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Tuesday 8 March 2011

Mardi 8 mars 2011

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 8 March 2011

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 8 mars 2011

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the non-denominational prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

STRONG COMMUNITIES THROUGH
AFFORDABLE HOUSING ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 FAVORISANT
DES COLLECTIVITÉS FORTES
GRÂCE AU LOGEMENT ABORDABLE

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 3, 2011, on the motion for second reading of Bill 140, An Act to enact the Housing Services Act, 2011, repeal the Social Housing Reform Act, 2000 and make complementary and other amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 140, Loi édictant la Loi de 2011 sur les services de logement, abrogeant la Loi de 2000 sur la réforme du logement social et apportant des modifications corrélatives et autres à d'autres lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Questions and comments?

Mr. Mike Colle: I'll just get my tie on, Mr. Speaker.

Just about the long-term affordable housing strategy, one of the things that most of us understand has become very apparent in recent years is that when we talk about housing, and especially the affordable housing strategy, it's not just the buildings and it's not just the mechanical, the heating, the air conditioning and, in some cases, the maintenance and repairs that are critically important. Many of our affordable housing units and buildings that are in our ridings—there have to be supportive services in there. That's what we forget.

People, more and more from all walks of life—rich, poor, young and old—need support. In many cases, it's people who suffer from perhaps learning disabilities or people who suffer from mental illness. In many cases, these are people who have these hidden disabilities, that is, people who cannot cope on their own. We can build the houses but, along with the housing, what is required are the supports in place to ensure that people are eating properly, that they're not dealing with all kinds of incredible stress in their lives—medical issues.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Bedbugs.

Mr. Mike Colle: In fact, I know the member from Peterborough mentioned the issue of bedbug infestation, which is a really debilitating issue that has affected a lot of people who, through no fault of their own, have had these issues.

This is part of the incredible investment that we make in housing and that people sometimes don't understand. You can't just have the buildings; you have to also have—

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I listened carefully some time ago to the member from Beaches–East York. Actually, that'll be on the record.

But in my own view of this important social topic, I looked into some information from various advocacy groups. What I've come up with here is this: "Ontario's Proposed Affordable Housing Plan Fails to Meet Five Basic Tests Set by Housing Network of Ontario." The article goes on to say, "The Ontario government released its much anticipated long-term affordable housing strategy today, but the document failed to provide a plan that meets all five basic tests as set out by the Housing Network of Ontario and its almost 500 supporters across the province."

It goes on to say, "The Ontario government has proposed some new legislation and administrative procedures that are useful and important, but the essential items for a long-term affordable housing plan—targets, timeline and most of all funding over a multi-year period—are missing." So this is much ado about nothing.

This is what I find so disheartening: When you look at vulnerable people and housing and how important it is to re-establishing an individual and, indeed, a family in our society, there's not one nickel in here. It's very much like the retirement home thing. They're going to regulate retirement homes. That's their plan to replace long-term-care homes, but there's not one nickel in it for people who need the support from the province of Ontario. I am so disappointed.

I don't know what happened to Premier McGuinty, but somehow or other, he seems to have lost the heart and soul that he once had, and it's in this very file here, where they promised years ago to have an affordable plan. Something happened here. He's not paying attention or he doesn't care—one of those things.

But all I can say is that Bill 140, by all reports, fails to meet five basic tests, as said by the Housing Network of Ontario—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Further comments and questions? The member from Chatham–Kent–Essex.

Mr. Pat Hoy: Someday, I hope that will be Chatham–Kent–Leamington, but we’ll wait for that.

I’ll make a few comments here. Of course, the long-term affordable housing strategy that we’re discussing is the first of its kind in Ontario. I’ve heard many speakers mention that this is really all about people, and truly, it is. That’s what we’re talking about, people’s lives. What everyone aspires to in life is a home. There are other things that people do aspire to beyond that, but certainly, I’ve met people who come to me and say they want to have a home at some point in their lives. That’s what this is about.

If passed, this proposed legislation will give Ontarians access to a system that does put people first. It will also set a strong foundation for a more efficient, accessible system for those who need it. That’s what we’re looking for and need: efficiency in this matter.

This bill is built upon the more than \$2.5 billion that our government has invested in non-profit housing since 2003—so this is just a continuation of the work that our government is doing and has done—and the more than \$430 million we provide in housing and homelessness supports annually. This is an ongoing part of our strategy.

I think it’s important for people to understand that, if passed, this will give municipalities the flexibility that they have requested so that they can better allocate resources to meet local needs. That’s very important, because we all understand that the needs of the GTA may not be the same as those in the southwest of Ontario or northern Ontario and all points in between. That flexibility is something that municipalities have asked for and sought, and this bill deals with that.

The proposed Housing Services Act, 2011, would create a new overarching framework for affordable and social housing in Ontario, and I’m very pleased and proud of this bill.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: I’m pleased to provide a few comments for the member from Beaches–East York. Because I wasn’t in the Legislature on Thursday, I printed out his speech and read it. So I want to make a few comments directly.

I found it interesting. Obviously, I’m a new member of the Legislature. I was elected a year ago last Friday. I was a mayor like Mr. Prue. I was a mayor of a very small community many years ago. I enjoyed his speech giving a little background about the Beach. It was an interesting quote, right off his lead-off, where he talked about, “Isn’t that a rich place?” So I particularly appreciated his comments about his own riding, where he talked about places like Crescent Town, Barrington and Lumsden, but I also believe that he made some very good points about wait-lists and the fact that the government, through this legislation, needs to get their head around the fact that there are massive wait-lists for housing in the province.

Just on my own riding of Leeds–Grenville, when I spoke on this housing bill I expressed concern about how the government has been dealing with this file. I know my local service manager, the united counties of Leeds and Grenville, has been very active in trying to reduce the wait-lists, which, granted, compared to the ones that the member for Beaches–East York talked about, are quite small compared to the ones in the city of Toronto. Yet we have made an effort, in my small rural riding, to try to get some government funds.

We’ve been stymied by the government in terms of our plans, so I really hope that, when this bill moves forward, goes to committee and hopefully hearings, we’ll have a chance to deal with issues, especially ones like the member for Beaches–East York spoke about last Thursday.

0910

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Beaches–East York has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Michael Prue: I thank the members from Eglinton–Lawrence, Durham, Chatham–Kent–Essex and Leeds–Grenville for their input, but I really must state that I don’t know whether some of the members actually listened to what I had to say. Some of the members in their comments never even referred to that I was—I don’t even think they knew that I was the one who was here and was the last speaker, because they talked only about government initiatives.

I have to tell you that this bill is going to do nothing to satisfy the five tests, as set out by the Housing Network, which was the last thing that I had an opportunity to speak about. This is a housing strategy with absolutely no money and a housing strategy which is not going to see any houses actually built. This province and the members opposite ought not to be proud of their role in producing housing in Ontario because Ontario, as in so many other fields, is dead last in the field of housing. We have the lowest per capita amount of money that is given for housing of any jurisdiction in Canada, and that includes the territories. So for a government to stand there and talk about what they’re doing, knowing that they’re doing almost nothing and that every other province in Canada is spending more money per capita than we are here in Ontario, is not to say very much about this government’s plan.

There could have been many things done within the body of this, just to simply allow municipalities the freedom to zone to allow for affordable housing. It’s not something they’re forced to do, but any municipality that wanted to or could have, should have been there. The backlogs continue to grow.

This bill is not a bad bill, but it’s not going to do what is necessary. It’s a little, tiny tinkering around the edge, which this government is so very adept at.

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

On December 2, 2010, Mr. Bartolucci moved second reading of Bill 140, An Act to enact the Housing Services Act, 2010, repeal the Social Housing Reform Act, 2000

and make complementary and other amendments to other Acts. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

This vote will be deferred until after question period this morning.

Second reading vote deferred.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY STATUTE LAW

AMENDMENT ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LA SANTÉ ET LA SÉCURITÉ AU TRAVAIL

Mr. Sousa moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 160, An Act to amend the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to occupational health and safety and other matters / Projet de loi 160, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé et la sécurité au travail et la Loi de 1997 sur la sécurité professionnelle et l'assurance contre les accidents du travail en ce qui concerne la santé et la sécurité au travail et d'autres questions.

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

Hon. Charles Sousa: I am sharing my time with the member from Scarborough Southwest.

I am pleased to stand for second reading of the Occupational Health and Safety Statute Law Amendment Act, 2011, Bill 160. As mentioned, I'll be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant today, the member from Scarborough Southwest.

This bill represents the first major review and the largest overhaul of Ontario's occupational health and safety system in 30 years. The bill calls for many changes, but has one goal, and that is to help ensure that working Ontarians go home safe and healthy at the end of their workday.

We are proposing a road map forward for the future so that this province's working people have a future free of injury and occupational health disease. We are proposing a framework for improved workplace health and safety. Our stakeholders will be consulted as we build on this framework and work to achieve the best implementation of the panel's recommendations. We are acting to protect our working citizens. That, above all, must be our goal.

I will outline the significant changes the proposed legislation calls for. But first, I would like to recognize some of the many people who worked hard to bring these proposed changes forward. On December 16, 2010, the expert advisory panel, headed by Tony Dean, delivered its final report. As many of you know, Mr. Dean is a former Deputy Minister of Labour and is a professor in the School of Public Policy and Governance at the University of Toronto. The final recommendations of this

expert advisory panel struck a balance between two key factors: a need to provide better protection and support for workers, especially young and new workers and recent immigrants, and a need to improve the way we reach out to and help the business community, particularly small businesses, to comply with our health and safety laws.

Our government accepted the panel's recommendations. I would like to thank and show my appreciation to the members of the panel for dedicating their time to accomplishing this report. Just as importantly, these representatives of workers, business, health and safety experts reached their recommendations by consensus, knowing how important their undertaking was to the lives of working Ontarians. Their approach made a consensus report possible, and consensus on such a critically important matter is invaluable for success. As we bring this proposed legislation forward, we would hope it will be considered in the same atmosphere of mutual respect and co-operation that existed on the expert panel and that we constantly remember that we share the common goal of keeping Ontarians safe.

On behalf of my government and the people of the province, I would like to thank the members of the expert advisory panel: Bud Calligan, retired secretary-treasurer of the Carpenters' District Council of Ontario; Carmine Tiano, director of WSIB advocacy and occupational services of the Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario; Vernon Edwards, health and safety director of the Ontario Federation of Labour; Joan Eakin, professor, Dalla Lana School of Public Health; Carolyn Tuohy, senior fellow, School of Public Policy and Governance, University of Toronto; H. Allan Hunt, senior economist, W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, in Michigan, United States; Domenic Mattina, vice-president of sales and estimating at Mattina Mechanical Ltd.; Jattinder Dhillon, vice-president of health, safety, wellness and business continuity for corporate human relations at Loblaws Canada; and John A. Macnamara, vice-president of health, safety and environment for Hydro One.

There are many more individuals from many stakeholder organizations who gave invaluable assistance to working groups that provided input to the panel, including working groups on vulnerable workers and on the underground economy. Important for the essential input it provided was the small business subcommittee. I would also like to recognize the hard work that the Ministry of Labour staff put into bringing this legislation forward to us.

As I mentioned, this is a consensus report. There are many consultations that occurred. Overall, the expert panel received more than 400 responses and submissions during consultations and conducted more than 50 meetings with stakeholders. The expert panel held regional meetings in London, Windsor, Ottawa, Sudbury, Thunder Bay and Toronto. As well, the panel's chair provided two updates to stakeholders during the review—once in June 2010 and again in September 2010. Altogether, that is a

lot of consultation with workplace parties. Our stakeholders played a significant role as key players in building the structure, in assembling the enabling framework, that will help us move forward in prevention. There will also be more opportunities for consultation and input as we continue to work closely with stakeholders to implement the recommendations of the expert panel.

0920

Since this government assumed office in 2003, Ontario's annual rate of workplace injuries has dropped substantially, by 30%. We have worked hard to make working Ontarians safer, but we know there's much more to do. There are still workers—family and friends, loved ones—who are not coming home at the end of the work day or are coming home injured. We can do better and we will. We owe this to ourselves and our loved ones; we owe it to the people of this province, whom we represent. Any workplace death or injury is simply one too many. That is why we're taking action. It is because we care about the well-being of our province's workers and want to begin implementing the consensus recommendations of the expert panel. Simply put, it is the right thing to do right now.

We believe our proposed legislation, if passed, will save lives and help prevent injuries as we move forward. Under our proposed amendments, the minister would assume responsibility for prevention. This will help coordinate, align and strengthen our prevention enforcement activities.

A new chief prevention officer, reporting to the Minister of Labour on strategic priorities, would provide day-to-day leadership on the prevention of workplace injury and occupational disease. This change will provide us a new position to provide leadership and focus in preventing workplace death and injury.

The Ministry of Labour would expand its involvement in workplace health and safety education and promotion.

The Minister of Labour would have oversight of the province's health and safety associations, under the leadership of the chief prevention officer: again, better aligning and coordinating our activities.

A new prevention council with representatives from the worker and employer communities as well as health and safety experts would provide valuable input in the direction that the health and safety system takes with respect to preventing occupational injury and disease. This new prevention council would keep our stakeholder communities engaged and in touch as we move ahead.

The minister would have the authority to establish standards for health and safety training in order to enhance this training and ensure workers are properly trained.

Workers, especially the most vulnerable workers, would have improved protections against reprisals for exercising their rights under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. The legislation would ensure that the framework would be in place to improve the system of health and safety for Ontario's workplaces.

The major components of these proposed amendments would, if passed, come into effect on or before April 1, 2012. Our amendments will better allow us to create codes of practice that could better provide assistance to employers, especially small businesses, and guide them in complying with our health and safety laws.

As I said, we will continue to consult on the implementation of these changes as we move forward. Consultation and further advice from stakeholders and the interim prevention council will assist the ministry, in the months ahead, to ensure cost-effective and thoughtful implementation of these reforms.

The expert panel heard from stakeholders who said they wanted to better coordinate and align the province's health and safety prevention activities. We listened, and so the structural changes proposed in our bill would improve the integration of prevention programs and be led by a chief prevention officer accountable to the minister. This is a change that we believe would strengthen and better align our health and safety efforts to the benefit of all.

The expert advisory panel highlighted the need for better alignment of the occupational health and safety system, with greater support for vulnerable workers and for business, especially in helping small business understand how to comply with legislative requirements. The mandate in accountability for prevention under our bill would be transferred from the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board to the Ontario Ministry of Labour. This will not only better align and coordinate our efforts, we believe it will enhance accountability and transparency and offer greater opportunities for stakeholder engagement.

If the prevention function is assumed by the Ministry of Labour, this would mean that funding would come under the same review and approvals process of all provincial government expenditures. For example, the minister would have to seek approval from treasury board and cabinet for prevention-related expenditures. Such spending would also be subject to public scrutiny through the estimates and public accounts process and publications.

Finally, under this bill, the minister is required to publish the chief prevention officer's annual report.

All of these new requirements will support and, in fact, improve transparency, and so, in addition to helping make workplaces safer and healthier, the new structure would be more accessible to both labour and small business and accountable to them and to the public.

Our bill would provide that the Minister of Labour have oversight of the province's health and safety associations. These powers can be delegated to the chief prevention officer.

Our changes would mean that the health and safety system is working together effectively and efficiently. This was another key recommendation of the expert panel. Stakeholders asked for enhanced coordination and alignment between the activities of the health and safety

agencies, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board and the Ministry of Labour enforcement and policy priorities.

Under our bill the chief prevention officer, the CPO, would be responsible for establishing a provincial occupational health and safety strategy. This CPO would ensure that this overall provincial health and safety strategy was aligned across all systems partners. The chief prevention officer proposed in our legislation would directly report to and provide an annual report for the Minister of Labour on the statutory mandate and to the Deputy Minister of Labour on administrative public services matters.

It's important to add that under the proposed new model contained in our bill, health and safety associations would be funded through government transfer payments and would work under the direction of the chief prevention officer. This approach would be fiscally neutral to the government and would not add to employers' WSIB premiums. The revenue that the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board currently spends on prevention would instead be allocated to the Ministry of Labour for the new prevention organization. The ministry is currently working with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board to develop a transition plan that would include the transfer of funds for prevention services to the Ministry of Labour. Employer premiums, which fund the whole of the occupational health and safety system, will not go up as a result of the Ministry of Labour taking on the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board's current prevention functions.

Under our bill, a new prevention council consisting of both employer and worker representatives would be an important partner in setting the direction for the ministry's prevention activities and would work closely with the chief prevention officer. This, again, was a key recommendation of the expert panel report.

The involvement of our key stakeholders is a priority for us, moving forward. The prevention council would advise the minister on the appointment of the new chief prevention officer and advise the CPO on the occupational health and safety strategy. And as the CPO contemplates significant new changes to the health and safety system, the prevention council chair would be asked to tell the minister whether he or she endorses that direction of change.

As my ministry and I have announced, our government has appointed an interim prevention council to help improve workplace health and safety in the province. The interim prevention council will help the province implement the key recommendations of the expert advisory panel, including the recruitment of a chief prevention officer. This interim council is led by Paavo Kivisto, retired Deputy Minister of the Environment and former Deputy Minister of Labour. The interim prevention council includes Joan Eakin, Vernon Edwards, John A. Macnamara, Domenic Mattina and Carmine Tiano. I would like to acknowledge all these individuals and say that I could not be more pleased with the expertise and commitment these leaders are bringing forward to our efforts. Going forward, the permanent prevention council

will be established and the chair will be selected by the members of the council.

A key recommendation of the expert safety panel's report calls for increased health and safety training for our province's workers, especially in high-risk occupations. The consultations led by the expert panel showed us that many workers are not aware of their basic rights and responsibilities under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

0930

The panel found that workers were not aware of such basic rights as the right to refuse unsafe work or to receive appropriate information—the right to know, including the right to receive appropriate instruction and supervision—or the right to participate in making workplaces safe through the joint health and safety committees or safety representatives. And so, as recommended in the report, our amendments would empower the Minister of Labour to approve health and safety training standards and programs.

We are proposing that all health and safety representatives in workplaces with six to 19 employees be trained to carry out their health and safety duties. They currently do not require any training, and the expert advisory panel felt that this caused higher risk in small workplaces. Basic health and safety awareness training for workers will improve the knowledge of their rights and responsibilities, and thereby improve their safety and help safeguard their health.

These provisions would come into force on a date yet to be determined to allow for sufficient time to develop the training standards and, importantly, to consult with both business and labour on their effective implementation and to make sure we achieve the best results for the money spent.

Another provision in the bill deals with workplace reprisals. The expert advisory panel concluded that when non-unionized workers are fired or otherwise punished by an employer for exercising their rights under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, there is no quick mechanism for these workers to obtain timely redress. Therefore, our proposed amendments would allow the Ontario Labour Relations Board to deal with such claims in a more timely manner. In addition, inspectors would be given the power to refer the matter to the Ontario Labour Relations Board in certain circumstances if the worker agrees. Workers, especially those most vulnerable workers, would have improved protections against reprisals.

The panel also recommended that the offices of the worker and employer advisers could, in the future, provide support for both workers and employers in reprisal cases. The proposed amendments include a regulation-making authority to allow for this.

This provision to protect against reprisals, if passed, would preserve the neutrality of the Ministry of Labour inspectors. It would ensure that they couldn't be called as a witness by one of the parties to reprisal proceedings. It would also ensure that the reprisal proceedings would not

be delayed unnecessarily by requests for inspectors to attend at hearings before the Ontario Labour Relations Board.

Such statutory provisions concerning the ability of inspectors to testify in civil and other proceedings are common. Similar provisions also appear in other Ministry of Labour statutes—for example, the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Employment Standards Act.

We will be setting up a section 21 committee for vulnerable workers. This will help ensure that the key stakeholders who represent the workplace parties can give needed input and advice on reaching out to and protecting those workers who are often at the greatest risk in the workplace.

The expert panel has recommended, and we will be moving forward with, new and enhanced efforts to reach out to young workers. We will help develop materials and programs to help ensure that teens entering the workforce know their rights and their responsibilities under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. We owe it to our young people, our children, to give them the knowledge and the tools to keep themselves safe as they enter the workforce.

The expert panel recommended, and we will move forward with, strengthening the foundation of our occupational health and safety efforts, and that is the internal responsibility system. This system to ensure that the workplace parties are working together to achieve and improve safe and healthy working conditions comes out of another historic review of our health and safety system: the Ham commission that was chaired by the renowned Dr. James Ham.

In the expert panel's report, the internal responsibility system was seen as the right approach to assuring that the workplace parties are actively engaged in preventing workplace injury and disease. This, in the words of the report, "is because Ministry of Labour inspectors cannot be in all workplaces at all times."

Workplace health and safety is everyone's responsibility. The anti-reprisal provisions of our legislation, as well as the support for small business, will strengthen the internal responsibility system. As part of our support to small business, there will be a new section 21 committee to address the needs of small business.

We have listened to the expert advisory panel, with its representation from workers, employers and various health and safety experts. We have carefully considered the recommendations of the panel—recommendations based on broad consultations with workplace parties and representatives. We have accepted the recommendations of the expert panel, and thank all those who worked so hard on the panel's report.

The panel's report was a call to action, and we are acting by bringing forward this legislation. Our government believes that by working together, we can continue to foster workplaces that are healthy, safe and harmonious, and by doing so also build a strong economy. We believe our bill, over time, can and will save lives and

prevent injuries among Ontarians. The working people of this province and those who depend on them deserve no less.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Scarborough–Southwest.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I rise to address the second reading of the Occupational Health and Safety Statute Law Amendment Act, 2011.

This legislation is about our hope for and our commitment to safer and healthier Ontario workplaces. It is about working together, all of us: employees and employers, health and safety stakeholders and experts and the government that represents them. It is about working better, and that means better aligning and coordinating our health and safety systems and our efforts and resources. It is about working to change a system to ensure the well-being of the working people of this province and their ability to come home at the end of the workday safe and sound. It is about listening to our stakeholders, because our proposed legislation is a direct result of the recommendations of the expert advisory panel, and those recommendations are the direct result of consultation and co-operation. The expert panel reached out to and included input from both key stakeholders and the public. We have emphasized that the panel's consultation process received more than 400 responses and submissions and conducted more than 50 stakeholder meetings. We talked about the regional meetings for input—meetings that were held in London, Ottawa, Sudbury, Toronto, Thunder Bay and Windsor. The panel listened, and we have also listened, and have accepted the panel's recommendations.

Now we are acting to bring forth this legislation. The expert advisory panel report and recommendations reflect and represent the hard work, collaboration and expertise of the panel members, as well as the significant input from stakeholders who gave their best advice in the interests of making workplaces safer. In our proposed legislation, we are embarking on a major change in our province's occupational health and safety system, the biggest change since the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act was adopted over 30 years ago.

We are moving ahead to develop new partnerships, new tools and a new structure that will better serve the needs of our people: a structure that is more responsive, effective and efficient; a structure that will promote a culture of health and safety in Ontario workplaces. At the end of the day, and certainly for the end of the citizens' workday, the goal is and must be workplaces that are safe and healthy. Our proposals are a road map forward to ensure we are providing a more promising future for working men and women.

This bill is not an end point, but a beginning. Our proposed changes would create a framework for us to build on together.

0940

Many of the panel's recommendations will be phased in over time to allow for further consultation on detailed proposals. We want to ensure that the workplace parties

have an opportunity to become familiar with and prepare for the new duties and responsibilities that will be required.

The implementation of the panel's recommendations requires not only legislative changes, but also the development of new operational policies and new procedures. This work will go forward in consultation with the interim prevention council, prevention system partners and stakeholders.

Our legislation is a first step in what will be our walk together to protect Ontario's working people. Our proposals are a foundation for what will be a work in, and for, progress in workplace safety. Progress means safer and healthier workplaces for new and young workers, for recent immigrants and for workers who are at the greatest risk, those who are most vulnerable.

