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of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 3 May 2012

Jeudi 3 mai 2012

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 3 May 2012

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 3 mai 2012

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ONTARIO ELECTRICITY SYSTEM
OPERATOR ACT, 2012

LOI DE 2012 SUR LA SOCIÉTÉ
D'EXPLOITATION DU RÉSEAU
D'ÉLECTRICITÉ DE L'ONTARIO

Mr. Bentley moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 75, An Act to amend the Electricity Act, 1998 to amalgamate the Independent Electricity System Operator and the Ontario Power Authority, to amend the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 and to make complementary amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 75, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur l'électricité pour fusionner la Société indépendante d'exploitation du réseau d'électricité et l'Office de l'électricité de l'Ontario, modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario et apportant des modifications complémentaires à d'autres lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Debate? Minister of Energy.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: Thank you, Speaker. I will be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the member from Richmond Hill.

I'm very pleased to be able to stand and speak to this bill. It's part of a journey that we've taken since we became the government in 2003, a journey to make sure that the people of Ontario have reliable, clean jobs supporting and producing affordable energy.

We know where we were. We know where we were in the years leading up to 2003. We know about the brownouts. We know about the shortages of electricity, of power. We know that we have been following a journey that saw the ability of Ontario to actually produce electricity go down but the demand of electricity consumers in Ontario go up, and that is not a good combination of directions. Our ability to produce, down; our demand, up—this can only mean what it produced: brownouts, shortages, diesel generators on street corners in communities—not a good foundation for a strong economy.

We also know that in the years leading up to 2003, Ontario became more and more reliant on coal, on energy produced from coal, on energy that relied on a technology that had been around for centuries. We all know that coal dirties the air. Dirty air makes people sick. Ontario had become increasingly reliant on that technology that ultimately made people sick.

So we started a journey that sought to remedy the direction Ontario had been going in, a journey that I'll speak to in a moment but a journey that has, as part of it, brought us to this bill, which is another step in the journey.

Those watching the proceedings might say, "What is the Independent Electricity System Operator and what is the Ontario Power Authority, and why are you putting them together?" I know that my colleague Reza Moridi, my parliamentary assistant, will get into this in much more detail, as well as telling more about the journey we've been on. But very simply, the Ontario Power Authority not only engages in long-term planning for the province, but it is also responsible for obtaining or procuring additional sources of power generation in the province and for managing those contracts; in the case of Ontario, many thousands of contracts now. That's their responsibility.

The Independent Electricity System Operator also engages in planning, beginning with the very short, minute-by-minute planning to make sure that we can match the demand of consumers for electricity with the electricity that's available—get it to the right place. They're responsible for dealing with either shortages, as they particularly had to in the years leading up to 2003, or, from time to time, when the weather is particularly good—surprisingly good and nobody is inside using power—the occasional surplus. They deal with that on a minute-to-minute basis.

So they've got a planning function as well as managing the market, because electricity moves within Ontario, between Ontario and other provinces and between Ontario and the United States and all the different states. Electricity moves by the second, and the IESO, or Independent Electricity System Operator, actually manages that.

The IESO was one of a number of agencies created when the old Ontario Hydro was broken up by the Tories, and the Ontario Power Authority was established to help us have a way of actually obtaining or procuring electricity—extra generation—when we needed it in 2003, 2004 and 2005.

So why put them together? Well, we see an opportunity now to take those planning functions that are in the

two different agencies and put them together. That strengthens the planning capacity of the province, because it puts it together in the same place. We also see an opportunity here to take out some back-office duplication and extra costs, and reduce the cost of running our electricity system. At the end of the day, what we're always trying to do is find ways to reduce the costs on families and businesses. We want reliable, we want clean, we want job-producing, but we also want to manage the costs. Taking costs out—costs that are great, costs that are small; we're looking at them all.

We understand that this amalgamation will reduce costs by about \$25 million a year. That's a significant amount of money for most families and businesses. Some might say that in the context of the overall electricity system it's not a huge amount of money. But I think \$25 million is a significant saving. If we can put \$25 million on top of other savings, we're going to see the effect on the bills of families and businesses. That's one of the things we're always trying to do: Find ways to take costs out of the system.

