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des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 21 April 2011

Jeudi 21 avril 2011

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 21 April 2011

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 21 avril 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

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 151, An Act to enact the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act, 2011 and to amend the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, 1994, the Standing Committee on General Government be authorized to meet on Wednesday, May 4, 2011, during its regular meeting time for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the clerk of the committee shall be noon on Tuesday, May 3, 2011. On Wednesday, May 4, 2011, at no later than 5 p.m., those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. The committee shall be authorized to meet beyond the normal hour of adjournment for clause-by-clause consideration on Wednesday, May 4, 2011. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession, with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House no later than Thursday, May 5, 2011. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

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

That, when the order for third reading of the bill is called, one hour shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question ne-

cessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That the vote on third reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

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

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Mr. Phillips has moved government notice of motion number 57. Further debate?

Mr. John O'Toole: I don't know where to start, actually, because this is the most tragic event that has happened this year. In fact, this day is a bad day: Not only are the pages experiencing their last day here at Queen's Park, but you're witnessing another time allocation. What that is is truncating the whole system of democracy. It's cutting off debate. We call it the guillotine motion. It's decapitating the whole purpose of parliamentarians: to speak on issues. It's also a signal, a very profound signal, that Premier McGuinty has lost his way. He has lost respect, I believe, for the people of Ontario—perhaps even for this very precinct. It is most troubling.

In fact, yesterday when I read the paper, I found another sign of this slippery slope we're on: when they announced another price increase for energy. Where is it going to end? It's almost like having someone standing with their foot on your chest. I can hardly breathe.

When I look at the bill—this time allocation, government notice of motion 57. It has been used so many times now that we almost know the motions are there for almost every bill to time-allocate it, which cuts it off. It's routine procedure. But Bill 151 is at the very heart of this. I'm waiting—because there's such limited time. Usually I have an hour, but it's such limited time here to actually get to the point. This is really about northern Ontario being ignored by Premier McGuinty. I should point out that today—this very day, as I speak, Thursday, April 21—our leader, Tim Hudak, is in northern Ontario listening to the concerns of people in northern Ontario. Our leader Tim Hudak is listening.

What was the whole problem with Bill 151? Premier McGuinty would not allow this House to go to the north to hear the people's concerns. They have trouble with the forest industry; we know that. Part of it is because of the price of electricity. Part of it is the price and the HST and the GST all combined into an enormous tax grab, and there is where our leader is, listening to the people who are at the very heart of this time allocation motion.

I know that the speakers who are lined up this morning, I think on both sides of the House—and I can only

speaking for our member from Leeds–Grenville. He knows. He participated in the debate on that bill, the very Bill 151 at the heart here. They put forward amendments, and I know that the member from Timmins–James Bay did as well, from the NDP. We worked side by side for the people of Ontario. Who was missing? The people from the other side, Premier McGuinty's side of the House. Somehow, at the end of the day, they have lost their way on representing all of the people all of the time, as fairly as possible.

I don't blame it entirely on him. I understand that the economy is in trouble. But who has had his hand on the tiller for the last eight years? Premier McGuinty. He can't blame Stephen Harper, which he tries to do every day. He can't blame Tim Hudak: We've been here arguing on behalf of the people of Ontario.

In the last couple of minutes I have, because I want the member from Leeds–Grenville to have the most time today, which is very generous on my part—

Interjection.

Mr. John O'Toole: —and it's actually surprising as well. But anyway, one of the papers that I read fairly regularly is the Working Forest—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): You know what I'm going to say.

Mr. John O'Toole: Mr. Speaker, you're giving me a chance to get a second wind there.

The Working Forest is a very widely-publicized paper. It's not a prop. It's made from pulp from northern Ontario—what can you talk about here?

This article is about wood supply. Here's another error that has been made. It's a false announcement, technically. They announced on January 31—that is, Premier McGuinty. This isn't personal. This is just simply a case where the Premier has lost his way.

Listen to the people. They'll always tell you what's on their mind. He's stopped listening. In this announcement here, they announced that the Atikokan Renewable Fuels plant was going to be making wood pellets, basically. Eventually, the plan to close the coal plants and replace the coal plants. The fuel would then become wood pellets.

0910

Now, wait a minute here. Who are we kidding? Wood pellets: What is wood? Wood is carbon, basically. Trees store carbon dioxide; that's how they grow, basically. It's a little more complicated than that. When you burn it, it releases the carbon. So they're replacing coal with wood. I think that's a step backwards, personally, yet they're investing money.

But this is what Mayor Lee Kennard from Ignace says: "Ignace still has a skilled workforce.... 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...."

"Despite the recent announcements, many people in the existing or potential biomass sector are frustrated with how slowly the provincial government is releasing" the money and getting on with the project.

Really, this time allocation this morning—I've made my point. The Premier is refusing to meet with the people of Ontario. Tim Hudak is up there, along with Randy Hillier from our side, who's the critic on this file. They are listening to the people of the north.

This is a time allocation motion shutting down debate on the very essence of northern Ontario, and it's an insult to this House.

With that, I'm going to pass the baton to my good friend from Leeds–Grenville.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I've got to say, I'm not happy to be participating in this debate. Normally, I start my presentations in the House with how glad I am to debate this issue. But I've got to say, right off the top, I am not happy one bit as a northerner and I'm not happy one bit as a legislator to be debating a time allocation motion on a bill such as this. The government says they're really good at consulting. Well, if you're so good at consulting, why do you have to use time allocation to stop debate on Bill 151?

I just think that this government, quite frankly, has got it wrong. I think the people in northern Ontario are mad, and rightfully mad. I think that the government, in the next election, is going to have themselves all kinds of problems in ridings where they thought they might have been safe to where I think, quite frankly, they're going to be finding they have a heck of a race on their hands and, in some cases, they're going to have some losses they weren't expecting. Why? Because this government has decided to not pay attention to northern Ontario, as other governments have done in the past.

Previous governments—and I'm not going to go into the different brands, because all three parties were there in government: New Democrats, Liberals and Conservatives—have always had an approach in the past that you have to pay some attention to the north. Why? Northern Ontario happens to be two thirds of the land mass of Ontario. We may not control all of the seats—we're only 10 seats in northern Ontario—but almost two thirds of the land mass of Ontario is the north.

The second part is that northern Ontario is extremely important to Ontario's economy. Mining and forestry, which are the mainstay of the economy of northern Ontario, don't only generate jobs and wealth in northern Ontario; they generate all kinds of jobs and wealth in southern Ontario.

Take a look at what's going on right now with the stock merger issue on the TSX. We know that here on Bay Street the majority of the people who work in the financial sector here in downtown Toronto are directly related to the mining industry and what needs to be done to list stocks and sell stocks and to do the kinds of things you need to do in order to get mining companies up and running. A lot of the headquarters are here. My God, even the Australian exchange has a headquarters here in Toronto, because we are the mining capital of the world.

When northern Ontario doesn't do well, my friends, the rest of Ontario doesn't do well, and that's what this

government doesn't seem to understand. They say, "Well, look, things are going well in mining." My God, \$1,500 gold. You don't have to be too bright to make money at 1,500 bucks. The mining sector has a lot of bright people in it. I come out of the gold sector; I used to work in the gold mines back in Timmins in the days when the price of gold was \$300 an ounce. At \$300 an ounce, with substantially less costs than there are today, we were having a hard time trying to turn a profit. If the gold sector is doing well, the government can't say, "Oh, it's all because of what we've done." It's because of the commodity price; we're up to \$1,500. As they say in mining terms, everything is waste until you can make money with it, and then it becomes ore. I tell you, there's a lot more ore in northern Ontario than there is waste in these mines, and there's money to be made.

If you take a look at the forestry sector, it's the opposite. We've lost 30 mills across northern Ontario; mills that have shut down, in 30 communities. Actually, no, it's 30 communities that have lost mills; there are more mills than that. I've lost at least four mills in my riding alone. If you take a look at what's going on in the forest industry, it has been a basket case. People in northern Ontario are upset. They're saying, "Listen, we understand that part of what is going on in the forestry sector and what was happening in mining"—not so much anymore—"is cyclical and is also tied to what's happening with commodity prices. We understand that. We've been at it for a long time in northern Ontario. For 100 years we've been mining and we've been into forestry activities of different sorts. We've been very good at it, and we've been competing with the world quite successfully. But we also understand that government policies are able to assist when you're having sectorial problems when it comes to your particular industry."

When the McGuinty government came to power in 2003, I remember the battle cry back then, as it just started. We were seeing all of these mills that were very profitable and that were making lots of money, and that the market in the United States when it came to the sale of lumber was quite strong. We were making money.

Then we started seeing the market drop, because we all know what happened in the United States with housing starts. We're now below a million housing starts in the United States, something that's unprecedented. You'd never seen that in the history of the United States. We're down in housing stocks in other nations as well. We started seeing the commodity price drop and the demand drop, and what ended up happening was that a lot of these mills were having a hard time trying to make money.

People understood in northern Ontario that there would be tough times, but we had gone through those tough times before. We weathered the storm because governments were there in order to assist. For example, I was a member of a government in 1990, in the NDP government of 1990-95, who went through a similar downturn in the forestry sector. We had mills in Kapuskasing that were going to close down. We had mills in Sault Ste.

Marie; we had mills in Thunder Bay; we had mills in Sturgeon Falls and Timmins and different communities that were facing similar challenges. And the government said, "Listen, let's sit down with the communities and let's sit down with the forestry companies and the unions and figure out what has to be done."

We took a bunch of different approaches. In some cases, where the employers said, "Listen, we don't have enough money. We cannot afford to continue operating. We want out, or we're going to have to declare bankruptcy," we restructured the ownership. In some cases, we ended up with worker ownership, in places like Kapuskasing, in places like Sault Ste. Marie, in places like Thunder Bay, where we got the workers to come to the table with their union. We found a new buyer. We sat down. We brokered the deals.

Yes, we helped finance it to some degree, and those companies were then able to deal internally with their cost structure. They were able to say, "Okay, what do we need to do on the wage and benefits side for a temporary period in order to weather the storm?" And the unions knew what to do. To these people who think that unions only negotiate increases: Listen, when the market is bad, unions know what to do in order to save jobs.

But the point is, we empowered the communities. We empowered the unions to do what had to be done so that we were able to weather that storm. Then when the storm ended, the northern Ontario forestry sector took off like gangbusters. It was booming like we had never seen before. Why? Because the government of the day—in this case, the NDP government—actually sat down with people, consulted and did what had to be done in order to be able to deal with the issues that that sector was facing.

What we have now is a Liberal government who have been in power for the last eight years, who have said, "You know what? We're going to have to let the private sector work this out. The forest companies know what to do, and we've got to let them work it out themselves." And then what they ended up doing on top of that was that they changed the electricity policies in this province. It was started by the Conservative government, but the Liberals took deregulation of hydro and the privatization of hydro to lengths that are unprecedented in the history of Ontario.

As a result, we have doubled the energy prices in northern Ontario. So a lot of those mills that are very energy-intensive, especially the pulp and paper mills and refineries and smelters, like there used to be at Xstrata in Timmins, found it harder and harder to make a buck. They closed their doors, and the government response here was hardly a whimper. They said, "We've got the northern Ontario energy program in order to assist the private sector with their energy costs," but nonetheless, even with those programs, the price of electricity is still more expensive in Ontario than it is in Manitoba or Quebec.

If you are Domtar or Tembec or any one of those national or multinational forestry companies and you decide that you have an operation in Ontario, where the

price of electricity is more expensive than an operation you may have in Quebec and Manitoba, it's a no-brainer where you're going to put your money to invest in modernization and to bring your plant up to the latest standards as far as the technologies of those plants. It's going to be where your costs are lower.

0920

This government, for whatever reason, has decided to take a laissez-faire approach; let the private sector do what it must as an approach to what goes on in northern Ontario.

I look at Mr. Brown going like this. I've got to tell you, Mr. Brown, you're going to be shaking your head after the next election. That's all I can tell you.

People in northern Ontario expect their government to come to the table. They expect their government to be at the community meetings and to be at the meetings that have to take place between municipalities, private sector employers, unions and others in order to come up with solutions. The government, basically, did hardly anything to deal with the cost of what's going on in forestry. They said, "The answer is, we're going to offer money to companies to be able to invest in their plants." Well, they were so far in debt, it wasn't a question of adding debt that was the problem; the question was, they needed to find a way to reduce their costs. The government, I would say, failed at it, and I think the people of northern Ontario understand that quite well.

Then here's the kicker—and this is where it comes down to Bill 151. When the mills started to close down in northern Ontario, one of the first ones was in my riding, Excel lumber in the Tembec plant in Opatatika. The company shut the plant down and the community said—rightfully so, and all of the regional communities and myself took the same position—that if Tembec was to shut down its mill, the government should take the wood back and make it available to the community for a successor employer. At the time, it was Mr. Ramsay who was the Minister of Natural Resources, and he took his direction from Dalton McGuinty, because Mr. McGuinty, the Premier of Ontario, has a laissez-faire approach to economics in Ontario. So they took this position: "You know what? This is only a short-term, cyclical thing. We're not going to take the wood back. We're going to leave it with the companies because they're going to need that wood to reoperate mills when the sector comes back, and rather than having five or six mills, they'll go down to one or two super mills and all of that wood will get cut and transported to some super mills in northern Ontario."

I, along with other community members, said, "No, that's completely the wrong approach. Yes, it might be advantageous, to a degree, for the private sector to operate fewer mills but larger mills, but when it comes to the communities where those mills operate, there are going to be lots of losers and there are going to be few winners." And that's what the communities understood.

The point is, you can still make money. I look at Ben Lecours, who is running Lecours Lumber up in Calstock. He's an individual operator who is still making—well,

he's not making a lot of money in this market, but he has one of the mills that is still operating. It shows that small independent operators—and he's not exactly small; he has 300 people that work for him when they're running full out—are able, quite frankly, to do well as independent operators. It made no sense for Calstock or Hearst or Opatatika or Kapuskasing or Smooth Rock Falls or Cochrane or Kirkland Lake—and the communities go on—to go to super mills.

So this government didn't take the wood back, and I, along with a whole bunch of other people in northern Ontario, said at the time to Minister Ramsay, "Hey, listen. You guys are wrong. When that mill shuts down, the first thing you should do is take the wood back, and then say to the community, 'This is your wood. Go out there and try to find somebody who is interested in using the wood in some form of operation that will create employment in your community.'" And yes, it may not have happened right away with what's going on in this forestry downturn, in the cycle in forestry that we see now, but certainly communities would have been positioned to do something alternative when it came to the use of the wood, or they'd be in a position, when the economy did come back, to know that they could have a successor employer. For communities like Opatatika and Smooth Rock Falls, they really got the short end of the stick, because the government refused to do that. Let me give you the story of the two communities.

Smooth Rock Falls, when they lost the old Abitibi mill—which is a Tembec pulp mill—they lost essentially about 800,000 cubic metres of wood. There was a directive on the licences in surrounding communities that they'd get 800,000 cubic metres of wood in the form of chips. What the community wanted, and what I asked for, was that the government needs to make sure that there's an equal allocation of timber to that community for the future.

So they went out and said, "Okay, what can we do?" Their first proposal was that they found somebody who was interested in starting up a cedar mill in Smooth Rock Falls, something we don't do a lot of in Ontario, where there's good potential. They found the investor. They came to the table with the money and said, "Government, Mr. McGuinty, can we have the wood?" And they said, "No, you can't have it. We're not prepared to go through a redistribution of the resource," and that particular project died. It would have created some 60 jobs in that community.

Then they said, "Well, okay, the government announced they want us to move to use biomass in the forest"—taking the tops of trees and the waste wood and some of the chips and converting it into fuels or converting it into heat in order to make energy. So Smooth Rock Falls and Opatatika went out and were quite aggressive in trying to find people to invest in their communities to be able to go forward with those particular projects. I'll talk about Opatatika in a minute.

Smooth Rock Falls went out, they basically got everything they needed, and they found yet another investor

who was prepared to invest in their community. But the key was to get the wood. The long and the short of the story: They spent all kinds of money in Smooth Rock Falls to get to that point, they go to the Minister of Natural Resources at the time, again, Mr. Ramsay, and they said, "Can we get the allocation of wood? We're ready to go." And the government refused to reallocate the timber. That was wrong. That wood should have been set aside for the community so that if they can find a successor employer, they're able to get a project going based on the wood that would be allocated to the community.

Opasatika is even worse. This is one that really drives me off the deep end. I've got to tell you, the former mayor, Donald Nolet, and the rest of the community members who worked on this project are just fit to be tied. Here's the deal: The government says, after a bunch of meetings and encouraging them to do a biomass project, "Listen, don't come to us for the wood; go to Tembec or somebody and do a business-to-business relationship where you're able to get the wood through an allocation from the licence of an existing operator."

That's a very hard thing to do because the reality is, if I'm Tembec—and I understand this—I'm not necessarily excited about having to negotiate use of my timber because, at the end, it really gets in the way of what I've got to do as a business. They are not in the business of starting up other businesses and doing value added; they're in the business of producing wood for their own mills.

Nonetheless, Opasatika went to the various licence holders, and they ended up with Hearst FMA with an agreement for 100,000 cubic metres of wood. That was pretty significant. Opasatika now had an allocation of 100,000 cubic metres, so they were in the ballpark.

With that 100,000 cubic metres, they were able to get an investor to come to the table who said, "Listen, I'm prepared to invest in your community. On 100,000 cubic metres of wood, we can go ahead with phase 1 of the project by using 100,000 cubic metres of waste wood, and we're going to use that to convert that into energy and/or make some biomass fuel. Then we can work on expanding the mill by getting more wood. If there's a reallocation of wood, we can then get ourselves up to 300,000 or 400,000 cubic metres of wood." Here they were, ready to go.

So the government now, Mr. Gravelle, the Minister of Northern Development and Mines—whom I have a great amount of respect for, I have to say on the record. He basically started an RFP process for underutilized and unutilized wood. At the time when the government announced that, I said that was a good thing. I had been pushing the government, along with communities in northern Ontario, to go through a reallocation process because, up to that point, the government was saying, "Oh, no, we don't have the authority because the act doesn't allow the minister to redirect the wood." I used to say, "Poppycock. Of course the act allows you to redirect the wood." And they said, "Well, how do you know?" I said, "Because I was there when we drafted the legislation." It was 1992 or 1993. I sat on the committee that

drafted it. I was on the cabinet committee. I remember darned well what that legislation was all about, and I remember the conversations about what we wanted in the bill and how it ended up at the end when it was finally voted on here at third reading. I argued, along with others, that the minister and the crown had the right to reallocate timber that was either not being used on an existing licence or was being underutilized; in other words, species that were not being used on an existing licence.

About two years ago—I forget the exact date—Minister Gravelle announced one of the largest reallocations of timber in the history of the province of Ontario, which proves the point that we were right in the first place. The government did have the right to reallocate that timber. I was hopeful, when that announcement was made, that we would then have a process where communities really were in the driver's seat so that the Smooth Rock Falls, Dubreuilvilles, Terrace Bays and Opasatikas out there would be able to go forward and say, "Here is our request of what we want to do with timber. It's sort of a community forest model so that we're able to get the timber in order to do what has to be done in our communities."

0930

The government went through the reallocation process, and what did they do? First of all, before they even made the announcement, the government took back the 100,000 cubic metres of wood that was negotiated by Opasatika from the Hearst FMA. This was after an agreement was signed between the parties. After the Hearst FMA had signed with the entity from the community of Opasatika a contract on 100,000 cubic metres of wood, the government took the wood back.

I said to the minister of the day, "Why are we doing that, Mr. Gravelle? These guys have actually got a use for the timber. They did exactly what you guys asked them to do, which was to spend a lot of time and a lot of money to get an agreement with the Hearst FMA to do a business-to-business relationship on the wood, and now you're taking the wood back." I was told, "What they could do is, they could apply for the wood, and they should be okay." Can you imagine what the investor said? "I've been at this now for two years," says the investor, "and I can go back and start all over again? I've already spent in the hundreds of thousands of dollars to get this far, and now the government of Ontario has changed the game on me. They told me, 'Here are the rules; here's what you have to do in Ontario to start a plant. And all of a sudden, they change the rules.'"

It's a little bit like what the government did with De Beers. De Beers went and built a \$1-billion diamond mine in my riding, and after the fact, when the mine was about to start up, they changed the royalties on the diamonds. It drove the company crazy because they went and sold this project on the basis of how profitable that place could be, and one of the issues that they sold it on is that Ontario—and Canada—is a stable place to do business. My God, how stable can we be when we change the rules after the fact? That's what they did to

the community of Opatatika. So the investor walked away and said, “No, I don’t have the money or the time to go through this all over again.”

It ended up taking another two years before the government did the allocation of timber. And did Opatatika get wood? Did Smooth Rock Falls get wood? They didn’t get a tree, because the government’s allocation process was flawed. So what we ended up doing was, we went to communities—

Mr. Michael A. Brown: Huh.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The parliamentary assistant says, “Huh, huh.” Talk to the people of Dubreuilville. Go talk to the people of Wawa. See how they feel. You go into those communities and say, “Huh,” and you’ll see how far you’re going to get.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: It’s you I’m saying that to.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Don’t say “huh” to me, because I’m saying exactly what the people of Dubreuilville and the people of Wawa are saying. They’re saying, “Here we were. We had mills that were idle, that were shut down because of what has happened in the economy.” In the case of Dubreuilville, they were ready to partially reopen this summer, and the government basically took 200,000 cubic metres away from them, hamstringing them from being able to reopen. A flawed process? Darned right, a flawed process. Are people mad? They are hopping mad.

In the case of Wawa, the Jager mill that opened but 15 years ago, they basically lost all of the wood. The frustrating part is, Wawa is trying to find a buyer for the mill, and the condition of being able to buy the mill is what? You have to have some wood tied to it, and the government took the wood away. You left Wawa high and dry; you left Dubreuilville high and dry, and Sioux Lookout, and the list goes on. And you wonder why people like me are coming to the Legislature, upset with you guys? Because you’re killing northern Ontario. It’s a great place to live. I want to continue living there, and I want my kids and grandkids to live in northern Ontario. And a Liberal government is going to make sure that they scoot from northern Ontario, because there will not be the jobs if we follow the policies of this government.

I can tell you, after the next election, there are going to be some changes—huge changes, if we form the government of Ontario or if there is a minority government.

Interjections.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: You guys can laugh all you want. Take a look at your polls federally and see how you’re doing. My God, what arrogance the Liberals have, I must say. What arrogance. Arrogance: That’s all it is.

In the case of Wawa, in the case of Dubreuilville, here are two communities who are trying to either have somebody purchase the plant to restart it or have a plan to restart it, depending on which community we’re talking about, and the government took back the wood.

The government says, “We have an answer: We’re going to introduce Bill 151.” Bill 151 essentially deals with the allocation of timber and the pricing of wood. Here’s what’s going on now: Communities have been

asking for a community forest model. That’s what the community of Hearst and others have been asking for. I recognize that, for some people, that’s difficult to accept. The larger forest operators, if you talk to them, don’t want the community forest model; I understand that. But from the community perspective, they’re saying, “We need to find a balance between the need to ensure that the large corporations like Tembec don’t have their licences and wood taken away from them”—and if there is wood left over, underutilized or not utilized, communities are saying, “We’d like to have a community forest model.” There are already examples of where we do that in Ontario, to a degree.

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Yes, Westwind, and also Algonquin, to a degree.

So it’s not something that we’ve not done in this province. It has been around for a long time, except we’ve only done it in a few places.

Communities have said, “We want to engage in this Bill 151 dialogue.” The government consulted—and I’m putting it on the record—quite effectively when it came to the pre-introduction of the bill, in what they call the white paper, or what we should put in the bill. The government did travel across all of northern Ontario. They held multiple meetings, without a doubt. There were lots of people who showed up. There was lots of dialogue. I don’t deny that for a second, because it is true.

But here is the problem—and I’m going to speak about two or three different issues, because in Bill 151, there are three issues: There is the community forest issue, there is the licensing issue for large companies, and then there is the whole issue of pricing the wood, and I’ll deal with those separately.

On the issue of the community forest, people were saying to the government, “What we want is a community forest model.” The government then came out with these LFMPs, once the legislation was drafted, and everybody said, “What? We didn’t talk about wanting LFMPs.”

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, they’re going to have a couple of pilots: one in the northwest and one in the northeast.

The problem with the LFMPs is simply this: It doesn’t deal effectively with the underutilized, non-utilized wood. If you really engage in a community forest model process, you really need to go that way. You really need to say, as the crown, as a policy, that if an existing mill doesn’t use its wood and is not able to use its wood, it’s going to go into sort of a community forest, and then you develop the structure by which that is managed, which is a whole other debate.

When the communities looked at what the government did in the bill, it is not what they asked for. So when people in northern Ontario said, “We want you to travel this bill now,” after second reading, it was because what they had discussed prior to the introduction of the bill and what they saw in the legislation was different. That’s

why Mr. Hillier, the member of the Conservative caucus on the subcommittee, and myself said, “We want to at least travel this bill to northern Ontario.”

I was at the foresters’ association meeting in Timmins last Friday, and Bill Thornton, the head of a division of MNR, was there and said, “Well, the reason that they didn’t do it is because the government couldn’t travel this bill because they don’t travel bills when the House is in session.” Well, that is true. But we’re going into a constituency break next week—and that’s what we asked for. We said, “During the constituency break next week”—and we’ve done this a number of times—“let’s travel that bill to four or five communities across northern Ontario and at least have some consultation in places like Thunder Bay, Timmins, Sault Ste. Marie and down in the Peterborough area”—not Peterborough.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: Pembroke.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The Pembroke area. I always get the two mixed up.

We said, “Let’s have the bill go out so that people who were part of the discussion prior to the drafting would be able to at least show up and say, ‘Okay, here’s what’s in the bill. Here’s what I like about it’”—because there are some people who like what’s in this bill, but there are a lot of people who don’t—so that the government can go back and try to fix the bill so it reflects what people wanted in northern Ontario. That’s why we wanted the public hearings.

In the first place, there was no community forest model, as such, in this bill. What you’ve got is an LFMP, which is a very different thing.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: LFMC.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: LFMC, sorry. My acronyms are wrong. Thank you very much, parliamentary assistant. The local forest management corporation, LFMC, is a different model to a community forest than what people expected.

The second part is, inside those LFMCs we’re going to go to a competitive bidding process for the wood. People fear, if you go that way—there are two or three issues. One is, what happens if, for whatever reason, the price of the wood in a depressed market is not enough to deal with reforestation? The crown is going to be on the hook. And if you truly have a competitive wood system, is that right? I think that’s a good question.

Others say, “If we end up in a depressed market of wood and the price is not enough to cover the cost of reforestation, and the government pays for that reforestation, will the Americans see this as something to trigger a countervail against Canada for using government money to subsidize what is a market-based system?” I think that’s a fair argument. I’m going to get lawyers who are going to agree with that and lawyers who will disagree with that. But my point is, the Americans will use it as a trigger for a countervail. That’s what we’re being told.

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The second thing is that what we end up with in a competitive bid system—let’s say that the LFMP is in Mr. Brown’s riding. I’m just going to make this up.

Mr. Michael A. Brown: LFMC.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: LFMC, okay. We’ll put it in my riding then.

Let’s say the LFMC is somewhere up on Highway 11, and now you have about five or six mills that are bidding on that wood: Little John Enterprises, probably people out of Cochrane and Kirkland Lake. They’re all bidding on the wood. And you’ve got a mill in Quebec that operates at a much lesser cost. Why? Electricity prices are less expensive. There are government programs to assist those mills in Quebec that we don’t have here, and their overall cost is lower.

What do you think they’re going to do on the bid of the wood? They’re going to bid higher, so that, at the very least, will drive up the price of lumber for Ontario operators beyond what the market should dictate, because it won’t be only Ontario operators bidding on the wood; it’s going to be whoever wants to bid on the wood. So it’s going to drive the price up, and what people really fear is that we’re going to see even more wood than we have today leave Ontario and go into Quebec if you’re on the Quebec side, into Manitoba if you’re on the Manitoba side, or into the northern United States if you’re up around the Rainy River area. We’re going to see ourselves cutting the trees down, putting the wood on the trucks, and then people in communities that don’t have jobs will be waving their jobs goodbye over the border. That’s what people fear with the competitive bid system.