Our bill would enable us to build a more integrated health and safety system, a system where our prevention goals are more closely aligned with policy and enforcement efforts, a prevention system that is more accountable and transparent to the people that it exists to serve.

Also critical to our new system will be training and protection for workers who use that training and exercise their rights under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. That is why we accepted and are proposing to move forward with new mandatory basic health and safety training for workers and supervisors. This training is necessary for our internal responsibility system to work, and our internal responsibility system is key in making our overall prevention system work. And as we've underlined, there will be more consultation on training before requirements are put in place.

We have said that Ministry of Labour inspectors cannot be in all the province's workplaces at all times. That is why we depend on the workplace parties working together in an informed environment and constructively working towards the common goal of increased health and safety.

This only makes sense for our workers and for employers. We know the tremendous cost that workplace injuries inflict: the cost in human suffering, in lost productivity, the cost to the workplace safety and insurance system. The average cost of a workplace injury in Ontario in 2008, according to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, was \$24,133 in direct costs and \$96,532 in indirect costs per lost-time injury. But those numbers do not and cannot include the immeasurable emotional costs borne by the families who have lost a loved one or have a family member who has been injured on the job. There's no price that we can attach to human suffering or certainly to the tragic loss of life. That is why we are proposing this legislation; that is why we appointed the expert panel on health and safety; and that is why we have accepted the expert panel's recommendations, which were based on broad input and consultation.

Bill 160, under section 2, would add provisions to the Occupational Health and Safety Act to specify that the Minister of Labour is responsible for administering the act and that as part of such administration, the minister's

powers and duties would include the following: the promotion of public awareness of occupational health and safety; the education of employers, workers and others about occupational health and safety; the fostering of commitment to occupational health and safety among employers, workers and others; and making grants to support occupational health and safety, which would include funding research.

Let me say a few words about the prevention council. Our bill adds a number of provisions regarding the creation and operation of a new multi-stakeholder prevention council. Council members would be appointed by the minister and would include representatives of workers and employers as well as experts in occupational health and safety. The council would also select a chair from amongst its members.

The key functions of the council will be to advise the minister on the appointment of the chief prevention officer, or the CPO, and anything else the minister specifies, and advise the chief prevention officer on various matters, including the prevention of work-related injuries and illnesses, the provincial occupational health and safety strategy, an annual report, and proposed changes to the funding and delivery of services to prevent work-related injuries and illnesses.

I would also like to say a few words about the chief prevention officer. Our bill, under section 8, would add a new section to the Occupational Health and Safety Act requiring the minister to appoint a chief prevention officer to do the following:

- exercise any duties or powers delegated by the minister;
- develop a provincial occupational health and safety strategy;
- prepare an annual report;
- advise the minister on preventing work-related injuries and illnesses; and
- advise the minister on any proposed changes to the funding and delivery of prevention services.

The creation of the provincial strategy on occupational health and safety called for in our proposals would do some of the following things: It would set goals for occupational health and safety system partners, include performance indicators to measure the progress made toward achieving goals, and be approved and published by the minister.

The chief prevention officer's annual report to the minister would report on the achievement of the goals set in the provincial strategy and also be published by the minister.

The chief prevention officer, or the CPO, would be required to consult the prevention council and consider its advice in developing the provincial strategy and the annual report. Throughout our proposed changes, there is a lot of provision for accountability and transparency. This is what the stakeholders told the expert panel they wanted. This is what our bill provides.

Under section 6 of this bill, there would be added a new requirement for employers and constructors to en-

sure that the health and safety representative is trained to effectively perform the duties of a representative. The minister could set standards for such training.

Under section 7 of the bill, there are provisions that would enable either co-chair of a joint health and safety committee to make written recommendations to the employer if the committee has failed to agree on a recommendation. The Ministry of Labour has appointed an interim prevention council made up of five members of the expert advisory panel and an interim chair. This council will advise the minister on an interim basis regarding the expert panel's recommendations, and it will recruit a chief prevention officer. This chief prevention officer is expected to be appointed by June 2011.

The Ministry of Labour has also established an implementation team with staff from the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, the health and safety agencies and from the ministry itself. This team is setting up a number of working groups with representatives from the health and safety system partners, and others, to look at implementation of the panel's recommendations.

I've outlined some key provisions of our bill and the road forward. But for a moment, I want to talk about what the Ministry of Labour has done and accomplished during our time in government. We have been actively promoting construction safety across the province. We all want our loved ones to come home safe and sound after a hard day's work. We have done more than any other government to ensure and protect the health and safety of workers on construction sites. The Ministry of Labour now has more than 400 highly trained ministry health and safety professionals supporting enforcement every day. The lost-time injury rate has decreased by more than 30% since 2003. That's a reduction of more than 25,000 injuries. That means that just last year alone, our inspectors conducted over 62,000 field visits. Of all these field visits, more than 41,000 were proactive. Within this same time period, over 30,000 workplaces were visited across the province. During these visits, health and safety inspectors issued over 98,000 orders. That's progress.

0950

We've got inspectors out on job sites every day, but more needs to be done and will be done. This bill is about pushing even further to usher in a new era of collaboration to reduce the number of workplace injuries. The expert panel was a true example of workplace parties, of representatives of labour and of business working together. Only through co-operation and working together can we achieve our goals.

Let's continue this spirit of co-operation. Let's move forward toward the common goal of safeguarding Ontario's workers. I know we all share that goal in this Legislature, so this bill should be one that we all support.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm pleased to listen to a very important bill this morning, Bill 160, amending the Occupational Health and Safety Act, and to the minister's

opening remarks. Our critic is actually in the midst of preparing his remarks to respond to this important bill.

We all want the workplaces in Ontario to be safe. Certainly, a lot has been said and little has been done in terms of the remarks this morning. I think it's all in the plan.

One of the things that did strike me in listening to it is this new—sort of another bureaucratic forum here, this chief prevention officer, who I guess would be appointed by order in council, which would be political. I was wondering if it would be Pat Dillon, who could easily be the Working Families Coalition. He does work with the trades groups; I understand that. It's the work he does about putting the videos on the screens that portray persons and others in certain ways that aren't particularly complimentary.

I think that we need to keep the politics out of it and keep the injured workers at the very front of it. Having worked myself in an industrial work environment and, to a large extent, with WSIB, early return provisions in work and part of the ability of rehabilitation of injured workers, I've been quite familiar with that for several years.

It seems to me that, just listening here—and I've had an opportunity to read some of the preamble of the bill. It's fairly long. There's a very important section to amend the part to deal with injury and disease prevention.

The role of this new committee might be to set goals. Now, I would think that the membership of that would be very critical. I hope again that it's not a political appointment, like we find at the LHINs and other places. We'll keep an eye on it. Everyone wants to protect workers.

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

Mr. Peter Kormos: I've been here in the chamber this morning, along with my NDP colleague the member for Beaches—East York. We listened carefully to the comments made by the minister and his parliamentary assistant. While the minister tries to put the best possible impression forward, this bill warrants serious consideration, analysis and indeed, where need be, critique. Our member the member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, who is the critic for this matter, will be addressing this bill in due course. I understand, if the week rolls out as we expect, that that will be on Thursday morning. I expect that the Conservative critic's lead will take place tomorrow morning, Wednesday morning.

Let's put this in perspective, because I suspect that this is more likely simply some icing on the cake rather than the cake itself, or anything of real substance. We live in a province, here in the province of Ontario, now in the year 2011, where workers die on a regular and tragic basis. Increasingly, and more often than not, it tends to be new Canadians as workers, people for whom the English language is not their first language, people who are readily exploited in the workplace and workers who tend to be un-unionized.

If this government and this minister were really serious about worker safety, this government would extend card-based certification to all workers in the province so that all workers could join unions and protect themselves by virtue of collective bargaining and union membership. This government would extend the right to belong to a collective bargaining unit and to negotiate a collective bargaining agreement to agricultural workers, who work in one of the most dangerous workplaces in the province and in Canada. Yet this minister turns his back on agricultural workers. This minister turns his back on industrial workers in some of the most dangerous workplaces. He turns his back on the poorest—

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

Mr. Jeff Leal: This morning I did listen to the Minister of Labour and the parliamentary assistant on Bill 160. I take a very personal interest in this one. In a previous life, before coming here in 2003, I was a health and training officer with the Coyle Packaging Group in Peterborough, which is a corrugate business, and spent a significant amount of time working with WHMIS and other workplace issues and training.

One of the things that we're looking forward to doing with this bill is to make workplaces safer. We all know that the safer a workplace is, the more productive the workplace is. When we leave in the morning, we say goodbye to a wife, a husband, a partner and loved ones. In the province of Ontario, when you enter your workplace, you should have the expectation that you're going into a safe workplace. It's a continuous effort by the employer and the employee to make sure that happens. Having been involved in this field, I know that you get great participation both from employees and employers, because it's in everybody's best interest to make sure that the workplace is indeed safe.

I know that from the employer's perspective, anything that would help them to have a more efficient, streamlined prevention and compliance system would certainly assist them in living up to the obligations and responsibilities they have under the various occupational health and safety statute law provisions in the province of Ontario.

I've read some of the work that has been done by the expert panel. I think there are some very good suggestions. As this piece of legislation moves through the House and goes to committee, we'll—

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

The minister has two minutes to respond.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I'd like to thank the member for Durham, the member for Welland and the member for Peterborough for their comments.

Let me stress very loudly: This is not about politics. This is about those who are most vulnerable. It's about the health and safety of those workers. That is our primary concern. That's how we're going to behave, and that's how we're going to proceed. As I've said many times, there is a consensus report that was developed. I

hope, in the end, we'll have consensus in this House to help those who are most vulnerable. When it comes to those tragedies, one is one too many.

When it comes to farmers, it was this government that trained over 100 inspectors and did 350 inspections for farmers, not the NDP and not the PCs. We do care, and we'll do our utmost to help those most in need.

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

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move adjournment of the debate at this time.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member has moved adjournment at this time. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading debate adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Orders of the day?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: We have no further business this morning.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): This House stands recessed until 10:30 of the clock.

The House recessed from 0959 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

M. Phil McNeely: J'aimerais accueillir trois visiteurs d'Ottawa qui sont parmi nous. Ils sont dans la tribune du Président ici : le D^r Bernard Leduc, président-directeur général de l'Hôpital Montfort; Gilles Morin, président du conseil administratif de l'Hôpital Montfort, ancien député d'Ottawa-Orléans et vice-président de cette Chambre quand il était ici; et Michel Tremblay, chef de la gouvernance et conseiller exécutif de l'Hôpital Montfort.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm pleased to introduce some people in the members' gallery from Ducks Unlimited Canada who are here today for their awareness day: Julie Cayley, Michelle Stuckless, Joanne Barbazza, Stephanie Walker, Erling Armson, Cam Thompson, Christie-Lee Hazzard, Greg Weeks and Philip Holst.

Also, I want to mention that this afternoon at 4:30 there's a reception in the legislative dining room hosted by Ducks Unlimited Canada.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's my great delight to introduce a number of members of the board and other workers of Victim Services Toronto. We've got Bonnie Levine, executive director; Lauri Reesor, board chair; Tricia Bennett and many other members here today on International Women's Day.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: In the west members' gallery, please welcome page Brittany McCorrison's mother, Susan, and sister Melissa.

Mr. Paul Miller: It's my pleasure to welcome students from McMaster University who are here in the west gallery to learn how our Legislature works: Simon Granat, Kevin Simms, Kaitlin Peters, Josh Wybrow, Santino Marinucci, Alex Weatherill, John-Carlo Di Rosa and Amelia Runchee. Welcome.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'd like to welcome back to the Legislature the parents and family of Amanda Belzowski, who's one of our pages, from Don Valley West. Lisa, Dan and Josh Belzowski are here, along with Amanda Werger and Hannah Shuster-Hyman, who are friends of Amanda joining us today.

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: I want to welcome Stephen Wasteneys, who lives in the neighbourhood of old Ottawa South in the great riding of Ottawa Centre, and is the president of Ducks Unlimited Canada's Ottawa chapter. Welcome to Queen's Park, Stephen.

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'd like to welcome to the west gallery somebody who needs no introduction: Smokey Thomas, president of OPSEU. With him is Mr. Al Donaldson, chair of the mental health division of OPSEU, as well as Deborah Gordon, the chair of OPSEU's children sector. They also have Dan Sidsworth, the chair of corrections for MERC, and Roy Jones, who is one of 28 experienced child and youth workers from Whitby who will lose their jobs in April. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. John Gerretsen: First of all, I'd like to welcome Smokey Thomas, a proud Kingstonian. I'd also like to welcome Mr. Michael Muise, who's the principal of St. Paul Catholic School and of Sacred Heart School on Wolfe Island. Wolfe Island, of course, is one of the communities that is heavily involved in Hockeyville right now for Hockey Night in Canada. Principal Muise is here with his son Avery Muise, and they're in the gallery.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I want to welcome students from the Mattawa Learning Centre in northern Ontario, a high school for older youth. We've got representatives from Webequie, Martin Falls, Eabametoong and Neskan-taga First Nations. They're here with their principal, Denise Baxter. Welcome.

Hon. Carol Mitchell: I'm very pleased to introduce a couple of my constituents who are in the House today: Henry and Nelly Baker. They purchased this time in the House to help support our local hospital in Clinton. Welcome and thank you.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I'd like to introduce a constituent and friend, Patrick Bogden, who lobbied the Ontario government successfully to distribute December ODSP cheques in Ontario before Christmas every year and is back to visit us again. He's in the visitors' gallery.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I'd like to introduce in the House today the mother and the cousin of page Simon Cook from Oakville. We've got Annette Cook here and Mathew Fedsin.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome Alexis Smith from my riding of Elgin-Middlesex-London, who is seated in the Speaker's gallery today. Alexis, welcome to Queen's Park.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is to the Premier. Premier, every day we learn of a new hit to the pocket-books of average Ontario families. Hydro One recently released its 2010 year-end financial results, which confirmed that Ontario families continue to pay for the expensive mess that you're making out of the hydro system. Specifically in this report, we learn that Hydro One now has an unfunded pension liability of \$300 million. We anticipate that Hydro One will be coming forward for yet another rate increase to cover for this mismanagement.

Premier, exactly how much higher are hydro rates going to go to pay for your mismanagement?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm pleased to take the question. I know that my honourable colleague is going to want to recognize that the issue of the unfunded pension liability started under their government. I'm sure he's going to want to recognize that. It's an ongoing issue; it's an ongoing concern.

My honourable colleague says that he's concerned about costs that are being borne by Ontario families. I want to remind my honourable colleague that our plan to move ahead with full-day kindergarten in Ontario, to benefit 247,000 four- and five-year-olds, will save families thousands of dollars in daycare costs every year. So if he's truly committed to ensuring that we keep costs down for Ontario families, then he's going to want to take the opportunity right now to commit to full-day kindergarten for all four- and five-year-olds in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: You know, Premier, Ontario families are seeing through your shell game, and they know that they are footing the bill for your inability to get public sector spending under control. Your hydro bureaucracies represent the same kind of bloat we've seen from the McGuinty government across the board.

Hydro One's 2010 financial report goes even further, Premier, and notes that Hydro One added 300 new employees in the last year alone. So instead of getting the relief they need, Ontario families will face yet another rate increase to pay for your bloat in the hydro bureaucracy.

Premier, can you explain to Ontario families why you say you're going to cut the civil service by 5% on one hand but they're going to get stuck with a bill for 300 new employees at Hydro One? Why are rates going through the roof?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock.

Minister of Energy, I would appreciate being able to hear the question.

Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: There have been more people hired on at the hydro companies. I think my hon-

ourable colleague knows that we're investing billions of dollars in a massive build-out of our electricity system. It's something that should have been done years ago. It's something that they chose to set aside, but it's something that we chose to do. We have some 9,000 megawatts of new generation. We have rehabilitated some 5,000 kilometres of transmission. We're laying the foundation for a new industry—thousands of new jobs.

My friend mentions in passing that he thinks it's important that we better manage public service costs, and again, that's one important reason why he's determined to eliminate full-day kindergarten from Ontario schools. If he's committed to ensuring that Ontario families have some help with their costs, then he's going to want to commit right now to putting in place full-day kindergarten for all four- and five-year-olds.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: You know, sadly, Premier, you just seem to shrug off this growing bloat in the public sector, and Ontario families are struggling to pay the bills. You don't respect the fact that Ontario families are stuck with higher hydro bills because of your incredible mismanagement of our energy system.

The unfunded liability at Hydro One is now up to \$300 million. That probably implies a rate increase. The number of bureaucrats working there went up 300 employees in one year alone—pressure for a further rate increase. Now we find out that, in the last year alone, the operating costs of Hydro One are up some \$67 million.

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You claim a victory by saving \$5 million with the ORC merger. Premier, you've increased that thirteenfold with a nearly \$70-million increase in the operating budget.

Premier, when will you rein in the public sector costs? Why do Ontario families always get stuck with the bill for your mismanagement of the energy—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I expect this will be a recurring theme. My honourable colleague says it's important to rein in public sector costs. I want to translate that so that Ontarians can better understand what he means by that.

"Public sector costs" means we can't afford full-day kindergarten for our four- and five-year-olds in Ontario. "Public sector costs" means we can't afford the smaller classes that we have in our schools. "Public sector costs" means we can't afford the 11,000 more nurses that we've hired in Ontario. "Public sector costs" means we can't afford—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The members from Renfrew, Simcoe North and Thornhill.

Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I just want to be clear and to elaborate a little bit more for my honourable colleague when it comes to his plans. He doesn't want to talk about

those, but we get a better understanding every day of what those plans actually are. They represent some dramatic cuts to public services. I think Ontarians have seen that movie, and they don't want to see it again.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Premier: Premier, you've grown increasingly out of touch after your seven years in office. You seem to have no clue that the hydro bill is no longer just another bill; it is the bill for families in Ontario today. They simply cannot afford it, and they find out about your waste.

Premier, you have now, according to the C.D. Howe Institute, spent a billion dollars exporting Ontario power to Quebec and to the States to give them discount power while Ontario families are stuck with skyrocketing hydro bills. Not only do you charge them an arm and a leg for their own hydro, but you send them a bill to subsidize families in Quebec and New York state as well.

Premier, why are the only families getting any relief in hydro customers in Quebec and New York? Why are you sticking families with the bill?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm not sure there's any foundation in fact for any part of that question whatsoever. I think it's a wonderful exercise in fantasy. If my friend were honestly committed to helping Ontarians better manage their hydro costs, then he would support our clean energy benefit, which is taking 10% off our hydro bills for the next five years. It's a practical, pragmatic way to help families. It's a specific example. He might want to tell us why it is that he's against reducing hydro bills by 10%.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Honourable members, I think your leader would like to hear the answer, and the heckling is making it extremely difficult for your leader to hear.

Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, you've made life increasingly unaffordable for average families and for seniors in our province with your HST tax grab and your skyrocketing hydro bill policy. Premier, many families can't afford to turn on the lights. If they're not up late at night washing dishes because of your time-of-use smart meters, they're up worrying about how they're going to pay their hydro bill. Instead of giving Ontario families any relief, you spend, according to C.D. Howe, a billion dollars in discounts for families in Quebec and New York state.

Premier, why is it the only families getting a break today are families who live in Montreal and in Buffalo?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I disagree fundamentally with my colleague's assertion and with those numbers.

But one thing that's perfectly clear is that his party refuses to support the clean energy benefit. That is, in fact, now reducing electricity bills by 10% for the next—

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Give us a PowerPoint.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Simcoe North.

Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: There's another specific way we're helping Ontario families. We've put in place a new law that is reducing the cost of generic drugs by half a billion dollars. My honourable colleague was given the choice; he had to take a side. He took a side that opposed the interests of Ontario families.

It seems to me that on many occasions now, when presented with specific opportunities to stand up for families, to make sure they have full-day kindergarten, for example, to make sure they have a clean energy benefit or to make sure they have cheaper drugs, he chooses the other side.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, you've chosen sides all right—you've chosen to discount power to Quebec and New York and raise the rates on Ontario families.

How out of touch have you become after seven years in office? You spent the first seven years chasing families out of Ontario to try to find jobs in other provinces. Now you're spending this year chasing them out of Ontario to try to find affordable hydro across the border. What kind of policy are you running in this province?

Premier, you've signed deals that make us get the most expensive power—your pie-in-the-sky schemes for solar and wind—even when we don't need it, and then you have to discount bills to people in Montreal and Buffalo. Why is it the only way to get relief from the hydro bill is to go across the Peace Bridge into Buffalo, New York?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: As they say, everybody is entitled to their own opinion, but not their own facts.

Here are the facts: In 2002—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. Members will please come to order.

Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The facts are our friends. I would encourage my honourable colleague to understand that.

In 2002, under the previous government, \$500 million was what we paid for importing power. In 2003, we paid \$400 million to import power. Since 2006, as a result of the massive investments we've made in new generation and new transmission, we have so far \$1.5 billion for net exports. We're now in the business of exporting and making money off of our systems. We didn't have enough electricity in the past and we were buying electricity. That's the difference. Those are the facts.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Members will please come to order. The ministers—Minister of Economic Development, Minister of Infrastructure. Member from Oxford, Minister of Community Safety.

New question.

PAY EQUITY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. It's been a difficult few years for Ontario families: jobs lost, savings destroyed, economic anxiety. It's fair to say on International Women's Day that it's hit women especially hard. Women who work full-time earn only 71 cents for every dollar earned by men. Women are nearly twice as likely to earn minimum wage.

What's the Premier prepared to do to confront the growing inequality that hits working women so hard?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I'm pleased to take the question, and I know that I join with all members in celebrating a very important day, International Women's Day.

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My colleague will know that when it comes to the minimum wage, we have raised that several times over; it's now \$10.25. That's a 50% increase since 2003. My understanding is that that is the highest among the 10 provinces.

My honourable colleague will also know that one of the most important initiatives that we are pursuing—and I can tell you that young moms in particular speak to me about this all the time. They keep asking, "When is full-day kindergarten coming to our local schools?" That's important, not only by means of providing our kids with the best possible start, but it's an important—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Some 450,000 Ontarians work in minimum-wage jobs; they are disproportionately women. Women are twice as likely as men to work for the minimum wage and twice as likely to work at jobs that keep their families below the poverty line. After promising not to freeze the minimum wage, why did the Premier do just that?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, we've raised the minimum wage six or seven times over. It's now \$10.25 an hour. It's the highest in Canada. It represents a 50% increase. I think that is significant.

I can tell you something else that makes us hopeful about the future, and that's how well our students, including our young women, are doing in our schools. I was in a high school this morning, and I'm pleased to report that the graduation rate in Ontario has gone from 68% to 81%. Overwhelmingly, it is young women who are performing better in our schools.

There's a challenge there. We intend to take that up when it comes to dealing with our boys and our young men. But young women are thriving in our schools today in Ontario, and that bodes very well for our future.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Without access to adequate income, housing and good jobs, many women and their children are simply trapped. Women are earning less, but the government drags its feet on pay equity. Over half of families headed by single women are living in poverty, but the government freezes the minimum wage. The

government brags about full-day learning, but sits on its hands while child care spaces vanish across this province.

I remember, myself, scrambling between child care and jobs, working my way through those hard years of my early life as a young mother, and I see the situation getting much worse for women today. Why does the Premier keep ignoring the growing inequality that's clearly an issue for working families and women?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: In addition to raising the minimum wage to \$10.25, which is the highest in the country, we've created 22,000 new licensed child care spaces since 2003. We've also—and this is very important to moms as well—developed and increased the Ontario child benefit. It's now \$1,100 per child. Again, that is something else that is at risk from a Conservative government in the province of Ontario.

There's always more work to be done; I'm more than prepared to acknowledge that. But a number of initiatives we've put forward, the NDP have voted against. I would ask for my honourable colleague's support the next time we bring an initiative into this Legislature to advance the cause of women in Ontario.