I also know that amalgamating agencies is something the New Democratic Party has particularly asked us to take a look at. They asked that in the context of the budget discussions we were having. They participated in those budget discussions. It was an important point that they raised. So we've taken this idea and listened very carefully, and we've come up with this bill to put these agencies together.

0910

Now, let's be very clear: There are a lot of other ways we're taking costs out of the system. We have, for example, reduced costs in our large, publicly owned agencies, Ontario Power Generation and Hydro One, already by almost half a billion dollars. But we're not satisfied with that; we're doing more. Remember, it's producing and delivering for the most reasonable cost—so half a billion dollars out already, and we're looking for more.

But we've not stopped there. We're placing both of those agencies on an international benchmarking exercise. What that really means is that we're going to compare our big agencies to similar agencies in other parts of the world to see whether we're doing it as effectively as we can—high quality, yes; clean and reliable, yes; but as effectively as we possibly can, and that means the most cost-effective.

But we're not stopping there. We've set up a panel, a group of three people—Murray Elston, David McFadden, Floyd Laughren—to take a look at the local distribution companies—there used to be over 300; there are now 78—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Can I ask you guys to take your discussion outside, please.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: —to see whether the number of companies is the most effective way to deliver electricity from the major transmission lines down to the families and businesses in local communities. That's what we're taking a look at, and we are continuing to look at ways to take costs out of the system.

This has, as I say, Speaker, been a journey, a journey to reduce the amount of power we get from coal to zero—we've reduced it by 90% already; we're at zero in 2014—to make sure we have enough power—brownouts in 2002-03; paying lots of money for imports in 2002-03.

We've brought on more generation. We've made sure that that generation is clean. We've launched a green energy and economy act, a jobs-producing act, which has nicely positioned us in Ontario to have a strong, clean, renewable sector in the province of Ontario to accelerate getting out of coal, produce great jobs in Ontario—20,000 already, on the way to 50,000—and has nicely positioned us for a substantial share of the clean-tech worldwide market. Clean technology is going to be about \$3 trillion by the year 2020, which is not that far off. We're nicely positioned to have a very substantial part of that and looking forward to the jobs it creates as we take advantage.

But you can't go and sell clean tech from Ontario to someone else if you're not using it yourself. The first thing they do is say, "Well, what are you doing?" We're doing it; we're practising it; we're leaders.

It has been a journey, and this bill is one more step on that journey of making sure we have clean, reliable, jobs-producing, jobs-supporting and affordable electricity right here in the province of Ontario.

Now I'm going to turn it over to my parliamentary assistant, because I know, given his background, he has a lot that he would like to add to this debate, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member from Richmond Hill.

Mr. Reza Moridi: It is my pleasure to rise in this House and to speak on Bill 75, An Act to amend the Electricity Act, 1998 to amalgamate the Independent Electricity System Operator and the Ontario Power Authority, to amend the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 and to make complementary amendments to other Acts.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin my remarks today on the state of Ontario's electricity sector and some of the recent changes made in this sector, as well as what we see as the opportunities for new economic development in the electricity sector in Ontario.

Ontario has always been the world leader and a pioneer in energy, whether it be the 19th-century birth of North America's petrochemical industry; Sir Adam Beck's creation of the world's first publicly owned electricity utility, harnessing the power of Niagara Falls; or the province's current role as a global leader in the emerging clean energy industry.

But first, here are some of the key numbers on the electricity sector in Ontario. You will note that the sector is undergoing significant change and experiencing exciting investment, development and renewal.

Ontario's electricity sector is a \$16-billion industry, employing 95,000 Ontarians in direct and indirect jobs. Ontario's electricity sector includes 5.1 million electricity customers and more than 3.3 million natural gas consumers in Ontario. More than 80% of the power generated in Ontario in 2011 came from emission-free sources

such as wind, hydroelectric and nuclear. This is 6% more than the Canadian average. We have some of the most aggressive conservation targets in North America.

Ontario is also home to the largest smart-meter rollout in North America, with 4.7 million smart meters already deployed. We will be the first globally to mandate time-of-use electricity prices for 100% of residential and small business customers by the end of this year, with 80% on time-of-use to date.

Mr. Speaker, let me go back to prior to 2003 and see where we were then. Under the Ontario PCs, our electricity system was in a state of crisis. Families and businesses didn't know if the lights would stay on when they flipped the switch. Mismanagement saw prices jump 30% in just seven months. Electricity demand had risen by 8%, but generating capacity fell by 6%. That is the equivalent of Niagara Falls running dry.

