds of organizations: CFIB, the Ontario chamber, the Ministry of Finance themselves, who all say that we will lose jobs because companies aren't prepared to pay for this.

Here's an opportunity to make some amendments that will exclude people who are already taken care of and allow us to help the 13% that need the help.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you, Mr. Fedeli. I don't believe I have any other discussion on this.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I will ask for a recorded vote on this particular one, Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): You'll ask for a recorded vote. Members are ready to vote? We're voting on motion 30.1.

Ayes

Fedeli, Martow.

Nays

Anderson, French, Lalonde, Mangat, McGarry, Qaadri.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): The motion is lost. We go to PC motion 31.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Withdraw, please, Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Withdrawn. Thank you.

We go to NDP motion 31.1: Ms. French.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I move that subsection 2(1) of the schedule to the bill be struck out and the following substituted:

"Eligibility under the plan

"Eligible employee

"(1) An eligible employee is an individual who is employed in Ontario in pensionable employment within the meaning of the Canada Pension Plan."

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you. Did you want to comment on that?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I would be pleased to.

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The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Please.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: In this section of the schedule there are currently five subpoints. Rather than referring to all of those, if we keep this in the interest of creating a plan that mirrors the CPP, that is our intention, and also, again, focusing on inclusion rather than excluding people. This isn't just a matter of "the more people in the plan, the more money and the greater benefit," but really this is a case for "the more people who will benefit."

There's nothing comparable to the CPP; therefore, it's our opinion and those of many groups across the province that there shouldn't be anything comparable and therefore exempt from the ORPP. By eliminating specifically subpoint 5—that at this stage there not be anyone exempted, that no plan should be considered comparable and therefore exempt, that everyone should have the opportunity, if they would qualify for the CPP, to be able to participate in the ORPP and therefore benefit.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you, Ms. French. Mr. Qaadri—Dr. Qaadri; sorry.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thanks to Ms. French for presenting 31.1, an NDP motion.

While we appreciate perhaps the intent of attempting to universalize this particular program, I do have to say once again, with respect, that, given the consultations, the papers that have been floated, the thousands of written submissions, the numbers that are being crunched currently at the Ministry of Finance and so on, the definition of "comparable plan" and therefore the resultant inclusion or exclusion of individuals is still pending. While we appreciate what you're attempting to do in this particular motion, we will not be supporting it.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Ms. French.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Thank you. I'm somewhat relieved to hear that while you won't be supporting it, which is disappointing, decisions are still pending regarding who will be included, and we hope that it will be more. I'd like to remind the government, as we heard in many of the hearings and with the submissions across the province, that there are going to be some more-than-

frustrating, almost insurmountable, challenges when it comes to the logistics, whether we're tracking employees in the plan, out of the plan or from one comparable plan to the next.

It would be more efficient to manage in terms of that if anyone who would qualify for the CPP would be a part of this plan. The same thing with portability and flexibility: If everyone is in the plan—depending on their precarious work situations, their changing work situations, young workers—it just makes far more sense.

Also, a reminder that universality really is what makes the CPP as strong as it is, so we hope that the ORPP will also be as strong as it can be. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Further discussion? Seeing none, are you ready for the vote? We are voting on—

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Recorded vote. Can I still say that?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I'm sorry?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Recorded vote.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Yes. No problem. We're voting on motion 31.1.

Ayes

French.

Nays

Anderson, Fedeli, Lalonde, Mangat, Martow, McGarry, Qaadri.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): The motion is lost. We go to PC motion 32: Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that section 2 of the schedule to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

“Exception

“(1.1) Despite subsection (1), an employee is not an eligible employee if he or she is eligible to receive financial assistance in respect of his or her electricity bill through the Ontario Electricity Support Program.”

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you, Ms. Martow. Did you want to speak to that?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I just think that, again, the assumption that if people can pay CPP, federal tax, provincial tax and municipal tax, therefore we can put another burden on them that takes out of their salary is, at the best, naive. The fact is that if somebody is receiving some kind of supplement, that's on the backs of the taxpayers. We shouldn't be then taking money out of their income and then we're forced to supplement their income. It doesn't quite make sense.

I would remind people that, from a lot of the deputations, it became very, very clear that people think it's great, “Yeah, let's have a better income when we retire.” But it shouldn't be a burden to the taxpayers, it shouldn't be a burden to the employees and it shouldn't be a burden to the employers.

Again, I don't know where the magic money tree is to be able to not burden people, because it is a burden. I think that if you are burdening people, then you're honest about it. You say, “I'm very sorry, but I'm burdening you.” But to pretend otherwise is really unfair.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you. Mr. Fedeli, and then Ms. McGarry.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you very much, Chair. What we're proposing in this is to use the Liberal government's own metrics. It's their own number, their own definition, their own logic. In fact, these are not new people that we would be talking about. These would be people who fall under the new introduced plan with respect to the Ontario Electricity Support Program.

What we're suggesting, quite simply put, Chair, is if this group of people cannot today, by the government's own metrics, afford to pay their hydro bill and are excused from that, to a percentage, how can they afford to pay for a pension plan? There should be some other kind of system. Again, we go to: 87% can pay for it, 13% need it. We want these folks who can least afford it to come up with money for a pension plan for a pension they're never going to see, according to the statistics.

Again, I'll go back to when the three parties travelled on the pre-budget consultations. We heard from a woman named Jennifer in Ottawa who talked to us about the fact that she cannot—well, what she does because she cannot afford her hydro bill—we all heard that—she shuts off her power from 6 in the morning to noon and again from 3 in the afternoon to 7 at night. She shuts her power off to save money so she can buy food. This is exactly the person that we're talking about now who can't afford her hydro bill to pay into a pension program.

Chair, we need some relief somewhere for some of the people. This turns it away from this sledgehammer to kill an ant.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you. I have Ms. McGarry.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you very much, Chair. I do certainly appreciate the comments of the members opposite. I really want to just point out again that those who are living without retirement savings of an adequate amount are a burden to our system. They're a burden to our society in general because they're reliant on social programs, which we, as taxpayers, put into. Again, the initiative to bring an Ontario Retirement Pension Plan forward is one way we are looking at improving incomes of those who are retiring to ensure that they can support themselves in retirement.