WOMEN'S ISSUES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is to the Premier. The Canadian Council of Chief Executives is led by the former Liberal MP John Manley. Their membership includes nine women and over 150 men. They recently wrote to the Minister of Finance, encouraging him not to give women and their families a break next budget. The CEOs are saying Ontario should “declare war on spending,” the sort of spending that provides long-term care for aging women and child care and helps with the family budget.

Does the Premier find it surprising at all that the only kinds of spending that Canada's richest corporations support are their own multi-billion dollar tax cuts?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: As part of the pre-budget consultations, we get input from a variety of sources. Last night, we had 11,000 people in Kitchener–Waterloo on a telephone call talking about their concerns. The night before, we had 10,000 people in Thunder Bay. We've been doing this across the province.

Mr. Manley and the council of chief executive officers wrote a long letter outlining a number of positions, positions which we have to take seriously, as we do other positions. We don't always agree with what various groups advocate, but I can assure you that we will bring forward a budget that builds on our success in education, builds on our success in health care, reduces the deficit and builds a brighter and better future for all Ontarians.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Women and their families are struggling to get by. Wendy writes that she's having a hard time paying her home heating bills and says, “I am still working for the same wages from 2008. But everything has gone up.” Meanwhile, the CEO lobby

group, 94% of whom are wealthy men with an average income of about \$4 million a year, says “No breaks for families next budget,” and the Premier seems to agree.

Why do Canada's CEOs get their multi-billion dollar break, but women like Wendy, struggling to pay the bills, are told that there's nothing at all for them?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I think what is conveyed by a number of groups is important for us to take into consideration. I think they're concerned about the level of the province's deficit and debt, because they recognize that our children will pay for that. I think they've advocated in their letter very strongly for continued investments in education and health care, which they see as being important to the future.

That member and her party want to play cheap politics. We want to build a coalition of all Ontarians, Ontarians who are dedicated to the best education system in the world, to the highest-quality public education system in the world and to the tax package that we brought forward, which will create some 600,000 jobs. On this side of the House, we see a better future for our children with the right investments in education and health and the right approach to bringing our budget back into balance.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Amanda in New Liskeard writes, “Since the HST has come into effect, I have fallen behind on all my household bills. I have had to get a second job just to make ends meet.” Amanda could use a break on her home heating bill, but the Premier and his CEO friends say that a tax break to Canada's richest corporations, like banks and insurance companies, is much more important.

Why is the Premier putting his rich friends first over the priorities of Amanda and women like her across the province?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Last week I had the chance to speak to 5,000 Sudburians, with our member from Sudbury, about their views on the budget. I spoke to 7,500 residents of Sault Ste. Marie about their concerns with the budget. They want to see us invest in education and health care. They want a society that embraces all people. They want an approach to getting back to balance that respects the need to have the best education system, that respects the importance of full-day learning for our youngest students and that respects the need for more post-secondary spaces in Ontario and builds on the investments we've made in health care.

This province has a bright and brilliant future ahead of it. We'll work with all Ontarians to build that future, and I look forward to budget day later this month.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, yesterday you got caught again. First you got caught saying you had directed Hydro One to pass on \$18 million in legal fees despite the fact that the Electricity Distributors Association is saying Hydro One

was never part of the settlement. Then you got caught saying the majority of Ontario families were benefiting from your smart meter tax machines when data clearly shows otherwise: that the majority are not benefiting. In fact, they're paying more.

How many times do you have to get caught before you'll finally admit you're in over your head?

Hon. Brad Duguid: The member is wrong today, like his leader was wrong yesterday.

I cannot believe the bounds of arrogance that these guys want to rise to, when they make false accusations yesterday and then rise in their place today and continue to make those same incorrect accusations. Then yesterday, they sent out a press release that also included those accusations that were patently false—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I let it go once. I would just ask the honourable member to withdraw the comment, please.

1100

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'll withdraw that, Mr. Speaker.

The Leader of the Opposition yesterday continued to make accusations that were incorrect. He did not correct the record yesterday. He did not correct the record today. Does this leader not believe that if he says something that's incorrect in this Legislature he owes the Legislature an apology? That he owes—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakubuski: I cannot believe the arrogance of that minister. I hope we'll get an answer—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. I'd ask the honourable ministers to please come to order.

Please continue.

Mr. John Yakubuski: I look forward to an answer to this one. We know that Ducks Unlimited are in the building today. They're having a lobby day here, and a reception. Unfortunately, what people are getting out of this party is unlimited ducking when it comes to question period.

Last week we asked you twice to confirm that you were not going to sole-source a new power plant in Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge. You refused to answer both times. Your first action as Minister of Energy was to sign the \$7-billion sole-sourced Samsung sweetheart deal. The reason you refused to answer the question last week regarding sole-sourcing the Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge power plant is that you are left with two options: either confirming that are you going to sole-source that power plant or getting caught once again—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I think that a Leader of the Opposition has a responsibility in this Legislature in the important role he plays to hold the government accountable. I also believe that he has a responsibility, like all of us, to be very straight-up with the people of Ontario. We've made a point on the energy file to be very straight-up on our long-term energy plan, but accus-

ations were made yesterday that were absolutely incorrect. They were followed up with a press release that was issued from the Leader of the Opposition and his party. That was absolutely incorrect, and he should apologize, and his member should if they want us to treat their questions with credibility here in this place. Their questions should be somewhat in keeping with the facts.

VICTIMS' SERVICES

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is for the Premier. Recently the government announced its sexual violence action plan. We noticed that in the action plan Victim Services was completely ignored. Victim Services is here today waiting for an answer.

Victim Services is the front-line agency that provides immediate assistance to victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse. Victim Services has not had a cost-of-living increase for two decades. Why is this government endangering its existence by not providing cost-of-living increases to this front-line agency that deals with women at their most vulnerable, as it does for all other agencies?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the minister responsible for women's issues.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I'm pleased to have a chance to talk about the province's sexual violence action plan: Changing Attitudes, Changing Lives. It is a four-year strategy that includes \$15 million in funding.

The plan builds upon the progress that we've made in the domestic violence action plan, which was launched in 2004, and the solutions that have come to the table come to us from those survivors and front-line workers, 350 of whom we consulted over the last many months. Maria Van Bommel, parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for women's issues at the time, conducted those consultations across the province. The voices of the women are reflected in the strategy, and the strategy is supported by investments of \$15 million. We're very proud of the steps that we're taking. We will change attitudes and change lives with this strategy.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Not one penny is going to Victim Services, the front-line agency that goes out with the police, that deals with victims at their most vulnerable. Not only has the government not included Victim Services in the sexual violence action plan and not given a cost-of-living increase for the agency, the government is now looking to cut essential programs, such as the SupportLink program to help victims of sexual abuse. Can the Premier assure us that Victim Services will not face any cuts to their programs?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: We are very proud to have received support from many women's organizations, including sexual assault centres, who lead this work across the province, who are receiving \$3 million in additional resources as a result of this strategy, a 6% increase in their funding. That will allow them to continue to serve women across the province. These dollars are front-line dollars.

These are the voices that we heard from communities' sexual assault centres. That organization, the OCRCC, is the organization with whom we worked closely to develop this strategy. This is a strategy that will respond directly to the needs of women in communities across the province. The member opposite, I would think, would embrace and thank the province for leading the sexual violence action plan.

For the first time in this province we've talked about this important issue, and this comprehensive strategy has come forward as a result.

AIR QUALITY

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I have a question today for the Minister of the Environment. Minister, last month you released the 2009 air quality report, and there was much reason to celebrate. It showed decreases in the amounts of carbon dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide and fine particulate matter. These are long-term trends that show the air we breathe in Ontario is getting cleaner.

My constituents in Oakville were pleased to hear that air quality was improving. They're still concerned, however, about Oakville's air being considered stressed back in 2006 during smog events. Minister, today, can you confirm that the same air quality improvements seen throughout the province are also occurring in my community of Oakville?

Hon. John Wilkinson: The number one reason that children are admitted to an ER in the province of Ontario is because of asthma, and the number one reason for that asthma is because of poor air quality.

I'm proud that in Oakville, I can report to the member, there has, in the last decade, been a decline of fine particulate matter of some 33%; and nitrogen dioxide decreased by 19%. This member and this party understand that our children's lungs are more important than that love affair with dirty coal that you have over there. On this side of the House, we are getting rid of dirty coal because our children's lungs deserve that. That's why we're investing in our children with full-day kindergarten: because their minds deserve that.

I want to thank the member from Oakville for being a tireless advocate for his community. We will work closely with the southwest GTA as we work together to improve the air quality because our children deserve it—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: The families in my community and throughout the southwest GTA will be reassured by those reductions.

Dr. David Balsillie was appointed to undertake a study to determine the steps your ministry—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Honourable members please come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Durham should be in his seat, speaking of seats.

Please continue.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Dr. David Balsillie was appointed to undertake a study to determine the steps your ministry could take in the province to improve air quality. The comprehensive air management system proposed at the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment aligned well with the task force plan. The hallmark of both approaches is working well; it's engaging local communities in local air quality issues.

Minister, the residents of my community want to know how they can be involved in the comprehensive air management system.

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to thank the member because he has been a tireless advocate, understanding that communities have to come together. If we're going to address the issues of local air quality, then we need to have people who are willing to do what the MPP for Oakville has done, which is to reach out to the community, to activists, to industry and to the municipalities. Because of his leadership and the leadership shown by Minister Sousa, the southwest GTA is seeing improved air quality. They are very eager to participate in the new national effort that would allow communities to define themselves by way of an air zone and to take actions collectively to improve their air quality, because they understand that it does come down to the very simple question: What is more important, the lungs of our children, or is it more important to have a love affair with dirty coal?

When they were in power, coal production went up 124%. Under this government it has gone down, because our—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

1110

CURRICULUM

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is to the Premier. Premier, last week your Minister of Research and Innovation said that Ontario families opposed to teaching sex ed to six-year-olds were homophobes. Yesterday, we asked your Minister of Education if she agreed with Minister Murray's comments. She refused to answer.

Premier, do you agree with your Minister of Research and Innovation that Ontario families opposed to your sex ed curriculum are homophobes?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think that Ontarians are fair, hard-working, honest, decent people. They want to ensure that we have a good-quality curriculum in our schools in all areas of subject matter, and I'm sure that my honourable colleague opposite knows that.

At present, we are taking the time to develop a consultation process so that we can better hear from parents.

I want to remind my honourable colleague that there is in fact sex ed in our schools today. We also have some solid equity policies that have been developed here in

Ontario that teach our children that homophobia and racism, for example, are wrong. In fact, in the later grades, we invite students to stand up against those kinds of actions and words, should they ever bear witness to them.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Premier, this isn't the first time you've had to clean up a mess left behind by your Minister of Research and Innovation. The last time, it took days for the minister to finally be forced to apologize for his comments on Twitter around the same topic. Now Minister Murray shows he has no respect for Ontario families and says that those opposed to sex ed being taught to six-year-olds are homophobes. Premier, very clearly, will you now condone the latest comments from Minister Murray?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I find it passing strange. I'm not sure I've received a question from the Leader of the Opposition on education yet. The only time they raise issues related to education are in order to somehow launch some spurious attack against a member of the government.

On behalf of Ontarians, we would like to know what their stance is with respect to full-day kindergarten. What is their stance with respect to smaller classes? What is their stance with respect to no strikes in our schools? What is their stance with respect to higher graduation rates and higher test scores? Where do they stand on education?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Simcoe-Grey. The government House leader.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): This is the final warning for the member from Simcoe North.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final warning for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Order.

New question.

UNION CERTIFICATION

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour le premier ministre. As you well know, men make up the majority of construction workers. These men have been given card-based certification, which means that if 55% of them sign a union card, it is done and automatically certified. I'm really pleased that construction workers have those rights, but every worker should have that right.

Women make up the majority of home care workers. These women have been denied card-based certification. On the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day, why does the McGuinty government still have rules that discriminate against women workers?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I appreciate the question from across the way. I recognize that Smokey is here from the union. Welcome to the House.

We recognize how important it is for us to have labour relations in our province, and we're very proud of our record. In 99% of the cases, we have had work-related success without work stoppages. Also, we have introduced card-based certification in our construction trade, given the diversity of that trade.

We recognize how important it is to maintain relations. We will continue to work closely with all those involved, including on issues around pay equity and ensuring that those who are most vulnerable get what they need.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I'm not too sure what he was talking about, but what I'm talking about is card-based certification. Why is it that men get card-based certification and women don't? The question is as simple as this.

Let me read you the standard card that a construction trade—a man—reads and understands: "Yes, I apply for and accept membership in the ABC union." Does the minister really think that this is too complicated for a woman to understand, that they cannot sign a card?

Hon. Charles Sousa: This is not a gender issue; this is a sector issue. Card-based certification exists in the construction trade for men or women, and it's not based on that issue.

What we do believe, and it is in the collective bargaining process—we recognize that in this province over the last number of years we've had labour peace, unlike what has occurred in the past through the time of the social contract, when you ripped up some of those ideas. We don't believe in that case. We believe in strong relationships with our union members and our workers regardless of gender. We will continue to support those who are involved and will continue to be that way.

LIQUOR CONTROL

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: My question is for the Attorney General. With summer fast approaching, my community looks forward to the world-class music festivals held each year in my riding of Ottawa Centre. Ottawa's festivals attract visitors from all over the province and, indeed, across the globe. These world-class events attract top-tier musicians and offer a friendly and relaxed outdoor environment for people to enjoy the great performances. Yet, unlike festival-goers the world over, people attending outdoor festivals in Ontario cannot in many cases watch a performance while having a beer or a glass of wine.

Minister, along with the Minister of Tourism and Culture, you recently announced the launch of consultations on the modernization of certain parts of Ontario's liquor laws. Can the Attorney General tell us what these consultations could mean for my community and how Ontarians, Canadians and tourists alike might further enjoy the many great summer festivals Ontario has to offer with the proposed changes to Ontario's alcohol regulations?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: The member from Ottawa Centre makes a very good point. We have lots of great festivals in the spring, summer, fall and, in fact, in the winter, in the province of Ontario. We've heard from lots of Ontarians that they'd like some more opportunity for—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Member from Hamilton East. Final warning for the member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek. There are now three of you close to a red card.

Minister?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: They'd like some more opportunity for choice; the ability at a festival, for example, if it was okay with the festival owner and the municipality, to be able to walk around a little bit within a defined area with their drink, have greater enjoyment, enjoy the drink while they're looking at crafts and purchasing crafts. It's just a question of updating and modernizing some of the really old rules. We're going to hear from Ontarians and we hope to be able to provide more opportunity for choice in Ontario when it comes to—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: Many people are glad to hear the government is responding to what many consider outdated restrictions by considering the needs of business, festivals and the public for a more enjoyable experience for Ontarians and tourists.

There is, however, some mixed reaction to this consultation process among police forces in the province. Indeed, the police in my riding have voiced concerns with regulatory changes in relation to liquor laws. They are concerned that enforcement could be affected and that the relaxed outdoor atmosphere which attracts people to festivals may actually be jeopardized by changing the regulations in this area.

Minister, we all agree that police forces throughout the province do valuable work in protecting our communities and need the support of the province to provide them with the tools necessary to do their job. Can the Attorney General please address concerns raised by my chief of police that the potential changes will actually make the job of police more difficult and thereby endanger our communities?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: We really respect the work that our chiefs of police and the police forces do. In fact, I was on the phone yesterday with Chief White of the Ottawa Police Service getting his views and telling him we wanted to hear more. We're having meetings with the chiefs; we're going to be having meetings with the policing community.

Part of the proposal involves extra, more strenuous enforcement and more enforcement options. That's where we want to hit the right balance. We want to provide greater opportunity for Ontarians to enjoy freedom at festivals combined with strong enforcement. We happen to have the toughest drinking and driving laws in North America. We have half the rate of drinking and driving of any other province or territory in Canada.

Strong enforcement, more choice; we think we can hit the right balance. Let's hear from Ontarians on this issue.

1120

TENDERING PROCESS

Mr. Norm Miller: I have a question for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. Minister, I have here an example that illustrates that your ministry—and in fact, your government—not only fails to promote Ontario businesses, but denies them the opportunity to even compete in the provincial RFP process. The specifications of this tender are tailored to specs for the Boston Whaler/Brunswick boats, effectively ruling out any Ontario company from competing. Apparently, aluminium welded boats need not apply. Minister, why aren't you interested in supporting Ontario businesses in your government's own procurement processes?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I'm going to have to ask the member opposite for more information related to this specific discussion around an RFP, which my ministry doesn't do related to boats.

Having said that, I think it's high time that we started telling people just what we do to promote Ontario business, not just in Ontario but around the world. The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, on average, has 60 missions a year. We have hosted almost 100 incoming buyer/seller forums in Ontario alone, and that's just in the last three years. We have hosted Home Depot's supplier fair and Canadian Tire's supplier fair. All of this is to drag our SMEs, our small and medium-sized enterprises, to do more business in Ontario, in Canada and in the world.

I look forward to the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Norm Miller: Well, Minister, what about Ontario jobs and Ontario businesses? Minister, the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services led an RFP for a quantity of boats valued at several million dollars. In my own riding, Connor Industries makes vessels used by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and its Quebec counterpart as well as the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, and yet they and every other Ontario boat builder say this tender expressly excludes them.

The tender closes today. Minister, will you do the right thing, rip up the RFP and start over so that Ontario companies have at least got a chance to compete on this tender?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: As I said, I'm surprised that he didn't send materials over, because if a member is serious about going to bat for a company in their hometown, they would provide me with paper, provide me with details. That member knows full well that we follow up on every single inquiry. Every member in this House knows that that happens in our ministry.

So let me say this: We have never been more aggressive on the world front, in taking our companies

around the world. There has never been a more active minister or a more active ministry, with 60 missions going to all corners of this globe selling Ontario companies, selling Ontario tax policy, telling people all over the world the benefit of investing in our province, driving more Ontario companies into the supply chain of multinational companies around the world. That's the record of our ministry and I'm proud of that, and if this member is serious he's going to table that material so we can get to the bottom to help more companies do more work in this province—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. This morning, OPSEU is at Queen's Park asking the McGuinty Liberals—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Renfrew. The member from Simcoe—Grey.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This morning, OPSEU is here at Queen's Park asking the McGuinty Liberals to walk the talk on mental health. In fact, a page will bring over these postcards to the Premier—thanks very much, Emily.

In communities across Ontario, mental health services are being cut. Children's Mental Health Ontario is predicting that they will lose the ability to serve 2,000 children across this province this year. The wait time for services is already longer than seven months. Imagine what will happen after this latest round of cuts. Why has the Premier abandoned the pleas of so many mothers and so many families and so many children in need?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I thank the member for the question. I just want to take the opportunity as well to thank all our mental health workers around the province, who work so hard every day and who have been leading the way—they've been working so hard—to take mental health issues out from under the cover of darkness, bring them into the light of day and help all of us understand that mental health is an issue that affects pretty well every Ontario family. They were the inspiration for our 10-year strategy that we are developing now. We are looking to them, in many instances, for guidance. We look forward to releasing that sometime this spring.

There is certainly more work to be done, but I think one sentiment I can certainly share with my honourable colleague opposite and certainly with all members of this House is that we owe a great debt of gratitude to those people who have been working on the front lines in mental health for such a long time now.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The only thing in darkness is this government's lack of attention to this particular issue.

In Sarnia, a 14-bed residential facility for girls is set to close its doors at the end of this month. In Whitby,

Ontario, the only long-term-care residential mental health program for children and youth is about to cut 28 child and youth counsellors. In Brockville, 80 clinical and support staff positions at the Brockville Mental Health Centre have been put into limbo as acute mental health services are transferred to the Brockville General Hospital.

Time and time again, I have listened to the pleas of mothers and families who are desperate to get adequate care for their children. These cuts are short-sighted, they ignore the advice of the select committee and the minister's own advisory panel and they hurt families in need. Will the Premier finally put women and their children first and walk the talk on mental health?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I also welcome Smokey Thomas and the folks from OPSEU here. We continue to have many conversations with them with respect to how we can continue to do the important work in this sector.

I do know that one of the things that was said at the press conference this morning was that, in 17 of the last 19 years, we haven't seen increases in children's mental health. I'm proud to be part of the government that's had two increases in children's mental health. We provided the first two base increases in over a decade.

We've provided more than \$64 million to the sector to support and expand services, we've invested \$5.9 million in the Ontario centre of excellence in children's mental health, we've doubled funding to the Ontario child and youth telepsychiatry program and we are listening to mothers and parents as we work with them to develop a family navigator pilot project with Kinark.

We know there's a great deal of work to be done, but the Minister of Health and I have our sleeves rolled up, and—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

FARM SAFETY

Mr. Pat Hoy: My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Each year in Canada, there are an average of 115 farm deaths and at least 15,000 farm-related incidents. I believe all members of this House would agree that one accident is one too many.

Everyone has a role to play in ensuring there are viable solutions for keeping safe on the farm. Farms are work sites like any other, and farm workers must be provided with a safe and healthy work environment. For many of my constituents in Chatham—Kent—Essex, farm safety is top of mind. Most tell me it's an important and essential component of their operation.

Minister, what initiatives are being undertaken by your ministry and our partners in the agricultural sector to promote safe farming practices here in Ontario?

Hon. Carol Mitchell: This government is committed to ensuring that all farm workers are protected and that

their health and safety is protected. My ministry has been working with Safe Workplace Promotion Services Ontario, formerly the Farm Safety Association, for over 10 years. Our goal is to reduce the occurrence of workplace injuries and illness on Ontario farm, horticulture and landscape operations.

Canadian Agricultural Safety Week gives us the opportunity to reflect on the work that we have done to improve our safety record. My ministry is very pleased to provide Safe Workplace Promotion Services Ontario with \$120,000 annually. Together, in partnership with OMAFRA, they are working on a number of safety initiatives, and those initiatives are: editorials in the Ontario Farmer on safety issues; Safety Days, which are summer camp programs for over 1,800 Ontario children—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Pat Hoy: We all know that our farmers are hard at work to put food on our tables, but there are inherent risks associated with the type of work that occurs on our farms. Many of your constituents are farmers—and so are mine—and face these risks each and every day.

I've heard the opposition criticize our government about our health and safety record on farms. Minister, can you provide the House with the facts and tell us what you are doing to ensure farm workers are safe in this province?

Hon. Carol Mitchell: I would like to refer this to the Minister of Labour.

1130

Mr. Charles Sousa: Thank you very much for the question. I'd also like to thank the Minister of Agriculture for her continued support of our province and our agricultural workers.

To the member's question, let me be clear when I say that there is only one government in this House that is on the side of Ontario farmers and that has actually acted when it comes to protecting our farm workers.

I've heard the opposition talk, but it was our government that, in 2006, extended the Occupational Health and Safety Act to cover farm operations. Our government trained 100 of our health and safety inspectors specifically in farm safety, not the NDP and certainly not the PC Party. We're inspecting over 350 farms a year. When we started, 50 were being inspected. The result: Lost-time injuries have been cut in half.

The parties opposite seem to be interested in pulling people apart, but we're working together with the Minister of Agriculture and all of our partners. We're bringing people together for a better—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

LANDLORD AND TENANT DISPUTES

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: My question is to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Ontario's rental property owners are calling on your government to modernize

the rent dispute process in this province. It typically takes 90 days for a dispute to be resolved, costing landlords about \$5,200. That figure doesn't take into account administrative costs, lost time and productivity.

Your government has put a strain on the rental housing sector, especially the small landlords, and there is a great risk that they will get out of the industry altogether, creating uncertainty for the 1.3 million rental households.