Right or wrong, northern Ontarians deserve to be consulted on that part. Whether you agree with me or don’t agree with me is not the issue. The issue is that people have raised this as an issue; therefore, the north should be consulted. That’s why the committee should have travelled.

On the last issue: Again, in this whole discussion prior to drafting the bill—and I was at some of those meetings—there was not a huge clamouring of people saying, “We want to go to a competitive wood-bidding system.” I didn’t hear that. I talked to a lot of people who participated at the time, and that’s not what they were asking for. They were asking for a community forest model, those who were advocating that.

The third issue, which is the big one, is the issue of the licence to the existing licence holders. To make it simple, a company like Tembec has a licence to operate wood. It’s a long-term licence that essentially says, “Here’s how much wood you have. It is guaranteed to be yours for a period of 20 years, provided you follow the conditions under the forest management plan.” And Ontario has lots to be proud of when it comes to how well we do in reforestation and forest management in northern Ontario. We are world leaders when it comes to what we do in our forests.

I look at forestry like a farming operation. A farmer sows his fields, he grows his crop and he cultivates it once or twice a year, depending on the crop. In northern Ontario, we have a crop, and it’s called trees. Unfortunately, it takes about 80 years to grow them, so our crop cycle is much longer, but we manage our forests in a

way that it is sustainable. We are doing the right things. When we go to cut the trees, we plan what effects that will have that would be negative against the environment, against the animals, the people who are out there blueberry-picking or have cottages, or hunters or anglers, and if we shouldn't cut in an area, we just don't cut there. That's the way that it essentially works.

Anyway, back to the point of the larger companies: What we ended up with was that the government, in this case, under this bill, said, "We're going to basically put those licences at risk." What they essentially said in the legislation was that the minister, if he or she chooses, could cancel a licence of an existing operator at the stroke of a pen. You can imagine how Tembec, Domtar, Eacom, AbitibiBowater and OFIA reacted. They said, "Whoa. We're financed on the availability of wood and the sustainability of being able to bring wood into our plants. If you, all of a sudden, say that you changed the legislation, that the minister can cancel my licence, if I go to borrow money in order to do something in my plant—expand, modernize, whatever it might be—I'm going to have a heck of a time trying to raise the money, because I don't have the assets to secure the loan." Because the asset is not just the mill; the asset is the forest.

The government is putting that at risk, so we said to the government—not only I but also the people who presented at committee—that that had to be fixed, at the very least. The government—here's the amazing part: Not only did they not go out and consult northerners on any of this stuff; they drafted amendments, and on the day of the committee hearings—we met at 2 o'clock—we got the amendments at 10, if I remember correctly. So at 10 o'clock, I get a package of amendments on my computer that was, like, 230 pages thick. Yeah, the government is going to say, "Well, we only had five." That's beside the point; there are 230 amendments. I had to take a look. They're saying that a lot of the other amendments from the Conservatives are similar. How do I know that unless I look at it? You have to look at every amendment and say, "Oh, yeah, that's similar; oh, that's different." You've got to decide what position you're going to take on those amendments, because who knows what the Conservative amendment might or might not be? I have to take it seriously that there are amendments that I have to deal with.

I said to the government—I had a motion that I brought to the committee that was supported by my friends in the Conservative Party, and it was simply this: My first motion was, "We, New Democrats, oppose this bill in this form and we will not be providing any amendments to the bill because we don't agree with what this bill is doing." What was the use of my putting in amendments on local forest management corporations if I don't agree with them? Why would I try to amend something that I don't want? Why would I amend a pricing system that I don't want? It made no sense to put amendments forward. So we took the position, "We're going to vote against the sections of the bill that we're not happy

with and we're going to vote against the bill in its entirety." So I put a motion forward to make that clear, why we were not doing the amendments.

The second amendment was saying—again supported by the Conservative caucus, and I want to thank them for that: "We need to go out to communities in order to consult in northern Ontario." We recorded the vote; the Conservatives and New Democrats voted in favour of going out to do the consultation. What did the Liberals do? They voted no. A recorded vote: Mr. Brown and all the other members on the committee on the Liberal side voted no. That's where we were at.

The ironic part about all of this is that Mr. Brown is doing all the dirty work for the Liberal government at committee, killing the ability to have hearings in northern Ontario on this bill, but then he goes back to his riding. Then the local media say, "Well, what's all this noise that we're hearing about how the Liberals don't want to travel this bill in northern Ontario?" "Oh, no," says Mr. Brown. "I don't think bills like this should go to cities. I think they should go to communities, should go to all small communities in northern Ontario, like Espanola."

Mr. Michael A. Brown: And they were heard.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Oh, he says they were heard. Oh, my God. Yeah, you'll be heard in the next election; that's all I can tell you.

The point is, he goes into his riding, he gives the impression to the person who picks up the paper that he is in favour of having public hearings in northern Ontario, and he then comes here and puts the boots to the opposition and uses the majority on the committee to kill any opportunity to have any consultation in northern Ontario by the committee travelling there. He's like the quintessential Liberal. He meets with you and says, "Oh, I'm your friend. You have to know I'm your friend. I'm with you," he says. Then he comes to Toronto and says, "Dalton, what dirty work do you want me to do today?" It's just so ridiculous. Man, no wonder these guys are in trouble in places like northern Ontario and southwestern Ontario and other places—

Interjection: Everywhere.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Everywhere, quite frankly.

I just say that the government didn't want to allow this bill to travel. I think that was rather unfortunate.

So then I said, "Okay, listen. We've just now got these amendments. There are five government amendments on which I have no idea if those who presented to us support the amendments or not. We need the time to take the amendments, call the stakeholders, and say, 'How are you on this, that and the other thing?' So let's adjourn the committee until May 4, which is the Wednesday when we're back after constituency break."

The government voted for it. Now, you know as well as I do why they did: They didn't want to stay there with 20-minute divisions until 6 o'clock. They wanted to go to whatever reception was going on that day.

Hon. Carol Mitchell: Oh, Gilles, that is just so rich. Give me a break.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Oh, give me—rich. Oh my God, the Minister of Agriculture, give me a break.

Hon. Carol Mitchell: Give me a break, Gilles.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: So here we were—well, that's the truth. You guys voted for my amendment, and I thank you for it. It at least gave me some time to go and do some consultation with the stakeholders who presented in the Toronto committee hearings. But here is the thing: Now we said, "All right." So we get on the phone. We start chatting with people. I expected there was a really strong chance they'd time-allocate, but I thought, "Are they really going to do it? Are they going to time-allocate this bill after they got beaten up on not travelling to northern Ontario?" At the end of the day, there were some signals from the Conservative caucus: They were not going to be holding up the committee to great lengths with those amendments. That was at least my understanding. I'll let the Conservatives clear the record for them. And there was going to be an opportunity to deal with some amendments when we went back on the Wednesday.

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So what if it took a day or two days to do the clause-by-clause? That's not the end of the world. The government still gets their bill. They're going to be here until the end of May. Even if we took a day or two extra of committee clause-by-clause, the government would still get its bill. So the government says, "No, no, we don't want to even be bothered with that. Not only do we not consult the northerners; we're not going to give the opposition the opportunity to ring bells." Man, can you imagine that, if we rang bells in the committee?

Do they know there's a thing called democracy? I hear Michael Ignatieff run around and say, "Oh, Mr. Harper, he's just stifling democracy in Ontario." He should look at his own provincial cousins here in Ontario and get the lesson about how you stifle debate in this House and how you stifle northerners from being heard.

So I'm going to vote against this time allocation motion, and it's no surprise to you. All I've got to say to my friends in the Liberal caucus is that this is very wrong-headed. Not only are you time-allocating this bill, but not travelling the bill back to northern Ontario at the end, I believe, is a huge mistake. It piles on to what people think about you, which is, "You know what? We've made our mind up about Liberals, and we're not voting for those guys in the next election."

That is clear. We're seeing it on the doorstep as we knock on doors across northern Ontario. I've got to say, this government will pay for its actions of the last eight years, for how they've left northern Ontario and a whole bunch of other places in this province behind.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm glad to join in the debate today. I appreciated the comments on our side of the House from the member for Durham, and I know the member for Oshawa will also make a few comments on the record. Like the member for Timmins–James Bay, I will be voting against this time allocation motion, this guillotine motion, as the member for Durham called it.

I was on the general government committee, and I agree with a number of points that the member for Timmins–James Bay brought forward this morning. When the subcommittee came back on March 30, they had clearly left the mandate with the general government committee to provide hearings in the north. And I think, from some of the points that have been made here today and yesterday when we discussed the opposition day motion and comments in committee, it was clear that that was said as part of the consultation—and there was extensive consultation in the north prior to the minister making comments in January.

The minister made a speech up in the north in January, and I think what put people on alert was the fact that what was talked about during the consultation, the white paper discussion, was different from what the minister said and then different from what was in Bill 151 as it was presented. So there was a real call from people in northern Ontario to have public hearings.

I just want to put a little meat on the bones for what the member for Timmins–James Bay—the committee laid out a pretty good plan. It included going to the north during constituency week, which will be next week. It gave ample opportunity to tour Pembroke, Timmins, Thunder Bay and Sault Ste. Marie during that week, to bring it back and then to do clause-by-clause on May 2.

That was completely—completely—removed from the committee's agenda by the parliamentary assistant, the member for Algoma–Manitoulin, Mike Brown. It was surprising, almost shocking, given what happened at that same committee for Bill 191, the Far North Act. It was almost a mirror image of the deletion of northern consultation at that time.

Then when we had the two days of hearings here in Toronto, it became quite obvious that half of the people—maybe more than half—hadn't been given the opportunity to know what the government was bringing forward in terms of amendments. There was a long list of people who seemed to know what was being proposed by the government, how they were going to change the bill that they had circulated, but many did not.

A lot of municipalities that had participated in those two-day hearings, many of them by videoconference, indicated their strong suggestion that there be northern consultation. That motion was gutted by the member for Algoma–Manitoulin; he deleted numbers (2) and (3), and he moved up the days so we didn't have clause-by-clause on May 2.

As with the member for Timmins–James Bay, we were given a package. I brought the package with me, just to get the right record. It was 267 amendments. This was the amendment package that we received early in the morning on Monday, prior to that meeting at 2 o'clock—267 amendments. Now, I understand from the government that they placed five amendments, the NDP one, with the lion's share of the amendments from our caucus—and I apologize: the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington was the lead as our critic in the committee. A lot of our amendments are really call-

ing for northern hearings. If you look at the package that was presented, it includes many of the northern communities that asked us to come to the north—very pragmatic.

In addition, some of those amendments that we put forward were as a result of some of the deputations, the fact that the LFMCS, the local forest management corporations—I know that we affectionately called them, during second reading debate, tree LHINs or forestry LHINs, this other level of bureaucracy. However, during the hearings, there were a number of discussion points about the two pilots that were being started—one in northeastern Ontario and one in northwestern Ontario—and the fact that after we have the review, after they looked at the pilots, there would be a review process in five to seven years.

The one very clear point that the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington made in committee was that when those reviews take place, they shouldn't be done by the minister, in conjunction with the bureaucrats; that this Legislative Assembly, this body of 107 MPPs, should have a role in that review, almost like a sunset review. Those organizations would be required to come back and to provide some meaningful discussion here in the Legislature about the effectiveness of those two pilot projects.

I'm not encouraged by some of the inclinations I get at committee by the government opposite. I think they've lost their way. Certainly, if the Far North Act or Bill 151 was presented early in their term, I have to believe that they would have consulted northern Ontario by having hearings. But I just feel that they are a bit adrift, that their heart is not in it.

I'm just so concerned that northerners still have issues with this bill and still want this process slowed down. And by slowing it down—I know the parliamentary assistant, Mr. Brown, talked about foot-dragging and talked about us delaying. All we were talking about was using constituency week—which is the norm in this assembly when it comes to public hearings—to take that four days and travel to four or five or six northern communities to give them what they want.

But that's not what was discussed on March 30. Mr. Bisson, Mr. Hillier and myself asked, and this is what Mr. Brown, the parliamentary assistant, said on March 30 in the Standing Committee on General government: "We are about to hear, hopefully, two full days of public presentations to us. People can do this. This is 2011. Hopefully, we can do some of these things by audiovisual means, some of them perhaps just by audio. Many will want to come here. Many of the companies that are involved here are not unacquainted with the city of Toronto and the environs. These are very large companies."

Later, when asked by myself and others whether he felt, because second reading debate collapsed, that they were good to go, he said yes. In fact, he went on to say, "I've said what I needed to say. We need to move on. Northerners have had ample opportunity to comment on this." That was the parliamentary assistant.

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But, as was said by Mr. Bisson, the member for Timmins–James Bay, in the Mid-North Monitor that's not the same story that Mr. Brown had on March 30. He changed his story when he got back up in the north. The quote was when the Mid-North Monitor contacted him: "I don't want to see consultations in the cities, that is what I said, because that is not where the people directly affected by this piece of legislation live," explained Brown. "I want to see the hearings go to the communities directly affected by this legislation, places like Espanola." But there was no motion by the member on having hearings in Espanola. There were no amendments put forward by the parliamentary assistant to go to Espanola.

So there was one story here and another when he got back up north. In fact, he talked about the fact that the PCs suggested video conferencing. Well, we did. But when you read Hansard, clearly it's after he moved his version of the guillotine motion by removing those northern travel days, those northern hearings, off the table.

I'm also on the Legislative Assembly committee, where we talked about video conferencing capabilities, where we discussed that room 151, the Amethyst Room, the room that we met in as the general government committee, could easily provide live streaming of the committee. So we talked about that immediately after because we wanted to use Skype and we wanted to use some of the available technologies to help northerners who were guillotined by the government opposite—the government that made sure we weren't going to the north—so that we would give them more opportunity, and that when we had the hearings in Toronto on those two days, the hearings would be streamed live on the Internet, which I think was one of the first opportunities. But when the government advertised the two hearings, they didn't mention that. In fact, when you looked at the website on the day the hearings were on, it was just a small little line right beside the Queen's Park webcast. It didn't talk about the fact that it was being streamed live, that northerners were given the opportunity to log on to the Internet to watch the proceedings, the companies, the individuals, the First Nations, municipal officials. The government did a really crappy job. But that again goes back to the fact that Mr. Brown had one story here and another story up north.

When we met this week, yes, we did the normal little filibuster. We did the 20-minute break here and the 20-minute break there—again, trying to raise awareness. My hat is off to the member for Timmins–James Bay to place those three motions on the floor. I'm glad that he put on the floor the fact that we could have adjourned on Monday, we could have had an immediate meeting of the subcommittee and we could have made a change; we could have righted the wrong that the committee made on March 30. We could have set up the northern hearings, just as were originally scheduled. We could have spent time next week attending those four, five or six communities to address the concerns of the amended bill, because we had the 267 amendments. It would have given us time to stand in the north and talk to them about the amend-

ments, but that wasn't given. The three members—Mr. Bisson, Mr. Hillier and I—voted in favour. The parliamentary assistant, Mr. Brown, and all of the Liberal members—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I've been letting it go for quite a bit but I'd just remind honourable members that we refer to each other by our riding names or titles.

Mr. Steve Clark: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know that the member for Algoma-Manitoulin kept correcting me yesterday to call him by his name, so I just took that invitation from yesterday, but I will adhere to your ruling.

Hon. Carol Mitchell: Are you arguing with the Speaker?

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm not arguing, Minister, not at all.

So we had the opportunity on Monday to right the wrong from March 30. We could have still visited northern communities. Finally, the government passed the third motion that was presented for us to defer to May 4.

Interjection.

Mr. Steve Clark: And that's right, Mr. Parliamentary Assistant; I'm going to talk about that. That's—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I believe we don't have a quorum.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I'd ask to see if we have a quorum.

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

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): A quorum is now present. The honourable member for Leeds-Grenville has the floor.

Mr. Steve Clark: Again, we could have, in committee on Monday, righted the wrong. We could have travelled to northern Ontario. I know that the member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington did take the opportunity, and I applaud him for that, because he took the time from Monday at 6 o'clock to May 4. He jumped and went up north to talk to people. He has travelled to—

Mr. Michael A. Brown: Is Jack there?

Mr. Steve Clark: No, I'm talking about the member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington.

He has been up in Sault Ste. Marie and Thunder Bay. He has been travelling in northern Ontario, as has our leader, Tim Hudak. Our PC leader, Tim Hudak, the Leader of the Opposition, has also taken the opportunity to travel to North Bay, Sudbury and Thunder Bay. We've taken the time after that adjournment on Monday to go up and speak to northerners about this bill.

I also want to take the opportunity just to talk about a letter that we received on Monday, because I think it's very important to put in the record. It's a correspondence that was copied to members of the committee—at least I received a copy—from the Ontario Forest Industries Association; it's a letter to Minister Gravelle about concerns with Bill 151.

There were five issues that they brought forward in the letter that they still believed that, prior to third reading, there should be amendments to. It goes back to some of the points that were being discussed today.

The first one was something that we heard at committee: the fact that there should be some "inclusion within the preamble of the bill of the background information concerning the aspects of Minister Gravelle's January 13, 2011, announcement, including the initial LFMC limitations." We heard that at committee over and over again, that that initial January announcement by the minister and what was presented in Bill 151 were a bit inconsistent.

Second was the fact that there needs to be "protection measures for validly supported existing and future supply agreements, excepting for the purposes of agreed measured and moderate tenure reforms."

The third one was the amendment that was discussed to "section 27(2) of Bill 151 to include the development of criteria defining 'sufficient and consistent use' within the OFTMA regulation."

The fourth was "the amendment of section 27(2) of Bill 151 to include the development of objective criteria for independent evaluation of various tenure models within an OFTMA regulation."

Finally, "the inclusion of rights of compensation in accordance with the principles of natural justice that are otherwise well enshrined in Ontario law" is referencing Ontario Bar Association correspondence dated April 13 that the committee received.

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So there were still issues brought up by OFIA on Monday. There were still issues that were brought up by the Ontario Bar Association to members of the committee. There are still issues on the table that our party has put forward.

Yes, we are consulting. Yes, the member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington is in the north consulting. Yes, Tim Hudak, our leader, is consulting as Leader of the Opposition. They're doing what the government chose not to do, and that's to give us the opportunity to take those four or five days and travel to the north.

Mr. John O'Toole: Four minutes left.

Mr. Steve Clark: Thanks for the time. Thanks for my shot clock—because I know the member for Oshawa wants to speak

We had lots of opportunity on March 30 and April 4, during the two hearing days, and on Monday to provide those hearings. I know that the Ontario PC Party, through our fine critic the member for Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, put a number of very pragmatic amendments to the committee, and you're cutting it off at the knees. So we will not be supporting this guillotine motion, this time allocation motion. We're committed to consulting the north when it comes to Bill 151.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I thank my colleague for the opportunity to speak on this.

As I've said before, as members of the Legislature, one thing we all have to remember is that so long as the forest continues to have value, it will continue to be a forest. As soon as we remove the value of that forest, municipalities and governments and other aspects will find other purposes for that.

The government went on yesterday talking about the 50 million trees it was wanting to plant and move forward. I think they had eight million trees—the minister was out planting a tree. As my colleague from Timmins–James Bay knows, all you have to do is look at the forest industry in communities like Hearst, where they've planted well over 200 million trees because they care about the forest—they see it as the lifeblood of the communities in Ontario.

All you have to do is look around in the north to know where the lifeblood is. It's the forestry sector and the mining sector. It's those mills that employ people. My colleague from Timmins–James Bay mentioned the fact that one community was going to get 60 jobs out of it. Well, in our community in southern Ontario, if they say you're going to get 60 jobs, they say, "What are they doing? Opening a new Lowes?" No, it's opening a community in the north.

The people in the south and some of the individuals across the floor don't understand that this is the essence of what the north is all about. It's understanding how those trees grow and the viability of jobs and the economy. Whether it's the cutters, the truckers and the plants that process the entire material—to get that out to all the people across the province and throughout North America.

Some aspects are quite surprising. My colleague from Timmins–James Bay mentioned the value of the forest to the communities. Last year, I was in Alberta. I always pick up the small papers when I'm in these communities. This is rather interesting. I picked up the paper and they were advocating a cord of white poplar, which is essentially a large-tooth aspen—the poplar that is used by a lot of the mills here. A cord of white poplar was selling for \$450. Let me put that in perspective. About seven years ago, you could buy a tree that last year I paid \$76 for—because I'm building a log cabin, as some members know—it was \$700 for the same tree. To get \$450 for a cord of white poplar in Alberta is certainly more than reasonable, because that's one of the quality woods out there, from the perspective of what they're able to grow, whereas that same tree to the pulp and paper companies may represent about \$15 or \$20. The difficulty now is, that tree becomes very viable in order to cut, process, split and ship out to Alberta at the very prices that they're trying to sell that product at.

Some of the other aspects of this legislation—quite frankly, we're talking about a closure motion here and shutting down the debate, which a lot of individuals, particularly in the north, have concern with, as do we, because we know what it means to those northern communities.

The new local forest management corporations: One of the concerns with that is, what is going to be the

makeup of that? Is it going to be individuals from southern Ontario who are going to come forward and be the ones who are going to be appointed to these boards, to once again make decisions in northern Ontario that don't apply to the north? We have to ensure that these individuals have complete compliance with what's taking place in their communities.

There were a number of locations where community forests were taking place. As the member from Timmins–James Bay mentioned, the Algonquin–Westwind model is one that's working very effectively. Those individuals have a say in which way the fibre is going to flow and what's going to take place.

Quite frankly, a lot of this bill—if you just have a look at what it states in the Working Forest in regard to the number of operators in the particular area—Mr. Brian Nicks, I believe, was going on to say that the number of management units would drop from 43 to about five or 15. That has a lot of concerns, and I know we are concerned very specifically about what's taking place in that aspect.

If you're looking at the number of players in this, the small players in the small communities have a big say in what takes place for employment.

I think, Mr. Speaker, you're giving me the sign that the shot clock is just about over, as the member mentioned, so I will close at that.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): It being just about past 10:15 of the clock, this House stands in recess until 10:30, at which time we'll have question period.

The House recessed from 1016 to 1030.

WEARING OF RIBBONS

Hon. Charles Sousa: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I believe we have unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear ribbons in recognition of National Day of Mourning.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Bob Delaney: I'm very pleased to introduce the executive of the Probus Club of Streetsville and some of their spouses. Joining us today in the members' east gallery are Lou Pinarello; Phil and Alison Saunders; Harold and Ruth Anne Jaques; Murray Scott; John and Diane Wilton; and Wayne and Loreen Chambers. They're here to watch question period and to get a tour of the building today. Please welcome the Probus Club of Streetsville.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I'd like to introduce some guests of mine today. First of all, I have Christine Poland, the mother of our page, Travis Poland; and her brother-in-law, his uncle, Steve Poland, who's also here.

Also with me, for my bill today, Bill 180, my private member's bill, are Lauren Whitwham from Union Gas; James Whittaker from Union Gas; and Jim Douglas from

the Ontario Regional Common Ground Alliance. Please welcome them to Queen's Park for my bill today.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I'm delighted—we should all be delighted—to have in the members' gallery today Dr. David Hulchanski, who is associate director of the Cities Centre and a professor at the University of Toronto. Beside him sits his daughter, Tessa, from Ursula Franklin school, and beside her sits Mary Todorow, who is a policy analyst for the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario. I'm delighted to have them.

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I'd like to introduce Dr. Harshinder Kaur, who's in the west gallery. She's from Punjab, India, and is currently visiting my residents in Brampton–Springdale. Dr. Kaur is a crusader for women's rights and has launched an international awareness campaign to highlight female foeticide and infanticide. A consultant pediatrician, Dr. Kaur has held hundreds of free medical camps and has adopted over 300 underprivileged females, providing financial assistance in their pursuit of higher education. Her work is globally recognized and has won her many international awards, including a lifetime achievement award for service towards humanity by the government of Canada.

In addition, Dr. Kaur will be the keynote speaker at this Sunday's Nagar Kirtan, being hosted by the Ontario Sikh and Gurudwara Council. It will end here on the south lawn of Queen's Park.

Dr. Kaur is joined by Tehal Singh Brar, the coordinator of the Punjabi Press Club; Daljinder Singh Puar, a former employee in my constituency office; Councillor Raj Sandhu from Bradford; Jagmohan Sahota; Sulakhan Singh Atwall; Sarbhjit Sandhu; and Harpal Randhawa, who is a small business owner in my riding. Please join me in welcoming them to Queen's Park.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's my pleasure to introduce Mark Calzavara, regional organizer of the Council of Canadians. Mark and others are participating in a five-day walk from Queen's Park to Shelburne, starting tomorrow, to raise awareness about the environmental dangers of a proposal for a massive open-pit mine north of Shelburne.

Mr. Reza Moridi: It's my pleasure to introduce Dr. Adeli from Sick Kids hospital, and Dr. Zamani, Dr. Madanni and Dr. Khavarian from the Universities of Isfahan and Tehran, sitting in the members' gallery.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It is a pleasure for me to welcome Carl Cosack from NDACT, representing the North Dufferin Agricultural and Community Taskforce. He is also here to participate in the walk starting tomorrow—and, in fact, it's going to Melancthon.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I'd also like to acknowledge and welcome to this House Mr. Wayne Chambers, who was my first boss at Royal Bank of Canada 23 years ago.

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: April 23 is International Children's Day. With us to help us celebrate International Children's Day are a number of people who began the International Children's Day festivals in Turkey in 1929. First, with us is the teacher of the Nil Academy, Fatih Kirmizci. Then there's Fatih Yegul, who's the executive

director of the Anatolian Heritage Federation, and Ahmet Tamirci, who's the executive director of the Intercultural Dialogue Institute.

Mr. Speaker, as you probably know, this afternoon at 4:30 there's an exceptional reception for International Children's Day, and all members are cordially invited.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: It's my privilege this morning to introduce Peter Price, who is the son of the revered and sometimes feared Carrol Price, who works in the government whip's office. Peter is here with us today, and we're very delighted to have him here today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HYDRO RATES

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is to the Premier. Premier, you tried to sell Ontario families on your green energy experiments by promising that they would add only 1% to the energy bills that they pay—promise made, promise broken. Then you conceded it would be 46%—promise made, promise broken.

In fact, your list of broken promises has grown longer than Pinocchio's nose on a bad, bad day. You've blown well past your lowball estimate of what Ontario families will pay for your expensive energy experiments. Premier, what is your new number? Is it in triple digits?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Here's something that is in the triple digits: It has been 662 days since the leader of the official opposition has had that responsibility, and they have yet to put forward any kind of a plan on electricity—662 days.

I would again recommend to my honourable—
Interjection.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: If he would pay attention, I would recommend to my honourable colleague that he visit the Ontario Energy Board website. There has been all kinds of talk, of course, about rates and prices and costs associated with electricity. I would strongly recommend that he visit the Ontario Energy Board website.

In the supplementaries, I will speak about the reliable information that we can find on that very site.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Premier, there are less than 170 days till the election. That's the one you should keep in mind.

I can understand that the Premier is preoccupied with the sex ed curriculum since he backtracked on sex ed classes for six-year-olds a year ago. But even a grade 2 student can do the math.

Hydro bills are skyrocketing. The Ontario Energy Board says so in the other 99% of their report that you gloss over. They say that "electricity is costing more.... How we're producing it and the types of generation we're using are costing more." The OEB confirms what every Ontario family and senior already knows: Keep a

defibrillator nearby when opening hydro bills because they are going through the roof.

But the real question is: Just how much more will Ontario families and seniors pay because you refuse to stop your expensive energy experiments?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I welcome the question.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I remind the member from Leeds, who's not in his seat, that if he's going to choose to sit in that seat, he should be sitting there silently.

Premier.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: It's interesting that my honourable colleague, whose questions are always gratefully received over here, refers to our investments in clean energy and our determination to shut down coal-fired generation in Ontario and to clean up the air as "an experiment."

I would ask him to turn to his colleagues the MPPs for Burlington, Haldimand–Norfolk, Leeds–Grenville, Cambridge, Sarnia–Lambton and others whose names escape me at this point in time and ask them, "Why do they keep showing up at our announcements for clean energy jobs in their ridings?" They're doing that because they support those jobs, and they're doing that because their constituents support those jobs.