I wanted to really address the Ontario Electricity Support Program. I just want to point out at the moment, in a good spirit here, that it's a proposed initiative. It's a bit premature to be tying the eligibility to the Ontario retirement pension program at this point, because it's a program whose eligibility has not yet been established. Again, this is work that's going on and to be analyzed. But I think it's a little premature to tie it to a program just at this particular point.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you, Ms. McGarry. Ms. French, and then Ms. Martow.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: It's interesting to hear all of the different perspectives on the issue of retirement security. But I would ask how can we afford not to have a pension plan and retirement security for those who are struggling with the burden of existing in this province right now? More than hydro—and I'm certainly happy to get into that—we have those who are struggling with student debt and barely, if at all, affordable child care and housing.

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We recognize that life in Ontario is very expensive and challenging. But imagine that retirement if there aren't safeguards in place. If people don't have predictable income streams into their retirement, imagine the burden on them and how little they'll be able to contribute financially and personally in their local economy and in their communities.

I appreciate, of course, having the opportunity to talk about hydro. We recognize that, right now, businesses and individuals are immensely challenged by the hydro situation. Thank you for bringing it up so that we can remind the government that perhaps we should take a closer look at fixing those problems rather than sweeping them under the rug of privatization. Hide-and-sell really isn't the NDP way, so we would encourage you to hold on to that, and let's give Ontarians a fair shot at being able to afford their hydro bills.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Ms. Martow, and then Mr. Qaadri—Dr. Qaadri.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I thought it was a bit of backtracking. To make an announcement that you're going to have an Ontario Electricity Support Program, and then say, "Well, it was just a suggestion"—I think you come up with the plan before you start going to the media and announcing it.

Actually, the Ontario Electricity Support Program exactly mirrors what we're trying to talk about here, which is that—you have Ontario Hydro. Say you take a certain section of the province, and it's collecting a certain amount of revenue from everybody in that region. Then a certain segment—say 5% or 10%—is struggling and they're having trouble paying their bills, and the government and the opposition recognize that there's a certain segment of people struggling to pay their bills. For simplicity, say that it's 10% of the people who are struggling to pay their bills. The government says, "Well, you know what we'll do? We're going to have a subsidy for that 10%."

Where does that subsidy come from? The subsidy comes from the other 90%, or the entire province—all the taxpayers. The money doesn't just materialize. It's not a private business, that you're saying to a private business, "Oh, well, you know what? You're going to have to subsidize. You're going to have to take it out of your profits." No, we're all losing.

Now we're hearing a bit of a backtrack, which suggests that the government's realizing that the only way we can subsidize that 10% is by raising the electricity rates of the other 90%. Now we have another 10%

who now can't afford their rate. They were managing, before it went up significantly to subsidize that 10%. Well, now it went up.

It's very similar to the entire idea of a pension plan. The idea of a pension plan is that some people are going to contribute very little, and other people are going to contribute more, but everybody's going to get a mediocre stream in their retirement, to supplement the CPP or their savings. Hopefully, they've paid off their mortgage. The suggestion is that the vast majority—or absolutely everybody, ideally—has the income to pay that extra 1.9%.

But we're hearing too often of people—and that's why you're suggesting the Ontario Electricity Support Program, because there are tens of thousands of people who literally, down to the dime, don't have money for food. They are having their electricity cut off. These aren't people out buying big-screen TVs or going for fast food or whatever. These are people who are just not managing. They've lost their job, or they have a very low-income job, or they've having to pay for all kinds of expenses that used to be covered in OHIP.

I'm an optometrist. At one time, eye exams were covered for young adults. Now you have to turn 65 before you're covered. Not everybody has an insurance program, through their work, that covers eye exams.

This is becoming a province of haves and have-nots. The haves are the people who have government jobs with great benefits and great pensions. We all recognize that people are green with envy and want government jobs.

We would love to see everybody have affordable energy and have money to save for their retirement, and then help them to do that. But the problem is, again, we're going to be creating more problems than we're solving. This is what I'm worried about.

I think that this Ontario Electricity Support Program suggestion—now we have to add on to it—is really a microcosm of how you try to help a small group of people, but you're hurting somebody else. That's not what government should be there for.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Dr. Qaadri.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Mr. Chair, I feel that our committee may be suffering, if I may offer a diagnosis, of either motion or amendment drift.

We're considering tying a linkage of a particular support program to an exemption or an eligibility to this particular ORPP. I don't think, first of all, it's plausible or even intelligent. I think, first of all, for example, some of the scenarios, the very poignant scenarios, that were raised by some of my colleagues would likely be captured within the minimum income threshold. We think that would be perhaps the best way for that to be addressed.

The government will not be supporting this particular motion. I would just encourage my colleagues to speak to the motion, so that we don't start drifting off into optometry or a full-court press with regard to Ontario Hydro etc.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I have a question for Dr. Qaadri, or the member—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Actually, you can speak to me.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Okay. I have a question for what he just said. He said that the threshold would be for low income, so that it's unnecessary. But I would ask him if he honestly believes that it would be the same threshold for people who would be part of the Ontario Electricity Support Program. Some people who would necessitate help with their hydro bill—it's not necessarily that they're on the bottom rung, in terms of low income. It's that maybe they have a big family that they're supporting, with a lot of dependants.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you. He may or may not comment.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We'll proceed to the vote.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): No further discussion?

People are ready for the vote?

Mrs. Gila Martow: Recorded vote, please.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Recorded vote. We're voting on motion 32.

Ayes

Fedeli, Martow.

Nays

Anderson, French, Lalonde, Mangat, McGarry, Qaadri.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): The motion is lost.

We go to PC motion 33: Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that section 2 of the schedule to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

“Exception

“(2.1) Despite subsection (2), an employee's employment is not eligible if the employee is employed,

“(a) under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program established by the government of Canada; or

“(b) as a seasonal worker.”

I think it's obvious that it's really unfair. We talk about worrying about refugees, immigrants, people who are in other countries, and doing our part to be humanitarian in Ontario, yet we're taking very valuable income from foreign workers who are coming to the province temporarily and trying to support families back home or maybe get some work experience. We're having them contribute to a pension plan that they have no hopes of being part of unless they immigrate to Canada.

I think that we can't say that we support low-income workers, that we support foreign workers, and then take their very valuable income that I personally think they and their families need more than we need.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Mr. Fedeli.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: This particular amendment to Bill 56, our amendment number 33, is primarily motivated to assist in the agricultural community.

When you think about the high cost of wages in the agricultural sector, and the short time period that the workers actually are employed—it's seasonal—it doesn't make sense to us, Chair, to take their salaries, these short-term salaries, and put it towards long-term retirement.

If they are temporary foreign workers, they are, by definition, temporary, and they're not from Ontario. That means that when they do actually reach retirement age, they will not experience any money from the ORPP; they're not eligible. That simply means that they and their employers will pay into the ORPP and not receive any benefit whatsoever from that program. When they're long gone, out of Ontario, when they're no longer a temporary foreign worker, they won't be eligible for this. That's number one.