Why have you done nothing to modernize the rent dispute process in order to create a system that is fair, both to tenants and landlords?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: The member better read her briefing notes, because nothing can be farther from the truth. We made extensive changes to a program that was unfair, to a program that was biased, to a program that had no balance at all to it. We made those changes because those changes were important. They were important to landlords, and they were important to tenants. We are very, very proud of the balance we put in that legislation, unlike the previous government, where the balance was so skewed, so biased and so unfair.

When we formed the government, we decided that there had to be fairness and there had to be balance. We ensured, with the amendments and the changes that we made, that that balance was there and that that fairness was there, because—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mrs. Joyce Savoline: To the minister, the truth speaks for itself. The facts are the facts, and you can't dispute that many of these cases take up to 90 days to resolve. Minister, no other business is required to provide goods or services without payment, yet landlords must allow tenants to stay, even without payment.

Vince Brescia, the president of the Federation of Rental-housing Providers of Ontario, says that this particularly affects small landlords who must find ways of making up lost costs from rental charged to all tenants, even those who do pay their rent.

Property owners and the majority of tenants are in favour of modernizing the rent dispute process by reducing hearing times from 29 to five days. Will you finally support Ontario families across this province with their request to reduce the existing—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: This is a fundamentally important question. They know where we stand. I'd like to know where they stand. I know one thing for sure: I have yet to hear the leader of the PC Party, the leader of the official opposition, mention social housing in this House. I have never heard the words "social housing" from the mouth of the PC leader.

Let's talk about balance. They know where we stand when it comes to protection for landlords and tenants. They understand that we have struck the balance that is good for landlords and good for tenants. I want to know: Where do they stand? What is their position? The people

of Ontario, the tenants of Ontario and the landlords of Ontario want to know: What is the PC plan?

PAY EQUITY

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is to the Premier, and it's a very simple one. Why has the Premier allowed women to earn 29% less than men in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the minister responsible for women's issues.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I'm so pleased that women's issues are getting such a good hearing in the Legislature today, because today we celebrate 100 years of International Women's Day.

We know, as a government, that to have a prosperous Ontario, we need women to be at their best, and that's why we developed and created the Ontario child benefit. The Ontario child benefit allows mothers in many instances to be able to have support for their child as they make decisions in their own lives about how to move into the workforce and into the education system, and we know that those investments have helped lift mothers out of poverty. That's why we went to bat for child care in Ontario and we invested, permanently, \$63.5 million. Around this time last year, we were talking about this issue. Those investments were made in the budget. When the federal government stepped away, we stepped in. Unfortunately, the NDP didn't support that initiative. We look forward to having their support when we continue to—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: And women are still earning 29% less than men in the province of Ontario. For the past seven years, this government has ignored their own pay equity legislation by failing to pay the adjustments owed to working women, and the government has refused to commit to a plan that would finally close this gap. Pay equity is not a privilege. Pay equity is not a frill. Pay equity is a human right; it's the law.

Why won't the McGuinty Liberals do the right thing and ensure that women workers are paid wages that are free of gender-based discrimination? Why won't they make it fair?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: As I said, our government has demonstrated our commitment to helping women bridge the wage gap by increasing the minimum wage to \$10.25, by creating 22,000 new child care spaces, by providing more than \$21 million annually to assist child care operators and other agencies to meet their pay equity obligations—\$21 million into the sector.

The NDP claim to support and stand up for women, but their record goes against that. They failed to support the Ontario child benefit. They failed to support the creation of 22,000 new affordable child care spaces. They failed to support the raising of minimum wage. They haven't supported Ontario families following the early learning agreements. We ask them to stand with us,

to call upon the federal government to step back in where they have failed Ontario families when it comes to child care, and so far, they have refused. They need to pick up the phone and call Jack Layton.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Mr. Rick Johnson: My question is for the Minister of Tourism and Culture. Minister, Ontario is home to many of the world's renowned festivals and events. These festivals showcase all that Ontario has to offer. Festivals such as the 4th Line Theatre and the Globus Theatre summer seasons and the Buckhorn Fine Art Festival demonstrate just some of the attractions in my community.

Festivals across Ontario attract millions of people from across Ontario, Canada and the world, contributing \$22 billion to the economy and creating thousands of jobs. However, as our economy is recovering from the global financial crisis of 2008-09, we must make strategic investments that will have a significant impact in our communities. My riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock needs the additional investments to attract tourists, create jobs and ensure sustainability.

How will the minister ensure that these investments are bringing forward the best value for dollar?

Hon. Michael Chan: I want to thank the honourable member for the question.

There are many benefits in investing in festivals and events. Last year, despite the economic crisis, festivals and events generated over 22,000 jobs. This is why on March 1, this year, our government enhanced our support to the sector. Through Celebrate Ontario, we are investing \$20 million across the province. This brings our total investment since 2003 to \$186 million.

Our investments will support world-class festivals in every corner of the province. Beyond the economic benefits, festivals showcase Ontario's heritage, diversity and culture and provide children the chance to learn and families the chance of being together. Our government's Open Ontario plan is attracting tourists and creating jobs.

DEFERRED VOTES

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION LABOUR DISPUTES RESOLUTION ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 SUR LE RÈGLEMENT DES CONFLITS DE TRAVAIL À LA COMMISSION DE TRANSPORT DE TORONTO

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 150, An Act to provide for the resolution of labour disputes involving the Toronto Transit Commission / Projet de loi 150, Loi prévoyant le règlement des conflits de travail à la Commission de transport de Toronto.

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

The division bells rang from 1140 to 1145.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On February 24, 2011, Mr. Sousa moved second reading of Bill 150. All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Mitchell, Carol
Arnott, Ted	Fonseca, Peter	Moridi, Reza
Arthurs, Wayne	Gerretsen, John	Munro, Julia
Bailey, Robert	Gravelle, Michael	Murray, Glen R.
Barrett, Toby	Hardeman, Ernie	O'Toole, John
Bartolucci, Rick	Hoskins, Eric	Orazietti, David
Bentley, Christopher	Hoy, Pat	Pendergast, Leeanna
Bradley, James J.	Hudak, Tim	Phillips, Gerry
Broten, Laurel C.	Jaczek, Helena	Pupatello, Sandra
Cansfield, Donna H.	Jeffrey, Linda	Qaadri, Shafiq
Caplan, David	Johnson, Rick	Ramsay, David
Carroll, Aileen	Jones, Sylvia	Sandals, Liz
Chan, Michael	Kwinter, Monte	Savoline, Joyce
Chiarelli, Bob	Leal, Jeff	Shurman, Peter
Chudleigh, Ted	Levac, Dave	Smith, Monique
Clark, Steve	Mangat, Amrit	Sousa, Charles
Colle, Mike	Martiniuk, Gerry	Takhar, Harinder S.
Crozier, Bruce	Matthews, Deborah	Van Bommel, Maria
Delaney, Bob	Mauro, Bill	Wilkinson, John
Dhillon, Vic	McGuinty, Dalton	Wilson, Jim
Dombrowsky, Leona	McMeekin, Ted	Witmer, Elizabeth
Duguid, Brad	McNeely, Phil	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duncan, Dwight	Meilleur, Madeleine	Yakabuski, John
Dunlop, Garfield	Miller, Norm	
Elliott, Christine	Milloy, John	

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Those opposed?

Nays

Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Prue, Michael
DiNovo, Cheri	Kormos, Peter	Tabuns, Peter
Gélinas, France	Marchese, Rosario	
Hampton, Howard	Miller, Paul	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 73; the nays are 10.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to the order of the House dated March 3, 2011, this bill is ordered referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

STRONG COMMUNITIES THROUGH AFFORDABLE HOUSING ACT, 2011 LOI DE 2011 FAVORISANT DES COLLECTIVITÉS FORTES GRÂCE AU LOGEMENT ABORDABLE

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 140, An Act to enact the Housing Services Act, 2011, repeal the Social Housing Reform Act, 2000 and make complementary and other amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 140, Loi édictant la Loi de 2011 sur les services de logement, abrogeant la Loi de 2000 sur la

réforme du logement social et apportant des modifications corrélatives et autres à d'autres lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Call in the members. This is a five-minute bell.

Interjections: Same vote.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On December 2, 2010, Mr. Bartolucci moved second reading of Bill 140. All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Aggelonitis, Sophia	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Miller, Norm
Arnott, Ted	Fonseca, Peter	Miller, Paul
Arthurs, Wayne	Gerretsen, John	Milloy, John
Bailey, Robert	Gélinas, France	Mitchell, Carol
Barrett, Toby	Gravelle, Michael	Moridi, Reza
Bartolucci, Rick	Hampton, Howard	Munro, Julia
Bentley, Christopher	Hardeman, Ernie	Murray, Glen R.
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Horwath, Andrea	O'Toole, John
Bisson, Gilles	Hoskins, Eric	Orazietti, David
Bradley, James J.	Hoy, Pat	Pendergast, Leeanna
Broten, Laurel C.	Hudak, Tim	Phillips, Gerry
Cansfield, Donna H.	Jaczek, Helena	Prue, Michael
Caplan, David	Jeffrey, Linda	Pupatello, Sandra
Carroll, Aileen	Johnson, Rick	Qaadri, Shafiq
Chan, Michael	Jones, Sylvia	Ramsay, David
Chiarelli, Bob	Kormos, Peter	Sandals, Liz
Chudleigh, Ted	Kwinter, Monte	Savoline, Joyce
Clark, Steve	Leal, Jeff	Shurman, Peter
Colle, Mike	Levac, Dave	Smith, Monique
Crozier, Bruce	Mangat, Amrit	Sousa, Charles
Dhillon, Vic	Marchese, Rosario	Tabuns, Peter
DiNovo, Cheri	Martiniuk, Gerry	Takhar, Harinder S.
Dombrowsky, Leona	Matthews, Deborah	Van Bommel, Maria
Duguid, Brad	Mauro, Bill	Wilkinson, John
Duncan, Dwight	McGuinty, Dalton	Wilson, Jim
Dunlop, Garfield	McMeekin, Ted	Witmer, Elizabeth
Elliott, Christine	McNeely, Phil	Wynne, Kathleen O.
	Meilleur, Madeleine	Yakabuski, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 84; the nays are zero.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: I would ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): So ordered.

There being no further deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1152 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Mario Sergio: I am pleased and honoured to have a delegation from the sunniest island in the Mediterranean, Sicily, with us here today. They are on a trade mission with the Sicilian association in Ontario.

We have Dr. Luciano Luciani, president of Istituto Italiano Fernando Santi, and Dr. Pippo Cipriani, a member of Parliament from Sicily. We have Mrs. Maria Rita Di Micele, together with the member from the Sicilian government, Dr. Cipriani. We have the president of the

Associazione Trapanesi Emigrati nel Mondo, Mr. Domenic Renda. I know that another member is late. We have Dr. Frank Perricone, who is the ATEM ambassador from Toronto to Sicily. I welcome them.

Remarks in Italian.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'd like to introduce a constituent of mine from the riding of Durham, Mr. Greg Weeks, who's a director with Ducks Unlimited. He's very supportive of the outdoors community.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the member from Vaughan and page Holly Rose Lorenzon, to welcome her mother, Josie Lorenzon, to the Legislature today.

I noted in the members' gallery, also with Ducks Unlimited, a constituent of mine from Aylmer, Ontario: Herb Kebbel. Welcome to Queen's Park today, Herb.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HOWARD NOBLE

Mr. Jim Wilson: I rise today to pay tribute to a respected businessman, a loving great-grandfather and true gentleman. Howard Noble was a great friend who passed away on February 8 at the age of 92.

I was privileged to know both sides of Howard. As the founder of Noble Insurance, I respected him as an honest, hard-working businessman who always knew what his customers wanted. In private, I admired him as a generous man who cared deeply for his community and even more for his family. He is survived by his son, Wayne; granddaughter, Anne; and two great-granddaughters, Maggie and Abbey.

Simcoe county has a rich past, featuring many characters who left a legacy, and Howard Noble stands firmly amongst the ranks of the most important figures in our region's history.

He started selling insurance in 1945 at the family farm in Mulmur. Combining hard work and a razor-sharp mind for business, Howard made his company a success.

He was a parishioner at St. John's United Church in Creemore and an active member of the Masons, Shriners and Eastern Star.

His generosity extended to countless community projects, including the community centre in Avening and the Station on the Green in Creemore.

He was also a devoted Progressive Conservative who was recognized as an honorary member of the Simcoe-Grey PC association last year. Whether it was a PC breakfast meeting in Creemore or a Christmas party in Wasaga Beach, Howard was always there, often accompanied by his friends Bob Hutchison and Margaret Hughes.

There's no question that Howard Noble left an indelible mark on our community as a businessman and made an even greater impression as a loving family man.

I offer my sincere condolences to Howard's family and his many, many friends.

BRANT SPORTS COMPLEX

Mr. Dave Levac: As a lifelong resident of Brant, I can tell you that when Brant residents come together for a common cause, we move heaven and earth to accomplish our goal.

On Saturday, February 19, hundreds of people gathered to celebrate the official opening of the Brant "twin pad" Sports Complex. It was a modern-day barn-raising that together we made happen. Former NHLer Jay Wells was the honorary co-chair along with Walter Gretzky. Other former NHLers there to celebrate with us were Rick Vaive and Marty McSorley.

I want to congratulate all those who took part in its planning, building and financing, especially Margaret Gurney, who donated the land for the project in memory of her father, Don, and councillor Brian Coleman, who spearheaded the twin-pad fundraising campaign in our community.

In addition to the provincial and federal infrastructure funding, not-for-profit groups like the Lions Club and businesses such as Lafarge Canada and individuals like Roger Davis donated money for the project. According to the Brantford Expositor, a total of 260 donors contributed \$3 million in money and in-kind donations to the project. As residents of Brant, my wife and I did make one of those donations.

To all of those who contributed and to all of those who had a vision and understanding that assets like this arena will help sell our community, we say thank you. This project also saw the return of our very own sledge hockey team, which had to practise in Hamilton. You built this for the kids and for the next generations to come. Thank you. Good work, Brant. We're proud of you.

DUCKS UNLIMITED CANADA

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm pleased today to speak about Ducks Unlimited Canada. We have a number of people here this afternoon in the members' gallery from Ducks Unlimited Canada.

I wanted to point out that they are having a reception here this afternoon—I mentioned that earlier—at 4:30 down in the legislative dining room, and everyone here is welcome to come and enjoy the conversation we have about their awareness day.

There are just a couple of things I wanted to put on the record. The number of supporters in Ontario of Ducks Unlimited is 35,500; volunteers, 1,357. They have 8,970 child volunteers as well who are active in the organization, and 45 employees across Ontario.

As far as their commitment to conservation, their acres of secured habitat are 916,000; the acres of influenced habitat are 537,000; over 1,027 habitat projects; and they have over 2,300 landowner partners in Ontario.

We've all seen Ducks Unlimited partnerships and, of course, we've all been to fundraising events. I personally have been at a number of them over the years. I even have a fridge that says, "Quack open a cold one," in my little cottage up on Gloucester Pool.

Everyone is welcome to come out this afternoon and enjoy the company of Ducks Unlimited Canada and support this great organization in our province and our country.

IMMIGRANT SERVICES

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I am pleased to rise in the House today and share how pleased I am that our government has stepped in to help settlement agencies in this province affected by recent cuts to the federal immigration settlement and adaptation program.

The recent federal announcement to reduce settlement funding in Ontario by \$44 million for 2011-12 will seriously affect the ability of newcomers to settle, integrate and find work here. Ontario welcomes among the highest number of newcomers each year, with the highest immigration retention rate in Canada. A large number of the newcomers who come to this city choose York South-Weston as their first home, and I am proud to say that we have some of the best agencies doing tremendous work for the benefit of the entire community. These cuts, however, will have a significant impact on the essential services they offer.

Our government has stepped in with an investment of \$500,000 to assist community organizations hardest hit by the federal cuts. I was pleased to welcome the Ontario Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to the Community Action Resource Centre in York South-Weston to make this welcome announcement. The support will ensure that thousands of newcomers can continue to access settlement services and better integrate, while agencies develop alternative long-term plans.

FOOD BANKS

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'm rising in the House today to ask the McGuinty government how they are going to help Ontario's most vulnerable families afford to eat, as the price of food is skyrocketing. Economists predict that food prices will rise as much as 10% in 2011. With the cost of energy increasing as well as the cost of food, many families in Ontario are finding food unaffordable.

1510

When families cannot afford to eat they turn to food banks. In 2009, food bank usage increased 19%, and that number has continued to rise. Almost 40% of all Ontario food banks report not having enough healthy local food to meet the ever-increasing demand.

The Recession Relief Coalition just released their 2011 hunger inquiry report. They state in there that "Emergency food programs must provide healthy food, including providing fresh fruits and vegetables."

I call on the McGuinty government to bring Bill 78, a private member's bill to fight hunger with local food, before the general government committee. Bill 78 grants non-refundable tax credits to farmers who donate their excess produce to food banks. This incentive is desperately needed to help food banks feed those vulnerable Ontarians who can no longer afford the price of food. I urge the government to do the right thing and pass Bill 78, and address this food crisis for Ontario farmers and families alike.

CANCER TREATMENT

M^{me} France Gélinas: Last week, I had the opportunity and the pleasure to meet with officials from Cancer Care Ontario, including Michael Sherar, their brand new CEO, to get an update on their five-year plan to improve cancer treatment throughout Ontario.

I'm very proud of the work that Cancer Care Ontario performs across this province, and their new five-year plan is progressive and exciting. But I was even more excited to be told that Cancer Care Ontario has taken an active role in PET scan planning for the Ministry of Health. This is a vitally important step in making PET scanning in Sudbury finally become a reality.

Cancer Care Ontario has always demonstrated a strong belief in equity of access to cancer care. I'm confident that Cancer Care Ontario will do the right thing and call for equity of access to PET scans for the people of north-eastern Ontario. After all, Cancer Care Ontario played a leading role in bringing the cancer treatment centre to Sudbury. They have been able to coordinate, in a very disciplined manner, the appropriate treatment needed to care for cancer patients right across the province.

Our cancer treatment centres are the envy of many. They have worked diligently to use best practices to improve treatment and outcomes in both rural and urban Ontario and in towns and cities across northern and southern Ontario. Having Cancer Care Ontario on our side is a huge asset to finally bring a PET scan to Sudbury.

I take this opportunity to thank the tens of thousands of people who have signed the petition. We are being heard.

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE

Mr. Bill Mauro: Last week, I had the opportunity to help host the Ontario Provincial Council of the Catholic Women's League's first Queen's Park meet-and-greet reception. My office was pleased to welcome and assist the dedicated group of women who make up the Ontario provincial council.

Thunder Bay was well represented at the event. It was a particular pleasure to work with Pauline Krupa of the Thunder Bay diocese. Pauline laboured tirelessly to bring this reception to fruition. She even provided the attendees with a sampling of Thunder Bay's fantastic food.

The provincial council's president, Shari Guinta, was also in attendance, and this July she'll be succeeded by the current president-elect, Marlene Pavletic, who is also from Thunder Bay.

The Ontario Provincial Council of the Catholic Women's League is a grassroots organization of 55,000 members from every part of the province. The Catholic Women's League represents every walk of life and virtually every ethnic and cultural group in Ontario. They work very hard from the local diocesan level on up to create what I describe as the social fabric of our communities: those ideas and activities that bind us together and provide a collective community compass.

Many thanks to the ministers of our government who took the time to meet with the Ontario provincial council members, and thank you to all the members from all the parties who were able to make it to the reception. Again, a special thanks to Shari Guinta, Ann Jacobs, Anne Madden and Pauline Krupa. Your event was a great success, and it's my hope that this event will become an annual fixture at Queen's Park.

ONTARIO FOOD INDUSTRY

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Last month, I was pleased to welcome Carol Mitchell, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, to Guelph to announce an exciting new initiative that will promote the use of Ontario food in our broader public sector institutions. The greenbelt fund, in co-operation with Ontario farmers and food distributors, is administering funding from the Ontario government that will assist hospitals, long-term-care facilities and other broader public sector institutions to offer more Ontario food.

Minister Mitchell and I visited St. Joseph's Health Centre in Guelph, where they have created space to develop their own salads and hot dishes made with good Ontario foods—and they had some scrumptious Ontario apple pie there that they'd made, too.

After introducing these menu changes, the satisfaction rate with food service has climbed to 87% amongst St. Joe's patients, residents, their families and cafeteria patrons.

The commitment to making small changes and understanding their preparation and processing needs is helping St. Joe's change their procurement practices and serve more Ontario food to their clients. Growing the supply of Ontario food in public institutions demonstrates our government's commitment to our agri-food industry and well-being of patients and residents. Congratulations, St. Joe's.

MARIA LUIGINA GRIMALDI

Mr. Mike Colle: Today, as we celebrate International Women's Day, I wish to pay special tribute to an incredible woman, my aunt Maria Luigina Grimaldi, who turns 106 years old today. Yes, 106 candles on her birthday cake. Can you imagine?

Luigina Grimaldi was born in San Marco in Lamis in Italy, Foggia, in 1905. She followed her husband, Gabrielle Grimaldi, to Canada in 1928, where they raised six children and started one of Canada's first Italian-Canadian travel agencies, which also acted as a post office and also sold sheet music and records and provided notary services. It was called Homeland Travel and was located on Bellwoods Avenue near Mansfield in the heart of Toronto's Little Italy.

Zia Luigina was an amazing lady who loved to cook, clean and support her friends, family and community. She never complained, nor did she ever take any days off. I can never recall her ever being sick or in the hospital until a couple of years ago. When she was 103, they equipped her with a pacemaker. A true Canadian woman pioneer and a true role model, to this day she still lives at home with her 80-year-old daughter, Jean Bartolini.

Luigina was also honoured with the Queen's Jubilee Medal.

Luigina celebrates her six children, 19 grandchildren, 29 great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren.

Buon compleanno, carissima Zia.

As her good friend Johnny Lombardi would say:

Remarks in Italian.

Happy birthday.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

1314596 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2011

Mr. Kormos moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr36, An Act to revive 1314596 Ontario Inc.

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

First reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

JOURNÉE INTERNATIONALE DE LA FEMME

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I believe we have unanimous consent that up to five minutes be allotted to each party to speak in recognition of International Women's Day.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed. Minister responsible for women's issues.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I rise today in recognition of International Women's Day; in fact, the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day.

Je prends la parole aujourd'hui pour souligner la Journée internationale de la femme.

International Women's Day is a time to commemorate women who have impacted us, guided us and supported

us throughout our lives. Each year, the United Nations chooses a theme to commemorate the day. Ontario joins the world in celebrating women and championing this year's theme, "Equal access to education, training and science and technology: Pathway to decent work for women."

Equality and education: two keys to success. Even though gender inequality is rooted in attitudes and beliefs that devalue women and restrict their achievements, we know that education can help remove these barriers and empower women. As former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan once said, "It is impossible to realize our goals while discriminating against half the human race. As study after study has taught us, there is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women." Education provides women with skills and knowledge, it boosts self-confidence and it has the ability to set women on a path of self-sufficiency and economic independence.

1520

Aujourd'hui, la majeure partie des diplômés universitaires de l'Ontario sont des femmes. Malgré cela, Statistique Canada précise que l'emploi des femmes reste concentré dans les secteurs des services traditionnels comme l'éducation, les ressources humaines, la santé et les services sociaux.

Today, the majority of Ontario's university graduates are women. Despite this, Statistics Canada reports that women's employment remains concentrated in traditional service sectors such as education, human resources, health and social services. To ensure equality to access the best-paying jobs and to boost Ontario's competitiveness, we need women in every sector and at every level.

There is good news, though: The number of women registered in apprenticeship programs has risen, with women now representing 28% of new apprentices in the major skilled trades. That being said, there is still room for growth. The new Ontario College of Trades, established in 2010, will encourage more female workers in the trades.

Our government continues to help low-income women gain entry to non-traditional jobs through our women in skilled trades and information technology training programs. We are also helping women who have been laid off to retrain for new, in-demand jobs through our Second Career program.