1040

The people of Ontario want us to continue to pursue clean energy opportunities. They want us to pursue clean energy jobs—

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Leeds.

Please continue.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It is clear that the Premier himself has not seen a hydro bill in a good long time. Stop insulting Ontario families by thinking they can be fooled by lame claims that hydro bills have flatlined, and stop ignoring the 99% of the Ontario Energy Board's report that says electricity is costing more, like where they say the increase in hydro is due to "changes in supply mix" and because "costs that contribute to the global adjustment are expected to increase." Note that they did not say "expected to flatline."

The OEB says that hydro bills are expected to increase because of your \$7-billion Samsung sweetheart deal, the Big Becky boondoggle and all those contracts you've signed to pay up to 80 cents for five-cent power. When will you stop insulting families and admit that your expensive—

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

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I would recommend to my honourable colleague that he visit the Ontario Energy Board website and see the sample bill that has been posted there, which shows that, year over year, last

May to this May, and whether you are on a tiered system or the time-of-use system, it shows clearly that it's a wash. It's the same. Bills have in fact stabilized.

Again, I would refer my honourable colleague to statements made by his colleagues. Here's one made by the MPP for Haldimand–Norfolk: "Our area has significant economic and geographical potential for solar energy generation." The MPP for Leeds–Grenville: "Building future jobs in the renewable energy field is clearly the way to go." I would encourage my colleague opposite to speak to his colleagues and get with the system. It's time for clean, renewable energy in the province of Ontario.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Peter Shurman: Back to the Premier: Premier McGuinty is so desperate and so out of touch, he won't give up claiming that hydro bills are the same this year as they were last year. You want families to compare from May 1 to May 1, but if you turn the clock back one day to April 30, it would account for the 36% increase in hydro rates, and if you count the increases to hydro bills that take effect May 1, it accounts for 23% more. That's a 50% increase in just two days. Nice try, Premier. Have you ever even seen a hydro bill? What made you think Ontario families would buy your lame claim that they aren't paying more?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The Minister of Energy.

Hon. Brad Duguid: As the Premier said, I recommend to the members opposite that they have a look at the regulated price plan as put out by the Ontario Energy Board. It's very obvious that they have yet to do that, because this is what it says, and I quote directly from the Ontario Energy Board. This is the province's independent regulator. This isn't us saying it; it's the Ontario Energy Board: that "a comparison of May 2010 and May 2011 shows overall the total bill has remained relatively flat as a result of the introduction of the Ontario clean energy benefit."

Now, they put on their website a comparison of somebody's bills, because what Ontario families want to know is whether the bills have gone up from last year. The answer from the Ontario Energy Board is no; they've remained flat.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Eight years ago, you came to office promising to keep hydro rates under control, but somewhere along the way, you grew out of touch and now Ontario families pay 150% more for time-of-use pricing. You've made such a mess, local hydro companies have begun a rebellion by refusing to install your smart meter tax machines. They hear from Ontario families and seniors who say they cannot afford to pay for your expensive energy experiments. The Ontario Energy Board agrees. It gave Cambridge and Thunder Bay hydro companies a reprieve on installing the smart meter tax machines. Ontario families and seniors get that your expensive energy experiments are driving up the cost of hydro bills they pay. Local hydro companies get it. The OEB gets it. Why can't you?

Hon. Brad Duguid: As I said earlier, Speaker, they can torque it any way they can try to torque it, but the Ontario Energy Board has been very clear. Bills have been flat between last May and this May. That's good news for Ontario consumers. It's bad news for those guys, because it's very obvious now that bills are stabilized in the province of Ontario.

But while bills have stabilized, we're continuing to invest in our efforts to move from dirty coal, which they support, to cleaner sources of power, which we support, to modernize our energy system, which we also support. They want to go back to the old, outdated system. Ontario families deserve better.

We're creating thousands of jobs in our clean energy economy. That's where we stand: with Ontario workers—thousands of clean energy jobs. We're leading the world in this clean energy economy. They want to kill those jobs. Given the choice—

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

Mr. Peter Shurman: Don't you compare May to May; you compare April 30 to May. Only McGuinty Liberals could be so out of touch to believe that Ontario families will buy that they pay the same for hydro as last year.

Municipalities and local hydro companies see through your phony spin that Ontario families pay the same for hydro as last year. The Ontario Energy Board has already surrendered to two hydro companies that are refusing to install your smart meter tax machines, and 14 more local hydro companies have joined the smart meter tax revolt, including London Hydro, Hydro Ottawa, EnWin and Enersource. They haven't given up on Ontario families, and neither have we. An Ontario PC government will unplug your smart meter tax machines to give seniors and families relief. Why won't you?

Hon. Brad Duguid: The Ontario Energy Board made it very—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Order. Minister?

Hon. Brad Duguid: The Ontario Energy Board made it very, very clear this week. Year over year, bills are flat. It's good news for Ontario consumers; it's bad news for the opposition, because they just can't make it up anymore with credibility.

I ran into somebody on the weekend who happened to run into the Leader of the Opposition at Future Shop. We know that they're against the modernization of our energy system, but the Leader of the Opposition was a little bit upset at Future Shop on the weekend. The reason was that he found out they're no longer carrying the Commodore 64. That's where they're at.

We're for modernization. We're modernizing our energy system, we're cleaning our energy system, we're creating jobs, and we're doing it in a way that stabilizes the energy bills of Ontario families. We're determined to move forward—

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

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. Many Ontario families are struggling. They've been hit hard by job losses and flatlined wages and by rising home heating and hydro bills. When they see public sector executives receive secret golden handshakes of hundreds of thousands of dollars or more, it makes them angry. Will the government support the NDP's bill to make government spending more transparent by posting severance payments on the sunshine list?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I appreciate the question from my honourable colleague and the sentiment that informs it. I know that my honourable colleague is going to want to recognize the steps that we've taken—and they have been considerable—to introduce more accountability and more transparency, whether it's expanding the ambit of the freedom-of-information legislation or giving more authority to the auditor to take a look at colleges, universities and hospitals, for example; whether it's the new rules we've put in place, curtailing expenditures for travel and advertising; whether it's requiring the auditor to, in fact, take a look at the books and approve those before we go into the election, so that nobody can ever again hide a \$5.6-billion deficit—no names mentioned.

I think our record reveals that we have done much. There's always more to do, and I appreciate the advice being offered by my colleague.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Ontarians expect their tax dollars to be used wisely in a time of cuts to front-line health care services, to emergency rooms and to nurses. It's unacceptable for public sector executives, some of whom have been fired or resigned in disgrace, to receive secret golden handshakes of six figures or more. It is just wrong. Why won't this Premier commit, at least, to making these severance payments public?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I was with my honourable colleague in terms of the general direction of her argument, but we part company when she insists that somehow we've been making cuts to health care. There is no foundation in fact for that, and my honourable colleague knows that.

1050

Let me tell you about some of the things we have been doing in hospitals. First of all, as my colleague will know, we've introduced freedom-of-information legislation to cover them. We've given the additional authority to the auditor to take a look at our hospitals. We have new accountability agreements that we're entering into with our hospitals. We have new provisions that require that CEO pay be directly connected to the quality of the care being provided by the hospital itself. We're also making sure that hospitals are subject to the 10% reduction in their executive offices.

Those are all steps in the direction which I understand my colleague would embrace, but again, we part company if she insists that we've made cuts to health care, because we have not.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: If I was this Premier, I'd be asking the people of Port Colborne and Fort Erie whether they think that there's been a cut, considering that their emergency wards are now closed.

This is about priorities. The McGuinty government chooses to secretly hand out hundreds of thousands of dollars to well-connected public sector executives while our health care system suffers. On April 7, the government services minister was asked if he would cap severances. He said, "We are moving towards that. We will do whatever is required to manage expenses."

The NDP's Bill 177 is a small step towards doing that by making severances public. Why won't the Premier commit here and now to supporting it?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I just want to remind my honourable colleague about some of the things that we've done with respect to health care. I believe we've hired 11,000 more nurses and 2,900 more doctors. We are building 18 new hospitals. We started with zero, and now we have 200 family health teams which are going to care for three million Ontario patients. We have the first nurse practitioner-led clinics in all of North America; in fact, we're putting 25 in place. Ninety-three per cent of Ontarians now have access to a family doctor; 1.2 million more Ontarians now have found a family doctor. Wait times: We didn't measure wait times at all before. Now we've been found to have the shortest wait times in the country.

We're not all the way there yet; there is more to be done. But surely my honourable colleague will acknowledge we are moving in the right direction.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also to the Premier. The Premier likes to talk a good game about openness and transparency, but his actions are anything but. As he prepares to keep severance packages a secret, why is he also sneaking through an amendment to the freedom-of-information rules that would allow hospitals to keep documents from public scrutiny?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I welcome the opportunity to talk about this. The amendment that was included in the budget bill is an important amendment because it protects patient safety. That's what this is all about. We have introduced quality legislation in this House. It received unanimous consent.

We are determined to improve quality across our health care sector, starting with hospitals. Hospitals are charged with a very serious responsibility. They have to report on quality indicators, and they develop annual quality improvement plans so that the public knows that quality is improving in those hospitals.

In the supplementary, I'll be more than happy to talk more about how quality is improving in our hospitals.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Pinocchio virus seems to be spreading over there.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock since the government's going to be interjecting.

One of the challenges, certainly, in the Speaker's chair is trying to focus on somebody asking a question but as well trying to deal with interjections at times. It was brought to my attention that, in trying to deal with a minister and bringing a minister to order, I may have missed a comment earlier that I probably should have asked to be withdrawn, but I did miss it.

But I will ask the leader of the third party to withdraw the comment that she has just made, please.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I withdraw, Speaker.

The bottom line is that the Premier and his minister are quickly running out of credibility when it comes to the issues of openness and transparency. They refuse to give the Ombudsman oversight over hospitals. They're allowing hospital executives to pocket sky-high salaries and walk away with six- and seven-figure severances, even when they leave in disgrace. Now they want hospitals to be less accountable to the public than ever before.

When a loved one gets sick and something goes wrong, people simply want answers. Why is this government making sure they won't get those answers?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The member opposite might want to make a joke about patient safety, but I tell you that on this side of the House we take it very, very seriously. The member opposite should understand that we're talking about lives. We're talking about people who are unnecessarily dying because quality is not as high as it could be. We're taking action on that.

Tom Closson of the Ontario Hospital Association has described our quality legislation as, "Could be the single most important piece of legislation since the creation of our publicly funded health care system." Hospitals will be required to report on a number of indicators: C. difficile rates, MRSA, VRE, hospital standardized mortality rates, and primary-line blood infections. Improving quality is the highest priority for us right now, and—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The only joke is the mockery this government is making out of the idea of transparency and accountability. I have to say that the secrecy in our public health care system that this government is prepared to implement is unacceptable. The minister is not coming clean about the fact that they buried an amendment in the budget bill that puts to waste their idea of FOI in the hospital sector. That's exactly the truth, and this minister knows it.

Ontarians need and demand full transparency and accountability, especially from their hospitals. Why are this Premier and his minister trying to ram through a legislative change that would create the exact opposite? What are they trying to hide?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Opening hospitals to freedom-of-information legislation is not exactly hiding anything. As I said, improving quality in our hospitals is a high priority for us. In order to improve quality, con-

versations about how to do that, understanding where those problems are and what needs to be done to improve quality, have to take place in an environment of confidentiality. Our patients' lives depend upon it. I'm not overstating this.

The Ontario Hospital Association and the OMA did ask for complete exclusion of this information. We did not go that far. We struck a balance. We have an exemption. The IPC can review the requests for information. The IPC is an independent officer of this Legislature. I trust her judgment when it comes to releasing information.

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. Frank Klees: My question is to the Premier. The Minister of Finance and the Minister of Health have repeatedly refused to answer questions relating to the financial arrangements between the Ministry of Health and Ornge, the organization under contract with the government to deliver air ambulance services. According to Tom Lepine, chief operating officer at Ornge, taxpayers have no right to that financial information. Does the Premier agree with the chief operating officer that Ontario taxpayers have no right to the financial information of an organization that receives millions of dollars from the Ministry of Health every year?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Ornge, of course, is an ambulance service. They provide critical air ambulance services to Ontarians in many parts of this province. In fact, throughout the province we rely on Ornge to get people to the care they need as quickly as possible. Through Ornge we have been able to increase access to emergency medical transportation, especially for Ontarians in northern and remote communities.

We fund Ornge through a transfer payment agreement. We have an accountability agreement with Ornge ensuring that they provide Ontarians with air ambulance services, with base hospitals, with organ recoveries and with air paramedic training certification. They provide over 20,000 admissions a year, which improves health care for Ontarians.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: One hundred and fifty million dollars are being transferred to this organization by the Ministry of Health every year, and the taxpayers are told they have no right to know how those funds are being allocated. A creature created by the government that claims it is not a government agency, yet it has 116 employees on the government's sunshine list—a so-called not-for-profit organization that has spawned a number of for-profit entities under its umbrella and refuses to disclose financial information.

1100

I'd like to know this from the Premier: How can the Premier ignore the potential for conflict in this organization that receives multi-millions of dollars of government funds while at the same time operating a number of for-profit entities? Can the Premier see the conflict?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The member opposite would know that Ornge is a non-profit corporation. It receives government funding. As a result, they are required to report to the sunshine list any employees that make over \$100,000 per year. I understand that they have frozen non-union compensation since 2008.

I'm sure the member opposite is interested to know that the Auditor General is in fact looking at Ornge right now and is doing a value-for-money audit. I know we certainly all look forward to the results of that audit.

TENANT PROTECTION

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is also to the Premier. In Ontario today, tenants who pay for their utilities as part of their rent could still have their vital services cut off if the landlord fails to pay the bills on time. In January of this year, tenants in a three-storey apartment complex, Ellrose Manor in Windsor, had their power cut off in the dead of winter. The tenants paid their utilities as part of their rent. However, they were left out in the cold because their landlord failed to pay their bill.

I'm introducing a bill today that would protect tenants from having their utilities cut off. It's supported by David Hulchanski from the University of Toronto and also Mary Todorow and the members of ACTO, among many, many others in the province. Will this government also support this bill and ensure protection for all tenants in Ontario?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: I want to welcome ACTO here to the House today as well. We had a very positive, very proactive meeting just a month and a half ago. They are very important stakeholders—partners—in tenant advocacy, and I appreciate that they're here.

I wonder, though, if the member for Parkdale-High Park has told ACTO of her party's record when it comes to protecting tenants in Ontario. They voted against reforms to the Residential Tenancies Act, which doubled fines for landlords who fail to protect vital services. They voted against reforms that provide fairer hearings for disputes through the Landlord and Tenant Board. They voted against reforms to the rent increase—

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: This from a government who is now in active violation of the United Nations human rights charters and laws when it comes to housing, and has condemnation on their record from the special rapporteur.

To get back to tenants, however: They suffer the consequences of the loss of vital services, which in some situations means being forced from their homes, even though they're absolutely blameless. There's no protection for tenants who are third party victims in such cases.

The minister will know that most of our population who fall into vulnerable categories are renters: elderly, newcomers, those who require support services. Many

live alone or don't have extensive networks of family and friends. Some do not yet fully understand their rights or even English. The loss of vital services in their rental housing can have a devastating impact.

I ask again: Will this government protect tenants in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: First of all, we're very proud of Bill 140, the bill that this House unanimously supported, including the member from Parkdale–High Park.

Just to reinforce: The NDP is the party that voted against reforms to the Residential Tenancies Act that doubled fines for landlords who fail to provide vital services. They're also the same party who voted against \$2.5 billion for affordable housing, which has benefited 680,000 low-income tenants across Ontario. She called our \$1.2-billion investment—at the height of the recession—in affordable housing “crumbs.” I don't think ACTO agrees with that.

We are very, very proud of our record. We will compare our record in advocacy—

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

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Rick Johnson: My question is to the Minister of Energy. Minister, there has been great interest in the microFIT program in my riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock. It seems that there are farmers on every side road who have installed solar systems and are enthusiastically buying into our government's green energy plan. I am told by my rural caucus colleagues that this is happening across rural Ontario.

Could the minister provide the House with an update as to the number of microFIT projects feeding clean, green energy into the grid to date, as well as the economic benefits realized as a result of this program and our government's forward-thinking plan?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I want to thank the member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock for that question. Indeed, our microFIT program has been a tremendous success. I'm pleased to hear that so many of his constituents are taking an active role in helping to grow Ontario's clean energy economy and build a healthier, more prosperous future for our kids and our grandkids.

I can tell the member right now that over 5,000 small renewable energy projects are feeding clean energy into Ontario's grid, and an additional 5,000 projects have now been green-lighted for connection as soon as their installations are ready.

Many, if not most, of these microFIT participants are farmers, and they're supplementing their farm income with clean energy. That's providing those families with an extra \$10,000 a year, on average. That's a great help to our farming community. It's a great asset to the—

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

Mr. Rick Johnson: I'm encouraged by the level of interest in and the success of the microFIT program. I know it's creating good-paying jobs in my riding. So I was extremely disappointed when I received an email from the owner of a booming green energy business. My constituent Mr. Randy Burke of Evergreen Energy Solutions had asked Ms. Laurie Scott, PC candidate, to clarify her party's plan for the microFIT program. Ms. Scott's response in an email was, “We will shut down all of the planned expansion of that unaffordable, unworkable microFIT plan. There will be no”—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just remind the honourable member to be speaking about government policy.

Mr. Rick Johnson: Minister, my constituent fears that countless good clean energy jobs across the province are on the chopping block, the very jobs that support so many families that her party claims to respect. Can you outline for my constituent and for rural Ontario the impact of such a move on our energy economy?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I think it's very important that the member brought this up today in the Legislature, because we've worked very hard to create jobs right across the province. In rural Ontario and urban Ontario, jobs are being created. Quite frankly, what the PCs are proposing would have a devastating effect on our clean energy—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just reminded the questioner to talk about government policy. I say to the minister: Talk about government policy.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, jobs are a priority for this province; they're not a priority for the opposition. The plan of the opposition would kill those jobs—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): You're obviously not listening.

New question.

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. Frank Klees: To the Premier: Taxpayers expect us to get answers to the basic questions we've been asking about the financial affairs at Ornge, a not-for-profit charitable organization created by fiat of this government under the direction of a former Minister of Health. The minister's chief of staff now has a senior position at Ornge.

Multi-millions of public assets were absorbed by that organization without public tender. Overhead, administration, salaries and capital costs are paid by taxpayers. For-profit entities are doing business under the same roof, and there is no disclosure of the financial relationship of those businesses.

I ask again: Does the Premier not share our concerns over the potential conflicts inherent in this organization, and will he not agree to ensure that—

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

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: As I said in the earlier—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: As I said in the earlier question, I am delighted that the Auditor General is, in fact, looking at Ornge. I want to assure you that Ornge is co-operating fully with the Auditor General. We are looking forward, as we always do, to what the Auditor General recommends to us. As we have always done, we will respond to the recommendations of the Auditor General. We look forward to that.

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The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: Now we know why the “A” is missing from Ornge: It obviously stands for accountability, and it’s nowhere to be found anywhere in that organization.

I want to ask the Premier this: Since this issue was raised here in the Legislature I have received numerous emails from employees, people in administration, pilots and paramedics in that organization giving inside information about what is going on there. Will the Premier agree to personally accept delivery of those emails and will he agree to personally read the content of those emails so that he can know first-hand what is going on at Ornge?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Of course we would welcome that information, and I’m sure the auditor would, too. If you’ve got information you’re willing to share, we’re sure willing to accept it and pass it on to the Auditor General. Perhaps you might have done that, actually, yourself—

Interjections.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: Perhaps the minister should have been looking into this herself.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Member from Renfrew.

Minister?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, you know—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): It didn’t take the member from Renfrew long. I just called him to order. I sit down, he interjects. Your seatmate right beside you wants to hear the answer.

Minister?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We are not going to be taking any lessons on accountability and transparency from the party opposite. They are the party that hid a \$5.5-billion deficit. We passed a law requiring the Auditor General to sign off on the books of the province before the election. They are the party that kept OPG and Hydro One off the sunshine list. We are the party that brought them back on. They refused to include OPG, Hydro One, universities, hospitals under—

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

STEEL INDUSTRY

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Premier. On March 23, I questioned the Premier about US Steel moving Canadian-processed coke offshore for processing. The Minister of Economic Development and Trade responded, “There is a lot of information that we are not aware of, in terms of resources moving in and out....” And she further said, “We don’t want to respond to questions where we simply don’t know what the facts are about what the company is doing on-site.”

It’s been four weeks since the minister gave the response. Does she have the facts and could she now tell us why the Premier and his government have taken no action to stop the removal of processed coke which should be used to produce steel in Hamilton?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I do appreciate the question because our ministry does follow up on a regular basis with US Steel about the situation in Hamilton. The government of Ontario does not have access to the level of detail within operations of a company. We don’t know where their feed stock necessarily comes from, we don’t track it, we don’t know necessarily where it’s being exported to, and the government of Ontario does not necessarily track that either.

In this instance, we are very mindful that the Ontario government played every role that we could play in resolving the negotiations that at this time don’t seem to even exist between US Steel and its employees. We’re concerned because there are hundreds of families in Hamilton who want to work. That’s very important to this government, and we want to do everything that we can to help.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Paul Miller: This past Sunday, locked-out workers from Steelworkers 1005 took desperate action that this government should be taking. They braved foul weather to block a ship from taking out Hamilton coke to another site for steel-making, taking our Hamilton jobs with it. The mayor of Hamilton supported these workers, but where was the government?

Why does the McGuinty Liberal government refuse to stop the removal of coke from Hamilton and help these locked-out, unionized workers get back to work in steel plants in Hamilton?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I just want to say, especially to the people of Hamilton, that the local member of provincial Parliament, Sophia Aggelonitis, the people that we’ve been working with at US Steel—we are determined to play a role that we can play to be helpful. What this member opposite is expecting, I think there is no government level that could possibly be involved in that level of detail within a company, and I don’t believe that the public expects that we would.

What’s important is that we expect that member opposite’s support when we have 300 people hired who used to work at US Steel who were laid off, where we

brought in foreign direct investment by Max Aicher to reopen bar and bloom mills that were closed in 2009—reopened by Max Aicher within six weeks of them landing in Ontario, and 300 new jobs in that community—

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

ONTARIO ECONOMY

Mr. Dave Levac: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Trade. A few days ago, I came upon an interesting article in our local newspaper, the Brantford Expositor, which discussed the Financial Times' latest foreign direct investment report, the FDI report. The FDI report stated that for the second consecutive year, Ontario and California have been named the top two destinations for foreign direct investment in North America. This is very encouraging news.

Minister, what does this mean to the average Ontarian? How does being number one in foreign direct investment affect our daily lives, particularly the constituents in my riding of Brant?

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I think it is important that every now and then, we have people from around the world who are watching Ontario closely. When reports like the foreign direct investment report that comes out on an annual basis are tabled, all of the world is watching to see who ranks number one.

Let me tell you how proud I am to be part of a Liberal Dalton McGuinty government, where Ontario is ranked number one in foreign direct investment. This province is equal to a great state like California. There's a difference between Ontario—little Ontario compared to big California. Yet here we are ranking number one in the number of jobs that land in our province because of foreign direct investment.

This is critical to the people of Brant, to the people of Windsor, to the people of Sudbury, because it means jobs—real jobs. While the world is still shaking and turning their way out of the recession, we're starting to see Ontario flourish.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Dave Levac: I, for one, am not going to get in the way or mess with the minister when it comes to fighting for jobs in Ontario. I'm just going to make sure that she gets it done, and I want to support her for doing that.

The FDI report certainly shows that Ontario's economy is turning the corner, and it's being done through various investments and strong policy.

Minister, I know that the McGuinty government and, specifically, your ministry and you, have done a lot to get Ontario's economy back on its feet after the 2008 economic downturn. But those tough times are somewhat behind us, and we have to prove ourselves. Now we have to continue to look beyond our provincial government, beyond the national borders, and to expand the livelihoods and the economic growth and prosperity of Ontarians. We need to show the world what Ontario has to

offer. In fact, the economists said that it is crucial that we get this economy moving.

What we'd like to know, Minister, is what you are continuing to do to attract—

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

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: I can tell you that for the people of Brant, in particular, having a great MPP like the one they've got is a sure sign of great success in their future, because here's an MPP who works with the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade to land business and to expand the business we have. This MPP, in particular, had a personal role in seeing the expansion of the Ferrero Rocher plant there, which is an expansion of foreign direct investment that landed about four years ago. So it's not just bringing them to Ontario, but it's nurturing them as well; it's showing great, new, better tax policy for businesses here, a business climate where they can flourish, so that companies like Ferrero Rocher continue to expand. In this instance, it is their second expansion in Brantford, largely because of the kind of representation they have in their MPP—

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

CURRICULUM

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: My question is to the Premier. One year ago, the Minister of Economic Development was Acting Premier. When we raised the concerns of parents who were surprised by your plan to teach sex ed to kids as young as six years old, the Acting Premier stood in this House and gave a very passionate defence of why you definitely were pressing ahead anyway. That was in the morning.

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Three hours later, you pulled the rug out from under her with a backtrack on the sex ed curriculum. Then you sent out the education minister to confess that you hadn't really consulted and you would now do so.

It is a year later. Why is there still no indication that you will consult parents?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Education.

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: First of all, I think it's really important that I take this opportunity to correct some of the statements that have been made by members of the opposition. I'm surprised that a former Minister of Education would not know that when they were in government, we had sex education in our schools. In fact, some of the things they have objected to in the curriculum are in fact what was in our schools when she was—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): "Aie, aie, aie" is right. Minister?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: It's important that we remind the honourable member of what was in place when they were in government, because you're suggesting that that maybe was not the case.

The other thing that I would remind the honourable member of is that in the province of Ontario we have a process around curriculum review. We follow this process for all curriculum, whether it's mathematics, social studies or sex education. That was the process that was followed with the delivery of the sex ed curriculum that was in place.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: The issue is consultation. It's like what happened earlier this week when Ontario families suddenly learned that you had only promised to post daycare and serious-incident reports online because you were put on the spot four years ago, and then you said whatever it took to make the problem go away. We know now that that promise was not lived up to; it was broken.

One year ago, you promised to consult parents on the changes to the sex education curriculum that you viewed as a fait accompli last year. There is no schedule of consultations, and parents are telling us that they do not see that anything will change.

My question to you is: Why shouldn't they believe that you're waiting until after the next election to bring sex classes back if you're given the chance?

Hon. Leona Dombrowsky: I cannot believe a former Minister of Education is asking to bring back sex education. It has always been there. It has been in our classrooms for 25 years. To stand in her place and suggest that that has not been the case is highly unusual.

What I can say to the people of Ontario: We are committed. We used a process. We did consult. Families told us they wanted us to do a better job—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Members will please come to order. New question.

AGGREGATE EXTRACTION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. A US-owned company wants to build North America's second-largest open-pit mine next to the Niagara Escarpment and amidst the headwaters of rivers that provide drinking water for over a million Ontarians. Farmers, citizens, aboriginal people and environmentalists oppose this planned quarry, which will destroy thousands of acres of prime farmland.

The Ministry of Natural Resources is only allowing 45 days for public comment on this 3,000-page proposal. Will the Premier order a 120-day extension for public comment to allow full input from the growing number of concerned citizens?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I'm very pleased to answer this question. I know that the member from Dufferin-Caledon has raised this issue in the past as she has approached me to talk about it. There has been lots of media concern expressed about this particular issue. I can confirm that the local district office has received a li-

cence application, but I do want to make it clear that this is only the beginning of the Aggregate Resources Act process.

While legally I cannot extend the comment period, I do intend to consider comments outside the official objection period. I would encourage all local citizens who have concerns with this project to become involved and engage with my ministry. I can tell you that I met with the delegation of Melancthon township back in February at the Ontario Good Roads Association and ROMA conference. I know the council is concerned and I want to ensure that their residents' concerns are addressed. As I said, it's the beginning of the process.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Sierra Club, the Lake Ontario Waterkeeper and the Council of Canadians all oppose this proposed quarry. Mark Calzavara of the Council of Canadians and Carl Cosack, a local farmer, are here in the gallery today. Tomorrow, they begin a five-day walk from Queen's Park to the proposed quarry.