The other is the seasonal workers. They make money for, at best, perhaps six months a year, depending on the season. If you're where I'm from, it's going to be a little shorter season, considering that the first snow was October 31. I had the boots on this weekend, as we celebrated Orthodox Easter, cooking a lamb out in the backyard in the snow.

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So our growing season may be a little shorter. Nonetheless, they do not actually make an annual salary. They'll likely make far less over the course of a year than a year-round worker. They, more than most people, cannot afford the additional 1.9% removed from their salary as their share.

The farmers themselves, the employers, who are already squeezed with today's announcement of the carbon pricing scheme, the cap and trade, the loss of pesticides—they still have to pick tobacco and apples. Those products still need to be picked in a specific period of time, at a cost that they can afford. This particular program, the ORPP—we heard from them loudly and clearly at the pre-budget consultations—is another serious tax on these employers. There's just no other way to say it: This is a burdensome tax on those employers in the agricultural sector, and we're looking for relief for them.

This is a pretty common-sense amendment. We're talking about temporary foreign workers who don't benefit and seasonal workers who can't pay.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Dr. Qaadri.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I would, if you permit me, just like to commend the PCs for their concern for temporary foreign workers. I would just simply cite that it was the PC Party, although at another level, who seem to be creating this—let's put it this way—institutionalized, second-tier citizenry amongst us. I'll leave that for another discussion.

I would like to say, though, that the temporary foreign workers, as you may know, are subject, first of all, to the availability of employment insurance, their workmen's compensation, and CPP, as well as health care provided, for example, through the province of Ontario. We would

like to extend to them the ability to also receive the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan.

I would also cite for you that you're quite right in the sense that whether it's a temporary foreign worker who is perhaps abroad or elsewhere overseas, and not in Canada and not in Ontario when they actually retire, there are pre-existing international agreements—by the way, modelled on the CPP—which would allow them to capture those benefits outside of the Ontario jurisdiction.

For that particular reason, we will, first of all, not be supporting this particular amendment. But also, I simply urge you to understand that offering individuals such as these, the temporary foreign workers, the capacity to have this retirement pension plan, I think, is something that would well serve not only Ontarians' interests but theirs as well.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Ms. French?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Again, we find ourselves finding another group to potentially exclude, which is disappointing.

I and my colleague across the way, out in Durham region, have many seasonal workers who we welcome into our communities, and we certainly recognize that all workers deserve stability and security—but I think that bringing it back to the fact that the ORPP, in terms of its design, should mirror the CPP, and so anyone who would be eligible for the CPP would be eligible for the ORPP.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I don't see any further discussion. People are ready for the vote? We are voting on motion 33—Mr. Fedeli?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: A recorded on this one, please.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Recorded vote.

Ayes

Fedeli, Martow.

Nays

Anderson, French, Lalonde, Mangat, McGarry, Qaadri.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): The motion is lost.

We go to NDP motion 33.1: Ms. French.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I move that subsections 2(2) and (3) of the schedule to the bill be struck out.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Ms. French?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: When we look at (2) under "Eligible employment"—we don't think that anyone should be exempt. Those who would qualify to participate in the CPP should qualify for the ORPP.

In (3), our concern was with the term "similar in nature." We felt that that was too vague. In this case, for those who would be considered exempt for employment under the legislation, that should be the same under the Canada Pension Plan, not similar in nature to the exemptions.

However, if we had adopted our earlier amendment or proposal, then we wouldn't have to have this conversation.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Dr. Qaadri.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I commend my colleague Ms. French, from the NDP, for proposing 33.1. As mentioned earlier, we appreciate the spirit and sentiment behind it in attempting to sort of universalize this program.

As has been mentioned, given our consultations, the discussion paper, the feedback and the number-crunching going on, the precise definition of comparable plans—who is included or excluded from this particular program—is yet to be made.

I might also add, Mr. Chair, that it seems to be a bit of a rule of thumb or perhaps House wisdom here that—first of all, a quick observation: The PCs are handing out exemptions left, right and centre, and the NDP are moving towards no exemptions whatsoever, period. So again, sort of invoking the House wisdom or parliamentary wisdom, it seems that maybe we got it right, because we get complete polar opposites from the opposition side. We are, hopefully, trying to go through that middle ground, the golden mean.

The government will not be supporting 33.1.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you, Dr. Qaadri. No other discussion? The members are ready—Ms. French.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: In the spirit of lively parliamentary discourse, I would also like to say that it may not be that the government has got it right but that they have it a tad premature, to be looking at exempting at this stage, before they have all the design features in place and as decisions are still being made and numbers are still being crunched.

Yes, in the spirit of being inclusive, we would like the opportunity for more Ontarians to benefit. I would say that we're fairly right on that, or, in this case, fairly left on that.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Further discussion? Seeing none, members, are you ready for the vote? Okay. We will be voting on motion 33.1.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Recorded vote.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I hear a call for a recorded vote.

Ayes

French.

Nays

Anderson, Fedeli, Lalonde, Mangat, Martow, McGarry, Qaadri.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): That motion is lost.

We go to PC motion 34: Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that section 2 of the schedule to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Exception

"(4.1) An employer is not an eligible employer if he or she employs 20 employees or fewer."

I think that we heard enough deputations from all kinds of business associations and businesses large and small, and it became quite apparent that, as difficult as it would be for large employers, for many smaller employers it would be next to impossible. They're operating on extremely small profit margins already.

Certainly, as the government has said, some bills can be a bit of a work in progress, and they could always make changes later on. We don't always know, even with the best of advice, what the impact is going to be, but we are all cognizant that on the smaller business models, it will be most difficult for them, and in part, it's because of just the paperwork of implementing the plan. They don't have an HR department and that kind of stuff.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Mr. Fedeli, and then Dr. Qaadri.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you, Chair. We saw, just a week or so ago, I think, Bill 45, the Making Healthier Choices Act, come through. The government, with that particular bill, differentiated between larger businesses and smaller businesses. For instance, in that bill they allowed menu labelling exemptions for restaurants with fewer than 20 outlets. Therefore, that particular bill only applies to larger chains. Why? Because, in their logic, the larger restaurants can afford that cost, they can absorb it, they have the ability to track calories in their food—those types of rationales. So if they recognize that the cost impact would be too high on small businesses to exempt them for that bill, why would you not consider exempting smaller businesses for the ORPP?