Par le biais de notre programme Deuxième carrière, nous aidons en outre les femmes qui ont été licenciées à suivre d'autres formations pour qu'elles accèdent aux nouveaux emplois qui sont en forte demande.

Globalement, grâce à ces programmes, nous avons soutenu des milliers de femmes en les aidant à accéder à de bons emplois et à une véritable autonomie financière.

In all, we have supported thousands of women in these programs, helping them gain access to good jobs and economic independence. But economic independence for women cannot be fully realized if those same women are not safe. Just last week, our government introduced an

Ontario sexual violence action plan to better protect women through investments in education, training and awareness programs. This plan builds on the success of our domestic violence action plan by improving supports for survivors and investing in public education to prevent sexual violence from occurring.

We want all of Ontario's women and girls to exercise their full potential, to have equal access to the jobs of the future and to be safe in their homes, workplaces and communities.

En nous réunissant aujourd'hui pour célébrer la Journée internationale de la femme, nous montrons que nous soutenons les femmes chaque jour.

While we stand today to mark International Women's Day, as Ontarians we must stand for women every day.

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: Today I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to speak on behalf of Tim Hudak and the PC caucus and recognize the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day.

Although it was officially established by the United Nations in 1977, this year marks the 100th anniversary of the very first International Women's Day. This day was first marked in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland on March 19, 1911. On that day, more than one million people in those countries, both male and female, rallied for the right of women to work, vote, be trained, hold public office and live free of discrimination. One hundred years later, this day is an occasion for people in Canada and many other countries throughout the world to recognize a remarkable century of change and inspiring progress towards equality between women and men.

However, it is also a day to remember that millions of women throughout the world are still treated as second-class citizens and do not have the opportunities, respect and security that they deserve.

I'd like to briefly touch on a few of the successes we have achieved in Canada. The current government in Ottawa has the highest percentage of women in cabinet in Canadian history. Women currently comprise the majority of full-time students in most university faculties. The labour force participation rate of working-age women has risen from 68.2% to 74.3% over the past decade. In 2007, women made up 35% of all self-employed individuals. There has also been an increase in the share of women who are working in managerial positions. In 2006, 73% of all women with children less than age 16 living at home were part of the employed workforce, up from 39% in 1976. In 2003, 29% of married women served as primary income earners for their households. This is up from 11% in the late 1960s.

The United Nations' theme for this year is "Equal access to education, training and science and technology: Pathway to decent work for women." Canada's theme is "Girls' rights matter." These themes are related in that they are both focused on empowering women through equal and equitable access to such fundamental human rights as access to education and training.

In Canada, we have made tremendous strides in this area as the majority of university graduates are now

women. We also know that women constitute a majority in graduate schools throughout Ontario and Canada, and we know that they are entering fields such as medicine, law and business in growing numbers, and opening their own small businesses and prospering.

However, I come back to the fact that despite the accomplishments, women do remain under-represented in corporate boardrooms as well as in provincial and federal politics.

Although these statistics and progress in many countries over 100 years are encouraging, we know that in some countries of the world, women and girls face enormous obstacles, hardships and engrained prejudices. Many of them, such as the girls in Afghanistan, are denied access to education. Other women and girls live in countries where, during time of war or political unrest, they become the victims of rape. We have seen the statistics during the Bosnian War, the Rwandan genocide, the civil war in the Congo and the aftermath of the Haitian earthquake. Thus, although this is a day for celebration about the progress women have made, we recognize that there is much more that needs to be done if all women are to be respected, feel safe and have a political voice.

I want to conclude by congratulating all the female trailblazers for their dedication and commitment to advancing women's rights and equality. It is because of their determination and hard work that our younger generation will be better positioned to achieve their hopes and their dreams.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'm very proud on behalf of New Democrats to say a few words about the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day. Around the world, this is our moment to celebrate how far we have come as women, but also to acknowledge the challenges that still exist for women today.

I spent time yesterday morning over breakfast—we had a wonderful breakfast with hundreds of women in the room, as well as some men, and I got to recognize 12 remarkable women who joined the Ontario cabinet back in 1990. These particular women helped shape history and they're still making history today in the work that they're doing in their communities, with not-for-profit organizations and in all kinds of different areas. They are Zanana Akande, Marion Boyd, Jenny Carter, Evelyn Gigantes, Ruth Grier, Frances Lankin, Shelley Martel, Anne Swarbrick, Shelley Wark-Martyn, Elaine Ziemba, Irene Mathysen and Marilyn Churley.

One of the things that we talked about yesterday morning at our breakfast was that it's not just a matter of getting elected—certainly, that is an important step; that's a step that has to be taken—but it's a matter of what you do once you're elected that really makes the difference and where women can really have an impact.

Those women had a real record of accomplishments when they sat in that cabinet: 10,000 child care spaces were created, they had a regime of employment equity that they could call their own and they were proud of, midwifery was recognized for the first time as a legal profession and thousands upon thousands of not-for-

profit housing units were built in this province to house women and their children, as well as other low-income people.

1530

What we need to do, then, is stand on the shoulders of these women who have brought forward such accomplishments here in the province of Ontario—and those are only a few of them; yesterday, my list was much, much longer, but in the interest of time, I've truncated it for this conversation. But standing on the shoulders of these women is exactly what we need to do.

When I think about my own son and the young women that go to school with him and attend classes every day, I know that he has no idea, that they can't even fathom or imagine what things were like 20 years ago, just as I found it hard to grasp the idea that, back 100 years ago in 1911, women did not have the vote in this province. Women were not even regarded as persons under the law 100 years ago.

Throughout Canada's history there are stories of courageous women who led the struggle on many, many fronts. They led the struggle for voting rights, for reproductive rights, for child care, for employment equity, for peace and disarmament. These are some of the fronts that women have been charging for many, many years in our history. Women's accomplishments have actually inspired me, as a woman, and I think the women around this room would agree that the accomplishments of other women have been our inspiration.

My mom herself didn't have a career per se—I'm from a working-class family. She had a job. She had to take a job for a while because we had four kids in the family, and things were quite financially tight for us. So she went out and did cleaning in schools, for example. That was one of the jobs she took to help our household get by.

I can remember myself as a young woman and some of the jobs that I took to try to get myself through university, to try to make it in the working world at the very, very beginning of my career. I did everything from slinging beer in taverns—my friend from Welland, I'm sure, would like to know about that story. But I did that for about 10 years when I was getting myself through the end of high school and into university.

I spent time at a dry cleaning factory, in a very toxic environment, trying to make a little bit more money because, of course, waitressing was not very lucrative, and many other kinds of low-paid jobs.

The bottom line is, we know that women still have very, very low-paid work. We talked about that in question period, and of course it is a big issue.

Today, 10% of the population takes home 40% of the income that's earned in Canada. Canada's top CEOs made more by 2:30 p.m. on their very first day of work than the average Canadian makes all year long. It won't be a surprise to anyone to know that those 100 top CEOs are not a majority of women. In fact, we're shut out of the top 40 altogether.

But there are a lot of women in the other ranks—the ranks of minimum-wage earners, and those women are struggling below the poverty line.

We know that we need more child care spaces. We know we need a better minimum wage. We know we need all kinds of supports for women to make sure that they actually achieve the equality they should have achieved many, many years ago.

Speaker, thank you for the opportunity. I'm proud to be a woman on International Women's Day.

PETITIONS

ONTARIO PHARMACISTS

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm pleased to present a petition on this special day of International Women's Day. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC caucus support public health care and protecting access to front-line care;

"Ontario families have already given Dalton McGuinty \$15 billion in health taxes, which was wasted on the \$1-billion eHealth scandal. Now the McGuinty Liberals are cutting front-line public health care and putting independent pharmacies at risk;

"Dalton McGuinty" will do the following:

"—reduce pharmacy hours during evenings and weekends,

"—increase wait times and lineups for patients,

"—increase the out-of-pocket fees people pay for their medication and its delivery,

"—reduce critical patient health care services for seniors and people with chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and breathing problems;

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

"That the McGuinty government stop its cuts" to health care and, specifically, to pharmacists.

I'm pleased to sign it, support it and present it to Braden, Jeff Leal's son.

OAK RIDGES MORaine

Mr. Michael Prue: I have a petition that reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Oak Ridges moraine's watershed covers close to 20,000 square kilometres and provides water for 65 rivers and creeks. In turn, it provides clean, fresh water for millions of people. The water taken from areas adjacent to the moraine and on natural core can drastically affect water levels in the moraine itself and even deplete an entire area of it.

"Be it resolved:

"First, that clean water should be declared a human right for all people of Ontario;

"Second, that townships, municipalities, counties and cities be prohibited from taking water off the Oak Ridges moraine to supply new development;

"Third, that there be no development of any sort in Ontario without a clean, sustainable water supply for all existing residents, either rural- or community-based, and for food-producing farms before potential future developments be considered;

"Fourth, that there be a minimum of a two-kilometre buffer zone put around the Oak Ridges moraine to prevent development and local government from drilling a well directly on or beside the moraine to find water for new development, thus allowing the groundwater to disperse uninterrupted;

"Fifth, that the sewage from said development not be allowed to be laid down within the Oak Ridges moraine's boundary or within the buffer zone, to prevent the contamination of the water coming off the Oak Ridges moraine going to municipal and private wells and water-sheds;

"Sixth, that the people of Ontario request that there be no grandfathering clause for any development, in order to protect the integrity of the Oak Ridges moraine and other water-sensitive regions; and

"Last, that a moratorium be put in place now to prevent further destruction of the Oak Ridges moraine until legislation pertaining to the moraine is resolved."

It is signed by literally hundreds of people, and I would affix my signature thereto.

PARAMEDICS

Mrs. Maria Van Bommel: This petition has been signed by 627 students and teachers at Strathroy District Collegiate Institute in Strathroy, in memory of a former student.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas paramedics play a vital role in protecting the health and safety of Ontarians; and

"Whereas paramedics often put their own health and safety at risk, going above and beyond their duty in serving Ontarians; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario annually recognizes police officers and firefighters with awards for bravery; and

"Whereas currently no award for paramedic bravery is awarded by the government of Ontario; and

"Whereas Ontario paramedics deserve recognition for acts of exceptional bravery while protecting Ontarians;

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

"Enact Bill 115, a private member's bill introduced by MPP Maria Van Bommel on October 6, 2010, An Act to provide for the Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery."

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to thank the Food for All Food Bank in Prescott for providing me with this petition. I know they also have locations in Cardinal and they just opened another food bank in Spencerville.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas agriculture plays an important role in Ontario’s economy and deserves investment;

“Whereas PC MPP Bob Bailey has introduced a significant tax credit for farmers who donate agricultural goods to food banks, helping farmers, food banks and people in need;

“Whereas over 25 million pounds of fresh produce is disposed of or plowed back into Ontario’s fields each year while food banks across Ontario struggle to feed those in need;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to call MPP Bob Bailey’s private member’s bill, Bill 78, the Taxation Amendment Act (Food Bank Donation Tax Credit for Farmers), 2010, to committee immediately for consideration and then on to third reading and implementation without delay.”

I agree with this petition, will affix my signature and send it to the table with page Benjamin.

REPLACEMENT WORKERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from the Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation, District 27; it’s based out of Kingston.

“Whereas strikes and lockouts are rare: on average, 97% of collective agreements are negotiated without work disruption; and

“Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers laws have existed in Quebec since 1978; in British Columbia since 1993; and successive governments in those two provinces have never repealed those laws; and

“Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers legislation has reduced the length and divisiveness of labour disputes; and

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“Whereas the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout is damaging to the social fabric of a community in the short and the long term as well as the well-being of its residents;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation banning the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask Michael to take it to the Clerk.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Mr. Yasir Naqvi: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas all Ontarians have the right to a safe home environment; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario works to reduce all barriers in place that prevent victims of domestic violence from fleeing abusive situations; and

“Whereas the Residential Tenancies Act does not take into consideration the special circumstances facing a tenant who is suffering from abuse; and

“Whereas those that live in fear for their personal safety and that of their children should not be financially penalized for the early termination of their residential leases;

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

“That Bill 53, the Escaping Domestic Violence Act, 2010, be adopted so that victims of domestic violence be afforded a mechanism for the early termination of their lease to allow them to leave an abusive relationship and find a safe place for themselves and their children to call home.”

I wholeheartedly agree with this petition, affix my signature and send it to the table via page Alexandra.

RURAL SCHOOLS

Mr. Jim Wilson: A petition to save Duntroon Central Public School and all other rural schools in Clearview township. I want to thank Ms. Maureen Miller for sending it to me.

“Whereas Duntroon Central Public School is an important part of Clearview township and the surrounding area; and

“Whereas Duntroon Central Public School is widely recognized for its high educational standards and intimate learning experience; and

“Whereas the framework of rural schools is different from urban schools, and therefore they deserve to be governed by a separate rural school policy; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised during the 2007 election that he would keep rural schools open when he declared that, ‘Rural schools help keep communities strong, which is why we’re not only committed to keeping them open—but strengthening them’; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty found \$12 million to keep swimming pools open in Toronto but hasn’t found any money to keep rural schools open in Simcoe-Grey;

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

“That Premier Dalton McGuinty and the Minister of Education support the citizens of Clearview township and suspend the Simcoe County District School Board ARC 2010:01 until the province develops a rural school policy that recognizes the value of schools in the rural communities of Ontario.”

I agree with this petition and I will sign it.

TRAVAILLEURS SUPPLÉANTS

M^{me} France Gélinas: J’ai une pétition de Valérie Laurin de l’école intermédiaire de Hanmer et de l’École secondaire Hanmer :

« Attendu que les grèves et les lock-out sont rares; en moyenne, 97 % des conventions collectives sont négociées sans arrêt de travail; et

« Attendu que des lois contre le remplacement temporaire des travailleurs existent au Québec depuis 1978 et en Colombie-Britannique depuis 1993, et les gouvernements successifs de ces deux provinces n'ont jamais abrogé ces lois; et

« Attendu que la loi contre le remplacement temporaire des travailleurs a réduit la longueur et la discorde des conflits du travail; et

« Attendu que le remplacement temporaire des travailleurs pendant une grève ou un lock-out compromet le tissu social d'une communauté à court et à long terme ainsi que le bien-être de ses résidents;

« Par conséquent, nous, soussignés, demandons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario d'adopter une loi interdisant le remplacement temporaire de travailleurs pendant une grève ou un lock-out. »

J'appuie cette pétition et je vais demander à Beau de l'amener au greffier.

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mr. Robert Bailey: I rise today with a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas agriculture plays an important role in Ontario’s economy and deserves investment;

“Whereas PC MPP Bob Bailey has introduced a significant tax credit for farmers who donate agricultural goods to food banks, helping farmers, food banks and people in need; and

“Whereas over 25 million pounds of fresh produce is disposed of or plowed back into Ontario’s fields each year while food banks across Ontario struggle to feed those in need;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to call MPP Bob Bailey’s private member’s bill, Bill 78, the Taxation Amendment Act (Food Bank Donation Tax Credit for Farmers), 2010, to committee immediately for consideration and then on to third reading and implementation without delay.”

I agree with this petition, affix my signature and will send it down with Benjamin.

ELMVALE DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL

Mr. Jim Wilson: A petition for Elmvale District High School.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Elmvale District High School is an important part of the community of Elmvale and surrounding area; and

“Whereas the school is widely recognized as having high educational requirements and is well known for producing exceptional graduates who have gone on to work as professionals in health care, agriculture, community safety, the trades and many other fields that give back to the community; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised during the 2007 election that he would keep rural schools open when he declared that ‘Rural schools help keep communities strong, which is why we’re not only committed to keeping them open—but strengthening them’; and

“Whereas Dalton McGuinty found \$12 million to keep school swimming pools open in Toronto but hasn’t found any money to keep an actual rural school open in Elmvale;

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

“That the Minister of Education support the citizens of Elmvale and flow funding to the local school board so that Elmvale District High School can remain open to serve the vibrant community of Elmvale and surrounding area.”

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

HIGHWAY 15

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

“Whereas the point that Highway 15 intersects with County Road 42 has been considered by many to be a hazardous intersection, particularly when local residents travel over the provincial highway; and

“Whereas in 2007 the Ministry of Transportation staff presented design plans which showed a dramatic reduction in the curvature of this portion of Highway 15, which would have considerably improved the level of visibility and safety to our residents crossing over Highway 15; and

“Whereas in late 2008/early 2009, the Ministry of Transportation revised the 2007 design plans for this intersection, which would only minimally improve the visibility and safety of this intersection but would result in a significant reduction in the amount of funds expended by the province of Ontario;

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

“That the Minister of Transportation be respectfully requested to direct staff to recommend the 2007 design plan for the intersection of Highway 15 and County Road 42.”

I’m pleased to affix my name to this petition and send it to the table with page Hailey.

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS TREATMENT

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

“Whereas thousands of people suffer from multiple sclerosis;

“Whereas there is a treatment for chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency, more commonly called CCSVI, which consists of a corrective angioplasty, a well-known and universally practised procedure that is low-risk and at relatively low expense;

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

“That the McGuinty government agree to proceed with clinical trials of the venoplasty treatment, also known as liberation therapy, to fully explore its potential to bring relief to the thousands of Ontarians afflicted with multiple sclerosis.”

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

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS TREATMENT

Mr. Steve Clark: I would like to thank Amy Preston for her advocacy on this petition. It’s to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas thousands of people suffer from multiple sclerosis;

“Whereas there is a treatment for chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency, more commonly called CCSVI, which consists of a corrective angioplasty, a well-known and universally practised procedure that is low-risk and at relatively low expense;

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

“That the Minister of Health agrees to proceed with clinical trials of the venoplasty treatment to fully explore its potential to bring relief to the thousands of Ontarians afflicted with multiple sclerosis.”

I’ll affix my signature and send it to the table with page Braden.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ONTARIO FOREST TENURE MODERNIZATION ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 SUR LA MODERNISATION DU RÉGIME DE TENURE FORESTIÈRE EN ONTARIO

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 7, 2011, on the motion for second reading of Bill 151, An Act to enact the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act, 2011 and to amend the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, 1994 / *Projet de loi 151, Loi édictant la Loi de 2011 sur la modernisation du régime de tenure forestière en Ontario et modifiant la Loi de 1994 sur la durabilité des forêts de la Couronne.*

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Further debate?

Mr. Steve Clark: I’m pleased to join in the debate on Bill 151, An Act to enact the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act, 2011 and to amend the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, 1994.

I read with interest the minister’s announcement. I have to admit I spent a good portion of last evening reading the debate from Hansard, some of the speeches that the minister made and also from our perspective, those by our critic the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox

and Addington. I believe he actually shared some of his time with the member for Haldimand–Norfolk. I also was especially interested in reading some of the comments from some of the New Democrats: Mr. Hampton, the member for Kenora–Rainy River, and also Mr. Bisson, from Timmins–James Bay. I found some of the banter between the parties extremely interesting.

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The one thing—and I believe it was our critic Mr. Hillier, from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, who said it—that really resonated with me was the fact that, in so many respects, this bill lacks substance. It has put a lot of its faith in the regulations, and I know that many folks on this side of the House are quite concerned about that.

We know from some of the comments—and I believe it was the member for Haldimand–Norfolk who talked about the review that started in 2009. The Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry initiated the forest tenure review. I don’t think anyone was averse to that. The current system has served Ontario for many years, and I think that there were many in the industry that looked towards the review as something very positive.

As the review began, I think there was some skepticism; certainly there was a feeling—and I believe, as I read some of the comments yesterday—that some of the outcomes had been predetermined. I was worried about that, because I remember being on the general government committee when Bill 191, the Far North Act, had been brought forward. I can remember when we got to the second reading approval, it was referred to the general government committee, of which I’m a member, and we were to have hearings up in the Far North. I can remember the excitement from some of the members in my caucus about that tour, and being a relatively new member, people do get subbed in for committees. So there was a real excitement about travelling to the Far North to talk about Bill 191.

Then when those June hearings were cancelled, and we came back and did the bill and went through that process at committee—which, for those who don’t know, was quite a quick process. The government, obviously, has the majority on the committee. There was a lot of frustration from those people in the north who made deputations, who came to Toronto to meet in the committee hearings.

I think it was perhaps Mr. Bisson, from Timmins–James Bay, who expressed concern about the time frame that the government has for Bill 151 and just what the real legislative time frame is. There’s lots of speculation that we won’t sit until our legislative calendar ends in June. I think there were a number of members who mentioned or hinted that they were worried about what exactly the legislative time frame was for Bill 151. So I hope at some point, we do get some clarification from the government on how they proceed to move things forward.

Again, our critic, Mr. Hillier, talked about the lack of substance in the bill. But also, I think one of the points that I want to bring up today as part of our debate is the overwhelming powers that the minister has under this act. I think it was the issue about revoking sustainable forest licences, or SFLs. I understand the present system can be somewhat complicated and a bit bureaucratic to do, even when a company wants to get rid of a licence. However, section 41.2, the way I read it, in the document gives the minister sweeping powers to revoke with, I don't believe, any recourse or compensation.

What we don't have in this bill is how the process is going to take place. There seems to be no discussion about process of revocation, no criteria. There's a lot of uncertainty. You look at some of our other systems that we have in place here in the province of Ontario—there's a system to revoke a driver's licence. It's quite clear. There's no system in this bill on how these SFLs would be revoked, and I guess that goes back to something that the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington said: There's tonnes of powers that the minister has under this.

I appreciate that he is here, so I do want to mention a project in my riding that he's well aware of that, although it may not directly relate to this bill, has the future of the forestry industry in mind, and that's the Ontario East Wood Centre and Eco-Industrial Park, located in the township of Edwardsburgh/Cardinal. It is an industrial park which is adjacent to the port of Prescott, the only deepwater port between Montreal and Toronto. The Ontario East Wood Centre began their deliberations in 2004. For the masses who are watching at home or who follow Hansard, they can be reached online at www.woodcentre.ca.

I also want to make a special mention of the founding director, former Prescott mayor Sandra Lawn, who sits on the 18-person board of directors that includes representation from industry, municipalities, universities, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne and retired federal and provincial government managers.

Their efforts to find new opportunities in the wake of the devastating economic impact the pulp and paper industry's collapse has had on many communities, not just in the north but certainly in eastern Ontario—the pulp mill in Cornwall, Domtar, was shut down. That's the example that we use locally in eastern Ontario.

The point I'd like to make is that there are more than one million metric tonnes of pulp wood feedstock available in the Ottawa Valley alone to support the initiative we are trying in Edwardsburgh/Cardinal. The project would help rebuild the forest industry and rural economies in the region by creating new uses for lower-value wood in eastern Ontario. There are over 70 different species of wood available within a short distance of that project, including maple, oak, eastern white pine, birch, basswood and ash.

The idea to create what they call a “wood-based bioeconomy” recognizes that processing opportunities can increase the value of wood products by six times.

Their vision is to look at new economic opportunities by utilizing forestry resources in new ways that are rapidly being developed. I want to commend them because they've worked extremely hard.

I know that they've met with the minister recently. Certainly, they've met with a lot of folks. I'll get to some of the ministries that they've dropped packages off at.

Their plan, quite ambitiously, is to create an eco-industrial park with a cluster of industrial, commercial and scientific research projects based on forest and biomass products. The products could include solid-wood building components, fibres, pharmaceuticals, biochemicals and bioenergy.

The research component is, in their opinion—and I think it's shared amongst many in Leeds–Grenville—a real key and has a huge spinoff potential in attracting the best and the brightest researchers to live and work within Leeds–Grenville and some of the surrounding areas. Locating the research facility and the industrial-commercial component together enhances the level of co-operation between the two sectors. The result is a dynamic that allows very innovative products to be tested outside of the lab in a manufacturing setting and dramatically shortens the gap between getting that good idea into a marketable product.