There is no reason to rush through a project of this scale. Some 1,300 Ontarians have written to the Premier, urging him to extend the period of public comment for 120 days beyond this Tuesday's deadline. Will the Premier agree to this very reasonable request in order to allow for full public consultation on this quarry?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: Even before the application was submitted, I know that the proposed quarry was the subject of significant local media attention, and certainly the councillors were very vocal about this issue. I know the residents are concerned about the preservation of the agricultural land.

The Aggregate Resources Act has a process that gives the applicant up to two years—that would be March 10, 2013—to resolve any objections to the application. As I said, we're at the very beginning of the process. If there are still unresolved objections to the licence application after two years, the Ministry of Natural Resources can refer the application to the Ontario Municipal Board. We're at the very beginning of the process. I would ask local citizens who have concerns with the project to please become involved in the consultation process. I welcome their comments.

WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE BOARD

Mr. Bob Delaney: This question is for the Minister of Labour. Minister, last fall, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, the WSIB, launched a year-long funding review. It was chaired by respected academic and labour expert Professor Harry Arthurs. The review is expected to be both rigorous and comprehensive. Panel members of the review include former Ontario Conservative Party leader John Tory and former Canadian Auto Workers president Buzz Hargrove. Minister, can you update the House on the progress made on the funding review and what stage the process is at?

Hon. Charles Sousa: The funding review presently under way is a year-long independent review of the WSIB's financial circumstances. The review is to inform the WSIB on a strategy to eliminate the unfunded liability by setting and achieving targets and timelines for full funding.

The funding review panel chaired by Professor Harry Arthurs is holding public hearings to gather expert advice and input from workers, labourers, employers and the public on a range of issues relating to the WSIB's financial future. Mr. Arthurs is hearing from workers, labour groups, employers and the public all across this province. Public consultations are taking place over a one-month period. They began on April 5 and they conclude on May 3.

The WSIB is working to ensure a stable and sustainable system of compensation for injured workers and employers in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Bob Delaney: The WSIB plays a key role in protecting Ontario workers and their families through no-fault workplace insurance. WSIB provides disability benefits and assists in the safe-return-to-work programs for those who have been injured on the job. WSIB provides safety incentives to businesses that encourage greater compliance and safer workplaces. That makes this review very important for both workers and employers in Ontario.

Workers and employers alike, both in our home city of Mississauga and across Ontario, are interested in being able to contribute to the outcome. Minister, will everyone who wants to offer ideas and suggestions have an opportunity to participate in the review?

Hon. Charles Sousa: The WSIB has a clear mandate to improve the performance of the WSIB and retire the unfunded liability. As mentioned, consultations are being conducted across Ontario. However, submissions and comments to the Arthurs funding review can also be made online before June 15. Mr. Arthurs will be hearing from more than 100 organizations, such as the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, CUPE, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, CAW Canada, the Employers' Council of Ontario, the Ontario Federation of Labour, the Ontario Mining Association and local injured workers' groups in Hamilton, Windsor, London and Thunder Bay.

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I encourage everyone, including my opposition critics, to take part in this review. Our government will continue to support the WSIB's efforts to create a stable and sustainable system of compensation for injured workers and employers. Ontario's workers and their families need to know that they will be protected.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Mr. Robert Bailey: My question is to the Premier. Premier, last night at an all-candidates' debate in Sarnia-Lambton, the federal Liberal candidate called your decision, along with your finance minister's, to close the

Sarnia jail "arrogant"—his word, not mine. But don't take my word for it. Turn on CHOK radio in Sarnia today and you'll hear it playing every hour.

I know that you and your finance minister will be door-knocking for Liberal candidates over the next week. Will you please come down to Sarnia and door-knock with your federal candidate down there, who said your decision to close the jail was arrogant?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I thought the questions about the federal election campaign were not appropriate in the House. But I'm always happy—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock. Minister of Agriculture. Minister of the Environment, who gave me the look. The member from Leeds.

I would welcome, at any opportunity, any one of you to come and sit in this chair and try and find the balance of both sides of the House. It is a challenge to try. I have to listen to a question. Yes, it may start with some federal campaigning, but it does morph into a question dealing with a provincial issue.

My issue has been with some of the questions and answers, particularly the government questions—everyone knows the Speaker has some issues with the government questions to begin with, but that's left for a different day—and starting to talk about opposition policy.

I'd just remind all members that I'm going to do the best job that I can to find the balance and to ensure that there is fairness on both sides of the House.

Minister.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I'm wondering if the member heard whether there was any concern about the closing of jails in any of these ridings: Cobourg, Haileybury, L'Orignal, Waterloo-Wellington, Parry Sound, Barrie, Peterborough, Guelph, Cornwall, Burtch, Lindsay, Whitby, Brampton, Millbrook and Sault Ste. Marie. Those are all communities in which your government, when you were in power, closed the individual jails, so I'm wondering if in any of those ridings, any of the federal candidates have anything to say about the closing of those jails under your watch. I know that now-Conservative Senator Runciman was in charge of closing them. I didn't hear any concerns expressed by members of—

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

Mr. Robert Bailey: That question was to the Premier, and the minister answered it. It was quite a rendition of history, but that wasn't what I asked for. I wasn't here then.

The McGuinty Liberals say that the decision to shut down the Sarnia jail and ship jobs and prisoners to the finance minister's riding was made three years ago, but no one knew about it: not the Sarnia mayor, not the OPP, not the RCMP, not the legal community and, obviously, not even the local Liberals. Your federal candidate called this decision "arrogant" because—this is a quote from him last night—in the budget: "Surprise, Sarnia, your jail

is gone.” That’s wrong. I couldn’t agree more. The mayor agrees.

The jail employs over 79 people and provides \$6 million to the local Sarnia economy. Why do you think it’s okay to shut down the jail in my area just to save your finance minister’s seat?

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I reminded the honourable member yesterday about the term that he used, or a derivative of that term, and I just ask that he withdraw the comment.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Withdraw.

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

Hon. James J. Bradley: The difficulty for those of us on this side is that during the first half of question period, members of the opposition get up and tell the government that they should be looking for ways to save money. As soon as we find ways of saving money, you don’t want us to save money.

I know that when the Conservative Party was in power, they closed 28 hospitals in the province of Ontario. They also closed several jails in the province. I didn’t hear any complaints then. In fact, Senator Bob Runciman said that it was only common sense to be making these moves—Conservative Senator Runciman.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Premier. This question is being asked on behalf of Mike MacDonald. Mike works for the Toronto Transit Commission. He is the father of three little girls. He has been diagnosed with a rare form of non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma. Doctors tell Mike he probably only has six months to live. But there is a ray of hope; that is, if he can take a drug called Folutyn. Mike has exhausted his life savings to pay for the first round of treatment. What is the McGuinty government prepared to do to help Mike with this fight of his life?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I’m pleased to take the question, and I certainly want to take the opportunity to offer my comfort and support to this family in the challenge that they face. I hope that my honourable colleague has previously raised this question directly with the Minister of Health rather than waiting for this particular forum, but nonetheless the question is here now.

I can’t speak to the specifics of it. I can say that what I do know is that there is a formal drug approval process where we rely on the best advice from our experts as to which drugs we should fund and which drugs we should not. That’s a process that we put in place. All governments of all stripes have relied on that in the past. As I said, I know that the Minister of Health would be very interested in getting more of the particulars of this matter.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Prue: This really is a case of life and death. Mike MacDonald’s co-workers are trying to raise tens of thousands of dollars to keep him on the drug

Folutyn. Mike has worked hard all of his life. He has played by the rules all of his life and now he has been dealt this terrible hand. He’d be here with us this morning but he had to go for chemo appointments. Mike is a fighter, but he needs his government to be in the ring alongside him. Will this government step up and help Mike MacDonald in his moment of greatest need?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I can’t speak to the particulars of a matter raised in this forum. I would encourage my colleague to take this up directly with the Minister of Health, and I will take steps to pass this information along to her.

What I can say is that we are now funding 35 new cancer drugs which have been added to the formulary. In our recent budget, we expanded breast cancer screening for women at high risk, beginning at age 30. Those are 90,000 additional screenings. I can say that there was a recent study made public in the British medical journal *The Lancet* saying that we have one of the highest cancer survival rates in the world, based on the cancer drug regime and treatment regime we have in place in our province.

When it comes to all health care matters, notwithstanding the fact that we continue to make progress, there is always more to do. Again, I encourage my colleague opposite to take up this matter directly with the Minister of Health.

USE OF QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I just want to reinforce the comments I made earlier because of some exception that was taken. I’m going to quote from Erskine May, *Parliamentary Practice*, 23rd edition, page 350: “Questions are out of order if they relate to opposition party policies rather than to the government’s responsibilities.”

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would like to take this opportunity to welcome grade 8 students from the Minister of Education’s riding, from C.M.L. Snider public school in Wellington. They are here to see their classmate Grace Conroy, one of our legislative pages, in action, and are accompanied by their teacher, Ms. Pauline Jones. Welcome to Queen’s Park today.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Speaking of the pages, I’d like to ask all members to join me in thanking them for their wonderful work, and we wish them all the best in their future endeavours.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Have a great Easter, a safe journey home, everyone, and make sure you buy local, Buy Ontario, buy Canadian.

This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1141 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: April 23 is International Children's Day, which we will also celebrate in Canada. With us to help us celebrate International Children's Day are a number of very important people who are from the Turkish community: Mr. Can Yoldas, vice-consul general of the Republic of Turkey; Mr. Yaman Uzumeri, a former chief building official, city of Toronto; Dr. Mehmet Bor, president of the Federation of Canadian Turkish Associations; Mr. Halil Sivri, president of the Turkish Culture and Folklore Society of Canada; Mr. Ilke Hincer, executive director of the federation; and Ms. Yildiz Ünsal, treasurer of the Turkish Federation Community Foundation.

Without further ado, I would like to invite all the members to join us this evening at 4:30 in room 163 to help us celebrate International Children's Day.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

BEYOND THE HURT

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Today, I would like to stand up to acknowledge the volunteer efforts of Sydney O'Brien, who has been a page in the Ontario Legislature for the past five weeks. I'm speaking about the anti-bullying program she is involved in.

Beyond the Hurt is a program coordinated by the Canadian Red Cross. Working with schools, sports teams, community groups and youth organizations, the primary aim of this program is to build school and community capacity to prevent and respond to bullying and harassment.

Peer facilitators are a unique component of the school-based element of this program. According to the Red Cross, "Young people have a clear, shared vision about what's important to preventing bullying and harassment. One area where students consistently show significant growth is in their understanding of the bystander role, and how critical it is to encouraging or stopping bullying."

Last year this House passed, with unanimous support, a motion making the third week of November Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week.

Bullying in any form, whether physical or emotional, in person or over the Internet, is never acceptable.

For Sydney's ongoing effort and dedication as a peer facilitator with the Beyond the Hurt program, I would like to recognize and commend Sydney O'Brien. Your work is making a difference in the lives of your friends and peers, and we all thank you.

SKETCH

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I want to take a moment today to give credit to an inspiring organization that is doing important work in my community. Operating mainly in downtown and west Toronto neighbourhoods,

Sketch is an organization that creates opportunities for homeless and street youth to engage in the arts in their community.

Homelessness and poverty are complex problems that call for innovative responses. Sketch maintains that everyone has a right to self-expression and that everyone has a story to tell. As an organization, they have spent the last 15 years helping at-risk youth find a voice through artistic expression. They have managed to do this despite the chronic underfunding faced by so many arts and non-profit organizations in Ontario.

Sketch is the result of the collaborative efforts of many people who help make their programs a reality, including the many youth who help develop their programs. Many personal stories of accomplishments and positive change as a result of Sketch's programs are told by the participants, staff and funders who use and support this unique organization.

I wish Sketch, its staff and participants all the best for a smooth transition to a new location in the Artscape facility on Shaw Street and for the continued success of their programs.

AMATEUR SPORT

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I rise today to take this opportunity to congratulate Nicholas Mallia and Jesse McNalley on their outstanding performance at the 2011 Canada Winter Games. Nicholas and Jesse are both residents of my riding of Scarborough Southwest.

While the competition was fierce, Nicholas was awarded silver and bronze medals in artistic gymnastics, while Jesse took home a silver medal in wheelchair basketball.

This year, the Canada Winter Games were held in Halifax. The games represent the highest level of national competition for up-and-coming Canadian athletes. More than 2,700 athletes competed in 20 sports, attracting thousands of visitors.

Ontario was able to maintain its prominent status in the games by winning the Canada Games flag for the 19th time.

Ontario is very proud of all its athletes, which is why our government has been committed to investing in amateur sports. Between 2003 and 2010, our government increased support for amateur sports by 162%. By 2010 and 2011, our government is providing \$23 million to provincial sport and multi-sport organizations and other partners to promote participation and excellence in sports throughout Ontario.

Please join me in congratulating Nicholas Mallia and Jesse McNalley, as well as all other Ontario athletes, on their remarkable performance at the 2011 Canada Winter Games.

SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: Throughout the province of Ontario, there is growing concern about the sustainability and viability of the school transportation industry.

The Ontario School Bus Association wrote to the Premier and the Minister of Education on April 7, indicating that they are concerned because there is a “marked lack of transparency and accountability by many student transportation consortia on the process, the scoring and the awarding of contracts to date under the government initiated RFP process.”

They have asked “for information from consortia that should rightly be in the public domain and ... are having a difficult time getting answers.”

They also go on to say that the consortia are “engaging in RFP processes without connecting to the process begun by the Ministry of Education and using documents that are still under pilot status.”

They are concerned: “We had a clear understanding that the ministry would set the ground rules of this transition. That has not happened. Instead, the worst-case scenario is happening.”

So there is a threat to the school transportation industry in the province of Ontario. It’s having a big negative impact on the association members and on communities throughout Ontario.

They are calling on “the Premier and the Minister of Education to immediately suspend the RFP process for home-to-school student transportation until such time as there is”—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. The member from Brant.

BOB COYNE

Mr. Dave Levac: I’d like all Ontarians to know that June Callwood began her journalism career at BCI, Brantford Collegiate Institute, in Brantford. She was the editor of the high school newspaper. She eventually dropped out of school to work for the Brantford Expositor and went on to lead an outstanding career and life, as we all know.

Today, I honour another Brantford native who now has a direct association to Ms. Callwood, Bob Coyne. The June Callwood Outstanding Achievement Award for Volunteerism recognizes individuals and groups who have made an exceptional contribution to volunteerism in not just Brantford but all of Ontario.

Volunteers help build diverse, vibrant, caring and safe communities. They make this province a socially, culturally and economically vibrant place in which to live, work, play and raise a family. Twenty individuals or groups in the province each year receive this award.

It’s my extreme pleasure to inform the House that Bob Coyne of Brantford has officially been awarded this most exceptional award. Bob Coyne has served as a volunteer on many varieties of committees and boards. He coaches and organizes boys’ and girls’ hockey teams of all levels, is an advocate for the expansion of Brantford’s sports infrastructure and participates in many other worthy charities. He has been instrumental in bringing many sporting events to Brantford, promoting Brantford both locally and internationally as a tourism destination.

On behalf of the residents of Brantford, Brant and Six Nations, I congratulate Bob Coyne for his achievements and thank him for his hard work and dedication.

ORGAN DONATION

Mr. Frank Klees: At a press conference earlier today, my colleagues Norm Miller, the MPP for Parry Sound–Muskoka, John O’Toole, the MPP for Durham, and I launched a friendly challenge to double the number of people registered as organ donors in our constituencies over the next four months. We want to extend that same challenge to all members of the House.

We were joined by four amazing individuals who as organ transplant recipients shared their personal stories of how they were given the gift of life because someone made the decision to be an organ donor.

I want to thank Sandra Holdsworth, Bruce Cuthbert, Kelly Thorman-Kleinschmidt and Jennifer Irwin for bringing their personal story to this challenge.

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Today there are 1,500 patients waiting for an organ transplant in Ontario and thousands more in need of tissue transplants. One person dies every three days, waiting for an organ that never comes.

One of the reasons for that statistic is that Ontario lags far behind many other jurisdictions in the number of people who are registered as potential donors. Some jurisdictions are as high as 80%; Ontario is at 17%.

My riding of Newmarket–Aurora is at 20%, and our goal is to double that by September 1. I’m asking my constituents to visit my website at frankklees.com, download a registration form and either deliver that to the ServiceOntario centre nearest them or mail it to the Trillium Gift of Life office.

We’re calling on all members to join us in this challenge and to give the gift of life to many who would otherwise be left without.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Kuldip Kular: Of the many great stories in Bramalea–Gore–Malton of late, I would like to share news of how our government is supporting Brampton-based companies, such as BMP Metals.

BMP Metals produces bogies and other precision metal components for Bombardier Transportation’s advanced rapid transit and monorail prototypes. These are destined for cities like Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and Sao Paulo, Brazil. The contracts highlight the international demand for transit technologies and Ontario’s strength in this highly competitive field. Bombardier was recently awarded \$750,000 through the eastern Ontario development fund to develop its Millhaven testing site.

While touring BMP’s Brampton facility, I was informed that programs like the EODF signal our support to the industry. In fact, our investment in Bombardier encouraged BMP Metals, as a strategic supplier, to hire 15 new staff to upgrade equipment, expand its operations

and to work more closely with Bombardier to improve their global competitiveness, and that will mean more jobs in the future.

I would like to thank the Minister of Economic Development for supporting Bombardier's success and also its Brampton partner, BMP Metals, and for her ongoing support to stimulate high-value jobs and investment for my—

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

EASTER

Mr. Mike Colle: Today I raise to bring Easter greetings to my constituents and people all across Ontario. Easter is one of the most important religious celebrations in the Christian faith. It marks the end of Lent, a 40-day period of fasting and penance, which began on Ash Wednesday. Today is known as Holy Thursday and is part of Holy Week, which ends tomorrow with Good Friday.

For those of the Christian faith, Good Friday marks the death and crucifixion of Christ. Customs for Good Friday include hymns and prayers of thanksgiving. This day is sometimes marked by fasting and penance.

All across Ontario, there are processions in honour of Good Friday. Many of my constituents will be celebrating the 49th annual St. Francis of Assisi Church Good Friday procession in Little Italy tomorrow. Many of my constituents will also be attending the Good Friday procession held by the St. Thomas Aquinas Parish on Eglinton and the St. Clare Parish on St. Clair.

For Christians of many cultures and religions, Easter Sunday represents the resurrection of Christ and is a time of celebration. In Vatican City, the Pope holds a large service at St. Peter's Square. Many churches around the world hold celebrations on the eve of Easter Sunday, with the lighting of candles.

Easter Sunday is celebrated with family and friends and usually begins with the early morning Easter egg hunt, and then everybody gathers together with a special meal of goat, lamb and ham.

So I wish everybody Buona Pasqua, happy Easter, and enjoy your Easter goat and ham and lamb.

INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S DAY

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: Every April 23, the Republic of Turkey proclaims International Children's Day. The very first children's day in the world was celebrated on April 23, 1929. Since then, every year, the children in Turkey celebrate this day as a national holiday. Schools participate in week-long ceremonies, marked by performances in all fields, in large stadiums, watched by the entire nation.

Among the activities on this day, the children send their representatives to replace state officials and high-ranking bureaucrats in their offices. The president, the prime minister, the cabinet ministers and provincial

premiers all turn over their positions to children's representatives.

The importance of April 23 as a special day of children has been recognized by the international community. In 1979, as part of the International Year of the Child celebrations, UNICEF recognized this important day as Children's Day as well.

Canadians of Turkish origin here would like to promote this tradition of International Children's Day within the Canadian multicultural mosaic and make Canada a better place to live for all of our children. To make this a success, we're holding a reception this afternoon to which all members are invited. I already introduced the members of the Turkish-Canadian federation who are here to help us celebrate this event.

Thank you very much, and happy Children's Day.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Estimates on the estimates selected and not selected by the standing committee for consideration.

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

Pursuant to standing order 60, your committee has selected the estimates 2011—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.

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

Report deemed received.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SUPPORTING SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO BY REDUCING CONTRABAND TOBACCO ACT, 2011 LOI DE 2011 APPUYANT LA STRATÉGIE ONTARIO SANS FUMÉE PAR LA RÉDUCTION DU TABAC DE CONTREBANDE

Ms. Aggelonitis moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 186, An Act to amend the Tobacco Tax Act /
Projet de loi 186, Loi modifiant la Loi de la taxe sur le
tabac.

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): The member for a short statement.

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: I'll make my statement during ministerial statements.

RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES
AMENDMENT ACT
(VITAL SERVICES), 2011
LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LA LOCATION
À USAGE D'HABITATION
(SERVICES ESSENTIELS)

Ms. DiNovo moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 187, An Act to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 in respect of vital services / Projet de loi 187, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation à l'égard des services essentiels.

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): The member for a short statement.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: The bill amends the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006, to provide that where no municipal vital services bylaws are applicable in respect of a rental unit, the following applies:

(1) The landlord is required to provide adequate and suitable vital services to the rental unit.

(2) A supplier of a vital service is required to give notice to the ministry before ceasing to supply the service because of a landlord's breach of contract.

(3) Where a landlord has failed to provide adequate and suitable vital services, the ministry may enter into agreements with suppliers to ensure the supply of vital services to rental units and may, in such circumstances, direct a tenant to pay his or her rent to the ministry.

The bill grants the Lieutenant Governor in Council authority to specify that when prescribed criteria are met, an otherwise applicable vital services bylaw does not apply in respect of a rental unit, and the provisions set out in the bill apply instead.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I believe we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Gerry Phillips: I move that the order of the House dated April 29, 2010, referring Bill 12, An Act to

proclaim British Home Child Day, to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy be discharged, and the bill withdrawn.

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

Motion agreed to.

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STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

TOBACCO CONTROL

Hon. Sophia Aggelonitis: Before I begin, I'd like to welcome some of the people from the Ministry of Revenue who are here, including my deputy minister, Steve Orsini, Peter Rzedki, Michael Coe and Alexandra Moskalyk.

Today I rise in the House to introduce the Supporting Smoke-Free Ontario by Reducing Contraband Tobacco Act, 2011. This is part of our government's commitment to create a smoke-free Ontario.

Today I have the privilege of bringing forward a very important piece of legislation. I'm honoured to announce that, if passed, this act would help protect our youth from the dangers of cheap, illegal tobacco. Our job, as parents and as leaders, is to do everything that we can to prevent our kids from smoking. Low-cost cigarettes are a gateway for young people to take up smoking or to start again if they have already quit. In fact, smoking kills thousands of people a year in Ontario. This is an alarming number, and cause for significant concern.

Our government is taking action. We are the government that has moved to build on the successes of the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. When it comes to illegal tobacco, we've met the challenge and we've made significant progress. With the changes that I'm announcing today, our government will have introduced measures in six of the last eight years to reduce the availability of cheap, illegal tobacco in Ontario. In developing these proposals, we have listened carefully to our stakeholders and partners who share our concern and our commitment to address this complex problem. We have asked them for their advice, and we have acted decisively. I believe that this bill strikes the right balance.

If passed, our legislation would increase oversight over the distribution of raw leaf tobacco in the province, ultimately replacing the Ontario Flue-Cured Tobacco Growers' Marketing Board's current system. We're also proposing to license importers to ensure that there's a level playing field for all raw leaf tobacco suppliers, and for the first time, we would require fine-cut tobacco to be marked.

The bill would permit police to seize illegal, unmarked tobacco found in plain view, and we intend to strengthen our important partnerships. There are a lot of partnerships, including with First Nations.

I am proposing a series of realistic and balanced measures that move us closer to our goal of a smoke-free Ontario. This legislation is an important step. We must remain focused, we must be thorough, and we must be persistent in our goal of reducing youth smoking rates. Our kids are counting on us.

I believe these measures are the right ones at the right time and will make a real difference. I look forward to working with my colleagues in every party to make this bill law. Together, we can take yet another important step in the right direction.

SMOKING CESSATION

Hon. Margaret R. Best: In 2004, the McGuinty government embarked on a commitment that earned Ontario international recognition as a leader in the battle against smoking. I am pleased to speak today to this government's commitment to build on that solid foundation with a renewed smoke-free Ontario strategy, and I certainly want to take this opportunity to thank the Minister of Revenue for her input.

Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death and disease in Ontario. It kills 13,000 people a year, three times the combined deaths caused by alcohol, drugs, suicide, homicide and car crashes. Our government is taking a whole-of-government approach in support of a renewed smoke-free Ontario strategy. We are working collaboratively with other ministries to take additional actions and make new investments, and are seeking further cross-sectorial collaboration in pulling in key partners to buttress our efforts. We are addressing some key recommendations provided in the October 2010 report of the Tobacco Strategy Advisory Group.

We will continue to review our progress and, over time, consider additional actions that may be taken to further reduce smoking prevalence rates in Ontario. In so doing, we will continue to work with our partners to get their best advice as the government moves forward to further prevent young people from becoming addicted to tobacco. I do see some young people in the Legislature today. I would like to call out to them to say to them, "Tobacco is bad for your health. Do not take up the habit."

We also want to make it easier for smokers to get the help they need to quit and to reduce demand for all tobacco products. To help smokers quit, the government is providing more ways for smokers to get the help they need. As part of our whole-of-government approach, the Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport will work collaboratively with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care regarding smoking cessation services and the addition of cessation drugs to the Ontario drug benefit formulary.

Our government's renewed Smoke-Free Ontario strategy will see additional investments of \$5 million in the funding for Smoke-Free Ontario. We're also exploring opportunities to engage employers and unions to assist workers in workplace settings where workers are at a higher health risk.

Preventing Ontarians, and our young people in particular, from ever taking up this deadly habit is an important component at the core of our approach. That is why the government's renewed commitment also includes increased prevention strategies to prevent youth from starting to smoke and supporting them in their efforts to quit. This means that we will be undertaking further research to inform our efforts to deter young people from using tobacco products, and using this information to further design and implement sustained, effective efforts to prevent youth from becoming addicted and further engaging youth at the forefront of shaping and leading these initiatives in order to maximize results through peer-to-peer influence.

I certainly look forward to working with my colleagues and our partners on these important next steps toward a smoke-free Ontario. These measures will make a real difference in creating a healthier province for all Ontarians.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Responses?

TOBACCO CONTROL

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm pleased to respond to the comments made by the Minister of Revenue on behalf of my colleague Lisa MacLeod, the MPP for Nepean and our critic for revenue.

I have to tell you right off the bat, we all want to see young people not smoke. But the reality is, I can't understand why this is a revenue bill, although you are losing a lot of money in revenue now with the way the system works. I think if we were in power right now, we'd be calling this a community safety bill, because we like to attack criminals at the source: the manufacturing and distribution of contraband cigarettes. I think that's one of the areas that we're missing out on here. If we're going after people who are importing or manufacturing alcohol, we have the police community go after them. With grow-ops and meth labs and that, we have the police community go after them. This is just as bad. This is contraband cigarettes, and we're making it sound like a public health statement here, as opposed to a criminal—it's basically a crime.

I would like to see the bill. This is my opposition to this bill at this point, and I haven't even read it; I can tell you that right now. But this will be something we'll be seriously considering. I think we should be providing more resources for our police community so they can attack the criminals; they can find out at the source where these illegal cigarettes are being manufactured and distributed from, not by challenging someone because they find a plastic bag full of cigarettes in the back of a car. That's my concern with this bill right now.

I'm sure we will be debating this quite a bit over the next few weeks. We've actually asked about this for some time now. Over the last seven or eight years, we've asked the government to do more about the contraband cigarettes. Here we are at the 11th hour, five months from the election, and they bring out this bill. We'll

never have a chance to test this bill. Even if it was passed tomorrow, by the time you get it implemented, we won't have any idea how it will actually work before the election. So really, it's not fair to bring it out and say that it's a success because it could be a complete flop as far as we're concerned at this point.

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That's really all I have to say at this point. My colleague will be making the lead on this. Obviously we can't make it a community safety bill at this time, although we would if we were in government. However at this point, I'll turn it over to my colleague to speak on health promotion.

SMOKING CESSATION

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I'm pleased to respond on behalf of our critic, Gerry Martiniuk. I had the pleasure of being part of the lung committee that all members of this House, all parties, are part of. We're certainly very aware of the impact of smoking on the lives of people in this province.