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Again, small business: the heart and soul of Ontario; large employer, collectively, but individually they all struggle. Just on Friday, when Stats Canada came out with their unemployment numbers, I was upset, at home in my riding of Nipissing, to see unemployment at 8.5%. As we go even further north, Chair, unemployment is higher. These small businesses are the ones that can least afford to have an additional tax burden placed on them.

On Friday we also saw the 98th month that Ontario had higher than national average unemployment—98 months, eight years. Everybody else has come out of the recession. Everybody else has finished with what we now have here to be excuses. When I first got elected, only three and half years ago, I remember the finance minister telling us that year that our deficit was because of the tsunami. That was the big reason back then; it was the tsunami that hurt us. Now it's the recession.

I can tell you that imposing this tax on businesses where we're looking at exempting businesses with 20 or fewer employees—if they're going to do this tax, then we at least need to have some relief for these small businesses. They are the ones that can least afford to pay this tax, Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you, Mr. Fedeli. Dr. Qaadri, and then Ms. French.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I welcome PC motion 34, although we will not be supporting it.

A couple of things to mention: First, I would respectfully ask the PC colleagues here if they might propose

amendments or motions 34 to 52 to be considered en bloc. I cite for the committee, for example, the next 20 pages of material we have here essentially seek to offer an exemption for small businesses, counting from 19, 18, 17, 16, 15, 14, 13, 12, 11, 10, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three and two employees. I commend the staffer who printed that and changed the single number—well done—but I think it's probably a material waste of parliamentary time and this committee's business.

Secondly, an individual who approaches a restaurant chain smaller than 20 not having a menu with a calorie count will indeed suffer and will perhaps have to ask for the calorie count onsite. But I think it's a material difference that you're going to essentially exclude individuals who have, for example, in places of business with fewer than 20, 19, 18 employees, or whatever number you want to pick—to essentially rob them of the capacity to have an Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. I think it's a material difference.

The other thing also, with due respect to the honourable McKinsey group and other, kind of, management consultants, whether it's Andersen Consulting, post-fraud renamed Accenture, and others, I would simply say that our numbers and our information—I think our lived experience on the ground—does not reflect this figure you keep citing that 87% of Ontarians are doing just fine with regard to retirement, thank you very much.

Our information tells us that something like 34% of people in Ontario have a workplace pension plan and, in the private sector only 28% of individuals have a pension plan. On top of that, you've cited RSPs of every permutation there is, whether it's group RSPs or pooled RSPs etc. We know ourselves that something in the order of about \$300 billion of RSP contribution room is still left unused. That is the reality. This is not a belief, for example, in the theory of evolution. This is what the numbers are telling us: that it's out there.

We see this on a daily basis. When it's retirement savings, there's a gap. You used the word "tsunami." I appreciate that. This is a retirement tsunami that is coming towards us. We attempted to reach out to Ottawa. Perhaps it's time for a regime change, but the point is, they are not leading us in this area and therefore we have had to step up. That was our second choice. We were very pleased to expand the CPP.

I may also say just with regard to the institutionalization of the ORPP: As you know, it is a 2017 phase-in. Larger businesses will come online earlier. There are mitigations. For example, it'll coincide with a reduction of employment insurance premiums. So there is a mindfulness from government to, yes, the cost or the burden that is being asked of businesses to pay.

The other thing I want to just ask—my colleague opposite paints this destitute picture that when a child is born in the province of Ontario, they immediately owe some figure, whether it's \$15,000 or \$20,000, but I have to invoke Trudeau 101 and say that that is money that we owe each other. That is the money that has gone, for example, into his newborn screening, the hospital care

that his mother gets, the vaccinations, the educational system that's going to take him from the womb to the tomb. That's the money that we're spending, and we owe that to each other.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you, Dr. Qaadri. Ms. French has communicated that she—

Ms. Jennifer K. French: No, no. I'd like to speak to this.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): By all means, go ahead.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: That was a whole other thing. Thank you, Chair.

Again, this is a series of motions that seek to exclude groups, in this case excluding small business, and that would disqualify a lot of potential employees from the plan. We would continue to say that all Ontarians deserve retirement security and deserve to be able to participate in their economy but really to participate in their community even after their working years. Life doesn't end at retirement.

I will appreciate, though, what my PC colleague said: that small businesses are the heart and soul of our communities. I think we recognize—certainly in Oshawa in our downtown we have a vibrant and dynamic downtown, and we understand that businesses across the province are managing a number of challenges, but we want to see businesses survive. I wonder if they would be able to—well, we want to see businesses thrive, but we wonder if they'd be able to even survive if no one is coming through their doors because people don't have a predictable income stream and, as I said, can't participate in their local economy. Window shopping doesn't pay the hydro bills. So we would not be supporting these motions.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Okay. I have Ms. Martow and then Mr. Fedeli.

Mrs. Gila Martow: Where do I begin? First of all, people pay taxes. They pay taxes to the government. That pays for their health care and education for their family and infrastructure. They already paid for all of that. The money that they're owing is \$22,000 for every man, woman, child and baby born today because of debt—debt that was incurred because of gas plant scandals, because of eHealth—and I put in electronic health records. I can tell you, I have colleagues in Alberta—the Alberta government would have gladly sold their electronic health record system that they spent many years developing, implementing, working the bugs out. They would have sent a team of experts to implement it here for maybe \$100 million is my guess, and we could have had electronic health records. Instead, we spent well over \$1 billion—I'm hearing that it's getting closer to \$2 billion after talking to some people in the know—and we don't even have electronic health records. That's number one.

Number two is, just because you don't have a pension does not mean you don't have retirement savings. People have paid off their mortgages, people have bought RRSPs, people have bought tax-free savings accounts,

people have invested and a lot of people are doing very well.

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This is what you just quoted, statistics comparing the number of people who feel comfortable with their retirement income versus the number of people who have a pension. Yes, there's a discrepancy because you're leaving out a vast chunk of people who prepared for their retirement without a pension. I welcome you to visit Thornhill, the land of professionals, myself included, who do not have a pension. My husband doesn't have a pension. Most of our neighbours do not have pensions. But let me tell you, they're saving for their retirement.

In terms of all of these motions that you feel that it's a waste of time to address them separately, the PC Party feels that every job we can possibly save is worth our time to sit here and put forward motions, vote on the motions and even, yes, if we need to, discuss the motions. But if you do want to save time, if there is possibly a number in there that suits you, you can tell us the number. We can put two groups together and just focus on that number. Perhaps the number is 18 or 17.