The project has done great things and they certainly have moved forward.

However, there's one point that I'd like to make. They've met with many folks—the minister. They've provided packages to a whole host of ministries, including OMAFRA, MOE, MNR, Research and Innovation, Economic Development and Trade, Municipal Affairs, Energy, and Infrastructure. They've met with some of the neighbouring MPPs, people like Jim Brownell, who is next door in Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry. Could you imagine having to promote this program through a whole host of ministries and a wide range of supporters? They've got great support. They've received \$130,000 from the federal government through its eastern Ontario development program. But could you imagine their frustration if they had to deal with another level of bureaucracy?

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I think it was the member for Lanark who talked about the local forest management corporations, or LFMCS, that are being set up under this legislation. He used the words “tree LHINs” or “forest LHINs.” I look at this project in my own communities and I would think they'd be extremely frustrated if they had another level of bureaucracy between them and the ministry. This project in my communities has really worked hard to get their message out, because it's a unique process. But can you imagine if they had to deal with a level of political cover? I'm sure they would be frustrated.

The debate that I listened to and read about yesterday talked about the tree LHINs or the forest LHINs and the fact that this would be another level of bureaucracy—and I know, in eastern Ontario, what our experience has been with the local health groups, the LHINs; the unelected,

unaccountable and largely anonymous bodies. There has been a lot of frustration with some of the health care groups in my riding because they have to deal with these LHINs and they don't seem to get anywhere.

When you look at creating efficiencies, I'd like to hear how these unelected, unaccountable bodies are going to do anything else but provide cover for the minister. I think that concern is shared amongst many. When you look at the amount of agencies, boards and commissions that have been established or, in this case, will be established, I just can't see how it's going to help attract new investment with a level of political cover. It just doesn't make sense to me.

The other thing that I found very interesting in the discussion yesterday was some of the comments—and again it was some of the New Democrats who brought forward access to markets. I think it was the member for Kenora–Rainy River who talked about his concern about mills from the United States coming in and having access. I believe it was Mr. Bisson from Timmins–James Bay who expressed concern about Quebec sawmills. He mentioned some communities—Cochrane, Timiskaming, Kapuskasing, Smooth Rock Falls, Iroquois Falls and North Bay—worried about lumber being taken from those areas into Quebec.

Again, as part of this debate, I think it's very important that the government lays out its legislative time frame for Bill 151. I know I share the concerns of the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington about the creation of this other level of bureaucracy. I share his concern about the minister having wide-ranging powers under this act without any criteria being present in this bill. I look at my own communities and the innovation of projects like the East Ontario Wood Centre. These people have been working on this project for six years, and I would be furious, as a volunteer on a corporation like that, if I had to deal with a new piece of legislation that threw up roadblocks, threw up political cover and provided a shell of a bill without any substance or criteria being laid out.

I just think there are a number of questions, and I would hope, when it came to the questions and comments section, that members of the government would try to put some meat on the bones, because I don't know what criteria are there. I think it was the member for Lanark who talked about taking a stick from the forest. I don't know why we're leaving everything to regulations. We've got binders and binders of regulation laid out right now, and I think what we need to do is we need to go back, we need to listen to some of the comments that were made yesterday and that I hope will be made today about the way this has been set up. I look forward to hearing some of the further debate.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: I must say that I had never made the connection in my mind between the local health integration networks, which look after health care services in our community, and the new Ontario Forest

Tenure Modernization Act, but I guess now that he speaks about it, we could see where the enhanced shareholder sustainable forest licences, where the new co-op, where the local forest management corporations could take on kind of the form of what we're now seeing in LHINs. It hadn't come to my mind till he mentioned it, but now I can see how the parallel could be drawn. I would tend to agree with the member that nothing good would come of that.

Like in a lot of legislation that this government has brought forward, there are broad strokes, but on the fundamental questions that could allow me as a politician to make an informed decision as to whether we should support this or not, we're not going to see this till it is in regulation. This is something, again, that we share with what the member has just said. This bill could make drastic changes to the way that wood is allocated in Ontario, yet some very troubling pieces of that bill, we won't get to see. It will be dealt with at the ministry level, in regulation. To us, it could make or break whether we support this legislation.

Some interesting parallels. I hadn't thought about them, but they were interesting to listen to.

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

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I want to thank the member for Leeds–Grenville for his comments. They were very respectfully delivered, and I appreciate the thoughts.

I think you need to understand that, with the local forest management corporations, to make those kinds of comparisons is odd in light of the fact that one of the concerns that had been expressed across the province—certainly across the province where there are forestry opportunities—is the fact that there is a greater desire on the part of communities and aboriginal communities to have an influence over decisions made on how the wood can be harvested. That's one of the goals that we have with the local forest management corporations. Again, I think it's important to understand that we're talking about setting up one or two of them as pilots, to test the principles of our model.

That brings me back to the original part of the remarks that you made, which really were about the fact that this is a process where we've had a significant amount of consultation. We put forward a draft proposal, and then went back and spoke to industry, spoke to new entrants, spoke to communities and made some significant adjustments as a result of the concerns that they expressed, which is why the model of the enhanced shareholder sustainable forest licence is one that industry itself is supporting and looking forward to working closely on. There are some tremendous opportunities in that.

As for the issue related to the so-called powers, I think it's important to know that this is something we want to put in place to make sure that our wood is actually harvested in terms of what's on the ground. We hope we don't need to use it; we want to basically engage with our licence holders to try and make sure they are indeed using the wood in an optimal way.

Again, I understand the role that you play—you're in opposition—and I understand the role my critic plays, but the fact is, I think it's being misunderstood.

As for the Ontario East Wood Centre, I know them well and have a lot of admiration for the work they're doing.

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

Mr. Randy Hillier: It's a pleasure to be able to be here to comment on the member from Leeds–Grenville's comments on this bill, and it is nice to see the minister here listening to this debate. So often that is not the case with this Liberal government, a minister actually being engaged.

But I will say this: The minister said that he hopes never to use these extraordinary powers that he's granting himself in this legislation. Even the other day he said that he would never exercise those powers. But I have seen it time and time again with this Liberal government: Once they grant themselves authorities and powers, the only reason they do that is so that they will use them. That is unequivocal. We've seen it time and time again. If they did not want those powers, if they did not want to use them, if they felt that they were not correct, they wouldn't put them in the bill. I really call on the minister: He already has sufficient authority to cancel licences and to revoke allocations, and he should stick with that criteria that is established.

1610

We'll deal with the forestry LHINs a little bit later on throughout this discussion, but those forestry LHINs, that's all it is: another layer, a thickening layer between the forestry industry and the minister who controls the wood allocations in this province, a thickening and an obstruction between industry and government. What we need to be doing is tearing down those barriers and removing those thickening layers so that industry and government can actually work together to get a more productive industry. But this government—

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

Mr. Paul Miller: I, too, am glad to see the ministers here for this discussion. A few years ago I was very concerned about the—I actually lobbied here for the Steelworkers from Kenora. The two mills in Kenora were under the jurisdiction of the United Steelworkers, and they were extremely upset that they were losing their jobs and AbitibiBowater was pulling out. We certainly lobbied and we lost that lobby. The two mills shut in Kenora and the biggest employer in town was the hospital after those two mills shut. I was very concerned about that, and that happened in 11 communities in northern Ontario.

This new bill and what they're doing—I'm wondering, in the wood basket of the area these guys were sitting on their porches watching lumber go down the highway to be developed in Manitoba and Quebec, sitting on their porches, 100 years working in those mills and those wood baskets, watching the logs leave their area and go

and be processed in another province. I don't know what has happened since then. That was a few years ago and I don't know if these wood baskets are going to remain in the community and start those mills up in the community again, because there are certainly a lot of communities in northern Ontario that are suffering because of hydro rates and other things that happened, and this government allowed these mills to shut down. Kenora was just absolutely destroyed. Both the mills were gone and Abitibi-Bowater.

I'll reiterate: The biggest employer in Kenora was the hospital. That's a sad state of affairs. Until they start protecting the wood basket for the people of that area and allow those mills to start up again and process those logs there instead of going to Quebec, where the hydro is one third of the cost, I might add—until this government gets their hydro costs under control, this will continue no matter how much they talk; it's still going to go on.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Leeds–Grenville has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to take this opportunity to thank the member for Nickel Belt, the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry, and also my eastern brother, the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington for your comments.

Interjections.

Mr. Steve Clark: We're neighbours. We're next door. Absolutely; he's my eastern brother.

I want to comment on some of the things the minister said. I can appreciate he only talked about how maybe they're going to set up one or two of these tree LHINs, but it may be one or two too many, because again I wouldn't want this government to force the failure that is the LHINs in our health care system on to the forestry sector.

I believe that he said he hopes that he doesn't have to use these extraordinary powers that he receives under the act, but still, we're dealing with a shell of a bill that doesn't have the meat on the bone to deal with some of these details, because the minister can cancel agreements, revoke licences and commitments; no issue of compensation. These 12-person tree LHINs, as I call them, have no accountability.

I can appreciate some of the comments today, and I do appreciate the minister being here and providing some comments. I hope that I've also given a local example of an innovative group in my own riding in the east that is looking at innovative ways to deal with the forestry sector, the fact that they have to deal with multiple ministries now because of the nature of their business.

I look forward to continuing to be in the debate this afternoon.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: It is my pleasure to add my few cents to Bill 151, the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act—I have a hard time with this word.

Basically, the act will bring two new components to forestry the way we know it. You have to realize that forestry is huge in Ontario. The crown, the province, owns 90% of our forested area, which represents 66% of Ontario. It is a huge potential. It is a huge natural resource that belongs to the people of Ontario, for the people of Ontario to create wealth, which I hope we will be able to share. Given that a lot of those hectares, 70.4 million of them to be precise, are located in northern Ontario, it is something that is near and dear to me.

The two new components are, first, the local forest management corporations; people have taken to calling them LFMCs. Basically, they are government agencies that manage the crown forest and oversee the competitive sale of timber in a given area.

A second new component is the enhanced shareholder sustainable forest licences, which are groups of mills and harvesters that collectively form a new company to manage crown forests under the sustained forest licences that are issued to them. The minister was in the House explaining to us that they intend to have two pilot projects on this.

I have concerns with the bill. There is no mechanism for changing stumpage prices. I'm really concerned that companies will have to pay more for wood. That would be devastating to a lot of companies that exist in northern Ontario. I say it would be devastating, and the word is not too strong.

Let me read you the list of forestry employers that have either ceased to exist or have laid off a substantial part of their workforce.

I'll start with Cascades in Thunder Bay, 375 permanent jobs lost; Abitibi-Consolidated in Kenora, which my friend from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek was talking about, 350 permanent jobs lost; Norampac, the containerboard in Red Rock, 300 permanent jobs lost; Columbia Forest Products, a veneer plant in Rutherglen, 63 permanent jobs lost; Columbia Forest Products, OSB mill in Hearst, 76 permanent jobs lost; Tembec, the sawmill in Timmins, 100 jobs on indefinite layoff. Those people don't know if and when they will ever have a job again.

Weyerhaeuser, one paper machine and the wood room in Dryden closed, 115 permanent jobs lost; Weyerhaeuser sawmill in Dryden, 385 permanent jobs lost; Weyerhaeuser in Sturgeon Falls, not far from me, 125 permanent jobs lost; Excel sawmill in Opatatika, 78 permanent jobs lost.

We have Domtar, the sawmill in Chapleau, 67 permanent jobs lost; Bowater—that's the newsprint in Thunder Bay—100 permanent jobs lost; Bowater, the kraft pulp, also in Thunder Bay, 250 permanent jobs lost; Smurfit-Stone, containerboard in Thunder Bay, 100 permanent jobs lost; Temagami Forest Products in Temagami, 55 permanent jobs lost; Tembec in Smooth Rock Falls, 230 permanent jobs lost; Tembec in Mattawa, 111—they are temporary layoffs, but it has been a long time since those people have been to work; Tembec in Kapuskasing, 65 permanent jobs lost; Kruger, or Longlac Wood Indus-

tries, in Longlac, 350 permanent jobs lost; Domtar pulp and paper in Espanola, 115 permanent jobs lost—the mill is still operating; Domtar sawmill in Nairn Centre, 140 permanent jobs lost; Devlin sawmill in Kenora, 30 permanent jobs lost; Patricia Logging in Dryden, 35 permanent jobs lost; Sturgeon Timber, in Sturgeon Falls, 70 permanent jobs lost; Weyerhaeuser, the iLevel plant in Kenora, 41 permanent jobs lost; Bowater sawmill in Ignace, 45—those workers are on indefinite layoff, and for them, too, it has been a long time since they've been at work; Bowater in Thunder Bay, 157 permanent jobs lost; Abitibi-Consolidated in Thunder Bay, 344 on indefinite layoff.

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We could talk about Atikokan Forest Products, or McKenzie Forest Products, in Hudson, 150 jobs lost; Marathon Pulp, in Marathon; Dubreuilville, Nakina—the list goes on and on.

I wanted to give everybody here a flavour as to what this means. Every one of those little towns in northern Ontario has been devastated. Some of them have had the guts ripped right out of them because the mill, the woodworkers, the forestry industry, was their main industry. That was the bread and butter of their community. This is what created the wealth in their community. That meant that the pizza shop—there is no Pizza Hut—would work, the hairdresser could continue, the grocery store etc. Not only were those workers laid off, but everybody who supplied them: the gas co-op, the guy who sharpened chainsaws, everybody else—the truckers, the mechanics who maintained the equipment. The spinoff effect in each and every one of those communities that I've read to you means tens of thousands of people in northern Ontario have lost their jobs.

Tens of thousands, I guess, doesn't look that bad when you sit in southern Ontario and you hear about 140,000 auto workers losing their jobs. But when you come from a little community like Gogama, with 198 houses, or if you come from a little community like Nairn Centre—I see the representatives from Nairn Centre and Espanola—those blows to the local economy are devastating. The forestry industry needs government help.

So here we have a new bill that will—that may—lead to all of those companies paying more for wood. This is very dangerous. This is not something desirable at all. This is the wrong time to introduce those kinds of uncertainties into a market that looks like what I've just read to you, and I could have kept on reading, because 70 of them have been affected by permanent closure, permanent job losses or indefinite layoffs.

There are concerns that companies across the border, where the price of electricity is lower—yes, I'm talking about electricity again—will come into Ontario. They will have more money to bid on wood, thus driving prices up and forcing more Ontario companies out of business.

I want to talk a little bit about the price of electricity. You're right that the forestry industry is not like a smel-

ter operation in the mines. But they do have electricity bills, and let me tell you, the electricity bills are going up.

If you take a medium-sized sawmill, let's say, in Ontario, you would pay \$491,384 for electricity. If you were located in Manitoba, it would cost you \$237,066 to use the exact same amount of energy. If you were located in Quebec, it would cost you \$259,637. Those differences are huge; they are huge.

When you're a sawmill that has barely made it through the recession, when you're a forestry operator for pulp and paper that is having a hard time making it through the recession and you see the price of electricity, it is something that you have to take into account, because when the forestry industry from outside starts to bid—the paper mills and the sawmills from outside our province will start to bid for our wood—they would have this huge advantage that their cost of electricity will be way cheaper, like I have just read to you. If you are a bigger user, the savings are even bigger. That takes into account all of the savings that are on the table for large energy users.

Those are significant. We had sort of good news/bad news in my riding recently, where Cliffs Natural Resources is a mining consortium that owns a lot of stake in the Ring of Fire to mine chromite. They have put on their website for everybody to see the case for building milling and a refinery that could be in my riding, in Capreol, where the train track is and there is supply of electricity. There certainly is a really skilled workforce because of our years of experience and knowledge. There is the support industry. So Capreol in my riding has been chosen as the case base for value-added jobs in Ontario from the Ring of Fire chromite deposit.

The problem is that if you go on their website, after you see their names and the name of the CEO and all this, the second slide is that there won't be any smelter and mill built in Ontario at the current price of energy. I'm not saying this; Cliffs Natural Resources, which has all the claims in northern Ontario in the Ring of Fire to extract the chromite, are the ones who said it for everybody to see. Go on their website, page 2. There will be none.

Northern Ontario produces some of the cleanest, greenest, cheapest electricity in all of this jurisdiction, but we are not allowed to use this for the prosperity of northern Ontario. We are not allowed to use it for the forestry industry—and this is what I was referring to.

Coming back to the bill, the bill talks about a bidding process for wood. I've already said that other jurisdictions around us, whether from the States, Manitoba or Quebec, will be allowed to bid. We all have to remember NAFTA. Once we put our natural resources up for bid, whoever is the highest bidder will get our wood. Those persons, those industries, those businesses will get our natural resources.

This is very troublesome to me because if you come from Quebec, if you come from Manitoba, if you come from the States, you're not going to have any value-added jobs in northern Ontario, where you harvest this

wood, and we'll continue to see raw logs on huge tractor-trailer trucks on this road that goes nowhere but to Quebec. If you come to my riding or if you go to my friend from Timmins—James Bay's riding and you sit on this highway, you will see the raw logs going by. It is already happening.

1630

I've told you about the 100 layoffs in Timmins, that the mill has shut down. The cutting of trees is still going on, but those trees are not bringing any value added. I want a plan that would allow us to share in prosperity.

We have wonderful natural resources. I've already told you, we in Ontario own 90% of our forests. There are a few people who own beautiful pieces of forest, and good for them, but 90% of the forest belongs to us. It is a natural resource that we should all share in. I don't want people from Quebec, Manitoba or the States—no offence to them—to outbid us on our natural resources, but this is what this bill will do. It has the potential to politicize the allocation of fibre. And no offence to all of my colleagues, including myself, but politicians are not the best people to make those decisions. It's always a little bit scary. It creates uncertainty at a time when the forest industry is in crisis and it does not allow for investment due to this uncertainty.

Let's make no mistake about it, I want the forestry industry to rebound. I know there will be markets for products from the forest now and into the future and forever. But we need to look at this bill very carefully as to what we are doing. Once we put our natural resources, our trees, up for bid to the highest bidder, we have just lost control over one of our dearest natural resources, our forests, our trees, and this brings a lot of uncertainty.

I have sawmills in my riding, like most of the MPPs from the north, that are still hanging on. I'm working really closely with Fryer Forest Products, who has a really tough time making it through this recession, a really tough time accessing credit so that he can invest and be prosperous into the future in the new markets that are opening. But if you bring one more layer of uncertainty into this industry, you have the potential to really do a lot of damage.

I've read to you this afternoon a series of forestry producers, whether it's sawmills or paper and pulp mills, that have closed, that have limited their operations, that have made permanent layoffs. Those are real. Those are people who need our help right here, right now. They are northerners. They are people who have made a living working out of the forest and want to continue to do so.

I, like every NDPer, believe that there is a bright future for forestry. It may not look exactly the way it looked before, but there will continue to be demands for the wood of northern Ontario for many, many years to come. So we need to support the businesses in this industry to make sure that they are ready for the future and to make sure that they make it through this recession that doesn't know when to end.

The same bold action that was afforded to the people of southern Ontario when the auto industry ran into

trouble needs to be available to the people of the north. It needs to be available to the forestry industry so that we can prepare ourselves, so that we can speak with certainty that, yes, there will be a bright future for the forestry industry in northern Ontario—and in all of Ontario, for that matter; there are forests everywhere. The government has to understand this and work in that direction.

But as I said, I have worries about this bill. I have worries that I have laid out regarding other jurisdictions outbidding us, about other jurisdictions driving up the price of wood, about bringing in a level of uncertainty.

You're looking at me intently, as in, I have to wrap up, so I will do this. I thank you for the 20 minutes that was afforded to me. It was a pleasure to add my voice to this debate, and I hope we are able to move on part of this act so that we bring in the certainty that is needed in the industry.

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

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I'm pleased to comment on the intervention made by my good friend from my neighbouring riding of Nickel Belt.

You know, she has discussed the difficulties in the northern forest and northern forest industry that have taken place over the last five, six years. She has forgotten to put it in the context of what's going on in the world economy. She has forgotten that the Canadian dollar has appreciated by about 35%, making us about 35%—just on the strength of the dollar alone—less competitive.

Interjection: It's 40%.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: My friend says 40%, and that's probably clearer.

She has forgotten that there are 190,000 American forest workers out of work. She has forgotten that the American pulp and paper industry has permanently closed 72 pulp and paper mills, and who knows how many sawmills.

Why did they do that? They didn't do it because of Ontario's forest allocations. They didn't do it because of any great reason other than there was no market for their product. When they had no market for their product, our mills struggled to find markets for theirs, and while southern Ontario managed to provide opportunities in the housing sector in particular for the use of our wood, it is a small part of what Ontario produces.

You know, we have put an offer to the forest industry of over \$1 billion in the past five years. The NDP did not support that money. They did not support the help to the sawmill in Hornepayne. They didn't support the money for Tembec in Chapleau. They didn't support the other investments we've made across the north. I think they are prisoners of their own rhetoric.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I want to compliment the member from Nickel Belt on her knowledge and compassion and shifting it into the debate here on Bill 151. She went through a litany of job losses in her riding. It's quite

disturbing, actually, to have witnessed that and to be a publicly elected person, regardless of your political affiliations, and to have to work with those people and also with a government that doesn't seem to have the same sort of commitment. Even yesterday, we heard some of the pushback, that anything critical that we say is somehow wrong. You even talked about the energy prices of processing other materials, resources from the Ring of Fire, and the electricity prices.

It's not something of a political nature that we're saying; it's that they've simply got it wrong on a couple of fronts. In fact, we had a member yesterday talking about the creation of a company, Atikokan Renewable Fuels, and here's what the mayor of Ignace, Mayor Lee Kennard, said:

"Ignace still has a skilled work force," Kennard said. "We've lost workers who continue to maintain a house in Ignace and a house in Thunder Bay or in other parts of the country. We need the provincial government to make a decision," says Kennard.

"Despite the recent announcements"—which they were mentioning yesterday; Bill Mauro—"many people in the existing or potential biomass sector are frustrated with how slowly the provincial government is releasing the results of the wood supply competitive process."

They say all the correct things, but the reality is that there are families who have no jobs and no income because of the lack of a policy. Part of that policy they stand up and champion: "How great is our electricity policy." Who wants to pay 34 cents a kilowatt hour for energy—do you understand—when it used to be five or six cents? They're simply on the wrong track. This isn't being said meanspiritedly or maliciously, but Denmark—

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

The member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd like to thank the member from Nickel Belt for her statistics and all the comments about the job losses. This is like an instant replay for me: the erosion of our base industries in this country.

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What's going on here is, you've got US Steel in Hamilton, which has now shut out the workers because they want huge concessions, but guess what? Production is going on down in the States; the blast furnaces are running down there, and our blast furnaces are closed. Do you see the comparison here?

The same thing is happening in the north. Abitibi-Bowater went into Kenora and places like that and said, "We want concessions. The hydro is too much. We're going to move to Quebec or Manitoba unless you facilitate us." This government did not facilitate it. They did nothing about the hydro rates, and now they're going to give them 30 bucks a month in northern Ontario for a rebate on their hydro. What is that going to do: keep one light running in the garage? Give me a break.

I can tell you right now that this is an instant replay. Years ago, I was in Ottawa for the Steelworkers, fighting about the erosion of our base industries. Correct me if

I'm wrong: 90% of our forestry, 90% of our mining and 100% of our steel production is foreign-owned. Isn't that special? We have no control over our own economy, we have no control over our base industries, and everyone's wondering why it's falling apart. What do you think the Americans are doing right now? It's called protectionism. They're doing it in steel, they're going to do it in forestry and they're going to do it in manufacturing.

This is just the start of the slide. And you think that by forming another LHIN you're going to protect the forestry business in northern Ontario? I don't think so.

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

Mr. Bill Mauro: I want to thank the member from Nickel Belt for her comments.