An estimated 33,000 Ontarians have lung cancer, according to the Ontario Lung Association, and regrettably, this number is expected to rise to 63,000 in 30 years. Unfortunately, as well, lung cancer does kill eight out of 10 people. It's also the leading cause of cancer death among both men and women. Smoking is the main cause of lung cancer, and, of course, lung cancer is the most preventable type of all cancers. This initiative today makes some progress towards discouraging people of all ages but particularly our young people from becoming smokers in the first place.

We know that smoking directly and indirectly costs our health system billions of dollars a year. Diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and there are 780,000 Ontarians currently living with this disease, pose very serious problems for sufferers and for those tasked with treating the disease. Again, it is largely caused by smoking, and it's a very debilitating disease.

I am very pleased that this government continues the initiatives that were established by our Progressive Conservative government in working with people in the province of Ontario who have a very sincere commitment to a smoke-free Ontario and the need to continue to move forward with very comprehensive anti-smoking strategies, because we do need to do everything we possibly can to help people quit smoking and, obviously, recognize the perils of smoking as well. This will certainly be a good step in this direction.

I guess the other disease that we know is impacted by smoking is asthma. Let's continue to do what we can to encourage everyone in this province to stop smoking.

TOBACCO CONTROL

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thanks for this opportunity to respond to the minister. As you're well aware, Speaker, we in the NDP understand the need for and support the need for action on smoking. We know the consequences,

both in terms of people's health and in terms of revenues for this government, for the people of Ontario.

I have to say that actions should have come much sooner than today, much sooner than now. The contraband issue has been visible and action recommended since 2006 and earlier. It's now 2011, months before an election. One could call it a last-minute bill. Since 2006, we've known that police needed powers to seize contraband. Since 2006, we've known that people needed education to understand that buying contraband tobacco feeds the system that gets kids hooked. We haven't been seeing that action.

It is now April 2011. In 2008, the Auditor General reported that \$500 million a year in revenue is lost because of contraband. It is 2011. The clock is ticking down on this Liberal government, and really, they're just putting this bill in under the wire. Better late than never, but it was almost never.

The Liberals have had years to build agreements with First Nations, as has been recommended by people involved in tobacco control. Have we seen that? No, we have not, not according to the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians, who expected to have an ongoing dialogue with this government and consultation so that we could build an agreement and deal with the political problems that this issue ties together.

We have to ask: Will this bill be enforced? Will police who are already stretched in so many cities actually have the resources to pursue the powers they've been given? Will this program be funded, the programs that are necessary to actually educate people and change the thinking in Ontario? Will the government actually follow through even if this bill is passed?

Those are the very big questions that we want to see addressed as we go through this debate. I am not holding my breath.

NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING

Hon. Gerry Phillips: Mr. Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent that up to five minutes be allotted to each party to speak on the National Day of Mourning.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed. Minister of Labour.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Next Thursday, we will stop to observe a sombre remembrance in Ontario and across Canada. It will be a Day of Mourning. On that day, we will remember workers who have been killed or suffered injury or illness on the job. On that day, we will lower our flags to half-mast to honour friends, neighbours and loved ones we've lost.

Since the 1980s, the Ontario government has recognized the Day of Mourning. It's a day observed in cities and towns across Ontario and Canada and in more than 80 countries around the world.

But today—today all of us must remember our resolve to ensure that the sacrifice of fallen workers and their families have not been in vain.

Ontario has worked hard to improve safety conditions and prevent accidents from happening in the first place,

and we're making progress. Since 2003, Ontario's annual rate of workplace injuries has dropped by 30%. But there is more work to do. We remain committed to improving the province's health and safety system and to increasing protection for workers. To that end, we have proposed amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

These proposed changes would, if passed, help save lives and prevent injury in Ontario by establishing a chief prevention officer and a special prevention organization that is more accountable at the Ministry of Labour. I urge all of us in the House to support this legislation, Bill 160.

We will continue to conduct multiple inspection blitzes in all workplace sectors, whether it's at construction sites, retail shops, mines or production plants, and we will ensure policies are created and strengthened to better protect our workers when they're faced with issues such as workplace violence and harassment.

We're doing all of this because we believe firmly that one injury in the workplace is one too many. Too many lives have been destroyed by workplace injuries. Too many families have gone through the pain of losing a loved one.

When it comes to health and safety, we all have a part to play. I encourage everyone to do their utmost to protect Ontario's greatest and most precious resource: our people and our workers. Working together, we will keep lowering the injury rates in Ontario workplaces and ensure that Ontario continues to be among the best and safest places to work in the world.

Some of you may be wearing yellow and black ribbons to commemorate the Day of Mourning. I encourage all of us to wear these ribbons. The black represents mourning; the yellow represents hope for a safer and brighter future, a future where there are no injuries, where everyone will be able to go home safe and sound and where lives are not at risk.

In a few moments, we will observe a moment of silence for all those who have suffered from a workplace incident. Let us pay our respects and honour their memories. Let us renew our commitment to ensure a future free of workplace injury and illness, a future where we can say to our children, "We never stopped doing all we could to protect you in the workplace."

Mr. Robert Bailey: Next Thursday, April 28, we will observe a sombre remembrance in Ontario and across Canada, the Day of Mourning. On this day, we will remember the millions of Canadian workers who have been killed, injured or suffered illness as a result of work-related incidents and hazards.

This year marks the 27th anniversary of the National Day of Mourning. In 1984, April 28 was declared the first day of national mourning by the Canadian Labour Congress. This day was chosen as it marks the passage of the first Workmen's Compensation Act, which was passed in 1914. Over the years, this observance has spread to many other countries.

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Too many lives continue to be destroyed by workplace incidents and occupational illness. Too many workers

lose their lives at Ontario workplaces and too many are injured.

Having made a career in the petrochemical industry, and as a father and grandfather, I find the statistics involving our young workers to be nothing less than devastating. All too often, I have seen workplace injuries and the burden they place on those workers, co-workers and their families. Some of the injured are fortunate and are able to return to their jobs, but others are not. Their lives and the lives of their families are changed forever. The human toll of workplace incidents and illness is enormous.

These injuries don't just place an undue burden on the worker and his family; they also create stress on our economy.

What is more devastating is that many of these incidents could have been prevented. No one should have to face the tragedy of a workplace injury, which is why we as Ontarians must continue to strive to prevent worker injuries and deaths before they occur.

Much progress has been made in health and safety over the years, as a result of the dedication and commitment of many individuals. But there's much more work to do. We can't do it alone. Government, employers, labour and unions all have an important role to play in promoting workplace health and safety. Today we're reminded of those roles.

In a few moments, we will observe that moment of silence to remember those who have suffered tragedy and illness in the workplace. Let us pause to honour the memories of all those workers and their families and pay our respects to their friends and loved ones who have also suffered. Let us do so while reaffirming our commitment and dedication to the ultimate goal of eradicating workplace injuries and fatalities.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I want to start by saying that I wish I didn't have to make a speech like this yet again. Today we commemorate the annual Day of Mourning for workers killed on the job here in Ontario. A week from today, on April 28, solemn events will be held across this province to officially mark the Day of Mourning. I wish the day wasn't necessary.

I also wish I didn't feel that I have to quantify the tragedy, but raw numbers are important. They're a grim reminder of the dangers Ontario workers face each and every day. So, in order to raise awareness, and in order to—in some inadequate way, really—offer comfort and sympathy to the families who have lost loved ones and reassure them that the loss of their loved ones isn't in vain, I'll cite some specifics.

In 2009, the last year for which full-year statistics are available, 73 Ontarians died because of the work they do. Since 2000, more than 1,000 workers have suffered this cruel fate. Just last week, a young man, 26 years old, lost his life while working at a food-processing plant here in Toronto, falling into a pasta-making machine. Clearly there's much, much more that needs to be done to turn every Ontario workplace into a safe workplace.

Sadly, fatalities aren't the only incidents we should focus on as we mourn workers who have been killed on

the job. There are also debilitating injuries and occupational diseases. In fact, occupational diseases are estimated to affect as many as 6,000 Ontario workers each and every year. But the WSIB does everything it can to play down the connection between work and disease. Untold illnesses are related to workplace exposures. Only 376 fatal occupational disease claims were made to the WSIB in 2007, and of these 376, only 279 were allowed by the WSIB, meaning 97 were rejected. Many, many claims are not even being made. In many cases, when claims should be being made, they simply are not, and when claims are not being made through the WSIB, the result is that workplace-related deaths and illnesses end up costing the Ontario health care system hundreds of millions of dollars per year. That's a lot of money. That should be money that's paid by employers who are actually making their employees sick and injuring them at the workplace. More importantly, it's money that wouldn't be needed at all if we focused on prevention, on enforcement, on inspections and on education.

At the end of the day, the real value of the Day of Mourning is that it raises awareness. So while we mourn for those who have lost their lives, I'm hopeful that an impression is made on employers first and foremost, but also on workers and, of course in this place, on policy-makers.

We mourn for the dead and we fight for the living. Why? So that we can avoid future workplace tragedies; so that every Ontarian who leaves for work in the morning can return home safe and sound that evening. That's the goal. It's a worthy one. It's a worthwhile goal.

It's my sincere hope that as Ontarians gather next week to mourn, they also give thought to how we can achieve an Ontario where no worker dies, is seriously injured or is exposed to conditions that may riddle them with disease in later years. I look forward to making a speech on that day that talks about how safe Ontario workplaces really have become. Until then, unfortunately, we mourn and we fight.

On behalf of my NDP colleagues and all New Democrats across the province, I want to convey my sincerest condolences to all of those families whose loved ones didn't come home at the end of their shift. In our way, by making these comments today, we're symbolically doing the march through the streets that is often done when high-profile public servants lose their lives. Every worker deserves to be acknowledged if they've lost their lives in the workplace because what it does is remind us that we have a duty, a duty to make workplaces safe. Unfortunately, we've failed in that duty thus far. We have an opportunity to fix that if we really put our minds to it and put our efforts into it. I hope that we do that so that we don't have to continue to have a Day of Mourning and so that it can become a remembrance or a symbol that's left in our past.

Our thoughts and prayers are with those families who have lost loved ones and who are dealing with loved ones who are suffering from diseases that are brought on from workplace exposures.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would ask all members and staff to join me as we observe a moment of silence for those individuals killed on the job, injured on the job, or who have died as a result of occupational disease.

The House observed a moment's silence.

PETITIONS

PHOTO IDENTIFICATION

Mr. Bob Delaney: I am very pleased to present this petition on behalf of Loreen and Wayne Chambers of Alpha Mills Road in beautiful Streetsville. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

"Whereas many seniors, visually impaired persons and other non-drivers do not need or are not eligible for a driver's licence; and

"Whereas many day-to-day transactions such as cashing of cheques; opening a new bank account at a financial institution; returning merchandise to a retail store; boarding a domestic flight; gaining admittance to bars, clubs and casinos; checking in at a hotel; obtaining a credit card, and even renting a video require government-issued photo identification; and

"Whereas Ontario's Photo Card Act, 2008, sets the legislative framework required to deliver a non-licence photo identification;

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

"That the province of Ontario develop a government-issued photo identification card and deliver, in 2011, an Ontario photo card identification for residents of the province over the age of 16 who cannot or choose not to drive."

This is a very reasonable petition. I'm pleased to affix my signature and to support it, and to ask page Daniel to carry it for me.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Milton is the fastest-growing community in Canada; and

"Whereas, during the past six years, 60,000 new people have moved to Milton and another 43,000 will be arriving in the next five years; and

"Whereas, over the next two decades, Milton will become the largest community in Halton region and the second-largest in the Mississauga Halton LHIN; and

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"Whereas this rapidly expanding community is still served by a hospital that is undersized and outdated in terms of its physical facility and aging infrastructure that was designed and built to serve 30,000 people; and

“Whereas no other hospital in the region, including the new Oakville hospital, has planned to provide core hospital services to Milton and its growing population; and

“Whereas the Milton District Hospital has not received approval for any added service capacity in the past 25 years; and

“Whereas Halton Healthcare Services has developed a responsive plan to address expansion of Milton District Hospital which it shared with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care;

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

“That the Milton District Hospital expansion project be identified as an urgent and top priority of the province of Ontario’s multi-year infrastructure plan and that Milton District Hospital be authorized to move to the functional programming stage of the capital approval process.”

I’m pleased to add my signature to this and pass it to my page, Madelaine.

HOME WARRANTY PROGRAM

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: This is a petition to support extending the Ombudsman of Ontario’s jurisdiction to include the Tarion Warranty Corp.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas homeowners have purchased a newly built home in good faith and often soon find they are victims of construction defects, often including Ontario building code violations, such as faulty heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems, leaking roofs, cracked foundations, etc.;

“Whereas often when homeowners seek restitution and repairs from the builder and the Tarion Warranty Corp., they encounter an unwieldy bureaucratic system that often fails to compensate them for the high cost of repairing these construction defects, while the builder often escapes with impunity;

“Whereas the Tarion Warranty Corp. is supposed to be an important part of the consumer protection system in Ontario related to newly built homes;

“Whereas the government to date has ignored calls to make its Tarion agency truly accountable to consumers;

“Be it resolved that we, the undersigned, support MPP Cheri DiNovo’s private member’s bill, which calls for the Ombudsman to be given oversight of Tarion and the power to deal with unresolved complaints;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act to provide that the Ombudsman’s powers under the Ombudsman Act in respect of any governmental organization apply to the corporation established under the Ontario New Home Warranties Plan Act, and to provide for necessary modifications in the application of the Ombudsman Act.”

Obviously, I support this, and I am going to give it to Sydney to be delivered to the table.

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads:

“Whereas agriculture plays an important role in Ontario’s economy, and strong, prosperous farms mean a strong, prosperous Ontario;

“Whereas the establishment of a risk management program was the single most important action the provincial government could have done to help ensure the economic success of Ontario’s non-supply-managed commodities;

“Whereas agriculture is a federal and provincial responsibility, and yet the federal government has refused to act and come to the table with their support;

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

“We applaud the Ontario government’s support of risk management programs and encourage the federal government to partner with the province and its farmers to support the risk management programs put in place by the province to bring much-needed stability, predictability and bankability to Ontario’s agricultural sector.”

I agree with this petition, and I will sign it and give it to Jia Jia.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, signed by a great many people in the province of Ontario.

“Whereas multiple industrial wind farm projects are being considered by the government of Ontario in the absence of independent, scientific studies on the long-term effects on the health of residents living near industrial wind farms;

“Therefore, we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the government of Ontario to put a moratorium on any renewable energy approvals for the construction of industrial wind farms in the province of Ontario until such time as it can be demonstrated that all reasonable concerns regarding the long-term effects on the health of residents living near industrial wind farms have been fully studied and addressed.”

I affix my signature, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the fact that you allowed me to present this on their behalf.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I’d like to read this petition on behalf of the constituents of Minister Eric Hoskins.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas in January 2009, Health Canada approved the medication Soliris on a priority basis for patients with paroxysmal nocturnal hemoglobinuria (PNH); and

“Whereas PNH is an ultra-rare, progressive and life-threatening blood disorder for which there were no therapeutic options until Soliris; and

“Whereas Soliris is the first and only proven effective treatment for PNH, significantly benefiting patients around the world;

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

"To urge the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to immediately provide Soliris as a life-saving treatment option to patients with PNH in Ontario through public funding."

I agree with the petition. I want to give it to page Cherechi.

CHILD CUSTODY

Mr. Bob Delaney: I'm pleased to present this petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly on behalf of my seatmate, the hard-working member for Niagara Falls. It contains the signatures of quite a number of people from his Niagara Falls community. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the people of Ontario deserve and have the right to request an amendment to the Children's Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and grandparents, as requested in Bill 22, put forward by MPP Kim Craiton; and

"Whereas subsection 20(2.1) requires parents and others with custody of children to refrain from unreasonably placing obstacles to personal relations between the children and their grandparents;"—and it goes on with a number of other technical amendments.

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Children's Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and grandparents."

I'm pleased, on behalf of the member for Niagara Falls, to affix my signature to this petition and to ask page Gemma to carry it for me.

PARAMEDICS

Mr. Khalil Ramal: "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 servicing 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."

I agree with this petition, will affix my signature to it and give it to Daniel.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

ONTARIO ONE CALL ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 SUR ONTARIO ONE CALL

Mr. Bailey moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 180, An Act respecting Ontario One Call Ltd. /
Projet de loi 180, Loi sur Ontario One Call Ltd.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Before I begin, I would like to welcome the following people to the Legislative Assembly today, all of whom have been instrumental in bringing Bill 180, An Act respecting Ontario One Call Ltd. to fruition.

For lending their support to our efforts, I'd like to welcome in the west members' gallery: Geoff FitzGibbon, executive director of Ontario One Call; Jim Douglas, president of Ontario Regional Common Ground Alliance; Paul Rietdyk, Matthew Gibson, James Whittaker, Corina Emde, Laura Whitwham of Union Gas; Ben Hamilton, Vicki Mitchell, Sean Boland, Grant Kilpatrick, Greg Knopinski and Jamie Milner, all of Enbridge Gas Distribution; Leslie Elliot and Lynn Chaput of Bell Canada; Dave Wulff of Vivax; and Gord MacMillan of the city of Toronto.

I'd just like to take a moment to explain why this bill is so important to me. First of all, throughout my life, in industry and beyond, I've always thought that safety should not be voluntary; it, in fact, should be mandatory.

My riding of Sarnia-Lambton is home to Ontario's oil, gas and chemical industry, an industry that I devoted over 30 years of my life to. In fact, just prior to my election to this House, I worked for Nova Chemicals, St. Clair River works, in Corunna, where I was a construction coordinator and was in charge of issuing excavation permits, among other duties.

1400

Since the first discovery of oil in North America, in my hometown of Oil Springs in 1858, the people of Sarnia-Lambton have been leaders in the development practices and technology that have helped change our society for the good. Sarnia-Lambton became a major oil refining centre during Ontario's 19th-century oil boom and a global centre for petrochemical production during World War II.

Today the city of Sarnia and the county of Lambton play a major role in Canada's petroleum market and are the terminus of many major pipelines leading from the United States and western Canada, and of course many of those pipelines branch off these main lines to connect the

city's petrochemical and other infrastructure to downstream facilities.

When working in Sarnia's Chemical Valley, the first lesson that any new employee learns is that safety is always job one. If you talk to any of the hard-working employees and managers involved in Sarnia's petrochemical industry, they'll tell you that being aware of what dangers you may face on a job site is the only way to know what sort of precautions you need to take. This is even more important when those pipes, electrical or telecommunication lines you are working on are a part of that vast network of hidden infrastructure that connects all of our plants, factories, businesses and homes.

However, today, homeowners and excavators alike are left with a system to locate underground infrastructure which is outdated, overcomplicated and very cumbersome. To be frank, Ontarians are left with a system which is unnecessarily compromising the safety of homeowners and excavators. For example, today, before you plant a tree, dig a garden, landscape or fence your lot, excavate for a pool or driveway, or add a porch or deck, you as a homeowner or excavator are expected to call for the locates of underground infrastructure on your property before you excavate. In other words, you are expected to call for the locations of wires, pipelines, water mains, and anything else that could be under your property. Then those utilities, hopefully, will arrive to mark the ground above where this infrastructure exists.

The problem is that in many communities across Ontario you may have to call up to 13—that's right, 13—different phone numbers to ensure that you have covered everything that might be underground in your area. So before you start your project, you need to account for electrical power lines, cables, conduits, street lighting, traffic signals, gas, oil, petroleum, potable water, sewers, telecommunication lines, signal lines and other conduits, and the list goes on. This is what I mean when I say that Ontario has an outdated, overcomplicated and cumbersome system in place. So I don't think it will be too much of a surprise to you when I say that some homeowners and excavators simply aren't bothering to call before they dig.

Without easy access to proper and complete information of underground infrastructure, damage regularly occurs to natural gas lines, electrical wiring and water mains, so at the very least, this means increased costs to homeowners, excavators, municipalities, taxpayers and ultimately the province. Accidental damage to underground infrastructure is not only expensive, but it can be deadly. Today, the number of emergency calls that result from damage done to underground infrastructure in Ontario is on the rise due to the growing complexity of underground infrastructure in our province. Accidental hits to pipelines, especially those carrying natural gas, are an increasing threat to public safety for all Ontarians.

Just for a moment, consider some of these real-life scenarios. Surgeons in our province now perform state-of-the-art telesurgery on patients across Canada. Imagine the complications that would result from a contractor

digging without locates, damaging that telecommunication line and interrupting or cancelling that surgery while in progress. These have happened. Or consider what could happen, like in the fall of 2010, when a contractor digging without locates in Whitby, Ajax and the Oshawa area—on three separate days in one week, this contractor damaged the telecommunication line, impacting service to over 250,000 customers. Just imagine if this happened during a major event like the Super Bowl, the Stanley Cup finals or the upcoming royal wedding. Just this week, a contractor digging around a Union Gas facility without proper locates damaged a major line that cut off gas service to over 60 customers.

These are just a number of examples of what can and has happened when contractors and/or homeowners dig without locates in this province. In fact, in Ontario, there were over 5,500 gas pipeline strikes between January 2008 and December 2010, and unfortunately, two of these strikes tragically resulted in fatalities.

Last autumn, a company called Genco Masonry was fined over \$225,000 following a fatal explosion at the site of a residential home construction. The company was employed to do landscaping work at this Niagara Falls residence when they accidentally punctured a propane line on the property. This propane leaked through the earth into the homeowner's basement, where it ignited and resulted in a large explosion, demolishing the home. Tragically, a 58-year-old grandmother of three who was in the home at that time died in the explosion, and two other women were seriously injured.

Following an investigation last November, the Ministry of Labour found that this landscaping company had made no effort—no effort at all—to discover the location of underground utilities or have these locates marked. This grave oversight left the workers onsite with no knowledge of what was beneath the ground where they dug and, tragically, resulted in the death of this Niagara Falls woman.

But it's not just small firms that can miss locates. Last month, a judge ordered a major construction company in the Toronto area to pay more than \$280,000 in connection with a fatal propane explosion at an East Linton home near Owen Sound. Again, an unmarked propane line was severed the day before the explosion using a Ditch Witch burrowing machine. This propane leaked through the soil and permeated the concrete block foundation, then was ignited later on when a candle was lit in the home. One resident escaped unharmed; the other was caught in the explosion and fire, resulting in third-degree burns to 85% of his body. He passed away two days later, tragically.

The business of digging in Ontario is a risky business. Sitting idly by and doing nothing is not an acceptable position when the well-being and livelihood of Ontario residents is in jeopardy. I believe it is long overdue for our province to have a mandatory one-call system. That is why I introduced Bill 180, the Ontario One Call Act, 2011. Bill 180 will create a single call centre for all underground locates for the use of homeowners and

excavators alike. So instead of calling 13 numbers to receive all of their locates, homeowners and excavators alike would make one free call to Ontario One Call, and they would dispatch the utilities to mark the underground infrastructure.

This is a simple solution. The organization and capacity to implement this system is currently available. Ontario One Call is already operating as an industry initiative, a central call centre in Guelph with 130 members representing over 700 infrastructure agencies in Ontario. Unfortunately, since participation is not mandatory, the majority of municipalities and small utilities have yet to join in support of this useful and prudent call system. Industry experts estimate there are still over 400 utilities and municipalities with infrastructure in the ground that have not registered.

The evidence of the effects of mandatory one-call systems is clear and abundant. Currently, each and every United States state has in place a mandatory one-call system. The federal government of the United States thought it was such a good idea that they mandated a national number, 811. When you dial 811 anywhere in the US, you are automatically connected to the call centre that has access to your area's information. As a result of the 811 system, incidents of infrastructure and utility damage decreased by close to 70% between 2004 and 2008. That's 70%. That is a major shift away from damage and waste to increased safety and productivity. That's the sort of result that the good people of this province deserve when this House hopefully passes this legislation.

I hope that all members of this House can recognize the need to implement a simple and effective solution to a persistent problem with the current utilities locating system. Thus, I would hope that the members of this House will assist me in moving Bill 180 through the House and moving one step closer to creating a comprehensive one-call system.

As I said, safety shouldn't be voluntary; it should be mandatory.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's often a joy, mainly and mostly shared by our Toronto members here in our caucus on Thursday afternoon, to listen to private members' public business, because here's where opposition members have a chance to truly be heard, often coming out of a sense of frustration where the ministry is across the aisle not doing what we hoped they were mandated to do.

Here is a classic case. Here is the member from Sarnia-Lambton, who, because of his knowledge of the industry, because of his experience in his constituency, is actually doing a very good job of representing them here and bringing their concerns forward. And he's bringing their concerns forward in a responsible manner. That is to say, first and foremost, this was taken to the ministry. First and foremost, it was brought to the attention of those who had the power to do something about it in the majority government, and it got no answer; it got no

action. It came back to the member. He brings it forward, hopefully, to get what they couldn't get in the first place. It's sad, one has to say, that they couldn't get it from the Ministry of Consumer Services in the first place, but it's still honourable that the member has gone the route and is bringing it back now, as he should.

1410

I want to say, first and foremost, that we in the New Democratic Party think that this is a worthy bill. It should go to committee. It should have committee time. It should be looked at. There are ramifications. We are going to support it. We think it's a good thing, but we also say that there are many who would like to come and make submissions around this bill, to highlight other issues that are really corollary issues to this as well.

We were concerned at first a little bit that this might be a private-public partnership agency, but the member has spoken to that and addressed it. Now it's voluntary. What we're only asking in this bill is that that be made mandatory.

I'm a homeowner, and like many homeowners, I have done renovations, particularly in my backyard. I remember putting in a deck, and I remember my poor contractor in his frustration phoning around trying to get responses. You can imagine my frustration, because I'm paying him on an hourly basis. Between the two of us, we were a little upset that this wasn't something that could be addressed very quickly.

Certainly, as the member from Sarnia-Lambton outlined, all of the instances where grievous harm has been done because the rules weren't followed—we in the New Democratic Party have some concerns. It's interesting that I just read a petition about one of those concerns, about Tarion, the oversight agency around builders, period. There's no Ombudsman oversight of Tarion, which means there's no real public oversight over building in this province. That's again something that we would like to highlight because you get new homeowners who buy homes where the real work hasn't been done, the background work hasn't been done, and they discover sometimes years down after the Tarion warranty or even during the Tarion warranty that there are serious foundational or HVAC issues with their homes. These are all problems that this bill is kind of the tip of the iceberg on.

Here's an issue of public safety. It's kind of a no-brainer, I think. It's an issue of public safety. And it's not only privately owned contractors and builders that have this problem. I know that in my own riding we came across a problem where municipal contractors were out working and didn't get all the numbers called, I guess. There was a potential disaster happening in my own riding. This was government contractors working who couldn't and didn't get the information.

To make it mandatory is just obvious. It seems to me it's obvious. Of course, the reality is, if it's not mandatory and you have to phone 13 different agencies—my goodness, just trying to get through to one from my constituency office sometimes takes all afternoon. All members know how difficult it is sometimes to get infor-

mation. As I say, all my constituency staff do is fight with bureaucrats all day long on behalf of my constituents. Imagine 13 phone calls to put a post in your backyard. Chances are it's not going to happen, and maybe the ramifications aren't great for that, but certainly, when you're digging out a street, they become extremely relevant.

So this, to me, is kind of a no-brainer. I think it's very sad, quite frankly, that it's had to come to this. We have—what?—five weeks left of the legislative session? We know that this is a government that hasn't been very forthcoming in terms of getting private members' bills before committees unless it's their own. Occasionally for their own they'll get committee time. Very rarely does an opposition member get committee time. I don't hold out a lot of hope that this bill, even if it's passed today, is actually going to become law. That's sad. I guess we'll have to wait till after the election for that.

But again, why did it have to come to this point? Why could this obvious matter not have been dealt with in legislation by the Ministry of Consumer Services?

Having said that, yes, obviously we're going to support it in the New Democratic Party. We would like it to go to committee. We would like to have a chance for people who have more expertise on the issue to be able to make their submissions.