You feel that that small business in Oshawa—the member from the NDP just mentioned small businesses. I'm sure she can picture a small business in Oshawa right now. She could just name one and call it out. Perhaps it's a small local garage. It's not part of some kind of franchise. They don't have support from some big corporate office to help with the red tape. They're shaking at tax time. They're shaking every time they have to do their T4s by themselves and their T4 summaries. I had a small business and I used to get nervous doing that all myself as well. It's hard enough for people who are small business owners for whom English very possibly isn't even their first language—now, to have to go and basically set up a pension plan is going to be a lot of paperwork for them. The cost of implementing the plan on top of actually the deductions of what they're going to pay for the plan is going to cripple them.

There are a lot of small business owners we meet in our daily lives and, really, they could be retired. They're 70 years old. They don't need to still be working, but it's like a hobby to them, "Where would my employees go? I'll keep the business running," or, "I'm waiting for my grandson to finish college so he can take over the business." We've all met wonderful people like that. It's incredible how many people there are in this province—doctors, dentists and small business owners—who continue working well past 65, who say they love it. It's not just a job. It's what they like to do. They are employing a lot of people. Well, if we throw something like this at them, they're going to say, "Forget it. I don't need it. I'm not working so much for the money," and all those employees are going to be out of work.

I am quite concerned, and I would welcome the government—perhaps they'd want to have a small recess to discuss what number of a small business is reasonable to not burden with all this extra expense and paperwork.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I have Mr. Fedeli and then Ms. McGarry.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you, Chair. So \$287,869,949.08—that's our debt at this moment; \$21,166.91 per person. So when you talk about that debt and the things it went to pay for, I echo my colleague's comments. I would add things like the \$400 million to bail out a US real estate firm out of the MaRS deal that they did. Of course, that was done secretly a couple of years ago. It was disclosed during the election, thankfully through a whistle-blower. Those are the kinds of things that this government spends hundreds of millions of dollars on.

Chair, you and I again—we sat on the gas plant scandal committee. We learned that not only did it cost the taxpayers \$1.1 billion—\$513 million of that alone, half a billion dollars of that, the Auditor General told us, was spent to locate the new gas plant in the wrong place. The fact that we have to pay to ship gas and pay to have electricity come back to where it was needed in the first place: That's \$513 million that was wasted by this government on a mistake, on an insult on top of an insult.

So when you talk about small business and families that owe that money, these are real people and real businesses with real struggles. These are people who aren't sure if their business can stay open next week. We have 2,700 fewer businesses last year in Ontario than the year before. This is not a good trend. We're going the wrong way. Businesses are leaving—the highest electricity prices in North America, the highest payroll taxes in Canada and the highest WSIB premiums in the country. We have new taxes coming in. We have strangling red tape that's stopping businesses from expanding. Chair, these are exactly the kinds of things—when is the limit? That's just what small business is asking. “When are you going to stop picking our pockets?”

You like to quote McKinsey and try to tie them into some disgraced other firm, but when McKinsey suits your nature—and it has in the past—they're all of a sudden the best experts, but when they come out with a statistic that the government doesn't like, they try to belittle them. This is a world-renowned and -respected firm who also told us that if you take the equity in your home into account, that is going to even enhance that 87% who are prepared for retirement even higher, Chair.

So we need some relief for business. If you're hell-bent on passing this ORPP and putting this new pension tax in place, then look for some relief for the smallest of small businesses. As my colleague said, we're down to, I think, amendment number 52. It says that an employer is not an eligible employer if he or she employs two employees or fewer. My good heavens. You could be talking about any business down any side street here. These are the people who struggle day to day.

Chair, at this moment it's now \$287,870,160,465.81. That's how much our debt has grown in the few minutes that I've been speaking. It's unsustainable, and our businesses will not survive.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you, Mr. Fedeli. I have Ms. McGarry, Madame Lalonde and Ms. Martow. Ms. McGarry, please.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. It's a free-ranging discussion there. I really wanted to focus on small businesses again because that's really what we're talking about—employees under 20 etc.

I did want to reassure the members opposite that this government has actually done a lot in order to bring down costs for businesses. The move to a harmonized sales tax, for instance, a more modern, value-added tax, provided businesses with annual compliance cost savings of over \$500 million. This government lowered the corporate income tax rate for small businesses from 5.5% in 2009 to 4.5% in 2010, with resultant savings.

I also wanted to point out that there was a reduction in the business education tax rates and that we've reduced the business regulatory burden by 17% since 2008, all of which are providing savings for small businesses.

I also wanted to talk about the private sector and just point out that in the private sector only, when we isolate that particular sector, pension coverage is down to 28%. This brings it back to the entire discussion that Ontarians are not saving enough for retirement. I know that this government doesn't want to deny Ontarians who are working for small businesses or are employed by small businesses to lose out on having access to enhanced retirement savings.

I also want to point out that this government is moving to roll in the ORPP by 2017, at a time when EI reductions are phased in. I also wanted to just concur with my colleague from Oshawa regarding those pensioners who may not have enough to retire on. I would agree with her that if indeed they don't have enough to retire on, they're not consuming some of the goods and services that they can avail themselves of in retirement, and that does have an added effect on small business.

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I want to say, just in conclusion, that small business is the backbone of Ontarians. Many are employed by them, and we certainly don't want to leave them out of the ability to participate in a retirement savings plan—a pension plan; I'm sorry.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you. I have Madame Lalonde and then Ms. Martow. Madame Lalonde?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will definitely echo what my colleague has just said, in terms of small businesses and the importance of having them here in Ontario.

One thing that I would like to share is that I was a business owner prior to my life as a politician. I certainly looked at various plans where I could offer my employees something that would be affordable as an employer. Unfortunately, at the time, we couldn't find something. Not only was it not affordable, but it was certainly very complicated to manage and, administratively, for a single person who paid all of their remittance, who had to do her CPP remittance, who had to do her payroll, her T4s—everything—it was actually more complicated than anything else that I was doing every day.

For me, the ORPP, I wish, as a business owner—and we've heard this, actually, throughout our consultations,

where a business owner would come and share that this actually will give him an advantage to retain that employee and also to help that employee in having a predictable stream of income, and, I like to say indexed to inflation and paid for life. So when I think about what we're offering to small businesses for this employee, I think we are heading in a direction where we're going to help build an economy for our future.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you. Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: In terms of an economy for our future, it's sort of like saying that if we give our kids an allowance, they'll go to the mall more, and that will boost the economy. But we're out that income. The money does come from somewhere.