Ontario was forced to import expensive US electricity, costing Ontarians almost \$1 billion in 2002 and 2003 alone, and the PCs had to sign a multi-million-dollar contract to rent dirty diesel generators to keep the lights on in our downtown core, at a cost of \$2.80 per kilowatt hour, at a time when electricity was 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour.

PC experiments like deregulation and privatization of Ontario's electricity system resulted in massive, unpredictable price spikes, and the PCs had to slap the debt retirement charge on families' electricity bills to pay for their costly experiments. They added \$1 billion to the stranded debt and left future generations with a \$20-billion hole to fill.

They wilfully neglected our electricity transmission and distribution system. This meant that we needed to rebuild over 5,000 kilometres of transmission lines. That is like driving from Toronto to Whitehorse, Yukon.

Under the PCs, the use of dirty coal to produce electricity increased by 127%. The cost to human health and the environment of burning coal in Ontario power plants was more than \$3 billion per year. This resulted in 300 premature deaths and 150,000 illnesses, like asthma attacks, each year.

Now let us see what we have done since 2003. We have introduced new clean energy electricity generation sources to Ontario. This results in a \$13-billion investment in new generation since 2003 to tackle the shortfall in supply we inherited, with 9,000 megawatts of new, clean power for Ontario. That's about one fifth of our current supply.

Ontario will be completely coal-free by the end of 2014. This would be equivalent to taking up to seven million cars off Ontario's streets and roads—basically, almost all the cars in Ontario today. This is the single biggest climate-change initiative in North America, saving \$4.4 billion in avoided health and environmental costs to Ontarians. Ontario has shut down 10 of 19 coal-fired plants to date.

0920

Ontario now has the five largest wind farms in Canada. In 2003, Ontario had 15 megawatts of wind capacity. We now have about 2,000 megawatts of clean wind

power—enough power to meet the annual needs of more than 500,000 homes. The third-largest solar photovoltaic farm in the world is located in Sarnia: 18 megawatts of clean energy with \$400 million of private sector investment that created 800 construction jobs.

We have invested \$2.6 billion in hydroelectric expansions on the lower Mattagami River, with 800 jobs created. This is the largest hydroelectric power project in northern Ontario in 40 years, a unique project in partnership with the Moose Cree First Nation. The Niagara tunnel hydroelectric project, the largest construction project in Niagara region in 55 years, with over 400 jobs, is expected to produce enough electricity to power 160,000 homes for the next 100 years.

It would be difficult to cover all the facets of public policy change and economic investments that have occurred in the past eight years as a result of the McGuinty government's investment in the electricity sector. But I'm going to do my best to cover some of those achievements.

Over the past eight years more than \$13 billion has been invested in Ontario's power systems to tackle a shortfall in supply. Since 2003 we have added almost 9,000 megawatts of power, about 25% of our current generating capacity. That is roughly enough to power cities the size of Toronto and Ottawa combined.

About \$9 billion has been invested in Hydro One transmission and distribution lines. Improvements include upgrades to some 5,000 kilometres of power lines. The province is also making the shift to renewable power, and we are seeing evidence of new economic activity associated with that shift. Today, Ontario is Canada's leader in wind and solar power, and home to the largest operating wind and solar farms in the country.

Last year, more than 80% of the power generated in Ontario came from emission-free sources. We have also introduced some of the most aggressive conservation efforts in North America, encouraging energy efficiency through innovation programs, technology and education aimed at residential, business and industrial customers.

Finally, we are well on our way to meeting our goal to phase out coal by the end of 2014. Last year, for the first time, we got more of our electricity from solar and wind than from coal. The transformation of our electricity sector is bringing meaningful changes that include reduced pollution, reduced emissions, increased reliability and economic renewal. Our task is now to solidify and build on what we have achieved so far.

This transformation will require the private and public sectors to invest up to \$87 billion in the next 20 years. How can we leverage these investments and create economic benefits for the province and for Canada? I will speak to this opportunity more broadly in a minute, but let me first touch on what we have already done to stimulate investments in new, green jobs in Ontario.