Certainly it's a tip-of-an-iceberg kind of issue. We'd like to use that opportunity to make our own submissions around a number of problems related to development and building in this province. But for now, it's enough to say, well done, member from Sarnia–Lambton. Sorry you had to do it, sorry it hasn't been dealt with, but it's good that you've done it at all.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I am pleased to stand here and speak on this bill brought by my colleague from Sarnia–Lambton. Let me say that he has very good arguments for this bill, there's no doubt about it.

The only reason I wanted to speak to this bill is because it actually falls into an area that I have worked in extensively over my entire career. My background is that I worked for Bell Canada—it's nice to see all the key players here—for 17 years, and I've been in municipal politics for 17 years. Now I've been here for the last five and a half or so.

I would like to see my colleague from Sarnia have his bill approved and, yes, something done about this, but some of us may need to understand a little bit about why this has happened.

We're in the 21st century. In the 19th century, we had a better system. Our friends at the federal government have caused this problem. Our friends at the federal government have never stepped up to the plate to solve it. I'll share with you what it is: Prior to 1997, municipalities actually used to be compensated for their rights-of-way being used by the utilities. Then came deregulation of all the various utilities, and the communications industry wanted to get competition into the place quickly. To do

that, they needed access to the municipal rights-of-way, so they had to speed up the process. So the federal government brought legislation through the CRTC that actually removed the rights of municipalities that they own their right-of-way, that they govern it and that the utilities have to pay compensation for the use of it. In came the communications industry competition, and they were allowed to put their stuff anywhere in the municipal right-of-way without compensating the municipalities.

I know in my particular municipality, the city of Toronto, if I remember correctly, when that happened, we actually had a budget shortfall the following year of \$30 million or \$33 million, something of that nature. If I remember correctly; it was a long time ago. Since then, it has been chaos.

Your problem is, if you look at my colleague's bill, one of the key players in the industry is missing, one of the key players that causes all of the problems in the municipal right-of-way: the cable TV companies. They're not here.

I did have a chat with my colleague from Sarnia–Lambton, and he pointed out to me that on page 2 of the bill, paragraph 8 of subsection 5(1), "Members," has an all-encompassing clause that captures everybody who has assets in the municipal right-of-way. I said to him, "It's good you're putting it in. I hope we can enforce it." Anyone who's licensed by the federal government can do what they like, regardless of what we do here in the province.

I'm in full support of his bill. I would love to see us fix it because one of the biggest complaints I get from some of my constituents is that some of the digs get done, and they remain for six, eight or 12 months before they get repaired. When you call the municipality, the municipality has difficulty telling you which utility did the dig, and then they tell you that you should be calling somebody else to fix it etc.

When I first got into the municipal world, your municipalities knew what was underneath the street or underneath the boulevard. When you called them, they would actually call the utility and make sure that it was fixed, because the utilities had to get a permit to do the dig. Today, they don't go to the municipality too often to do the dig.

When I went to the city of Toronto after amalgamation, I remember the city bringing the key players together over two to three years to try to find a solution to this particular problem. It never happened. They would come to the table. Most of the big players like the gas companies and Bell Canada would be willing to participate. The small companies didn't want to because of the cost of joining this particular process.

1420

I wish my colleague good luck. I'm in full support of what he's doing here. My only concern is, if we say it's mandatory in our bill and someone refuses because they have a federal licence, what do we do? The other problem I see, and I hope we can resolve it—in regulations, or maybe the group can get together and solve it amongst

themselves—is that this centre could start out costing cheap. If you talk about an 811 system—I recently came back from the US, actually, visiting a 311 system. It is not a cheap system. It is very expensive to operate, to build and to administer. If we move from this to the next step, which is 811, I hope the key players who are using this system are the bearers of those costs, not the government, not the taxpayer and not the municipality. But they have to find a way that the cost can be shared amongst all of those who actually use it and benefit from it.

I will leave the rest for my colleague from London—Fanshawe to add to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'm pleased to join the debate today on Bill 180, An Act respecting Ontario One Call Ltd., tabled by my colleague from Sarnia—Lambton, Mr. Bailey.

I must say, I haven't had too many private members' bills with this many people joining us in the studio audience, or the gallery, as we say, so there's got to be some support out there. I think we could probably get a bigger crowd if we were legislating a lower price for Leafs tickets, but that's not on the table today. I guess we don't need any Leafs tickets today either, eh?

Anyhow, I do want to support my colleague and commend him for bringing forth this issue. As my friend from Parkdale—High Park said, it's an issue of public safety. It's also an issue of cost.

Let me just paint a scenario: You're in the process of doing an excavation of some kind, and you're trying to tee everything up and you think you've covered it all. Then all of a sudden, you start digging and you hit a ground-borne asset of some utility that you probably knew might be there, but nobody made the call. You've got 13 possible calls in any one circumstance, and then you turn around and you say, "Well, Joe, I thought you were calling them." Joe says, "No, I thought Pete was calling them." Then all of a sudden you've got a costly mess on your hands because someone failed to make the call.

The reality is that if you had a one-call system, then all of the utilities, regardless of what their nature is, would be contacted by the one-call corporation or whatever we're going to build to ensure that this happens. All of those utilities would actually receive the call so that their people or designates or whatever would be there to make sure that their assets were marked and they wouldn't be cut in the process of an excavation.

My friend from Sarnia talked about what would happen if this happened during the royal wedding. I do know some people who probably wished that the gas line was cut during their wedding, but in retrospect, they may have had some regrets. But certainly not me. I want to make it very clear, on the record, that I am not one of them.

But I notice that in the United States, this system is in place, or a system like it. Some kind of one-call system is in place in all 50 states. Mandatory one-call systems have

been successfully implemented in all 50 states. To my friend from Scarborough—Rouge River, I understand his concerns, but if we just let the concerns get in the way and don't try to find a way to make something happen, then nothing ever happens. I think what my friend, my colleague from Sarnia—Lambton, is doing is initiating the process to make sure that something happens. My understanding from people in the industry is that for years there have been attempts to make it a voluntary system. Unfortunately, it just hasn't got everyone involved that needs to be involved, so they've asked Bob Bailey to pursue this and this is exactly what he's doing.

Some of the numbers here—I just want to get my glasses here for a second. In 2004, there were 225,000 no-locate damages in the United States. In 2008, after the implementation of mandatory one-call systems, there were 75,000. That's a 70% reduction in the number of no-locate damages. When you start to look at the stark reality of the numbers, as my colleague from Parkdale—High Park said—she called it a no-brainer, and she's correct, because wouldn't you want a system that gave you the best assurance that when that shovel goes in the ground, it's going in the ground safely?

If we have the opportunity, we have the technology and we have the ability to actually implement a system that says with one call—there is no question now—you will know whether a particular ground-borne asset from a particular utility is in that ground, and if so, that it's been located so that when you drop that bucket or that blade, you're doing it in the knowledge that that excavation will be safe, why would we not want to do that?

I understand that there could be some municipalities that have some concerns, but it's our job to work around them. I support the bill and I commend my colleague for doing so.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Thank you for allowing me to participate in the debate on Bill 180.

I listened to many speakers, and I want to congratulate the member from Sarnia—Lambton for bringing such an important issue to the House. I listened also to my colleague the member from Scarborough—Rouge River, who is an expert in municipal affairs and who dealt with this issue for many years, also as an employee of Bell Canada. They probably had a lot of calls in this regard from many different homeowners across the province of Ontario.

In the past, our government established One Call to protect many of the structures underground. It was years ago, done by the Ministry of Small Business and Consumer Services, to allow many different utilities to participate on a voluntary basis in One Call in order to protect consumers, protect the people and create some kind of safety mechanism in the province of Ontario.

Our data, our statistics, show that today, almost 80% of Ontario's population is covered by the One Call system; 72% for electricity; and 33% for municipal infrastructure. I know this is based on voluntarism by all

the providers, whether it's the cables of Bell Canada, gas utilities, water utilities or electricity—whatever—so everything underground.

I know the member from Sarnia–Lambton is asking that it be mandatory. The whole issue is, as the member from Scarborough–Rouge River mentioned, who's going to pay for this one? Who can we send the bill to? Most of the utilities, most of the providers, whether for cable, TV, electricity or whatever, benefit from providing the services. I think it would be important to you and to all the providers to get together and figure out how we can apply the system—in conjunction, of course, with the municipalities, because it's very important. We don't want to create a system to download more services onto the municipalities, because we just came and, for the last seven, eight years, uploaded many different services from municipalities, from Ontario Works to ambulance services to child care support—many different services we uploaded, because we don't want to overload and put a lot of pressure on municipalities.

Overall, I think it's a very important issue to be discussed, to bring forward to this House to be debated. I think the safety of the people of Ontario is very important to all of us. Also, for the people who provide services in the province of Ontario, it would be important to you too, because you don't want to waste time. You don't want your service to be interrupted by somebody digging and hitting your wires, cable or pipelines by mistake. All of this is important to you and to us, and to all of the people of Ontario.

1430

But the most important thing is how we can construct a bill—a law—to protect you and protect us, and protect all the people of Ontario. In the meantime, we don't want to burn the municipalities. We don't want to download more services to the municipalities. I think that if you are the beneficiary of the service and you collect the support and fees from the service, we're open as a government to work with you and work with municipalities to establish a law and a way to create a one-call service for all people, first, to save them time, and also to protect your services, because in the end, you invest a lot of money underground. You don't want that service to be interrupted. You don't want that service to be damaged. Also, you don't want the homeowner to be at risk. Sometimes when they dig and hit a cable it might kill someone, or a gas line might create an explosion. So all of these elements are important to create protection for consumers and also to create some kind of safety mechanism for your infrastructure, which you invest a lot of money in to put underground.

This bill, Bill 180, introduced by the member from Sarnia–Lambton, creates a great discussion for all of us in this House to open, because in the end, as I said, two years ago we had a bill that talked about this issue. We have a law that talks about this issue, but it isn't mandatory. So the member from Sarnia–Lambton asked about a mandatory law in the province of Ontario to encourage or force all of the service providers to participate in it and be part of this one phone call.

In the end, I think I'm going to support this bill. I see a lot of encouragement letters from different providers—from Enbridge, from gas companies, from utilities companies and from cable companies, asking us to support this bill.

But in the end, as I mentioned, there are so many different gaps in the bill. That's why I think it would be the right environment for it to be introduced here and discussed, and hopefully it will go to committee and then we'll discuss it further. Then we'll see who's responsible and how we can create a bill that will benefit all of us as providers, citizens and also, as municipalities.

Again, thank you for allowing me to stand up and speak.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Frank Klees: I'm pleased to rise in support of my colleague's bill.

I actually don't remember this kind of lobby on any particular bill in recent history. As we can see from the gallery, we have representatives of many stakeholders from different areas of industry and utilities, all of whom are very adept at copying the same information and sending it to us. Some of you could have been a little more creative, I would have thought, but in a day of wanting to be efficient, I suppose that's the answer. At least they're consistent in terms of the rationale presented to us for why this is so important.

The one organization that actually was a little more creative in their appeal to me was the Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association. They made it very clear that, while they, as an organization, and the several businesses that are associated with them, are concerned about the safety issues that obviously are and should be apparent to everyone in this House and should be apparent to anyone who is in a position of leadership in municipalities, this is something that shouldn't even be before us.

I understand what the member is attempting to do, and rightfully so, and that is for those municipalities, for those jurisdictions that haven't seen the wisdom of this—that they should be then forced to do so by the Legislature.

As a Conservative, I don't like to do this. It's typical of the McGuinty government to tell people in this province what to do. They've told us what kind of dogs we can own. They've told us what kind of food we can have in cafeterias. They tell us when we can do our laundry. But I have to tell you, in seven years this is the first time that I'm willing to actually vote in favour of a piece of legislation that tells people what to do, because it's the right thing to do.

I know this is a no-brainer for every Liberal MPP in here because they can't wait to tell people what to do. So, in this particular case, I welcome their participation in this House.

I know the member will have no problem getting this bill passed.

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

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Pretty soon the member from Newmarket–Aurora is going to call for the regulation of the financial industry, and that will be the day. This is only the beginning, but you've got to start somewhere, and I understand.

I'm going to support the bill that's been presented by the member from Sarnia–Lambton because I think it's a reasonable bill.

I also understand why the member from Scarborough–Rouge River raised a number of issues—and I think they're reasonable. I wish I had your research, by the way. I'm telling you, we need to elect more New Democrats so that we can have a couple of more researchers to help us out—Ted, you don't agree with that?—as a matter of fairness.

The member from Scarborough–Rouge River raises a few concerns. There's no doubt that there's a big cost factor in all of this. But to balance that argument out, it does cost, as the member from Sarnia–Lambton alludes in his notes—the other good research that you've done. We're spending nearly \$33 million each year because of the cost that is attributed to not knowing what is under the places that these folks here to my left are working on. So there is a cost. Somebody's paying for that, and it's probably me and you and the working stiff who earns a little bit less than we do. So, while there is a cost in developing a one-stop centre, there is a cost in not doing something about it. Either way, we're paying for it. The question is, how are we paying for it? Who is paying what, and how fair is the distribution of those fees? Is that correct? Just nod your head. I suspect there is an unfair level of what is being paid and by whom, and that should be addressed.

That's a good reason to send this to committee: so we can have the industry players that are here today, including those who don't want to join, come and talk about why they don't want to join.

The other argument that the member from Scarborough–Rouge River makes is a good one, and that is that some of the players that are federally regulated don't want to join. The question is, is it cost or something else? Either way, we would find out by having hearings. But if the province were to set up a one-stop centre and some of the federally regulated folks don't want to join, in my view, we would have the power—you, in this case, at the moment—to be able to say, “You've got to join.” So we either embarrass the industries that don't want to take part—the cable industry—and/or we embarrass the federal government and the minister related to it who don't want to force the people who fall under their jurisdiction to do so.

I know the member from Sarnia–Lambton is going to go hard on Jim Flaherty to make sure that he goes hard on the cable industry to be part of this mandatory one-stop centre. Is that correct, Bob? That's what we want. We want to be able to reach out to New Democrats, Liberals and Tories to work together and make it law.

I find this a reasonable proposal. If there are issues of unfairness in terms of who's paying what, that should be

dealt with, either in committee and/or under regulation, once we agree about the criteria under which this should operate. I think that's a manageable thing. But there's no doubt that we've got to involve the other players who don't want to take part; the question is, how do we do that? In my mind, if we were to create a provincial call centre, that would begin to put some pressure on the federal government and those regulated industries, like cable, that don't want to be part of this.

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My view is, the member from Sarnia–Lambton has brought forth a reasonable proposal. In my mind and in our mind, it's a reasonable thing to be doing. If there are questions, we can deal with that in committee. The problem is, like so many other bills—and this is what troubles me. I've got to tell you, when we were in government in 1990, one of my proudest of moments was that we passed 17 private members' bills. I know some of you will say whatever you want to say—blah, blah, blah—about that, but I was proud of that, and that was historical. We do not do enough of that, in terms of paying attention to what members introduce in this Legislature. We bring it to committee, they're debated and they're passed. Many more of these bills should be passing, and they're not. I find that regrettable. Many governments have been part of the problem on this. Even though we accuse the governing party at the moment for being the culprit, many of us have this problem, and we all need to solve it.

Congratulations, member.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer: I'm certainly pleased to support this bill which has been put forward by my colleague the member for Sarnia–Lambton. If you take a look at Bill 180, it would obviously create that single call centre for all underground locates for use by homeowners and excavators alike. I'm thrilled that there's so much support for this bill. Hopefully, it can be passed, because I think the member for Sarnia–Lambton has certainly identified an issue of importance.

I say that because I don't know when I have, in recent years, received as many emails and phone calls from supporters of this bill and people asking that I would support it and also indicating they would hope that all three parties in this House would pass this bill today.

It's obviously an issue of great importance. It is an issue which, I think, has received almost the unanimous support of the stakeholders in the industry and from consumers and individual businesses. I think in light of the fact that we're hearing that, when there is accidental damage to underground infrastructure, it can be not only expensive but, as we also have heard, it can be very deadly as well—at a time when we see a growing complexity of underground infrastructure in our province, the accidental hits to pipelines, especially those carrying natural gas, are an increasing threat to public safety for all Ontarians.

I was quite surprised to learn that in Ontario, there were over 2,500 pipeline strikes in a 16-month period,

spanning January 2008 to April 2009. Two of those strikes, of course, did result in fatalities.

I applaud the member for bringing forward this bill today. We have a lot of infrastructure in our province and we need to make sure that we move this bill forward today in order to ensure safety and efficiency.

This bill today, and this one-call system, which would be mandatory, would allow all homeowners and anyone else working underground to place one phone call and know whether or not it is safe to dig. It would also facilitate faster and safer development for business, it would streamline and simplify the process, it would reduce wait times, and, of course, most importantly, it would reduce the accidental damage to the existing underground infrastructure.

We know that when there is damage—I've talked about the fatalities that can ensue, but there are also increased costs to property owners, excavators, municipalities and, at the end of the day, all the taxpayers in the province of Ontario.

So I applaud the member for bringing the bill forward. I would encourage all of my colleagues from all three parties to support this bill. The bill really is based on his own personal work experience. It is a good bill. This bill would certainly allow Ontarians to dig and excavate with peace of mind. By following one single step, picking up the phone, we can ensure that there is greater safety and efficiency in our province. So thank you to the member from Sarnia–Lambton.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The honourable member for Sarnia–Lambton has two minutes for his response.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Let me begin by thanking all members of the House from all three parties who have participated in the debate today: the members for London–Fanshawe, Scarborough–Rouge River, Parkdale–High Park, Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, Newmarket–Aurora, Kitchener–Waterloo, and Trinity–Spadina. I don't think I missed anyone; I hope not.

To recap, the Ontario One Call Act, Bill 180, will create that single call centre and database for all underground locates that can be accessed by homeowners and excavators alike, at no charge to those homeowners and excavators.

Access to utility locate information in an efficient and timely manner will decrease the unnecessary cost of damage and lost productivity that results from thousands of inadvertent utility line strikes every year. Mandatory participation by organizations with underground assets will increase the awareness and understanding of the need to properly locate buried infrastructure before a project is undertaken. This awareness can and will save lives in our province, protecting residents and workers alike. The Ontario One Call centre is an initiative that was created and brought forth by the utility industry themselves and their contractors to reduce infrastructure damage and lost productivity.

As a homegrown solution, the Ontario One Call Act, 2011, has the broad support of industry, thanks to a fair

and inexpensive approach that ensures participation and service delivery. It is my hope that this piece of legislation, if passed, will lead to a safer, more productive and prosperous environment for those endeavouring to dig or excavate in our province.

Again, I would like to thank Ontario One Call, the Ontario Regional Common Ground Alliance, Union Gas, Enbridge Gas Distribution, Bell Canada and the many other utilities, municipalities and excavators for their committed and continuing support. Remember, safety should not be voluntary. It is time that all of Ontario's infrastructure agencies and underground asset workers work together and create this smart, comprehensive system in our province.

I ask this chamber to pass Bill 180, the Ontario One Call Act, and always, always, remember to call before you dig.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The time for Mr. Bailey's ballot item has expired. For those people visiting us today in the galleries and those watching at home, we will vote on this bill in about 100 minutes.

PUBLIC SECTOR
SALARY DISCLOSURE
AMENDMENT ACT, 2011
LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LA DIVULGATION
DES TRAITEMENTS
DANS LE SECTEUR PUBLIC

Ms. Horwath moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 177, An Act to amend the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act, 1996 with respect to disclosure of severance payments / Projet de loi 177, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1996 sur la divulgation des traitements dans le secteur public à l'égard de la divulgation des indemnités de cessation d'emploi.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Pursuant to standing order 98, the honourable member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Ms. Horwath.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I'm very, very pleased to begin the debate on Bill 177, An Act to amend the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act. This is a bill that would finally shine the light on backroom golden handshakes by requiring severances to be included on the annual sunshine list.

I want to explain, first and foremost, why, in my opinion and New Democrats' opinion, this bill is so important. As I travel the province, I see first-hand the extent to which Ontario families are struggling just to make ends meet: seniors struggling to pay rising hydro bills, young families struggling to be able to afford child care, students burdened by rising tuition rates, workers stressed out by rising gas prices.

Between September 2008 and May 2009, 250,000 Ontarians lost their jobs. Those who kept their jobs have seen their wages stagnate as the costs of everyday life

continue to rise. After inflation is taken into consideration, the average hourly wage in this province hasn't increased since 1991. People are getting by with less. Recent surveys have found that half of Canadians say that their financial situation has gotten worse over the past year, and 60% of families say that they live paycheque to paycheque. Households are taking on larger and larger debt loads. On average, we now have 1.5 times more debt than disposable income.

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And what is this government's response? This government's response to this crisis is to impose a regressive and unfair new tax on Ontario families at the worst possible time. As people are reeling from a recession that cost thousands of jobs and left many, many more coping with pay cuts, this government turns around and makes life more expensive. It added a new tax to items that everyone, regardless of income, relies on every day.

Ontarians are upset and they are confused by the McGuinty Liberals' policies, especially when they learn that the money brought in by the HST is not going to fund our schools. It's not going to help seniors who are stuck waiting for long-term care. Instead, what it's going to do is provide billions and billions of dollars in corporate tax cuts. That's what that money is going to. It's going to companies who are already reaping billions of dollars in profits. And it enrages people even more when they see public sector CEOs pocketing outrageous salaries while most families are struggling just to make ends meet.

In this situation of stagnating incomes and rising costs, it's understandable that Ontarians want to be sure that their tax dollars are being used as effectively as possible. Ensuring that this is the case is the least we can do as elected representatives. Taxpayers are generally okay with public sector employees being paid fairly. They get it; they understand that these are the very front-line workers who deliver the services that we rely on—our precious health care services, for example, and educational services in this province. But Ontarians are not okay with excessive salaries or exorbitant golden handshakes. They are not okay with that, I'm not okay with that and New Democrats are not okay with that.

The sunshine list is an important tool in ensuring the accountability of taxpayer dollars. It requires public sector employers to disclose salaries and benefits that are paid to employees if the total of those amounts is \$100,000 or more in a single year. However, it has serious limitations. It doesn't require that generous severance packages be made public. Those golden handshakes do not have to be listed on the sunshine list. Ontario families sometimes hear about six-figure golden handshakes been given to CEOs even after they fail to serve the public interest and leave their positions in disgrace. Sometimes—unfortunately, in many, many cases—they don't even hear about these golden handshakes at all.

Requiring public sector employers to disclose severance payments of more than \$100,000 would make the sunshine list more meaningful, and it would end over-

the-top golden handshakes. The number of sweetheart deals with departing CEOs on the McGuinty Liberal government's watch is absolutely sickening, and it's even worse when you think about the badly-needed services that those valuable taxpayer dollars could have been providing.

I'm going to list a few examples: the notorious former eHealth boss Sarah Kramer, who was fired in 2009 but received a severance pay of a reported \$317,000. Or Ron Sapsford, former Deputy Minister of Health, who quit in 2009 during the eHealth scandal. He earned a pretty good salary while he was working—over half a million dollars a year. This month, we learned that he received a severance pay of more than three quarters of a million dollars, an amount that an average Ontarian might earn in maybe 20 years, an amount that could have provided 10,000 hours of home-based nursing care for Ontario's seniors.

Or as another example, take Warren Chant, who was fired as the Windsor Hôtel-Dieu Grace Hospital CEO. He received \$300,000 in a severance package. Instead of padding the pockets of a rich executive, that severance could have provided 10,000 hours of homemaking support for senior citizens in this province—10,000 hours.

Or Julia Dumanian, CEO of Cambridge Memorial Hospital—another example. She was discharged and yet received \$650,000 in severance pay. That is enough to provide long-term-care beds for a full year for 15 seniors.

Diane Beattie, CEO of London Health Sciences Centre, resigned in 2009 after it was discovered she had dealt out over \$3 million in untendered contracts to a former co-worker. What did she get? She didn't get a slap on the wrist. She didn't leave with her tail between her legs. She received \$451,000 in severance. That's enough for 6,000 hours of professional nursing care in the homes of Ontario seniors.

The list goes on and on. Gerald Savoy, CEO of Montfort Hospital: severance pay of over \$1 million—two years' salary; John Skorobohacz, CAO of the city of Windsor: severance of at least \$220,000; Joe de Mora, CEO of Kingston General Hospital, severance of up to \$900,000. Duncan Brown, dismissed from the position of CEO of Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp., receives a golden handshake of over \$700,000. Dennis Egan, CEO of Kitchener's Grand River Hospital: severance pay of \$736,000. Tom Parkinson resigns from his position as head of Hydro One and is paid a reported \$3.3 million.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: You don't need to work, with that kind of money.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Absolutely. That's more money than many, many Ontario workers will receive in their entire lifetime.

Those are the ones we know about. For those ones, we know how much severance they received as they went out the door. There are many others that we don't know about, such as Debbie Sevenpifer, for example, who was ousted as CEO of the Niagara Health System early this year. We know she earned \$350,000 a year while at that

post, but her severance package, to this day, remains unknown.

This kind of lack of accountability for taxpayers' dollars is unacceptable, especially when residents of Niagara region have experienced closed emergency rooms and acute care beds, cuts to front-line services, and face a possible \$7-million operating deficit in the upcoming fiscal year.

In summary, what this bill does is protect Ontarians' interests by making sure that these backroom sweetheart deals are a thing of the past. Earlier this month, the Liberal government said it is "committed to getting best value for taxpayer dollars when it comes to health care." But this government is cutting vital health care services, and front-line staff are being slashed in communities across Ontario, while health care executives, on and off the job, are cashing in. This bill will rein in these excessive compensation packages and sweetheart severance deals. Will the government support us on this bill, or are they going to continue to look the other way while Ontarians are taken for a ride by well-connected health care insiders?

It's a pretty simple bill. It's about fairness. Ontario families are being squeezed for every last penny. They're being forced to pay more and more and more and they're receiving less and less and less, and all the while they are watching these public sector CEOs cashing in on their dime, on the public dime, making exorbitant salaries and taking in even more when they're fired. How is that right? How can that possibly be right? These well-paid executives are receiving handouts with hard-earned taxpayers' dollars while communities across the province are suffering health care cuts and reduced staffing for hospital clinics and emergency rooms.

What it does say about the McGuinty Liberals is that their priorities are out of whack. When this government can find bucketloads of money for hospital executives but Windsor can't get a shovel in the ground for a long-term-care facility that was promised four years ago, what does that say about the priorities of this government?

This is not the best use of our precious health care dollars. These golden handshakes have to stop, and one of the ways to get them to stop is by making sure that they are published on the sunshine list annually.

New Democrats have already pushed hard for another piece of the puzzle, and that is a hard cap, a permanent cap, on public sector executive salaries, which the government also opposed. The best way to rein in those salaries is simply to put a hard cap on them. But no, the McGuinty Liberals won't do that.

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So now we're here today to make sure that sweetheart severance deals are a thing of the past. I certainly hope that this government takes a wake-up call and does the right thing on this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I'm pleased to participate in Bill 177, the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Amendment Act, 2011.

I listened to the member opposite, the leader of the third party, speaking about this issue. I don't know what she's bringing—nothing new. Actually, our government introduced public sector salary disclosure a long time ago. It's a part of our government's commitment to being accountable and transparent. She's talking about transparency and disclosing all the salaries, which we've had in place since we got elected in 2003.

Before, your government didn't open up the salaries or disclose the salaries to the public. But in our present, since 2003, we introduced an accountability bill to allow all the taxpayers across the province of Ontario to know how much the public sector salaries are, who's receiving it and why they're receiving it. It's online. Anyone, taxpayers across the province of Ontario, can go and see it; it already exists. So the member opposite, the leader of the third party, didn't bring anything new for the public of Ontario to support.

As a matter of fact, before 2003, the auditor wasn't visiting the books before the election; now it's mandatory. Before the election, the Auditor General can come and sign off about the books of the province of Ontario so people who can run can see exactly how much the coffers of the province have before making a commitment.

Also, she talked about new taxes and burdens on the people of Ontario. You know, the opposition, every single time they stand up, tell the people of Ontario, "It's a new tax being imposed on you," the HST. As a matter of fact, it wasn't a new tax; it was a combination of the PST and the GST. The PST and GST combined together became 13%. There was nothing new. As a matter of fact, all the experts in this field—our economic recovery in the province of Ontario, almost 93% of our economic recovery, came as a result of the HST.