I think that we are hearing from a lot of people in the community and in business who have said—and I said it earlier—that they think having a great pension plan is wonderful, but it's got to be affordable. They don't feel that their employees can afford it. The employees say they can't afford it. Many of the small business owners—and that's what this next group of motions is focusing on. I haven't heard from the government side—I was hoping to hear a number which is where you feel that a certain business of a certain size cannot manage this.

What I would draw to your attention is that there are households where there are people who are elderly. Instead of going to nursing homes, they are managing through family members. They're hiring two caregivers and then the family members that need around-the-clock care, say two elderly parents—they're getting a little bit of care through the government, maybe two hours every second day. But the family has hired two caregivers. It's eight-hour shifts, and then the family members fill in some weekends, evenings and holidays. So these are two employees.

The government is suggesting that a family that's taking care of their parents—would this qualify as a business? You have two employees. You have to have a business number. You have to pay for a caregiver. In my estimation, I'm fairly certain that if you're hiring a caregiver, you're considered a small business owner of one employee. You're paying for that caregiver. You're having to do the T4 and do the T4 summary. That's what I'm questioning: whether, even just with two caregivers in a small house, that qualifies as a small business.

It comes down to a number. The member from the government, who I suppose is their lead, does not want to read through all these motions. We're happy to read through the motions. We feel that if it draws attention to the concern we have for business owners and saving the jobs of employees, we're happy to spend the time. But is there a number that you feel a small business of a certain number should not have to necessarily be forced—it doesn't mean they can't. See, this is what I don't understand. It doesn't mean they can't be part of it.

If Madame Lalonde, if it would have been available, if she could have afforded it—because she spoke about both parts, that there was the affordability and there was

the question of paperwork. Okay, so if this took away the paperwork for you, if you could have afforded it, then you have done this plan. I think a lot of employers, if they could afford it, would be happy to have a pension plan. And you're right; they do feel it helps them retain employees. But that's only if there are other businesses that the employees could go to that don't have a pension plan.

If you're looking at a universal plan, that takes away from employers trying to hold on to employees just by offering a pension plan because now all their competitors have a pension plan. So guess what? They have no advantage by having a pension plan, and this wouldn't leave room for them to offer a better pension plan because everybody is sort of in the same boat.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you. I have Ms. French, Ms. McGarry and Dr. Qadri, in that order. Ms. French?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I've been inspired to weigh in. I've heard some things. My colleague from the PCs just said, "We're all in the same boat." I'll speak about what I know in terms of my riding. I wouldn't say that we're all in the same boat. Some are in a boat and they are clearly ready for retirement; others can only hope for that kind of stability because they're currently challenged by precarious work, if they can find it.

We heard a lot, actually, during the committee hearings, about this 87%. It was an interesting number because, if I recall correctly—and don't quote me on this—it was 87% who are on track to at least maintain their current standard of living. I think that begs the question: For some of those who are currently on track to maintain their current standard of living, is that standard of living enough to sustain them in their retirement? Does that include households that are currently struggling? It's an interesting number and I think we're all kind of manipulating it, but I think, when we look around our communities, if we're talking about equity and households and their readiness, equity and home ownership—those are wonderful things, but many of my constituents would love to be able to afford to have a home but right now they're looking for affordable housing. They're looking for affordable child care. They're looking to be able to afford transit to maybe get to a job that they have been able to secure. So there are a number of things that play in.

We heard something earlier: "Let's show people how to save." I would argue that many of those individuals who are struggling to get by and are somehow managing to make ends meet but are not able to save for retirement could probably teach us a thing or two about how to stretch a dollar and manage.

I think that if we can remember that as the government is designing this ORPP, it really needs to benefit the most people in the most progressive and predictable way—again, back to including more.

I think there was also a point about businesses in a position to offer a pension plan if they were doing well

and financially could offer a pension plan, that they would choose to do that, and we heard about retention. So I think it comes back to that.

There are going to be challenges—we know that—with any new change, but we do want the most people to benefit in the long term in Ontario. If we can work towards that, I think that should be the goal.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you. I have Ms. McGarry and then Dr. Qaadri. Ms. McGarry.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you, Chair. It's really just a point of order to correct my record. I think at the end of my last comment I said "participate in a retirement savings plan," but I wanted to change that to "participate in the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan." Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you, Ms. McGarry. Dr. Qaadri.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I was repeatedly challenged to offer a number, perhaps in my mind associated with the PC Party. I would just like to simply commend the PC Party. The number that strikes me as most relevant for your plan for retirement security for the prosperity of the province of Ontario, for job creation, for economic stimulus, is the 100,000 public service workers that you pledged to lay off instantaneously on day one, which was perhaps the most prominent feature of your campaign. That's the number that comes to my mind when you're talking about these particular issues.

The other thing I want to say, Mr. Chair, with respect, is this: As Ms. French has quite rightly pointed out, different ridings have different income matrices. I don't know whether I want to call this the "eye doctor effect," the "optometry effect" or the "Thornhill effect," but I commend you and your riding for such a prosperous environment.

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I remember, for example, that when we pledged to increase the minimum wage, you were on television saying, "Well, that doesn't really affect my riding. No one makes minimum wage in my riding." I thought, "Marvellous." Perhaps that's a credit to the representation of the MPP, but the province of Ontario is much vaster than that. I say that with respect. What I simply ask you—and just generally I'll broaden it now. There are a number of people who are hurting. There are a number of individuals who, beyond the fear of the T4 form, have a very real and deep concern for retirement security.

We tried to go to the feds. There were no takers there. That's why Ontario is moving, and I would respectfully ask you to reconsider your position—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Dr. Qaadri, could you please address me?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Oh, certainly. Absolutely. An honour.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): It is, I know. I understand. Please, proceed.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I would simply ask, through you, Chair, to ask my colleagues to just reconsider a little bit of the parameters and maybe have a look a little bit at the big picture, what we're trying to achieve for the people of Ontario downstream. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you, Dr. Qaadri. Ms. Martow is on my list.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I would say that the member opposite is very lucky. He's speaking in a protected environment, and I would ask him to show me where that was on TV or in print. I suggest that you go and look for it, because it was actually retracted.

Interjections.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: By the media.

Mrs. Gila Martow: By the media, yes. By the person—yes, not by myself. I gave an interview that was recorded, and nowhere did I say anything like that. I think it was something that the point of minimum wage is for students and people getting into the market. Nowhere did I say that nobody earns minimum wage in my riding. Of course, many people earn minimum wage, and we would hope that they wouldn't stay on minimum wage for very long.