Three things that I'll comment on specifically: first of all, the comments about shipping wood out. The Crown Forest Sustainability Act was brought into this Legislature in 1994 under an NDP government. Under the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, you could ship wood out then. This doesn't change anything. The restrictions are just as severe to allow that to happen as they were almost 20 years ago in 1994. Nothing has changed in that regard.

When it comes to the bidding on wood, you always could. That hasn't changed either. No change there, but the fearmongering continues. You just have to use it in Ontario—the very same thing.

Number three: abuse of ministerial powers. Guess what? The point of this is to try to get the wood back to work. If you don't want to change it, if you're happy with the status quo, if you want certain companies under their SFLs to be allowed to hoard the wood, then I guess you vote for the status quo. What this would do is allow the minister—and it's rarely going to happen, I'm sure. If a group is found to not be using the wood and creating employment from the use of that wood, why wouldn't you want him to do something about it? Would you want the wood to be sitting there idle on the stump, rotting, and the people not going to work? I thought that was what you were all about.

The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek made a comparison between steel and forestry. I'm sorry; it's exactly the opposite. What you described has not happened. You said the capacity on the steel got shipped to America. The capacity in the forest industry did not get shipped to another province. I said that yesterday—

Mr. Paul Miller: Oh, yes, it does.

Mr. Bill Mauro: Show me where. You're wrong.

To the member from Durham: 34 cents a kilowatt hour? Who is spending 34 cents a kilowatt hour for power, as the member from Durham said? Speaker, please tell him to stand up and tell us where that's happening. Your analogy is completely wrong. I said it yesterday.

That's the difference. When they closed the capacity, it did not get transferred out. That's what shows you that the argument is false.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Nickel Belt has two minutes to respond.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Usually, Tuesday afternoons are not so animated. I don't know what happened.

I'll start with my neighbour from Algoma–Manitoulin and some of his comments. Yes, the recession in the forest industry did not only hit Ontario; I agree with him. But where we differ is that I see a bright future for our forests, for the use of our wood in Ontario. In order for that bright future to see its full potential, it needs support from our government. Part of that is to bring certainty to the system, to the industry, and this bill is not doing this.

The member from Durham called the list a "litany of job losses." I could have gone on way longer. There has been tremendous job loss in the forestry industry in northern Ontario. I happen to keep track of it because this is where I live and those are the people I know. People sort of know that forestry has gone down in northern Ontario, but I wanted to read them to you because each and every one of those communities has been affected, each and every one of those communities is still struggling, and they need their government to help.

The parallel that my neighbour from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek—I can see where you can draw the parallel. We're talking about our natural resources. We're talking about selling them to the highest bidder. We're talking about losing controls. I can see where the parallels are there. Sure, they are two different industries; we're talking about natural resources versus steel, but the parallels still exist. To the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan: Where we differ is, I see a bright future.

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

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: It's my pleasure to rise for a few minutes to add to this debate about the forest tenure legislation that's before us. I think it's probably worthwhile to listen to the debate here this afternoon. We, in some cases, went a little bit off tenor in certain sections. I think it's best if I just take a moment or so to really talk about what the intent of the legislation is and where we want to go.

Frankly, this came about after an enormous amount of consultation. The majority of the material from the consultation process has really helped us shape this legislation.

This proposed framework is key to building a strong forest economy in Ontario and is needed to create the opportunities that would generate the right level of investment to ensure that the crown forests continue to be renewed and enhanced while creating additional opportunities for jobs and economic prosperity. That's the overlying objective.

Ontario crown forests belong to the people of Ontario and we want to make sure that Ontarians receive the full benefit. The current forest tenure system was designed years ago to give primary consuming mills responsibility to manage Ontario forests in exchange for long-term wood supply, making it difficult for new players to enter the market and leaving communities vulnerable during economic downturns. I think we heard this over and over

again this afternoon, the way the economy has been for the last couple of years.

During consultation, we heard loud and clear that Ontarians wanted change. The status quo that has been there for a number of years frankly has served its purpose. We are in the 21st century and we need to move forward. We also heard that change should be implemented in a measured and cautious manner. Change is difficult at the best of times. We get entrenched in what we did yesterday and the day before, and sometimes even—we recognize that, for the betterment of the community and the betterment of Ontarians, sometimes that kind of change is difficult.

We've listened to the feedback and have developed a proposed tenure model that is widely supported and contains many of the suggestions we heard during the consultation, including more involvement by the local and aboriginal communities. There's no doubt we face some daunting challenges, but I believe that we can revitalize our industry and our communities by restoring prosperity through a new forest economy based on new products, new markets and new processes.

I would also add to that the fact that as the economy rebounds, we have to have this industry ready to face the challenges of tomorrow. What happened yesterday—we heard this over and over again; it's not going to come back as we saw it then, but it's going to have a new face.

We will continue to work with industry and local aboriginal communities and our partner ministry to ensure that the forest sector's needs are addressed in a competent and timely manner. Together we can work to revitalize our industry in our communities and restore prosperity. Together the wood supply competition and tenure modernization are key initiatives in promoting the fullest and most innovative use of Ontario wood.

The Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act, 2011, will enable the modernization of Ontario's forest tenure and the pricing system. Modernizing the Ontario forest tenure and pricing system will help make Ontario's timber supply and prices more responsive to market demand, create new business opportunities for entrepreneurs and facilitate greater local community and aboriginal peoples' participation in this sector. As I mentioned a minute ago, we really need to move to the 21st century within this industry so it doesn't fall any further behind.

1650

The bill would enact the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act, 2011, and will amend the Crown Forest Sustainability Act. This act will enable the incorporation of Ontario local forest management corporations as crown agents by regulation. The act sets out the objects of Ontario local forest management corporations, which would include: holding forest resource licences and managing crown forests in a sustainable manner; providing economic development opportunities for aboriginal people; managing its affairs as a self-sustained business entity and optimizing the value from crown forest resources; and marketing, selling and enabling

access to a predictable and competitively priced supply of crown forest resources.

The act also sets out the general governance structure for Ontario local forest management corporations, including the appointment of a board of directors; the powers of the local forest management corporations; the employment of a general manager and staff; financial matters; reporting requirements; and provisions regarding windup.

The act will permit Ontario local forest management corporations to retain their revenues and will authorize the use of revenues for their jobs. The act will allow the minister to issue directives to Ontario local forest management corporations.

The act will also amend the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, 1994, to support forest tenure and pricing modernization. The act will make forest resource licensing, forest resource supply agreements and wood supply commitments subject to terms and conditions, as prescribed by regulations. The act will enable the crown to grant a forest resource licence to an Ontario local forest management corporation without competitive processes.

The act will allow a licensee to surrender a forest resource licence subject to terms and conditions set by the minister and permit the imposing of terms and conditions by the minister in respect to a transfer of a forest resource licence. The act will allow the Lieutenant Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the minister, to cancel forest resource licences, supply agreements and commitments on the grounds set out in the act, as may be prescribed by regulations. The act will also effect a limitation on remedies and proceedings and limit the crown liability in circumstances set out. For example, the limitation of liability would apply to the cancellation or amendment of licences, supply agreements and commitments.

There have been a number of questions. Let me just touch on some of those questions to the best of my ability. The NDP has been out criticizing this tenure legislation on the basis that they want to make sure that every party involved is properly consulted and that resources will go to the highest bidder, regardless of whether or not they are in this province. That seems to be their thinking, so let me just explain.

First of all, I'm pleased that our government is proposing to modernize Ontario's tenure and pricing systems so that we can put Ontario wood back to work and continue to build a new forest economy. Together, wood supply competition and tenure modernization are key initiatives in promoting the fullest and most innovative use of Ontario wood. We have listened to the feedback and have developed a proposed tenure model that is widely supported and contains many of the suggestions we heard during consultation, including more involvement by local and aboriginal communities.

This proposed framework is the key to building a strong forest economy in Ontario. It's needed to create opportunities that will generate the right level of investment to ensure that crown forests continue to be renewed and enhanced while creating additional opportunities for

jobs and economic prosperity. This new legislation will modernize the forest tenure and pricing system to allow for greater market mechanisms in the pricing and allocation of crown timber than exists in the current model.

One of the other questions that gets raised in the debate: Why would this bill give the government the authority to cancel existing wood supply agreements and licences on a whim? The ministry will not cancel existing wood supply agreements arbitrarily. This will only be used to make sure that crown forest resources are being managed to put Ontario wood to work. The proposed legislation provides that the cancellation provision can only be used to help the issuance of a forest resource licence to an LFMC and to take wood away from someone who isn't optimally using it. This makes a lot of sense. Somebody holds a licence and they're not delivering on their commitment. Do we want to waste a licence for those precious resources? What this does is allow the minister to shift the licence to somebody who has a plan to move forward.

Use of this power will be done on a case-by-case basis and it will be considered very carefully; I think the minister suggested that just today. Legal assessments will need to be undertaken as part of our consideration to cancel. It's not done on a whim, as one might suggest; it may be based on facts and a lack of commitment from the proponents. At this time, we would hope that we would not need to use this power. We hope that we would be able to engage with licence or commitment-holders to find mutually beneficial solutions. Having this power in legislation would help encourage sector players to co-operate.

I've heard some comparison from previous speakers comparing this to other issues when it comes to the licences that were issued, like the FIT program with the Green Energy Act. We know there have been some proponents in the past that put forward applications, and basically what they did was they tied up a certain portion of the grid for the proposal with no intentions or not knowing exactly when that proponent would come online. That's not fair to legitimate businesses or investments that want to move forward, that they're hampered by somebody just sitting on a licence without taking the opportunity to exercise that commitment.

Another important question that we heard over the debate: Why does the bill allow mills from outside the province to bid against local companies for the wood supply? Provisions in this Crown Forest Sustainability Act make sure that no sale of wood goes to a bidder outside of Ontario unless the bidder can prove that there's not a market for it inside the province. I think that would make a lot of sense. We have some resources that have some value to create jobs, to improve our economy, and if there's no direct market for that particular product, I would suggest that we look for foreign opportunities.

I would relate that to another sector, the automotive sector. Ontario is the largest jurisdiction in North America in the automotive sector. Eighty per cent of our automobiles are sold outside of Ontario. Can you imagine an

automotive industry here in Ontario that virtually only catered to the Ontario market? We would lose about 80% of that market.

Almost all of Ontario wood is kept in this province. Of the very small amount of wood that does go outside the province, this commerce still creates Ontario jobs in the forestry sector.

1700

Let me try to address another question. The question that we heard, once again: What is the purpose of adding yet another crown agency? What is wrong with the current set-up? Let me shed some clarity. There is significant public interest in the management of crown forests, and a crown agency will provide the right balance of government oversight and control by providing enough flexibility to have the LFMC make decisions that are in the best interests of the business while ensuring continued sustainable management of crown forests; provide opportunities to take advantage of new and emerging markets; and enable innovative investment of revenues that will further the objectives of the LFMC and provide benefits to local aboriginal communities. As we know, a lot of forestry activity has a role within our aboriginal communities, and we truly have to respect that and make sure that they are involved.

That leads to the next question that's commonly asked, and that is: Why haven't we put aboriginal involvement and regulations directly into the legislation? We are getting criticism for not including enough in this legislation, like the requirement for aboriginal and local representation on the LFMC boards. If we deem it necessary after consulting with our stakeholders, will it be possible to include this requirement in the regulation? Those are some of the common questions.

As I said in my previous comments, we have listened to the feedback and have developed a proposed tenure model that is widely supported and contains many of the suggestions we've heard during consultations, including more involvement by local and aboriginal communities.

The proposed legislation does set out the objectives of the LFMC. These include providing economic development opportunities for aboriginal people and the recognition of the importance of local economic development. LFMCs will retain revenues from the sale of crown resources and use the money to further that objective. So they'll have a critical role.

As part of our proposal, we will be looking at ways to enhance economic opportunities for aboriginal people and communities. We will continue to engage with these communities. We have also been working with representatives of the Chiefs of Ontario to establish a working group to solicit further input.

I once again wanted to put some type of an overview of the intent of this piece of legislation. There was a enormous amount—as you heard from the minister—of consultation prior to the legislation being drafted. There has been ample debate. Can we make it better? I guess that's what it is at the end of the day.

I want to say that this piece of legislation has regard for everything under the sun. I think it's not quite appropriate—so we're here allowing debate so we can move this forward.

As I mentioned in my earlier remarks, the economy is turning around. The wood industry is a critical part of the turnaround. It's a huge economic driver, not only in northern Ontario. I have the privilege of having a mill in my riding at the mouth of the Trent River, Norampac, which produces a lot of corrugated board. It also uses some of the most innovative technologies to make sure that the plant stays competitive. Although it's a big industry in the north, there is a lot of spinoff from the processed products, even in southern Ontario. So we need to be ready. You've heard that we regained 95% of our jobs lost during the recession—and that's across the board—so we need to make sure that we have the proper processes, the proper ways of helping this very, very important sector of our economy in Ontario, natural resources, not just for now but for generations to come.

Madam Speaker, thank you for allowing me the time to add my few comments to this very, very important piece of legislation.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to provide some comments on the address by the member for Northumberland–Quinte West.

He started his speech 19 minutes ago and talked about our forests belonging to the people of Ontario. Again, I go back to some of the comments that I made before. This bill is empty. It leaves everything to regulation. The member used the words that the minister used an hour or so ago, "We hope not to use those powers"—"we hope." As we know on this side, the minister has extremely sweeping powers. He can break agreements, revoke licences. There's no issue of compensation.

Again, the member opposite doesn't provide any details, any criteria, any information. He mentions their consultation but, again, doesn't follow it up with any substantive details.

I couldn't believe what I heard when he talked about the tree LHINs, the forestry LHINs, the local forest management corporations, or LFMCS, and when he said that creating them was striking the right balance. I couldn't believe my ears. I can't believe that the member opposite believes that another level of bureaucracy, another agency, board or commission to add to the 600 we already have in the province of Ontario is striking the right balance.

We know the political patronage system that appoints them. We know the history of the government opposite with the local health integration networks, or LHINs. I can't believe that that's the right balance by creating another level of bureaucracy of unelected, unaccountable and anonymous people running the province.

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

Mr. Paul Miller: I have comments here from someone who knows a little bit about the forestry industry, the member from Kenora–Rainy River, Howard Hampton:

"One of the big issues around Thunder Bay just a few years ago was that Abitibi held some private forest land. After they closed a number of their operations in Thunder Bay, they said, 'We don't need this forest land anymore,' and they put it up for bid. Lo and behold, who was the highest bidder but an American company, which now harvests the wood and ships it to a mill in Duluth, Minnesota—forest resources harvested in Ontario, not being used to sustain jobs in Ontario but being used to sustain jobs, good jobs, in and near Duluth, Minnesota."

In his part of Ontario, "which is right along the Minnesota border," he bumps "into American wood buyers all the time. They're up talking to farmers and anybody else who has private wood, private land" for sale. "Are they buying that wood to create a mill and create good jobs in Ontario? No. They want to buy that wood and take it across the border to sustain good jobs in their jurisdictions.

"This government says it wants to promote economic development and jobs in Ontario. Well, let me tell you, from Thunder Bay through Fort Frances to Rainy River, what I can see happening is that all kinds of American mills" are benefiting—"Minnesota-based mills"—and "are coming up and saying, 'We'll bid on this, we'll bid on this and we'll bid on this.' Already having, say, 75% or 80% of their wood supply in Minnesota, they're probably quite willing to bid very high for that marginal 15%, the top 15%, because it's the added 10% or 15%. For them, it's not 50% or 70% of their wood supply; it's just that added 10% or 15%. They're probably willing to bid very high" on that 15% to fill their quotas.

"But what happens out of that process? You'll get a few jobs harvesting the wood, but the good jobs—the pipefitters, the electricians, the welders"—

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

Mr. Jeff Leal: I listened intently to the remarks from my colleague from Northumberland–Quinte West. He is a gentleman who knows a lot about the forestry industry. People should know that one of the largest forest areas in southern Ontario is the Ganaraska forest, and the member from Northumberland–Quinte West was a strong advocate during the time that he was a councillor in Brighton and mayor of Brighton, and now the member of provincial Parliament for Northumberland–Quinte West. So he knows about the necessity to conserve a forest, the Ganaraska forest, to make sure it's going to be there for future generations and the opportunity to sustain a livelihood and to make sure there's an ample supply in place for future generations.

1710

Secondly, I know of his great work with Norampac. I would invite members of this Legislature, if you have the opportunity, to go to Trenton, Ontario and take the opportunity to visit that rather large mill that Norampac operates in Trenton, Ontario. It's state-of-the-art, through

the good work of the member from Northumberland–Quinte West. I know a number of years ago there was a substantial investment in that mill to bring in state-of-the-art technology in order to have that mill compete in a very competitive world. For example, we've lost the 40% discount that we had a number years ago due to the exchange rate, so it was important for that mill in Trenton to invest in new technology to compete in a world where our currency will be at par or at a premium for the foreseeable future, which has certainly changed the dynamic of the forest industry in Ontario.

Again, this bill that we're debating this afternoon is all part and parcel to bring about the evolution of the forest industry in the province of Ontario, to make sure it's in place—

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

The member for Parry Sound–Muskoka.

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to add a couple of comments to the speech of the member from Northumberland on Bill 151, An Act to enact the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act, 2011.

I recently had the pleasure of taking part in pre-budget consultations, and on that tour we did hear from some in the forestry sector. We know the forestry sector has been hit hard the last number of years under the McGuinty government.

While in Timmins, the committee heard from Tammy Mazzetti of Georgia-Pacific. Georgia-Pacific is one of the world's leading manufacturers of tissue, packaging, pulp and paper and building products, and they recently took over the oriented strand board business in Englehart, Ontario. She stated that one of the key factors business needs when they're getting into this business is that they need to know "that the primary inputs of fibre, power and people remain competitive." We've certainly heard that energy is not competitive in the north these days, and throughout Ontario.

She made the point that Georgia-Pacific requested "the government promptly complete the wood supply competitive process and, working with the industry, accelerate the movement towards co-operative, enhanced, sustainable forest licences." That's the model that works for them.

It's Georgia-Pacific's view "that the tenure reform model initially posed by the government, where the mills were disconnected from the supply, creates uncertainty and risk. The system where crown corporations, known as local forest management corporations, essentially manage the land base will most likely reduce the security of supply and increase our delivered wood cost. This experiment would pose a great risk during fragile economic times." That's what some of the other members have been calling "forestry LHINs."

We're hearing from one company that says this is a risky experiment, a road that we should not be going down.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member from Northumberland–Quinte West has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: First of all, let me thank the folks that took the opportunity to add their two minutes to my comments: the members from Leeds–Grenville, Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, Peterborough and Parry Sound–Muskoka.

I'm going to focus a little bit on the comments from the member from Leeds–Grenville and the fact that he commented that he has an objection to the formation of another crown agency or board to manage the interests of crown lands. He compared it to the LHINs. I guess that really gives some signal that the member opposite and his party have no respect for people who are appointed to best manage what they're good at, and that's providing a service for their communities.

They want to bring back the centralization, if they were ever to form a government, bring it back down here at Queen's Park. I must say, if that's a comparison to the LHINs, then I think if they were fortunate enough to form a government, how many hospitals would they close? How many more schools would they neglect and have mould in them? Obviously, that's the type of signal that he put on the table.

Frankly, I do respect the boards and commissions that are staffed by folks from local communities, who drive those, who know the interests of the business and leave the government out of it.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I've been looking forward to speaking on this bill.

I did listen to the member from Northumberland–Quinte West. I was curious about whether he actually knows one of his constituents, Rob Milligan. Rob Milligan is a teacher down there, and he's quite interested in serving the public.

This is a case of a bill that—I think, in honesty, the minister is trying to do the right thing. I did read his remarks; I have a copy of the Hansard here. I looked at it carefully, because it's an area in which I've had to listen more than speak. That's how you actually learn things, which is a revelation over there, I think.

His last remarks were quite telling. I think he quite genuinely meant it. Mr. Gravelle is from the north. He's the Minister of Northern Development and Mines, obviously. I believe, quite consciously, that he does speak strongly for the sector. He said, "Let's put our wood to work." That was his final remark, and I think he means it.

What I do is, I kind of look around for independent, objective assessments of what's being debated here. Often, we get briefing notes; we have ours. Ours says no; theirs says yes, basically. That's kind of how it works—there's a little more to it—although today there were two bills on which we voted with the government. They usually say, "And you voted against it." If we voted against it, it's bad; they have some poison pill in it.

For my reference, I'm looking at the Working Forest. The Working Forest is a publication for the industry. I know it's sent to a lot of members. Certainly all of the northern members would get it; they're probably very familiar with it. I was interested, editorially, in what they thought of this, so I went through it, and it's quite informative. It's a working document.

I can see that the industry in Ontario needs this kind of document today, because the industry is falling off the cliff in Ontario, for a lot of reasons—red tape would be one; high energy prices is another; high taxation is another.

They say they've had seven or eight years. The best evidence is to look to what's happening. Are we better off? We're paying a lot more. Are we better off? That's a fair question.

We shouldn't browbeat people who don't always agree with us. We should say, "Ask yourself, are you better off?" Is gas cheaper? Is home heating cheaper? Is your phone, your car insurance, your tuition cheaper? Is it easier to get into a hospital?

Interjection: Yes.

Mr. John O'Toole: Is it easier to get into long-term care?

Interjection: Yes.

Mr. John O'Toole: Is it any better? The answer, in most cases—

Interjection: Yes.

Mr. John O'Toole: Let the people answer it. You see, they're trying to tell people how to think. They're trying to tell them what to drink, what to eat, when to go to bed, when to dry their clothes.

To the publisher, Judy Skidmore, and the editor, Phil Hearn, and the people involved in producing this: Thank you very much. It's important, very important.

What I did look for—Madam Speaker, this isn't a prop. This is actually made from pulp from northern Ontario. This is printed, I hope, on Ontario pulp.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Use it for the purpose that you have anticipated, as opposed to as a prop.

Mr. John O'Toole: Thank you, Madam Speaker—a most polite interruption.

"Mixed Reaction to Ontario's Tenure Reform Plans"—it seems to me, with mixed reactions, it's not like the perfect "let's get to work" thing. I'm going to quote it, because then people can re-quote it and they'll be talking to James Harrison, not to John O'Toole, who's from Durham. Of course, the Ganaraska forest is mostly in my riding, not that of the member from Northumberland-Quinte West. I've been going there since I was—I'd bring my children cross-country skiing there. Jerry Ouellette used to cut timber there; it was a clearance permit. Anyway, they'll be talking back to Brian Nicks. These are the two people who are cited in this.

I think to put some framework around this discussion, it's important also to help the viewer who may be follow-

ing this, or falling asleep, one or the other. There are a lot of acronyms used, especially in this industry here.

1720

MNR stands for Ministry of Natural Resources; I got that one. OFIA is the Ontario Forest Industry Association, and its present CEO is Jamie Lim, whom I met last night, and I did speak with her at length—a very intelligent, articulate person and a leader in women's issues, I believe, as well.

The OFIA is the Ontario Forest Industry Association, as I said; CFSA is the Crown Forest Sustainability Act; the SFL is the sustainable forest licence; the IFA is the independent forest audit; the FMPM is the Forest Management Planning Manual; the AOU is the area of undertaking; and the FMA is the forest management agreement.

These acronyms may crop up in here, and it's important when you look at Hansard—which will be printed tomorrow—that you can start by getting the acronyms all sorted out and explained and follow along my speech, which I'm going to be reading from the local paper. It says:

"Local forest management corporations (LFMCs) would be government agencies that manage crown forests and oversee the competitive sale of the timber in a given area." This is crown land, so that people bid on using the resource.

"Enhanced shareholder sustainable forest licences"—sustainability is a big part of this—"would consist of a group of mills and/or harvesters that collectively form a new company to manage crown forests under the sustainable forest licence that is issued to them."