Interjection.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: The member opposite probably forgot what his leader mentioned. She was talking about the new taxes, which is not a new tax. It was an old tax; it has always been around. We combined them together to make it easier and a lot better for the business people to conduct—and I'm talking about businesses in the province of Ontario. I'm talking about accountability and transparency.

All the people in the province of Ontario, all the public sector employees—

Mr. Paul Miller: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: In all fairness to the government, they have the right to give their response. But I think, for a point of order, the content of his response has nothing to do with what was brought forward by the leader of the third party—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Okay, I get the point. I would ask the honourable member to speak to the bill before us.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I'm speaking to the bill. I'm responding to the leader of the opposition when she mentioned about the HST, which we are proud of on this side, because this is an important issue for all of us. She was talking about: How come we imposed a new tax on the

people of Ontario? We created that tax to make business successful in the province of Ontario and to allow many people from across the globe to come and invest in the province of Ontario. As a result of this investment—that's why I'm responding to her; she mentioned this.

Again, we're talking about accountability. We're talking about the salary accountability—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I just want to be helpful. It's briefing note three, not briefing note two, all right? The HST is two; three is this one.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): That is not a point of order.

The honourable member for London–Fanshawe has the floor.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: I know the third party wants to send a message. They want to be partisan in this regard. They want to use whatever possible way to position themselves. That's fine. The sunshine list is fine. We publish this. Then the people of Ontario—

Interjection.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: It's important for all of us, for all the taxpayers across the province of Ontario, to know how much the public sector makes on a regular basis, which is published on a yearly basis—all the ministers, all the members of this House. As a result of our government's commitment to transparency and accountability, we are asked to publicly disclose salaries and expenses. We're open. We'd like everyone across the province of Ontario to know where their tax money is being spent. We are also open to any questions on a regular basis. We have an answer for all the expenses we have in the province of Ontario.

The member opposite mentioned the CEOs of hospitals being so-and-so with high salaries. I want to remind her—and she probably knows—that CEOs in hospitals in the province of Ontario are not appointed by the government of Ontario. They're appointed by the boards of many different hospitals across the province of Ontario, and their salaries are also dictated by the boards. Actually, we on this side don't dictate or micromanage every activity in the province. We respect the elected boards across the province who are elected by the people of Ontario to run their hospitals.

It's important for us to be accountable, open and transparent. I wish that the member opposite, as she promised, will post all of last year's expenses, which I don't think have been received by the fairness commissioner yet.

Mr. Paul Miller: I think she already did it.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: That's good. Thank you for telling me that she did it. Anyway, to my knowledge, it's not been published yet.

We are very accountable, every one of us, from the ministers to the members of this House. All of us published everything we have. We are open to talking about this issue any time, any day, because we have nothing to hide. We believe strongly in transparency and accountability.

I don't know what the third party is trying to establish by bringing this bill to this House. She's talking about

disclosing salaries. We already have a law in the province of Ontario where we disclose our salaries as members of the House. We already disclose our salaries as ministers and as a public office that runs the province of Ontario. So I don't know what she's trying to establish in this House.

We cannot ask other people to publish and disclose salaries. That is something we cannot control; it's something we don't appoint.

Interjection.

Mr. Khalil Ramal: One hundred per cent. All the public money that is generated by the taxpayers of Ontario, the taxpayers have the right to know exactly where this money is being spent—100%. We have no issue with that. All this money is being disclosed on the website. You and me and everyone across the province of Ontario can go visit the website and see where the money is being spent. That was part of our accountability and transparency.

I think the member opposite is not bringing anything new to the House here. She's taking the opportunity just to score some partisan points. There's nothing to it. I looked at this bill, and I don't see anything new. She's talking about transparency and accountability: We've already been doing that since we got elected in 2003. She's talking about disclosure of salaries: We have already been doing that since 2003. The Auditor General has the right to inspect the government's books any time, especially before the election, because we want the people of Ontario to know exactly how much we have and how much we're committed for.

That's not what happened in 2003. Before 2003, the past government told us that they had extras in the budget, and when we got elected in 2003 we found a \$5-billion deficit. That's the difference between the past and the present.

There's nothing to hide—nothing. Everything's open, everything's disclosed, and anyone across the province of Ontario can visit the public disclosure website and see exactly how much every member of the public sector makes, how much they spend and how they spend the money.

In terms of the CEOs she mentioned many different times, from London to Hamilton to Windsor—everywhere—I can tell her that the CEOs of hospitals are appointed by elected committees in every city. Those cities elect those people and appoint them, and also dictate their salaries, and their money is also disclosed on a regular basis. Any citizen of Ontario can visit those websites and see exactly how much those CEOs make, how much they spend, how much their offices spend and how much their staff spends, because we ask them to disclose all the information, because that information should be publicly announced. The people of Ontario, the taxpayers, have a right to know exactly how much those people spend.

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I'm not sure if I'm going to support something that does not benefit the public of Ontario, the people of

Ontario, and does not add to transparency or efficiency. I don't see anything new in this one, because we already have a disclosure clause in our government to allow people to know. I'm not sure what she's trying to establish in this bill. I don't see anything new. That is why—I'm talking on behalf of myself—I'm not going to support something that doesn't mean anything or has no meat to it. We already have a mechanism in place and a system in place and a website. All the information is on it.

I don't see any meat to this bill. I don't see any reason to pass this bill, because we already have it. We've already shown transparency and accountability through the years we've been in government. We already have all the information online. Any person, any taxpayer, can visit that website online and can see it. I don't see any reason to support it, as I mentioned.

In the end, I believe that our government is going in the right direction and the accountability measurements we put in place have been effective. Therefore I'm not going to support such a bill, just to try to create misinformation and mislead the people of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I had great hopes of the member who was speaking to this bill. At first he thought he would like the bill and vote for it, and then he completely turned around and did a flip-flop. Then I realized that he is sitting on that side of the House as a Liberal. I guess that's typical of what that government does.

This bill is about accountability: accountability of Ontario taxpayers' dollars. There should be nothing more sacred in this chamber than the transparency of Ontario taxpayers' dollars—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Order. I'd ask everybody to quiet down. The member is right to my left and I can barely hear him. Thank you.

The honourable member for Halton.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I know that the Speaker wants to hear what I'm saying. This bill is about the accountability of taxpayers' dollars. I was saying that nothing should be more sacred in this chamber than taxpayers' dollars and the transparency of those dollars. Yet this government has all kinds—we've talked about Sarah Kramer; we've talked about Ron Sapsford and the huge, huge severances and bills that were paid out—more than a worker would expect to make in a lifetime, paid out over someone who had resigned their office.

It doesn't stop with severances and people who are fired or people who resigned. There was a lawsuit regarding the OPP actions in Caledonia, where Mr. Brown and Ms. Chatwell were suing the OPP for lack of services. I think they were asking for \$7 million. That case was settled out of court, and yet there was no disclosure. We don't know how many Ontario taxpayers' dollars were spent, in the same way that we don't know how many taxpayers' dollars are spent in the severance relationships that the government has with other people.

That's wrong. These dollars are coming out of taxpayers' pockets, and they have the right to know how those dollars are being spent. They can't judge the worth of the government of the day if they don't know how that government is spending their dollars.

The Chatwell-Brown situation was one. Another one was the Samsung contract for \$7 billion. That contract is not an open contract that is available to the Ontario public to scrutinize. We don't know where that \$7 billion is going, other than the pockets of Samsung in South Korea. Those are Ontario taxpayers' dollars; they have the right, the inalienable right, to know where that money is going.

Then, of course, we have the granddaddy of all time, the Oakville power plant. First of all, Kevin Flynn, the member from Oakville, votes in committee that this power plant should be built, and then he spends the next three years trying to kill the thing. Well, eventually he did kill it—eventually—after the contract was signed, unfortunately. Now the government has to pay Trans-Canada, which had the contract to build that plant for \$1 billion—\$1 billion. And yet that—

Interjections.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Everything's in order. Don't worry about a thing.

Yet this government won't reveal—

Mr. Khalil Ramal: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: The member from Halton is not speaking to the bill. The member is speaking about disclosure—

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I'm making the—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I don't agree with the point. He is speaking to government accountability of the taxpayers' dollars.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Unfortunately, my time is up. I would lecture you a little bit more about transparency and the importance of governments looking after the responsibility of taxpayers' dollars, something that this government has failed miserably on.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It's a pleasure to speak to the bill presented by our leader: Bill 177, An Act to amend the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act, 1996 with respect to disclosure of severance payments.

This is a reasonable request to be making. I love to listen to the member from London-Fanshawe often, because he's a true soldier. He's the kind of guy the government puts in the front lines. As all the other generals are nowhere to be seen, you can always count on the true soldiers, who stand on the front line ready to defend the government. You witnessed today that only one member spoke to this, the member from London-Fanshawe. Why put many on the hook when you can put one on the hook with the government's position? He is willing to sacrifice himself for the cause—whatever that cause. He didn't quite speak to the bill, I have to say. He didn't speak to the bill at all. And I'm telling you this: When you've got a \$17-billion deficit, it would seem to me that the soldier and the generals would willingly, happily and together

join with the leader of the New Democrats and say, “We’ve got to control our costs.”

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No, no, member from London–Fanshawe. Putting the salary on the sunshine list is one, and she, as the leader, is proposing that we put the severance of their salary as well on the sunshine list. We want to know the severance package. You didn’t speak to that at all. The point of it is that in her speech—and you heard; it’s not like you didn’t hear—she had three pages of CEOs who were either let go or left voluntarily and their severance is just beyond belief and beyond understanding.

This is not an attack on civil servants. This is not an attack. We support civil servants in Ontario. What we argue is that many of them are incredibly overpaid, and not only overpaid in salary, but their severance is out of whack with what is normally accepted by the majority of people. They’re overpaid. So if you have a deficit, we argue that this is one way to deal with it.

By the way, I attack the wealthy in the private sector in the same way. I have no mercy for the private sector either. Because you’ll have my Conservative brothers and sisters on the other side saying that we’re just after the public servants. No, no; I wanted to attack viciously, as I did, and as I often try to do, when you reflect on the subprime fiasco—in the US, largely—the derivatives fiasco, where they bundled a lot of monies in mortgages and people who were buying them didn’t have a clue what they were buying, but they were selling them to investors without knowing what they were getting. In the end, it caused an incredible worldwide problem. Who paid for that lack of regulation over those folks?

Interjection: The people.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The little people, and I’m not little. Those who earn \$50,000, \$60,000 or \$40,000, those were the ones, Paul, who were burned.

1520

So I attack them as viciously, and more so, than public servants who, for the most part, earn a lot less, but relative to what normal people earn in the civil service and outside—way out of whack.

Mr. Paul Miller: Read that one.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I’ll leave it for somebody else.

My point is we need to get a handle on these salaries. We’ve argued, our leader has argued and the NDP argues that we need to cap salaries. We desperately need to cap salaries. When the Premier earns \$200,000 managing 110 billion bucks, and then you’ve got one CEO of a hospital or Hydro One or any other government agency or commission that we’re talking about—

Mr. Paul Miller: A university.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: —a university or even a college, where they earn more than the Premier, who manages \$110 billion, something is wrong.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Beg your pardon?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: He ain’t worth 200 grand.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No, no, no. You would argue that your former leader Mike Harris was worth his money; I’m sure you would say that. And if you don’t say it, say it out loud.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: What’s that?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: If you don’t think your former leader Mike Harris was worth his money, tell us publicly.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I said McGuinty.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: That’s not fair. It is not fair. Leaders, whoever they are—

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You’re too loud; today, you’re too loud. Whoever they are, leaders are underpaid relative to so many other people—underpaid. So if a Premier can earn \$200,000, and then we pay CEOs of a hospital, university or college or any other board, agency or commission more, something is terribly wrong.

We need to get a handle on that. This is one way to do it, and it surprises me that many Liberals simply just can’t find a way to say, “She’s right.”

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It’s an honour to stand and support our leader, Andrea Horwath, and her bill.

The bill does a very simple thing: It simply asks that the severance, as well as the salaries, of public servants at the higher end, the echelon over \$100,000, be made public. These are our tax dollars—your tax dollars, if you’re watching from home. And you should know that your tax dollars went to pay \$3,320,000 when Tom Parkinson, who was the CEO of Hydro One, left. That was a severance package; that’s your money.

You should know that when Sarah Kramer resigned—in disgrace, I might add—from eHealth, that incredible billion-dollar boondoggle, she still got \$317,000 in severance. We could go down, and so our leader has, the whole list. It’s frightening.

The government acts like they haven’t heard this before. They certainly have heard it before. In fact, in 2002, the member from Hamilton Mountain, Marie Bountrogianni—I gather she’s running for another position now—introduced a bill to require the disclosure of severance packages. That was in 2002.

On April 7 of this year, when the Minister of Government Services was asked whether the government should cap severance packages, he said, “Absolutely. We’re moving towards that.” Really, all we’re asking is what the government itself purported to have asked, but hasn’t done a thing about.

Let’s put the backdrop to this bill in place. This is a province that has now moved into have-not status; we now get equalization payments. This is a province that has doubled the real debt under the McGuinty Liberals—we’re now about a third of a trillion dollars in debt; that’s real debt—and is running a record deficit, a deficit higher than all the other provinces combined right now. This is the same province that gave \$3.2 million to Tom Parkinson as a golden goodbye.

This is the province that is now in breach of United Nations human rights laws around affordable housing; we had a rapporteur come to Ontario to talk about how this government is in breach of that, because this government puts less than half, per capita, into housing than any other government across Canada. This is the government that has one in six children living in poverty, and more food banks in the city of Toronto than McDonald's.

This is the backdrop to the \$3.2-million golden handshake that Tom Parkinson got, or the estimated \$1.15-million handshake that the CEO of Montfort Hospital got, or the \$650,000 golden handshake that the CEO of London Health Sciences Centre got—and we could go on and on and on and on.

Think how many children that money would feed. Think how many rent supplements or affordable housing units that money would build. Think what debt that money would pay down. That's our money. That's the Ontario taxpayers' money. Did you ask them when you gave these CEOs their walking papers and a nice little thank-you card with a cheque for over \$1 million, \$3 million or \$500,000 in it? That's not even talking about their salaries, which are double or triple or quadruple what the Premier of the province makes. Come on. And you talk about fiscal responsibility? Good grief. My goodness.

We have some owners here of small business—small business that's suffering, that produces about 90% of the jobs in this province. They're hanging on by their fingertips through the recession, and they read this? You ask them for their taxes at the end of the year, and they read this? Frightening. It's shocking. I can tell you, we know you're the government of the mall and not Main Street; you've made that very clear. But to whack small business on one side and then pay CEOs on the public purse this kind of money just doesn't look good, because guess what? It isn't good. It's bad, it's wrong, it's immoral, it's unethical, particularly against the backdrop of poverty, homelessness, despair, layoffs, and job loss that is the province of Ontario right now.

That's why we're supporting a very simple bill that asks one thing: It simply asks to make public not only the salaries of CEOs and people on the public purse who make over \$100,000 a year, but also their severance packages. That's all the bill asks, which is what your own minister asked back in 2002, which is what your own Minister of Government Services hinted that they would do and accomplish, and what you have not done and what you have not accomplished. That's what we're asking you to vote for. Stand up and be counted.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm pleased to rise and speak in support of Bill 177, An Act to amend the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act, 1996 with respect to disclosure of severance payments. Speaking on behalf of our caucus right now, I just can't believe that this isn't already law. To me, it's a natural thing.

I was listening to the member from London—Fanshawe discuss—you know, you should see yourself on tape.

You should go back home and watch what you said, because it's unbelievable. How can you possibly defend this?

What brought this to my attention even more was the story with the former deputy minister in the eHealth scandal and what happened. That story broke a couple of days before—I had a booth at a home show in Orillia, and I had a nurse come up to me from the Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital. She used to have nine nurses in her section. That's why I laughed this morning when the Minister of Health was standing there telling us how many new nurses they've got out there. What they've done in that unit is they've cut them all back to assistant nurses, like RPNs, so they can't carry on the same duties. What happened on that particular day of the home show is they had cancelled two surgeries because they didn't have enough nursing staff. The nurse came to me—and she's an older nurse, ready to retire in three or four years—in tears, at a home show. And then she hears this story about the former deputy minister getting this severance.

1530

We don't even know yet whether it was a severance. It was a lump sum of money for 2010. Don't tell me there's another severance on top of that that we don't know about. Is that what's happening? Maybe somebody on that side can explain that. Is there another severance package coming for Mr. Sapsford that wasn't included in that \$763,000 he got for 2010?

The public in the province of Ontario has every right to know that. It doesn't matter where you are in this province; if you've got health care issues, and you're a taxpayer, you should know that. That money came out of the Ministry of Health somewhere. That is a very, very sad day.

Anybody on that side of the House should be ashamed of themselves for not supporting this legislation today. This is a good, simple bill, it makes common sense, and it's good for the citizens of the province of Ontario to know where their tax dollars are being spent, especially when you look at how many people—I'm getting people who are calling my office right now who don't have the \$75 for the HST on their oil bill.

I heard the Premier today saying that the hydro rates have evened themselves out; there's no problem. Is he in Wonderland? Where did he come from? There's no way on God's green earth. Hydro bills are going up. The HST has put everything up. We're sitting here trying to defend this day after day with these crazy answers. Of course, that's why they call it question period, not answer period: because we never get an answer anymore.

So we in this caucus will be supporting this legislation, and I think it would be an excellent idea if the members on that side of the House got behind it and supported it today. Don't take your marching orders from someone else. Listen to common sense, and support this legislation today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise today to support Bill 177, the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Amendment Act.

The goal of the sunshine list was to make government more open and accountable. Taxpayers have a right to know how their money is being spent.

According to the guide for preparing the sunshine list and the Ministry of Finance spokespeople, the current sunshine list does not include severances. That's where the mystery comes in, because the sunshine list that was released a few weeks ago on March 29 includes significant payments to two major players in the eHealth boondoggle, two people who left their jobs in 2009. Sarah Kramer, the former eHealth CEO, received \$107,000 in 2010 even though she left in 2009. Ron Sapsford, the former Deputy Minister of Health, was paid \$763,000 in 2010 even though he resigned in November 2009.

If, as the government says, severance pays are not included in the sunshine list, what were these payments for? It seems like a reasonable question and one that taxpayers deserve to have answered. Yet this government has consistently refused to provide more information. Many members on this side of the House have asked the Premier and cabinet ministers about these payments over and over, but they still haven't received an answer. If severances aren't included on the sunshine list, how do we know that they and other people involved in the eHealth scandal didn't actually receive even more taxpayers' money last year?

On November 17, 2009, Premier McGuinty said in this Legislature, "There were some problems, admittedly, at eHealth. They had to do with oversight." Now he's blocking this Legislature and taxpayers from having knowledge and oversight.

Under Dalton McGuinty, the sunshine list has tripled to 60,000 people. This year, all of the LHINs appear on the sunshine list, and each one is now spending over \$1 million in salaries. We believe that taxpayers' dollars should go to front-line health care, not to bureaucracy and red tape.

Unlike the members on the opposite side of the House, we understand that taxpayers are not an endless source of revenue. We understand that the three quarters of a million dollars that the McGuinty government gave Ron Sapsford last year came from hard-working Ontario taxpayers, families that were trying to make ends meet. Many of them are already struggling with the ever-increasing cost of living in Ontario, yet every time they turn around, the McGuinty government expects them to pay more: HST, eco fees and hydro cost increases.

This week, we found out that on May 1 hydro rates will go up again, costing Ontario families an average of \$75 a year. That money could have bought new clothes for the kids, paid for class trips or meant a new bike this spring.

Can we really ask families to make sacrifices like that and not give them clear information on where their tax money is spent? Is it really fair to ask them to make these sacrifices and then for the Premier and cabinet minister to

refuse to explain why someone received three quarters of a million in tax dollars that apparently wasn't a severance?

We believe that Ontario families have had enough. They can't afford more increases, and they want more from their government than government waste and cover-ups.

I hope that the members on the other side of the House will support this legislation and that the members on the government side will do the right thing and explain to the taxpayers what the payments on the sunshine list are really for.

Thank you very much for allowing me to say a few words, and I do hope that the government—apart from the member for London–Fanshawe, who seems insistent on not supporting this legislation—I hope the other members will consider the option of supporting this legislation and making the government come clean on where all the money is going.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The leader of the third party has two minutes for her response.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I first want to thank the members who took the time to speak to the bill, Bill 177: the members for London–Fanshawe, Halton, Trinity–Spadina, Parkdale–High Park, Simcoe North, and Oxford. I mostly want to thank the latter members for educating the member from London–Fanshawe on exactly what the bill was all about, because even though it's quite descriptive in the description of the bill, in the actual title of the bill, which says that it amends the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act with respect to disclosure of severance payments, somehow he just didn't get it, and I think that's one of the problems that we have with the government. They like to talk a lot about accountability and transparency, but they just don't get it. They don't understand that they don't only have to talk about it, but they actually have to do something about it, and by publishing the severance packages—the outrageous severance packages, the exorbitant severance packages that they're allowing these top public sector CEOs and other executives to walk away with—on the sunshine list, it adds to something called transparency and accountability.

So just like this government likes to pretend that they do that—the latest example was with the FOI process in hospitals, where the government brings forward a bill, and then, in the dead of the night, puts a little amendment into the budget to really negate any transparency and accountability in terms of FOI in hospitals, a little amendment that actually gets the hospitals off the hook and puts a loophole in place that you could drive a Mack truck through in terms of accountability and transparency.

That's the record of this government. They don't want transparency, they don't want accountability, and mostly, they don't want to take responsibility for acting in the public interest. The member from London–Fanshawe talked a lot about what he thinks the government is doing, but what they forget to do is act in the public interest, and that's all we're asking for in Bill 177.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The time has expired for Ms. Horwath's ballot item. We'll vote on it in approximately 50 minutes.

TOWING INDUSTRY ACT, 2011
LOI DE 2011 SUR L'INDUSTRIE
DU REMORQUAGE

Mr. Zimmer moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 147, An Act to regulate the motor vehicle towing industry in Ontario / Projet de loi 147, Loi réglementant l'industrie du remorquage de véhicules automobiles en Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Pursuant to standing order 98, the honourable member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. David Zimmer: I intend on speaking on three points on this bill. First, I want to make a few comments about why the bill is important to the public and to the towing industry; secondly, I want to touch on some so-called technical aspects of the bill; and lastly, I want to speak about the support that the bill has garnered throughout the province.

In my discussions with my colleagues at Queen's Park and everyday Ontarians, I've heard countless personal stories about what happens when they have a towing experience. Almost everyone I speak to has their own towing experience to share, and when I say "experience," a better choice of words would be their own towing "horror story" to share.

Whether as a result of a collision, a broken-down vehicle or a parking violation, everyone is entitled to fair and equal service when having one's car towed for whatever the reasons that the tow is necessary.

The primary purpose of this bill is to establish a single body to manage a provincial regulatory system. Right now, there exist no common standards here in the province, no common fee structure, no common expectation of what a good towing experience might entail for the consumer or for the industry. This legislation is designed to address these uncertainties.

1540

This bill, if passed, would aim to do a few things. It would develop an effective and mandatory set of standards of operations to be followed by every towing company. It would develop mandatory education and training to ensure a high level of skill among towing operators, to ensure quality for money and to meet the needs of the consumer and improve public safety. It would establish continuous and professional communication links to all government agencies, including the Ontario policing community. It would provide a greatly improved and more professional approach to the towing industry's involvement in traffic accidents. It would greatly improve—and this is very important—the public perception of those engaged in the industry.

In the towing industry, the vast majority of towing companies are reputable, competent operators that pro-

vide value for money. Unfortunately, there is a segment of the towing industry that is operating on their own. They're outside the grid, as it were. When you dig around, you'll find out that the source of these horror story complaints from that sector of the towing industry—I have representatives of the towing industry in the gallery today who have worked with me and with other members in the House to bring forward a really good piece of legislation. The responsible towing industry, like these men and women in the gallery today, recognizes the need for some regulation of this industry. They want it, in the public interest. They want it because they have pride in what they do, and it's that pride in what they do that they've brought to this exercise of working with me in the drafting of this bill. I want to compliment the representatives from the towing industry.

Let me say a few words about some technical aspects of the legislation—the nuts and bolts, how it's actually going to work. First of all, it's important to keep in mind that this is self-regulation. With this bill, we are asking the towing industry to regulate itself. All funding will come from the industry through a variety of revenue streams: licensing of all tow companies; certification of all tow truck drivers; certification of all tow trucks; skills and development training; and penalties that would be imposed. Those things will all generate revenues which will sustain the cost of the self-regulation.

The legislation will establish an effective council and a board of directors, both from the towing industry and the public, with no connection to the industry. Those members will be appointed by the Lieutenant Governor. They will represent the public interest and the consumer. The council will include individuals representing independent tow operators, sole operators, large and small towing companies, law enforcement, the insurance industry, and the municipalities here in Ontario.

The towing council, with the board of directors, will be charged with the responsibility of coming up with a regime that will contemplate, essentially, four things: how a licensing regime should work; how a complaints process regime should work; how a discipline process regime should work; how a standards regime should work. All regulations would be developed by the council and the board of directors.

Just a word on licensing: The bill contemplates that everyone intent on offering towing services to the public would be required to join the Ontario towing council and become licensed. Once licensed and registered, they would be subject to the rules and regulations established and set out by that council.

Right now in Ontario, some municipalities issue a licence and some municipalities don't. Tow truck operators often find themselves in a situation where they've got to have multiple licences, or no licences at all, or a combination of both. They're confused about what the requirements are, especially in an area like the GTA, where the jurisdictions are so closely tight together. None of those licensing regimes to date have standards, an oversight policy or a disciplinary procedure. It's merely

that if you pay the fee, you get a licence and you can operate a tow truck in that municipal jurisdiction.

This bill is not about generating fees for the province; it's about streamlining the regulatory framework to improve accountability, efficiency and quality of service.

With respect to the Ontario towing council, again I refer to the men and women who are here in the gallery. They have all been in the towing industry for a long, long time. They know the towing industry, how it operates in the GTA, in small-town Ontario, in the north. They are bringing their best possible sense of how that towing council should operate, how it should go about setting standards and how it should render discipline when necessary and the like. We are fortunate to have people of this calibre and this experience who are working behind the scenes on this bill.

Let me say a few words about support for the bill. The legislation is fully endorsed by associations and individuals such as Doug Nelson, who's the executive director of the Provincial Towing Association of Ontario; Ralph Palumbo, who's the vice-president of the Insurance Bureau of Canada; Randy Carroll, who's the chief executive officer at the Insurance Brokers Association of Ontario; and the Ontario Provincial Police, just to name a few.

The bill has garnered support from a number of towing companies, independent towing operators and automobile associations. There is a considerable number of municipalities, cities and towns that are in support of this legislation. My office has received countless calls of inquiry and support over the past few months.

This is what Mr. Doug Nelson, the chief executive officer of the provincial towing association, said: "This legislation will eliminate barriers imposed by costly municipal licences. It will also promote a higher standard of training and provide better monitoring of prices charged to customers."

Mr. Nelson went on to say, "This bill will be of huge benefit to the general public. It will ensure a higher industry standard of employee training and conduct, improve overall customer service and eliminate price gouging. In addition, it gives our industry an opportunity to become involved in highway traffic incident management ... and work towards improving highway safety and resolving gridlock issues facing Ontario motorists."

The bill is about improving highway traffic incident management. The bill will go a long way in restoring the sometimes tarnished reputation of the towing industry.

It's the leadership in the Ontario towing industry, like the people sitting in the gallery today, that wants to polish, work on and maintain that image. They want to do that in the public interest. They want to ensure that those stories that I'm sure you've all heard, members of this Legislature, over the years—you hear it in your constituency offices; you hear it at church; you hear it at cocktail parties. Everybody has a towing horror story, and these horror stories generate hundreds and sometimes thousands of dollars of expenses.

There's a woman in the middle of the night on a deserted road who calls a tow. It's the luck of the draw

whether she gets a towing operator represented by people such as are in the gallery today and she has a good towing experience, or she gets someone who arrives—sort of a bandit off of the grid system—puts the hook on the car and that's when her horror story starts. It's towed away somewhere. There are huge expenses, and she's frightened.