I would just address very quickly—I'm not going to get into a discussion of 100,000 jobs, but he said "immediately." From what I recall, there was a lot of discussion about attrition and not rehiring people. Certainly I don't recall the word "immediately." Again, I think he's very lucky that he's protected here because certainly the word "firing" wasn't used and the word "immediately" wasn't used.

There was talk about paring back, and we're seeing big paring back. We're seeing nurses being fired and we're seeing budgets being slashed, and I would remind—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Ms. Martow—

Mrs. Gila Martow: Yes. Well, he started it, so I think I have to address it.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I understand. You've been making sure the record reflects your understanding of it—

Mrs. Gila Martow: Exactly.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): —but I'd ask people—you're making a point with your amendment, and if you could—

Mrs. Gila Martow: Okay. So I'll go back to the amendment.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): —stick as close to that as you can.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'm not sure what he was getting at. I guess because I said the word "caregiver," that strikes him as something very affluent, but the fact is that for a lot of people, whether or not to put two parents into a nursing home, what they do is, they hire a caregiver to help take care of those two parents in their condo or apartment or even in their children's homes. I know of many children—specifically, I think the Italian community is fantastic at taking in their elderly parents. They'll hire somebody to help in the house—sometimes two

people to help in the house. Sometimes there are multiple parents from both sides of the family. The kids are working but helping on evenings and weekends, and they do not want to have their parents—I guess the word is—“institutionalized.”

My question to you—and I didn’t really get an answer, and it was a genuine question; it wasn’t a rhetorical question—is if there are two family members with one or two caregivers helping out during the day—we’re not talking about affluent people. They’re actually doing it to save money. It’s cheaper than an institution. Would they be considered a small business?

The second question I asked that also wasn’t a rhetorical question, is that you wanted to somehow group these motions and you weren’t saying what small businesses’ number of employees could be exempt from being forced—they could still obviously opt in if they want to be competitive with their competitors. We know for a fact that there are many companies who came to give deputations who said that in fact the reason they have such a fantastic offer of topping up RRSPs or great pension plans is because they want to retain their employees. We recognize that. We believe in the carrot, not the stick. Let’s do everything we can to help people save. Let’s do everything we can to retain employees. Let’s do everything we can to create jobs. That’s what our concern comes out of. It’s not from some kind of game playing or wasting people’s time.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you, Ms. Martow. I see no further—Dr. Qaadri?

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I would simply say that if I have misquoted Ms. Martow, I would apologize for that, whether I am here or in a non-protected environment. I would just simply say that I guess you might want to consult the press, because there’s lots of stuff on Google, still, about that.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): That she might want to.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): With that, colleagues, I gather there’s no further discussion. You look like you’re ready for the vote, correct?

Mrs. Gila Martow: Sure.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): We are voting on motion 34. All those in favour? All those opposed? Yes, that one’s lost.

We go to PC motion 35. Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that section 2 of the schedule to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

“Exception

“(4.1) An employer is not an eligible employer if he or she employs 19 employees or fewer.”

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you, Ms. Martow. Discussion?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I don’t think we need to discuss it further.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Everyone is ready for the vote? We are voting on motion number 35. All those in favour? All those opposed? It’s lost.

We go to motion 36. Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that section 2 of the schedule to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

“Exception

“(4.1) An employer is not an eligible employer if he or she employs 18 employees or fewer.”

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): No further comment? You’re ready for the vote?

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Same vote.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): We’re on motion number 36. Those in favour? Those opposed? It’s lost.

We go to motion 37. Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that section 2 of the schedule to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

“Exception

“(4.1) An employer is not an eligible employer if he or she employs 17 employees or fewer.”

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I don’t see any discussion. Members are ready for a vote? All those in favour? All those opposed? It’s lost.

We go to PC motion 38. Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that section 2 of the schedule to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

“Exception

“(4.1) An employer is not an eligible employer if he or she employs 16 employees or fewer.”

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Seeing no discussion, members are ready for a vote? All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is lost.

We go to PC motion 39. Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that section 2 of the schedule to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

“Exception

“(4.1) An employer is not an eligible employer if he or she employs 15 employees or fewer.”

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I see no discussion. You’re ready for the vote on number 39? All those in favour? All those opposed? It is lost.

We go to PC motion 40. Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that section 2 of the schedule to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

“Exception

“(4.1) An employer is not an eligible employer if he or she employs 14 employees or fewer.”

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I see no further discussion. You’re ready for the vote on motion 40? All those in favour? Those opposed? It’s lost.

We go to PC motion 41. Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that section 2 of the schedule to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

“Exception

“(4.1) An employer is not an eligible employer if he or she employs 13 employees or fewer.”

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I see no discussion. You're ready for the vote? We are voting on motion 41. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion is lost.

We're going to PC motion 42. Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that section 2 of the schedule to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Exception

"(4.1) An employer is not an eligible employer if he or she employs 12 employees or fewer."

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I see no discussion. You're ready for the vote? We're voting on motion 42. All those in favour of motion 42? All those opposed? It is lost.

We go to motion 43. Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that section 2 of the schedule to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Exception

"(4.1) An employer is not an eligible employer if he or she employs 11 employees or fewer."

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The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I don't see any discussion. You're ready for the vote? All those in favour of motion 43? All those opposed? The motion is lost.

PC motion 44.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that section 2 of the schedule to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Exception

"(4.1) An employer is not an eligible employer if he or she employs 10 employees or fewer."

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I see no requests for discussion. You're ready to vote on motion 44? All those in favour? All those opposed? I can see the pattern.

Motion 45: Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that section 2 of the schedule to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Exception

"(4.1) An employer is not an eligible employer if he or she employs nine employees or fewer."

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I see no requests for discussion. You're ready for the vote? We are voting on motion 45. All those in favour? All those opposed? It is lost.

We go to motion 46. Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that section 2 of the schedule to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Exception

"(4.1) An employer is not an eligible employer if he or she employs eight employees or fewer."

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I see no discussion. You're ready for the vote? We're going to vote on number 46. All those in favour? All those opposed? It is lost.

Motion 47: Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that section 2 of the schedule to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Exception

"(4.1) An employer is not an eligible employer if he or she employs seven employees or fewer."

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I see no requests for discussion. You're all ready for the vote? We are voting on motion 47. All those in favour? All those opposed? It is lost.

We go to PC motion 48. Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that section 2 of the schedule to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Exception

"(4.1) An employer is not an eligible employer if he or she employs six employees or fewer."

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I see no requests for discussion. You're ready for the vote? We are voting on motion 48. All those in favour? All those opposed? It is lost.