The sustainable forest licence has a program manual, which I mentioned, which tells them that they must replant certain species etc. It's quite a technical area. Actually, silviculture in itself is a very, very important renewable resource; some would say it's far better than wind power. Industrial wind turbines aren't as reliable. In my riding, it's a big problem.

"At the time, Michael Gravelle, Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forests said 'this comprehensive overhaul of Ontario's wood allocation system would help build a strong forest industry in today's global economy.'" All fancy words; some lawyer wrote them. "It would help create investment opportunities and opportunities for jobs and economic prosperity."

We heard the member speak earlier today; the member from Nickel Belt gave the most impassioned account of the destruction in her riding over the past seven years—look it up; she spoke earlier today—a virtual litany of job after job, family after family being virtually dismantled. That's the truth, and I believe what she is saying.

She also spoke to the issue of another failed policy by the McGuinty government: the electricity policy. Somebody said earlier, "Who's paying 40 cents a kilowatt hour?" Well, for solar power in Ontario, you're paying—pardon me; I choke on this one—80.2 cents a kilowatt hour. That's more than the light bulb that you're lighting. Can you imagine? Ontario was built on safe, reliable,

affordable electricity at about five cents. Whoever heard of paying 80 cents for something and selling it for five cents? Quite honestly, if you want to look for a fundamental cause of the economy going over the cliff, look in the mirror. I'm telling them, and they don't seem to appreciate what it's doing to families and to the economy of Ontario, once the leader in our whole Confederation.

It goes on to say, "The Ontario government announcement to implementing tenure reform provided little relief to the management of Greenmantle Forest in Thunder Bay." Listen up: Here's another human story, a real story, not a political story—it's a real story. It goes on: "As one of the smaller forest management units in the province, it is likely to be among those in the government's sights" of widespread amalgamation and job loss.

"James Harrison, Greenmantle's general manager, said if the province could simply complete the wood supply competitive process the unit could prove itself economically viable." There's the manager, not some minister reading some bureaucrat's or lawyer's notes, telling you what is going on here.

That's a true story. I'm not making this up. I'm going to give it to Hansard, and they'll be printing it.

It goes on: "Harrison said the management unit is challenged right now because they are only able to sell"—listen to this—"35% of the poplar and birch and 50% of the conifer off the Lakehead forest. The competitive process is expected to bring in new business." What was meant before: American business.

"All the wood on the Lakehead forest was identified in the process as being available," said Harrison. "We see a need for a business that would use poplar because right now the poplar is not being totally used around Thunder Bay..." In other words, it can't sell the brush. "We feel we can stand on our own if we can move all of our volume"—all their forest materials. He goes on to say, "We don't need to look at the local forest management corporation scenario"—what we call the LHINs. "We could survive on our own without that."

Brian Nicks, Eacom Timber Corp.'s director of forestry for Ontario, "believes amalgamating some of Ontario's smaller forest ... units is inevitable and in the long run may prove to be beneficial."

This is an objective account of two participants in—I hope the minister is listening to them. This is not perfect. This framework, in all of what I've read—and I have more to say; I may ask for an extension of time.

"He said it is encouraging that the Ontario government is willing to reconsider some of the radical proposals that were causing" grave "concern within the industry." This is quite important. This is the industry, not our leader, Tim Hudak, who has asked us to reflect carefully on this because northern Ontario is a fragile economy. That's exactly what he said in caucus. We're not supposed to repeat that. But he cares about how it affects the family.

Here it says, "We were very concerned"—listen here—"about a revolutionary approach being taken as opposed to an evolutionary approach." How reasonable. Those are two reasonable northerners who bring a human

story to, "Let's work with the industry." Don't come up—if you read the bill, it gives all the power to the minister, totally. That's what these FMCs are. They're arm's-length agencies, another bureaucrat being paid big money to sit in some big office, like the LHINs, with furniture, and get all set up and maybe fly up—they won't stay up there; they'll fly up, probably in a helicopter or a Learjet or something. They won't be staying there. It would be too cold for them and perhaps a bit too much sawdust around.

The point being, it saddens me that this—get involved. The minister started, I said, by putting his boots on the ground—put the wood to work. I challenge him: Make these two young fellows right here, those young people, part of that process. You'll end up helping the north, not tying it up in red tape and more expense.

I wonder how much they're going to charge the industry, because I'll get into how the government gets their money. They have royalties on all the cuts.

They go on to say, "They were originally talking about having five to 15 forest management units versus the 43" that they have now. That rationalization is probably a good process. They're going to be bigger units and a lot more bureaucratic. I want to know what the appeal process is. When these people lose their licences, there will be heck to pay, let's put it that way.

They go on to say—I think, quite realistic. That paper I would recommend to you.

There's another quite interesting article in here talking about the Ontario Forest Industries Association's talking about the caribou habitat guidelines—more red tape. They're going to have to have little pens and feeding shelters. I don't know. It's kind of a nanny state for the caribou.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Are you making this up?

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm not making it up; not a bit.

I'm actually going on to something more technical. What I did here is, I downloaded a paper. This is an independent consultant's paper. It's available online. You can call my office, too; I would be happy to provide it. It's by Williams, Clark and Wedeles, consultants in this area. They talk about a number of things, but I think it's best to start—here's what they say in short.

Madam Speaker, is there any chance I could get more time to speak on this? We'll seek unanimous consent because there's so much that hasn't been said on this bill. They've read the notes. Quite honestly, the member from Northumberland—Quinte West read the notes he was given almost perfectly.

1730

Now, this is this consultant's report, not partisan, because there are some decent things in this too. All the paper wasn't wasted.

It says, "Shortcomings: This discussion of various aspects of the province's forest management system has highlighted that it is those components that support planning, such as the guides and planning framework itself, that seem to be working reasonably well. The four principal shortcomings of the tenure system are" as follow.

Here are the four problems, Minister. Look up Hansard because—I shouldn't say the minister's not here, but I'm sure he's listening on television. This is one of the problems with it—there are four of them, and I'll read them:

“(1) Linking wood supply to individual mills means the forest is treated as a ‘cost centre’—this is very important for competition—‘and the dominant concern of the mills is to reduce the price they pay for the raw material,’ which is the trees, the forest, ‘regardless of other considerations.’”

Now, this is very important: The licensee who owns the crown forest or has been granted that owns these trees. It's usually an 80-year supply stake that they have, because it takes 80 years from when they cut the first tree down till they harvest the last one and replant; that first tree should be growing by the time they get back there. Of course, they won't be alive to prove it, but it's assumed it will be.

“(2) The current system includes many government-imposed wood commitments or directives which distort the marketplace and pose barriers to more competitive new entrants and incumbents.”

So there you are. There's the little manipulation thing there: the current system of government-imposed wood commitments. Do you know why? Because when the licensee gets it, they tie all his inventory to one consumer, therefore driving the price down. If all that timber or wood pulp or whatever it is was available to a market condition, they would be selling at a better price and those communities would end up with the trees in their community and it would give them more money. That's about the long and short of it.

Now, remember, Mr. Brown—and I know you spoke very well on this. You live there and I know you mean well and I'm not criticizing that. I think getting it right is the right politics of this whole thing. This thing has been going on since 1800-something-or-other and has survived and needs less and less intervention as opposed to more intervention processes. Communities have to be consulted, from aboriginals right through the whole community. Number three—I don't want to lose track here. I might need more time.

“(3) It does not foster a means of resolving a number of outstanding constitutionally based aboriginal issues including the need for fair access to wood fibre.”

There's the third one. It's not a jagged, nasty statement; it's consultation, basically, with all of the communities involved.

“(4) There is no incentive to invest in the forest above the minimum regulatory requirements for renewal and the system lacks incentives to market timber to the highest-valued use.”

So often we're using timber—the Atikokan timber project was mentioned earlier by the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan, Mr. Mauro. They're going to actually be fuelling the current coal plants at Nanticoke and those plants—probably Thunder Bay, Nanticoke—with wood, replacing coal with wood.

Now, let's put the facts on the table here. Trees are a store of carbon. The carbon is released when you burn it. A fire: You see the black smoke; it's carbon. The trees themselves grow when they intake carbon as part of photosynthesis. It's not technical. It's basic grade 7 science. The pages probably understand this stuff. When you burn the wood, you release the carbon.

So now they're going to tell us that these new wood plants are cleaner than the coal plants. Well, the science would have to hear that, and if there's a carbon tax, that won't be, because they have to pay for carbon. They can almost tell you how much carbon is in a tree by measuring it, and I've read that. I'm sure it will be more efficient for the north, better for the economy of the north, as opposed to importing the coal from Alberta. I fully agree with that. But let's be straight: If you want a plan that's going to help the north, we agree that working with the community is paramount.

For those who haven't been able—Madam Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to have another 10 minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member has asked for unanimous consent.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I heard a no.

Mr. John O'Toole: I can't understand for a moment why. I haven't said anything that's cripplingly critical or caustic to anyone, but now I'm going to start. Premier McGuinty has really made a mess of something else. Here we have the north—

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: It was most entertaining to listen to the member from Durham, especially his last 20 seconds. I would have been quite ready to listen to the member for another 10 minutes, but I guess it was not the wish of the House, and we have to respect that.

Through it all, there are a couple of interesting points that come out. Why is it that we are reviewing this process, but there is nothing targeted at making sure that we get the highest value for our timber? I know that he spoke about a lot of things, but this is something he threw out there, and I think that it's worth considering. I think this is something we will hear if and when this bill goes into committee so that it is dealt with and, hopefully, modified.

He didn't mention, again, the list of paper mills and sawmills and pulp mills that I read earlier on this afternoon with all of the job losses associated with them. I just want to correct the record that those are not all from my riding. A number of them are from my riding, but a number of them are from other ridings in northeastern and northwestern Ontario. The number of layoffs that I read, I don't think there are that many workers in Nickel Belt. Even if we lost everybody in Nickel Belt, they wouldn't have made up all of the list of workers that I said had lost their jobs.

Some of the points that we have made, and he has made also, were policies that need to be looked at,

whether we looked at the cost of energy—and I'll keep saying it: Northern Ontario produces the greenest, cleanest, cheapest energy anywhere from falling water. We should be able to use in it northern Ontario for the prosperity of northern Ontario.

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

Mr. Michael A. Brown: I'm delighted to comment on my good friend from Durham's thoughtful intervention. I think people should reflect and members should reflect upon what's going on here. In northern Ontario today, there are millions of cubic metres of wood that have been allocated and they're not being used. That is why we—

Mr. Randy Hillier: Kill the industry.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: That is why the government has chosen to move forward with tenure reform. I know, and every member in the Legislature knows—I'm sure my friend from Nickel Belt and I'm certain my friend the minister and my friend from Thunder Bay—Atikokan have had numerous suggestions from small businesses that want to start up with a new product and a new way of using wood but have problems getting that allocation from the SFL holder. So it makes sense to find a way to let those smaller players, which sometimes become big players, get started to do that. That's why we're doing it. It will provide more opportunities for more jobs.

What's really interesting is to listen to my good friends, especially in the Conservative Party, complain about market pricing. The free enterprise party doesn't like market pricing. It's very entertaining.

Anyway, the tenure reform has gone through significant consultations already. I think my friends read from the Working Forest. My friend Judy Skidmore, the editor, formerly of Espanola and the Mid-North Monitor, makes some good points. Brian Nicks talks about the interests of the OFIA in this. We have their support. We're working hard to make sure that this bill is a good bill and works for—

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

1740

Mr. Peter Shurman: It's a pleasure to stand up and add a couple of words on the comments of my friend from Durham, who always has a thoughtful presentation on anything. I've got to say, as a southern member, I don't have any forestry anywhere near Thornhill—we use a lot of the products—but I know a bit about it because it's part of my job to know a bit about everything and a lot about a few things.

One of the things I know a lot about is that my friend from Durham is one of that rare breed in this place. We all get literally hundreds of publications crossing our desks every week. You can't possibly read all of them, and even with assistance, you can't get everything annotated that you would want. But he always comes in here with publications like Working Forest or whatever happens to be pertinent to the bill under discussion, and brings some thoughtful debate to this place.

What we don't need, from my perspective, is more intervention on the part of the Liberal government of Dalton McGuinty. Here is an act that could just as easily have been named the Ontario forestry industry tenure act, because what they're looking to do is to try to make that industry work again when, really, they're the ones who wrecked it. This is something else that's going to allow them to "fix" the forest industry. "Let's pick another sector," they said at the cabinet table at some point, "and maybe we can wrap it up in red tape as well."

The bottom line on this one is that the use of the term "LHINS"—and I'll explain that briefly for the people at home—refers to what they've done in creating an insulating layer that chews up hundreds of millions of dollars to run our health situation all over the province of Ontario. When you create these LFMCS, what you're doing in the forestry industry is what you've done to the health industry: chewed up hundreds of millions of dollars, to do what? To continue to manage what? A forestry industry—and you heard it from our friend from Nickel Belt—that the McGuinty government has all but killed.

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

Mr. Bill Mauro: I've listened to most of the previous speeches here in the last hour or so. I must say I think the piece that my Conservative friends are missing is that what is before us today is what has been asked for by the industry itself.

As the member from Algoma-Manitoulin mentioned in his remarks, there is a lot of wood out there that is being underutilized and has been that way for a number of years, that was tied up and not available to be used to create employment in the province of Ontario. What we've brought forward through this process in this particular piece of legislation, as well as the direct wood supply competition, is an ability to take that wood that is standing there on the stump and create jobs, and that's what we're doing.

We had an event about two weeks ago—my colleague Michael Gravelle from Thunder Bay—Superior North—at a place called Garden River timber, if I've got the name correctly—and I forget the name of the proprietor; I apologize. He's been in business for 30-some years, had about six or eight employees working for him. This gentleman could not have been more ecstatic because, for the very first time in over 30 years of being a small private sector operation, he has a long-term secure wood allocation; he has it. This gentleman couldn't be happier. He announced the jobs that he was going to be able to create and the young people we were going to hire.

I spoke in here yesterday. The AbiBow sawmill in Thunder Bay received additional wood through a similar process. They will create 50 more additional jobs. The Atikokan Renewable Fuels piece that I spoke about yesterday through the wood supply competition that the industry partners themselves, the small employers themselves, asked us to do will create 95 jobs.

That's just the beginning. There are many more that have already occurred across the province. We're taking wood that wasn't being used, putting it back to work and creating employment in northern Ontario. I thought that's what they were interested in.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I'd like to thank—the thoughtful responses from Nickel Belt, Algoma-Manitoulin, Thornhill and Thunder Bay-Atikokan. I really do feel we're actually trying to find the answer here as opposed to an excuse.

I think it's important to just explain a couple of things. In this whole report, timber pricing is very technical. It says, "Currently for each merchantable cubic metre of wood that is harvested, the licensee is required to pay the crown"—that's Dalton McGuinty—"a charge that varies by species, end product, and market conditions." These residual charges are part of the issue, where the people working in the wood don't get the money.

There's a whole issue here on trusts and how that money is set up in trusts to replenish the forests, and the most important is linking—and this is an important change.

"In contrast to the elements listed above, the tenure system attributes described in this and remaining sections ... have significant inherent inadequacies...." What it says here: "A key flaw in the current system"—as we know—"is the linkage between forest tenure"—owner, licensee—"and processing facility" They want to keep the price down so that they can actually process it and ship it to the US or somewhere else. That's the key thing: Leaving the value of the actual product in the community, I think, is paramount. It's just a small reminder.

The report says, objectively, that there are four shortcomings and these shortcomings should be addressed. They deal with: linking supply to the mill; the current system of government-imposed requirements; fostering a way of resolving disputes within communities, whether aboriginal or others; and no incentive for investing in the forests themselves. So what have we got? No payback to the community, no payback to the forest itself, and that means the sustainability argument, the language itself, is absolutely wrong. Sustainability means keeping the growing growing.

If you want to make a statement like the minister made in his final—

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

Mr. Paul Miller: Bill 151, the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act, attempts to enable the modernization of Ontario's forest tenure and pricing system. The objective appears to be: help make Ontario's timber supply and prices more responsive to the market demand; create new business opportunities for entrepreneurs; and facilitate greater local community and aboriginal participation in the sector.

Enacting the bill would amend the Crown Forest Sustainability Act. It would enable the incorporation of

Ontario's local forest management corporations, LFMCS, and the emergence of two new government models for sustainable forest licences: local forest management corporations and enhanced shareholder SFLs. The act would allow licensees to surrender a forest resource licence, subject to terms and conditions.

Unfortunately, it gives the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry the ability to arbitrarily cancel any existing wood supply agreement and make wood allocation subject to political favours. Stumpage fees will be affected, as the price of wood will go up during the competitive bidding process. Shocking to me is that this legislation will allow companies from Quebec, Manitoba and the US to outbid Ontario companies for wood supplies. These companies from other provinces have more money because they pay less for their hydro and they have more assets available to buy the wood.

Some 66% of Ontario, or about 70.4 million hectares, is forested, of which 90% is crown land. In the current system, the Crown Forest Sustainability Act provides for the granting of licences for harvesting forest resources on managed crown lands. Sustainable forest licences are set up for periods of up to 20 years and reviewed every five. They require the licensee to carry out renewal and maintenance activities necessary to provide for the sustainability of crown forests in the area covered by the licence. SFL holders bear significant management responsibilities: forest management planning, gathering forest information for the crown, and conducting operations in accordance with the crown's Forest Operations and Silviculture Manual.

Forest resource licences are set up for a period of less than five years. Where crown timber is harvested it is required that the licensee pay crown timber charges, also called stumpage fees.

Two new components envisioned in the legislation for forestry tenure reform are local forest management corporations and enhanced shareholder sustainable forest licences, which are groups of mills and harvesters that collectively form a new company to manage crown forests under sustainable forest licences that are issued to them. The sustainable forest licences will require mill owners to form co-operative bodies that, among other things, allow opportunities for new business to access crown land. Coordination will occur among the Ministry of Natural Resources, the forest industry, aboriginal peoples and local stakeholders for both the LFMCS and the ESSFLs.

The act would enable the crown to grant a forest resource licence to an Ontario local forest management corporation. The act would also allow a licensee to surrender a forest resource licence subject to terms and conditions set out by the minister and permit the imposition of terms and conditions by the minister with respect to the transfer of forest resource licences.

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The evolution of this reform, according to a government release in mid-January, is that there would be the implementation of two test cases of LFMCS for a period

of five to seven years which would evaluate against a predefined set of criteria before general application of the tenure reform. The act introduced in February 2011 does not—I repeat, does not—mention any of the phased implementation or the two test cases. We're very interested in finding out why this has not been included. Industry experts are against broad application without the two test cases because it will create uncertainty within the industry.

An example of current shared licensing is the Abitibi River Forest in northeastern Ontario, which is being used by the government as an example of an enhanced co-op model. Abitibi River Forest Management Inc. is responsible for the development and preparation of a 20-year strategic forest management plan. The shareholders are AbitibiBowater, Grant Forest Products, True North Hardwood Plywood, Tembec, Little John Enterprises, Wahgoshig First Nation, Wahgoshig Resources, Taykwa Tagamou Nation, Moose Cree First Nation, Nighthawk Timber Co. and Timmins Forest Products.

The shareholder-managed sustainable forest licence for the Kenora forest area includes Weyerhaeuser and the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry, and also the Wabaseemoong First Nation signed on.

Some of the concerns that we have are:

There is no mechanism for changing the stumpage prices. Companies will have to pay more for the wood.

Companies across the border, where the price of electricity is lower, will come to Ontario and have more money to bid on the wood, thus driving prices up and forcing Ontario companies out of business.

It has the potential to politicize the allocation of fibre.

It creates uncertainty at a time when the forest industry is in crisis, and it does not allow for investment due to this uncertainty.

To be certain that our position is completely clear, I'm going to repeat some of the issues made by our northern MPPs Howard Hampton and Gilles Bisson. MPP Bisson states clearly, "I want to start off by saying I disagree with the premise that this bill is needed in order to find a way to deal with unallocated timber. Could the unallocation process be made better? Obviously. Everything can be made better.... My point is to make an argument that you need this bill to be able to allocate unutilized timber—nothing could be further from the truth."

Bill 151 includes a section that says once you sign a licence with the crown—say a number of years ago on a particular forest—it is virtually impossible for your security of tenure to be lost unless you mess up. As a sustainable forest licence holder, you cannot lose your wood under the current system as long as you live up to the conditions of your licence. The conditions of your licence are well spelled out in the legislation and the regulations, but more importantly, in the forest management plan itself. As the holder of the licence, you have already agreed to hold up your end of the deal and live up to the conditions of your licence. As a licensee, because you have the security of the value of the wood and your licence, you can plan to make improvements that you feel

are necessary for the sustainability of the product and the ongoing ability to operate your company. These two tangibles give the licence holder the security to apply to a financial institution for loans to improve the product, increase production and, naturally, improve their business. As MPP Bisson has already made clear, if you start playing with the tenure system, and you start weakening the security of tenure for the forest companies, it is a very dangerous, dangerous thing with far-reaching impacts.

Speaking as one who lived through the Stelco buyout by US Steel, I know first-hand what instability can do to a once-proud industry, what it can do to women and men who have devoted their lives to turning out a good-quality product but, more importantly, what it does to an industry that once was proudly Canadian, proudly able to offer generations of the same family good, well-paying jobs with Canadian resources available to Canadian companies to keep Canadian jobs in Canada.

The instability that this piece of legislation could cause in the forestry industry could lead us down the same tragic path that Hamiltonians and Canadians suffered with the loss of Stelco. Pretty well everybody—municipalities; forest companies; the Ontario Forest Industries Association, OFIA; the owners of the mills; the workers in mills; the unions—nobody is happy with this.

As my colleague MPP Bisson said, you've got to ask yourself, if it doesn't pass the "Who's glad, who's mad and who's sad?" test, what are you up to? Why are you doing this?

"We have a good system. We have a system that for seven, eight or nine times, whatever it is that we've gone before the tribunals, they've agreed with us and said, 'No, Ontario does not subsidize its forestry industry.' Each and every time we've won. The Americans keep on coming back. That's a whole other argument" for another day. "But we've never lost before the tribunals."

Again, it is the fear of what the US will do. Why would we put ourselves in the Stelco situation when we already know what happened there? Why would we change something that has been proven to work by tribunals, where we've won? Why fix it if it isn't broken?

My colleague MPP Howard Hampton has spoken on the legislation, and he's very clear about what will happen, should this be passed into law. He said:

"One of the dangers of this bill, and I think the government needs to sit down and seriously think about it, is the fact that this bill, for the first time in history, will simply open up Ontario's crown forests to the highest bidder. All you have to do is look at section 5:

"The following are the objects of an Ontario local forest management corporation: ...

"(4) To market, sell and enable access to a predictable and competitively priced supply of crown forest resources."

"But the fact of the matter is, in Canada, we are subject to the World Trade Organization and NAFTA. If a mill located in Minnesota comes to my part of Ontario and says, 'We want to put in a bid on these crown forest

resources of Ontario,' the government can't disallow that. You can't say, 'You're not allowed to bid.' If you try to say, 'You're not allowed to bid,'" they'll take you to court, and a NAFTA or World Trade panel will rule in their favour.

"For the last 20 years, mills in the United States have been after—this is the real issue around softwood lumber—complete, full access to crown forests, whether they be in Ontario or elsewhere in Canada. They want to be able to bid. They want that wood fibre. Do they want that wood fibre in order to create jobs in Ontario? No. They want that wood fibre in order to access it here and ship it south of the border" to be processed. Will any of it be processed here? Not very much. I don't think so.

However, if this government is determined that it's

right on this, it should have the commitment to bring this bill to full public hearings. It should have the guts to hear from each sector that would be affected by these changes, on their home turf. It should have the guts to admit that it's wrong and withdraw this bill. If that's what the public, in full, province-wide, public hearings tells us, why won't they do it?

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

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): It being close to 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1757.

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