You can take that story and can replicate it hundreds and thousands of times throughout Ontario with men and women, with sons and daughters who borrowed their parents' cars. It's the luck of the draw. What we're trying to do is bring some consistency, some quality assurance, if you will, to the towing experience. That's what this bill is designed to do.

Essentially, in its last analysis, it's a piece of consumer protection. The sentiment around the province—and I know you've all heard your own stories about this—is that something has to be done about the consumer protection/quality assurance piece. That's what this bill does. It gets the very best people, the most experienced operators in the towing industry, and puts them in charge of a towing council. It tells operators, "You've got to be a member of the towing council to have a licence."

1550

Once they've got that licence and they're a member of the towing council, then the towing council has some oversight, if you will, regarding fee structure; regarding discipline, if required; and regarding just what the standards should be to ensure a satisfactory consumer experience.

It's for these reasons that I've introduced this legislation, and I urge all members to support this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Chudleigh): Further debate? The member for Newmarket—Aurora.

Mr. Frank Klees: I'm pleased to participate in this debate on this bill. If I'm not mistaken, member from Willowdale, this is the second time this bill has been before the Legislature—the second time. The last time we had a debate on this, the issues were the same. The rationale for bringing it forward was the same. What I suppose your stakeholders are probably wondering is why, if this assembly passed this bill once before, are we back here again attempting to do the same thing?

We welcome people from the industry who are here and thank them for their sense of responsibility in wanting to ensure that there are standards for the industry, province-wide. We know that there are responsible players in this industry, and there are those who are rogues. Unfortunately, it's those who are not conducting themselves ethically who end up putting a pall on the entire industry. So when someone says, "I'm in the towing industry," the immediate reaction on the part of many people is, "Oh, really?" It shouldn't be that way because we know the majority of people in the industry are, in fact, upstanding business people.

I have never had a bad experience with a tow truck and neither has anyone in my family. One of the most important cards in my wallet and in my wife's wallet—one of the first things I did for my daughter and then my

son when they got their driver's licences was to get them a CAA membership, because I didn't want them to be in a situation where, first of all, they were subject to a situation where perhaps they were not going to be treated ethically. So my experience has always been very positive.

I'm frustrated about the private members' business process in this place. I say to the people who are here that I wish you well. But in this place, private members' business is all too often a political game more than it is a legislative process. What I mean by that is that in the same way that you experienced the last time that you came here, this bill was debated, it was passed and the government of the day does nothing with it.

I had a similar bill that I presented to this Legislature many years ago, only it had to do with the collision repair industry. Today, that bill—by the way, Speaker, you'll remember. It went through second reading and passed as it went here. It went to committee; we had extensive hearings. It was referred back to this place and we had third reading. It was passed unanimously, and it received royal assent. Where is that bill today? It's gathering dust on the shelves of the Minister of Government Services. Nothing has been done.

As I read through this bill presented by the honourable member from Willowdale, I looked at it and I thought many of the words are actually very similar to the bill that I proposed here for the collision repair industry: a provincial council; self-regulation; bring in standards of conduct; ensure that there are appropriate measures of discipline—and it's nowhere. I say to the member from Willowdale, look, I wish you well, but if I was a betting guy, which I'm not, I wouldn't bet this is going anywhere. I don't want to discourage you, but this government has absolutely no track record of bringing private members' business, regardless of how good it is, into law. So I wish you well.

I want to say, in the time that I have, that there are some concerns.

Interjection.

Mr. Frank Klees: Speaker, would you ask the member across to just behave himself?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Order.

Mr. Frank Klees: I simply want to read into the record some concerns. Should this bill go to committee, I think there are issues we need to address, because I do have some concerns. One of them has to do with the inspection provisions that are in here. I'm actually surprised that the member for Willowdale crafted this bill the way he did. It goes to the powers of an investigator. First of all, the complaints committee, under this legislation, has the authority to appoint an investigator—fair enough. But then when you look at powers of the investigator—and we don't know who that is—that investigator is empowered to do a lot of things here that, quite frankly, if I was in the towing business, I would say, "You'd better have a second look at this, because I wouldn't want to be on the receiving end of what is empowered here."

Not only is that inspector empowered to do a lot of things like removing documents from my place of business, there's a power of entry. According to this, "An investigator may enter lands or business premises, other than a private dwelling, without the consent of the owner or occupier and without a warrant...." I don't know, folks, if that's really what you want to attract into your business. Keep in mind, this is a self-regulatory body. Those people, according to this, need to have no qualifications in terms of law enforcement. There's nothing in here about who they're accountable to, other than the complaints committee.

We know from experience that there are unintended consequences of legislation. At the outset, you start off with good intentions, and whoever that council may be when it's initially formed—we don't know who the members of those councils ultimately will be over time, and to empower a group of people this way without the appropriate checks and balances concerns me greatly.

So that would be a strong objection. I could not support this legislation—if we were voting now for third reading, I could not support this legislation with this the way it is. I wouldn't be responsible in terms of passing this on. However, we're voting for this bill on second reading, which is approval in principle, and so I will support this in principle because I believe that there is a need to bring standards into this industry. There is a need to ensure that the players in this industry know that they have to be accountable for how they conduct business, and so I have no problem supporting the principle of this bill.

But there are a number of other areas that we would have to examine in the course of committee review. Those are, again, the powers of the board, and who in fact sets the entry fee. I know it's your council, but there again, there are going to be some people within the industry—and I've received some correspondence from small business people who are saying, "Let's not have this be a barrier to entry for me to get into the business or to stay in the business." And what is the cost of this going to be? I raise this caution. This is a fairly comprehensive bill in many ways, and there are a lot of functions that this self-regulatory council is going to have to perform. Who's going to pay for that? When you start to assess business people who, in many cases, are already having a hard time making ends meet, and now you lay on top of them the additional fees and assessment for a business advisory council or for a regulatory council, that is yet another story.

1600

I will support this bill, but I have some serious concerns about some of the provisions of this bill that I believe need much further work, and there could be some serious unintended consequences for the well-meaning people within the industry.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I'll be sharing my time with the member from Timmins—James Bay, who's also the critic.

I want to say to the member from Willowdale that I supported this bill in 2008, and I'll be supporting it again in 2011. It was good then; it's good today.

But I'm beginning to worry about you, member from Willowdale, because you've introduced a couple of bills, and the government is stifling you each and every time. I just don't get it. The point is that your bills are, in my mind, good. And in the mind of many here in my caucus, they're good. I just don't understand why it is that your generals constantly put you on the front lines and then let you loose on your own in front of the firing squad. I just don't get it.

The Tories criticize you in the same way saying, "You introduce this bill, and the government doesn't support you." I had the same problem with them for eight and a half years—eight and a half years. It was long and painful, and we couldn't get any bills passed, either.

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: I'm glad you're getting all your bills passed, Rosie.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Which ones, Tony?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Order. I'd just ask the honourable members to speak through the Chair, and not directly across to each other.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You're so right. You're not as beautiful as the previous Speaker, but you're so right.

We've got to speak through the Speaker, Mr. Ruprecht, the member from Parkdale—

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: It used to be Parkdale; now, it's Davenport.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Davenport. Thank you for coming. I know you're busy raising a flag somewhere, but—

Mr. Tony Ruprecht: You're not invited from now on.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Thanks for leaving, Tony.

I think the bill is a good bill, and the whole point—

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Come and join us, member from Davenport. Stick around for a while.

The point is that this bill would set a fee structure and would set disciplinary action against those who obviously are not abiding by the rules. It would create standards, something that the hard-working and honest tow truck operators are doing on a daily basis. These are the folks that are calling for some rules. We don't have any rules at the moment.

Mr. Ted McMeekin: We should.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: And I believe we should.

I think the government, through the chief general and the others, should be saying this is a good bill. If it is a good bill that is supported by many, including the opposition, it should be drafted quickly, sent for hearings, of course, and corrected if that's what needs to be done. And then you pass it. If you've got three parties agreeing with it, it shouldn't take that long. What's stopping it? I just don't get it.

Mr. Ted McMeekin: What's the answer?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The answer is that you guys, the soldiers, are not fighting back against your generals;

that's the problem. You've got to be able to, at some point, say to the Premier, "We don't get it. We work with you, and we don't understand why you're not helping us to help you."

I often worry because there are, generally speaking, no regulations in some sectors, and this is a sector that doesn't have any regulations. I often worry about those who self-regulate, like the Technical Standards and Safety Authority. If you recall, they self-regulate, and we had the propane disaster that killed one person. So self-regulation is better than no regulation—

Interjections.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Member from Davenport, if you don't mind.

Self-regulation is better than no regulation. Sometimes, in my view, it's better to have it regulated by the government so I know that I can go to the Premier right away and beat him up, through question period, Speaker, through you, on a regular basis. The problem with self-regulation sometimes is that it may not be as effective as it could be, but it's better than no regulation whatsoever. In the absence of having a government-regulated industry where the Premier is held accountable directly, self-regulation is the other best thing to do.

So I've got to say, we need consumer protection. The industry is calling for consumer protection. The industry is saying, "We want it," because clearly, there's got to be problems in that sector, which means that there are probably a whole lot of rogue truck operators operating. That's causing a bad name for many of the honest, hard-working folks who are here today. And if they didn't think there was a problem, they wouldn't be here. Clearly they are here today, again—2008, 2011.

It's time for the Liberal backbenchers on my left here and the ones I face to say to the Premier, "Enough. We want you to support us every now and then, because if you don't support us every now and then, we're just not going to be there in the front lines fighting on your behalf." In fact, if you lose that election next time, nobody is going to come and have coffee with you after you lose that election. No one. Well, there might be a few. There might be a few, because the Premier always has a couple of friends who he can rely on for coffee.

You've got to step up. You've got to say, "It's enough. We need you, too." It's a two-way street. This bill is a good bill. I like the fact that you've got a complaints committee and that they're going to have an investigator go in somewhere unannounced because they have discovered, or heard by way of allegations that are presumably credible, and they want to go in there and check things out.

For me, I like that. The member from Newmarket—Aurora doesn't like that, but people like me say, "God bless." If we've got a problem on our hands, I want somebody to get in there quickly and fix it up. That's what I want.

Mr. Frank Klees: You'd be the first one.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: But Frank, I leave it to you to decide what you want to do, and maybe you might have another crack at it some other day. I don't know.

But in the meantime, self-regulation is good. The member from Willowdale has been stiff too long. He needs support from the backbenchers.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I'm pleased to rise and speak on Bill 147, brought here by my colleague from Willowdale. Let me give him kudos for making a second attempt to have this done.

I'm supportive of this bill, but I want to share with you a little bit of an experience I had, because I think this is a very important bill and all of us should be concerned about it. It's nice to know that the Insurance Bureau of Canada is here and it's nice to know that the Insurance Brokers Association is here, because this is all about consumer protection and public protection, and to help the reputable towing companies that exist out there, because they've had a problem for a long, long time.

In my previous stint at the city of Toronto, we attempted to revise the bylaw for the towing industry. I sat on the municipal licensing committee, and I have to tell you, it was a very scary couple of months sitting on that committee, attempting to deal with tow truck drivers. It was my first experience of dealing with licensing altogether, because previously in Scarborough we didn't have that particular business.

Mr. Frank Klees: Better be careful. They're listening to you.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Well, it was interesting. When Mr. Zimmer presented this bill to the House, I did receive a couple of phone calls, like you did too.

I want to share with you a story. It's a horror story of a personal friend and a constituent of mine. She had a brand new car. It was about eight months old. It got totalled on the rear end of the car—significant damage, late in the evening. A very elderly person. A tow truck driver gets her car all hitched up, and she says, "I'd like to have my car taken to this particular body shop because that's where I get all my work done." The driver convinced her to go elsewhere, because she was all shaken up, and said, "Not to worry. I'll take you to somebody who will look after your vehicle very well, will take care of it, and I will also give you a ride home. You don't have to worry about getting home."

1610

She got her car back. The insurance company claims person dealt with the claim with the particular body shop where the car was taken in Concord. This person lives in Scarborough. The insurance company received an estimate for all new parts, because the car was only eight months old. There was \$15,000 worth of parts and a couple of thousand dollars' worth of repair work to be done on the car. My constituent and friend received her car back. There were a few things she did not like. She took it back and complained, and they did whatever they could.

This person does not drive on the highway. She only drives on the city streets, so the most she would drive is probably 50 clicks. About a year and three months later,

she loaned her car to her stepson, who actually took it on the highway. He could not control the car. It was pulling all over; it was vibrating all over. She called me, because I'm a close friend, and said, "What do I do?" I said, "You have to call your insurance company. But if you would like me to help you, I will." She said, "Well, why don't you take the car? Here's all my paperwork. Here are all the estimates. See what you can do."

So I took it to a body shop that I knew was certified to work for insurance companies. Lo and behold, the owner put it up on the hoist and the first thing he said was, "This car has had unauthorized repairs that a manufacturer will not support." I called the insurance company, and the adjuster for the insurance company met me at the garage the lady wanted the car to go to in the first place. When they put it up on the hoist, they agreed with my previous garage that the car had been cut in half and a used car was brought in and welded together exactly where the seams were, and it was clearly visible and covered up. The unfortunate thing about her car was that one side of the car was an inch longer than the other side, so there was absolutely no way you could align this vehicle.

I said to the adjuster, "The person who owns this car has told me to get a lawyer and do everything possible to have this vehicle fixed." The adjuster said, "Can I have your keys? You'd better get a ride home, because I'm not going to let you drive this car," and he took the plates off the car. I asked, "What are you going to do to the car?" He said, "The car is going to be scrapped, and we will try to go after the body shop that did the work."

My friend received the full value of the car when she bought it new to go and purchased a new vehicle. The insurance industry has paid for that. But do you know what? It's in all our insurance rates, and we as a government are responsible for working with the insurance rates. We should take action on this. So I leave that with you as a horror story.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Khalil Ramal: Thank God, finally I have a bill I can support, that I can be proud about.

I want to congratulate the member from Willowdale for bringing such an important issue to us, as he does very often. Despite what has been said before, he has brought many different private members' bills that have been passed, and I want to congratulate him for that.

I had the privilege and honour to meet David Ross in my office in London. He came and spoke to me about the importance of the passage of the bill.

I'm going to support this bill because it's important to create a one-stop shop to organize the whole industry across the province of Ontario.

As the member from Scarborough–Rouge River mentioned, it's dangerous sometimes when you open yourself to a towing company, because you don't know who they are. They might take your car and you won't see your car again. Or they might destroy your car, because some of them have good connections with a mechanic's shop or

body shop, and for some reason they always take the car to those people and they split the cost and the profit.

The most important things in this bill, I believe, are to create regulations across the province of Ontario, to create professionalism in this industry, and also to have some kind of accountability.

I think that's what the member for Willowdale is aiming for in this bill, and also the professional association that is with us today, who came in huge numbers to witness the debate in this House: to create a body to protect the industry, to protect the consumers, to create a safety mechanism across the province. That's why I'm standing up in my place to speak in support and to congratulate the member despite this being introduced twice so far.

Hopefully, this one will pass and become law in Ontario, and all the drivers and the towing industry will be organized and will be regulated and only professionals will join the association and work in the province.

As we mentioned, we don't have one licence across Ontario. We have so many different jurisdictions, different municipalities. Every different municipality has a different licence. Sometimes in the towing industry, they have to go to different municipalities and have a different licence to operate along the 401 or different zoning in the province of Ontario.

In the end, I'm going to support it. I want to congratulate the member and all the attendees with us from the towing association and industry in the province. We're going to work together to establish a rule, a regulation, to support this bill and make it the law in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I want to, for the second time, congratulate the member for having brought forward this bill. This is basically a repeat of the bill we saw a few years ago. At the time New Democrats voted in favour, and we're going to vote in favour again, because we think it's high time that we have one of two things happen: One is that we move to a self-regulated model, or if the ministry has a hard time with that, let them regulate it.

At the end of the day, I think there's a lot of operators out there who are saying, "We need to make sure that we regulate our industry so that we get rid of the bad apples, so that the vast majority of people in the tow truck business are able to continue doing what they've always done." That is to provide a service to the people of Ontario and to do that in a way that is honest, that is straightforward and that charges people according to the incident that they're involved in.

I, like you and every other member in this assembly, have people in the tow truck business industry who have come to see me over the years, who have been calling for exactly this type of legislation. I remember on the first iteration of your bill, D&L Towing, Bill's Towing, Bupont Motors and a whole bunch of other people came to me in my riding, saying, "We would like you to support this bill." I said, "Listen, this is a no-brainer. We're the government that started self-regulation, and we

understand how important it is for professions and for businesses to be able to regulate themselves rather than having the government regulate them." That would be what I favour. I would rather see them be self-regulated than have the ministry come in.

I have a sense that the ministry has a bit of a problem with this, because when the member introduced the bill the last time, and it passed at second reading, my good friend the member from Trinity-Spadina pointed out, "Why did it not pass into law?" The member has brought a number of bills into this House that I can agree with, and I think they were sound bills that made lots of sense. I think he did some good work. And for whatever reason, the government decided not to pass this bill and bring it into law, when they could have. The forum of private members' hour is to give a chance for these kinds of ideas to go forward. I thought here was a no-brainer. I thought, when we voted on it the first time, that the government would actually pass the bill through the committee process, into third reading and finally enact it.

The government decided not to, so I've got to believe one of two things: The ministry is balking, which is probably the case. The ministry is probably saying, "We would rather not see them self-regulated; we'd rather see some other form of regulation." I guess I'd say to the ministry, if that's the case, you should, through the minister or the parliamentary assistant, be clear and to the point about what your problems are if you don't want to pass this bill. Are you then saying you want to see a form of regulation come from the government? Then at least the tow truck operators would know what the heck to do, and I think that's really the unfortunate part.

I think the second reason is—and I don't believe that's the case—the point that my good friend from Trinity-Spadina and others alluded to. That is, for whatever reason, this member, who I have a lot of respect for—and you can put this in your campaign literature; I'm okay with it. The member has come to the House, and I think he has been a very effective member as far as bringing forward issues, not all of which I agree with, but I think he's brought them forward. I ask myself, why is it that Dalton McGuinty—I should say "the Premier of Ontario"—does not see fit to support a good member's ideas on a good bill such as this one? I'll let people draw their own conclusion.

1620

This bill does have to go to committee. If we pass this at second reading—which I know we will because I know we're supporting it as New Democrats, the Conservatives are supporting it as Conservatives and I've got to imagine that the Liberals are going to support you this time around. So it will pass at second reading. But I do think it needs to get to committee, because here's the nub: No matter how good an idea is, you really need to get a chance at committee to allow the public to have its say. I think we need to have some form of public hearing in order to allow the public—those who are in favour, those who are opposed—to come forward to make sure that we understand what the issues are so that when we

go forward with the bill, we do so in a way that is consistent with those issues that have been raised at committee and we try to make the bill better.

On behalf of the New Democratic Party, my leader, Andrea Horwath, and as critic for the NDP on transportation, I wish to give support to this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm very pleased to rise in support of Bill 147, which has been tabled by my colleague from Willowdale here.

As we've heard, Bill 147 proposes to set up a self-regulatory system for the towing industry to protect consumers and protect road safety. I, too, would like to emphasize that there are lots of good towing operators. For some reason, our car always breaks down in Muskoka or has trees fall on it. The lovely towing company that we call in Gravenhurst is great, so we've had lots of good personal experience. But I, like many other members, have had stories from constituents which are quite appalling.

A few weeks ago, I had a young lady come into my office. She had been in an accident at 401 and Guelph Line. She had been injured. The car was a bit of a mess. As the ambulance came to pick her up, because she had been injured—I tell this to the member from Newmarket–Aurora—she pulled her CAA card out and said to the police officer, “Please, here's the CAA number for Guelph. I want you to take the car to...,” and she named the body shop in Guelph. They said, “Oh, no, no,” and gave her another card and said, “Here's the operator that we call.” Eventually, she hooked up with her father in the hospital and they got the card and looked at it. It was a Mississauga towing company. Where the accident was, Milton would have been logical; Rockwood would have been logical; getting a tow truck from Guelph would be logical; getting a tow truck from Mississauga was not logical. But nevertheless, her car had gone to Mississauga. In fact, it hadn't even gone to the original tower; it had gone to somebody else who had been referred, but eventually they found the car.

They arranged for the tow truck driver to bring the car to Guelph to the body shop she wanted in the first place. The tow truck operator shows up at the body shop and says to the poor young lady working in the front office of the body shop, “I need \$1,000 cash.” The young lady says, “I don't have \$1,000 cash.” “No cash, no car. I'll take it back to Mississauga. Next time I bring it back, it'll be \$2,000 cash.” The poor young lady panics. She said, “I can give you a business cheque. That's how we do business. I can't give you \$1,000 cash. I don't have \$1,000 cash.” She called the dad of the young lady. The dad comes. The dad says, “I don't have \$1,000 cash. Will you take a cheque or credit card?” “No, it has to be cash.” So he said, “I'll go to the bank.” He went to the bank. The tow truck followed him to the bank, blocked him into the parking at the bank and wouldn't let him out of the bank parking lot until he had produced \$1,000 in cash.

That's why this is absolutely necessary, and I hope all members will support it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Further debate?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm happy to rise in support of the member from Willowdale's bill as well. I think it's a bill that definitely needs the opportunity to be supported for second reading in this House. Like all the other bills we've seen this afternoon—they're all good private members' bills. They should all be moved forward and we should be debating them in committee. I hope that when we vote here in a couple of minutes, everybody will support each of the pieces of legislation that was introduced here today and give them the opportunity to move forward and into committee. It's really sad that you have to come back a second time with the same bill when you're a member of the government, and you're a very valuable member of the government because you do a lot of the dirty work for them in committee and in some of the things you do here—but not as much of the dirty work that the member from London–Fanshawe does.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: A lot of hard work.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Oh, the hard work. Yes, the hard work, but not the difficult heavy lifting that the member from London–Fanshawe does, because he sometimes starts out debating against the bill, and by the time he's done with his comments, he's voting in favour of the bill. We never know where he's actually coming from, but we love to hear you. We've got you on tape on this one, because it's going to be good for our campaign literature. So thank you very much for that.

It's good to see so many of the members of the tow truck industry here too. I do hope you'll also think of my private member's bill that allows tow trucks to be put in the same category, the “slow down, move over” legislation. I want to thank CAA again for all the work they did on that, because it too is a valuable bill that should be moved forward and become law in this province.

I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words, and thank you very much. Again, I hope everybody supports all three bills that were presented here this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The member from Willowdale has two minutes for his response.

Mr. David Zimmer: I just want to address a concern that was raised by the member for Newmarket–Aurora; that is, what parameters will there be on the authority of the council when they're investigating matters? Section 13 of the act sets out the objects of the council:

“1. To regulate the towing industry in Ontario.

“2. To govern the persons” and so forth; and

“3. To establish, maintain and develop standards” and so on.

Subsection 13(2) says, “In carrying out its objects, the council shall serve the public interest,” and then it sets out some details about the public interest.

Then, in section 20, “Powers of the minister”—and this is important:

“(1) The minister may review the activities of the board and ask the board to undertake activities that, in his

or her opinion, are necessary and advisable to carry out the intent of this act....

“(2) The minister may advise the board with respect to the implementation of this act and the regulations and with respect to the methods that the board uses or proposes to use to enforce the regulations and to implement its policies.”

So I say to the member from Newmarket, the plan is to allow the towing council to set up the rules on how they're going to enforce the rules and regulations, including investigation and discipline, with the idea in mind that whatever the council decides to do always has to be in the public interest. And there's another step built in where the minister, in effect, can step in if the minister or the government feels that the towing council has overreached itself perhaps or hasn't taken into account certain things that the government thinks should be respected in terms of disciplinary matters and enforcing the rules and regulations. That's the safety feature, if you will, in it. But I do have confidence in the council to do the right thing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The time provided for private members' public business has now expired. It's time to vote.

ONTARIO ONE CALL ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 SUR ONTARIO ONE CALL

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We'll first deal with ballot item number 4, standing in the name of Mr. Bailey.

Mr. Bailey has moved second reading of Bill 180, An Act respecting Ontario One Call Ltd. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Bailey, do you have a committee choice?

Mr. Robert Bailey: I move that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Is it agreed that the bill go to the Legislative Assembly committee? So ordered.

PUBLIC SECTOR SALARY DISCLOSURE AMENDMENT ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA DIVULGATION DES TRAITEMENTS DANS LE SECTEUR PUBLIC

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We'll now deal with ballot item number 5.

Ms. Horwath has moved second reading of Bill 177, An Act to amend the Public Sector Salary Disclosure Act, 1996 with respect to disclosure of severance payments. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

We will call in the members after the next vote.

TOWING INDUSTRY ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 SUR L'INDUSTRIE DU REMORQUAGE

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): We'll now deal with ballot item number 6.

Mr. Zimmer has moved second reading of Bill 147, An Act to regulate the motor vehicle towing industry in Ontario. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Mr. Zimmer?

Mr. David Zimmer: The Standing Committee on General Government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Is it agreed that the bill be referred to the general government committee? So ordered.

PUBLIC SECTOR SALARY DISCLOSURE AMENDMENT ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA DIVULGATION DES TRAITEMENTS DANS LE SECTEUR PUBLIC

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1630 to 1635.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): Ms. Horwath has moved second reading of Bill 177. All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing until counted by the Clerk.

Ayes

Bailey, Robert	DiNovo, Cheri	Marchese, Rosario
Barrett, Toby	Dunlop, Garfield	Miller, Norm
Bisson, Gilles	Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Paul
Brownell, Jim	Horwath, Andrea	Prue, Michael
Chudleigh, Ted	Klees, Frank	Tabuns, Peter

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): All those opposed to the motion will please rise and remain standing until recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Albanese, Laura	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Phillips, Gerry
Balkissoon, Bas	Hoy, Pat	Qaadri, Shafiq
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jaczek, Helena	Ramal, Khalil
Best, Margaret	Kular, Kuldip	Ruprecht, Tony
Colle, Mike	Levac, Dave	Sandals, Liz
Delaney, Bob	Mangat, Amrit	Sergio, Mario
Dhillon, Vic	McMeekin, Ted	Sousa, Charles
Dickson, Joe	Moridi, Reza	Zimmer, David

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):
The ayes are 15; the nays are 24.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): I declare the motion lost.

Second reading negatived.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): All matters relating to private members' public business have now been completed.

Before I call the next order of the day, let's once again wish our pages well in their lives. Thank you.

Orders of the day.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson): The minister has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

This House is adjourned until Tuesday, May 3, at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1638.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion and Sport / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé et du Sport
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Crozier, Bruce (LIB)	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC) Elliott, Christine (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB) Gélinas, France (NDP) Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Oakville Nickel Belt Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP) Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Kenora–Rainy River Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB) Hudak, Tim (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB) Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB) Jones, Sylvia (PC) Klees, Frank (PC) Kormos, Peter (NDP) Kular, Kuldeep (LIB) Kwinter, Monte (LIB) Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB) Leal, Jeff (LIB) Levac, Dave (LIB) MacLeod, Lisa (PC) Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock Dufferin–Caledon Newmarket–Aurora Welland Bramalea–Gore–Malton York Centre / York-Centre Glengarry–Prescott–Russell Peterborough Brant Nepean–Carleton Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Marchese, Rosario (NDP) Martiniuk, Gerry (PC) Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina Cambridge London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB) McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB) Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC) Miller, Paul (NDP)	Parry Sound–Muskoka Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)	Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Perth–Wellington	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	
Vacant	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

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Kim Craitor, Bob Delaney
Garfield Dunlop, Phil McNeely
Yasir Naqvi, John O'Toole
Maria Van Bommel
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Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Yasir Naqvi
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Joe Dickson, Sylvia Jones
Amrit Mangat, Yasir Naqvi
Michael Prue, Mario Sergio
Maria Van Bommel
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

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des comptes publics**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Shurman
Wayne Arthurs, Aileen Carroll
France Gélinas, Jerry J. Ouellette
David Ramsay, Liz Sandals
Peter Shurman, Norman W. Sterling
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Michael Prue
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller
David Caplan, Kim Craitor
Jeff Leal, Gerry Martiniuk
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch
Michael Prue, Lou Rinaldi
Tony Ruprecht
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin
Shafiq Qaadri, Khalil Ramal
Elizabeth Witmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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