We go to PC motion 49. Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that section 2 of the schedule to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Exception

"(4.1) An employer is not an eligible employer if he or she employs five employees or fewer."

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I see no requests for discussion. You're ready for the vote? We are voting on motion 49. All those in favour? All those opposed? It is lost.

PC motion 50: Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that section 2 of the schedule to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Exception

"(4.1) An employer is not an eligible employer if he or she employs four employees or fewer."

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I see no requests for discussion. You're ready for the vote? This is motion 50. All those in favour? All those opposed? The motion fails.

PC motion 51: Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that section 2 of the schedule to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Exception

"(4.1) An employer is not an eligible employer if he or she employs three employees or fewer."

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I see no requests for discussion. You're ready for the vote? We are voting on motion 51. All those in favour? All those opposed? It is lost.

We go to PC motion 52. Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I move that section 2 of the schedule to the bill be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Exception

“(4.1) An employer is not an eligible employer if he or she employs two employees or fewer.”

I would just add to this last one that there’s actually—you know those songs that you do from 13 to 12 to one? For The Twelve Days of Christmas you go from one up, but some songs go from 13 down.

What about the self-employed? They’re the ones who are really lost in this whole shuffle, because there is no eligible employer of one in this. Just because somebody is self-employed, employing themselves, they’re not going to be a part of this whole plan. We’re seeing, actually, in the last decade more and more people who are self-employed, working as one on contract work, and they are going to be in trouble.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you. Mr. Fedeli.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you, Chair. Look, we’re trying to find the sweet spot here and it’s obvious that there’s no give with this government. There was a comment earlier from one of the members who said, “We’re offering this ORPP to small business.” You’re not offering anything. This is mandatory. This isn’t an offer to help small business. This is a penalty against small business. You’re not offering anything; you’re demanding.

You continue to say you’re helping small business. I only have one expression, Chair: Stop helping. Stop helping them. They can’t afford your help any longer.

Today, at this moment, we are now at \$287,870,515,210.23. That’s our debt as of this moment. Stop helping.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you, Mr. Fedeli.

I see no further requests for discussion—

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I’d like a recorded vote on this one, please.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): You’d like a recorded vote? You’re ready to vote?

Mrs. Gila Martow: Can I make one more comment?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Yes, Ms. Martow.

Mrs. Gila Martow: There’s nowhere in here for businesses that are just starting out. It’s their first day of business. They’re just hiring their first employee and right away they have this handicapping them and stopping them from succeeding.

We all know—either we have family members who first started a business or we started a business. Very often the people starting the business are in serious debt. They borrow from family members. They don’t pay themselves a salary. We know of people who have lived for many years with family members while they got their business off the ground. This is stopping people from being innovative and being entrepreneurs in our province.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you. Madame Lalonde?

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: I would just like to make two comments. The first one is that, certainly, when I opened my business, contribution to CPP did not preclude me from starting my business. In 1966, when

the CPP was introduced in Canada, there was a lot of comments and a lot of, I would say, resistance. Change is always something that—we don’t always feel comfortable. I would like to think that the leadership that this province is showing, with the lack of the one at the federal level, will help Ontarians down the road. That’s my first comment.

I also just would like to clarify for members opposite that the self-employed are currently excluded from our proposal because of, actually, the Income Tax Act. It’s certainly something—

Mr. Victor Fedeli: That’s what she said.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: No problem. That’s something that I do believe is being reviewed as to how we can look into this. But it’s a federal issue also, so there has to be negotiation, which we haven’t seen.

That’s about it. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Okay, thank you, Madame Lalonde.

I don’t see any other requests. You’re ready to vote? I’ve had a request for a recorded vote.

Ayes

Fedeli, Martow.

Nays

Anderson, French, Lalonde, Mangat, McGarry, Qaadri.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): It is lost.

We’ve gone through schedule 2. Shall section 2 of the schedule carry? Carried.

Section 3 of the schedule: Shall section 3 of the schedule carry?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Isn’t there another amendment?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): There is another amendment, but it comes later.

Mrs. Marie-France Lalonde: Did we do 52?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): It’s 53. It’s an amendment to the preamble.

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: That comes later.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Yes. I actually am going through in a methodical way, believe me.

Shall section 3 of the schedule carry? Carried.

Shall section 4 of the schedule carry? Carried.

Shall section 5 of the schedule carry? Carried.

Shall the schedule to the bill carry? Carried.

Preamble: We have motion 53.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I move that the preamble to the bill be amended,

(a) by striking out “new mandatory provincial plan” in the third paragraph and substituting “new mandatory, universal, defined benefit provincial pension plan”;

(b) by striking out “and would build on key features of the Canada Pension Plan” and substituting “would build on key features of the Canada Pension Plan and would mirror the Canada Pension Plan’s participation rules”; and

(c) by striking out “administered by an entity” in the fourth paragraph and substituting “administered by an independent entity”.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you, Ms. French. I hope that I don’t have to rule your motions out of order very often, but I have to in this case.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: But I appreciate being able to read it anyway.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): The motion is out of order because it seeks to amend the preamble to the bill. In the case of a bill that has been referred to committee after second reading, a substantive amendment to the preamble is admissible only if it is rendered necessary by amendments made to the bill. I find that the bill has not been amended in a way that renders the proposed amendments to the preamble necessary. So unfortunately, your motion is out of order.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I wondered if I could correct my record from earlier. Is this an appropriate time, before we—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): If you want to quickly correct your record and then we will go to the vote on the preamble.

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Oh, well, whatever—okay. It was from earlier, though, and separate. I misread our first amendment. It had referred to subsection 2—I read paragraph 2 instead of 3. It was correct in the amendment, but I read into the record “section 3, subsection (2),” and then I read paragraph 2 instead of 3. So If we can—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Okay. That has been recorded.

We will go back to the vote. Shall the preamble carry? Carried.

Shall the title of the bill carry? Carried.

Shall Bill 56, as amended, carry? Carried.

Shall I report the bill, as amended, to the House?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: This is the one where we wanted a recorded vote.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I’m sorry?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Can we record this vote?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): On the report of the bill?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Yes.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I actually had already called it.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: That’s fine.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): That’s fine? We can have a recorded vote? Unanimous consent? You’re all happy? A recorded vote.

Ayes

Anderson, French, Lalonde, Mangat, McGarry, Qaadri.

Nays

Fedeli, Martow.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): The motion is carried.

I’d like to thank all of you for working so diligently this afternoon. I’d like to thank the staff up here for keeping us on the straight and narrow. And all of those who sat in the audience, you were very patient.

This committee is adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1712.

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