We introduced a long-term energy plan that clearly lays out our plan for a clean, modern, reliable, sustainable energy future. In 2009, the Green Energy and Green Economy Act was enacted to expand renewable energy

generation, encourage energy conservation and promote the creation of clean energy jobs.

At the heart of the Green Energy Act, we established North America's most comprehensive feed-in tariff program, which sparked the development of renewable energy projects by offering guaranteed prices and long-term contracts to the developers of wind, water, solar and bio-sourced energy.

Since its launch in 2009, the FIT program has created a clean energy program of unmatched scope and turned Ontario into a clean energy leader in North America. To date, we have created more than 20,000 clean energy jobs and announced projects that will attract more than \$27 billion in private sector investment. We are currently on track to create up to 50,000 jobs, and more than 30 businesses have publicly indicated their intent to set up or expand their clean energy manufacturing plants here in Ontario.

We introduced a feed-in tariff program that attracted \$20 billion of private sector investment in green energy. That will create an estimated 20,000 direct and indirect jobs in places like Guelph, Windsor, Cambridge, London, Newmarket, Mississauga, Sault Ste. Marie and Oakville. The program has undergone its first scheduled two-year review.

The results of the review of the FIT program were announced by Minister Bentley on March 22. The review recommended that prices be adjusted to reflect lower costs and that other program adjustments be made to build on the success of the program. We are committed to implementing those recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, Ontario is moving ahead with its clean energy program, taking immediate steps to ensure the long-term sustainability of renewable energy while creating more jobs, lowering prices and giving communities a greater say.

Following the first review of Ontario's signature feed-in tariff program, the government will act quickly to implement all the recommendations, which will include:

- creating more jobs sooner by streamlining the regulatory approvals process for projects while maintaining the highest environmental protection standards;
- reducing prices for solar projects by more than 20%, on average, and for wind projects by approximately 15%, on average;
- encouraging greater community and aboriginal participation through a new priority point system, which will also prioritize projects with municipal support;
- reserving 10% of remaining capacity for projects with significant participation from local or aboriginal communities; and
- developing a clean energy economic development strategy to leverage Ontario's significant expertise and strengths to become a global leader in this sector.

Regular program reviews are a feature of FIT programs around the world. Ontarians were encouraged to participate in the review by answering an online survey or making a written submission by December 14, 2011. The review received more than 2,900 responses to our

online survey and more than 200 written submissions. The review also met with more than 80 stakeholders.

Now, there has been a lot of chatter on the FIT 2 review and the effect on ratepayers. New rules and prices balance the interests of ratepayers with the need to continue to invest in Ontario's clean energy economy. In order to support the sustainability of the program, prices will be examined annually to ensure they reflect current costs.

0930

Mr. Speaker, I want to touch briefly on the Samsung project. This project attracted a \$7-billion private sector investment in Ontario by Samsung. This project will build 2,500 megawatts of renewable energy. It will create 16,000 direct and indirect jobs in Ontario, and this will include the Siemens turbine blade plant in Tillsonburg, with 900 direct and indirect jobs; the CS Wind tower plant in Windsor, with 700 direct and indirect jobs; and the SMA Solar inverter plant in Toronto, with 100 direct and 100 indirect jobs.

We made a strategic investment for the province of Ontario to attract new jobs and opportunities in an everyday-changing industry. I want to take this time to give my honourable colleagues some more information on our investment in Ontario through the Korean consortium agreement. The Ontario government has negotiated an agreement with the Korean consortium, comprised of Samsung C&T Corp. and the Korea Electric Power Corp., KEPCO, which will lead to both energy generation and manufacturing facilities being constructed in Ontario. It's interesting, Mr. Speaker, to say that many years ago we exported two nuclear reactors to South Korea—we exported our nuclear technology to South Korea—and now South Koreans are bringing their solar and renewable energy technology to Ontario.

The agreement with Samsung stems from opportunities created for developers and investors through Ontario's Green Energy Act. This is expected to be among the first of many major investments to result from the leadership position Ontario has taken in Korean energy.

The consortium will be an anchor tenant in growing a new, vibrant green economy in Ontario. The province signed an agreement with the Korean consortium originally in January 2010, and amended it in the summer of 2011. This agreement allows for the creation of jobs and investments into Ontario's economy, and will create 16,000 direct and indirect jobs. Mr. Speaker, great progress has been made since the agreement has been signed, and the province improved the deal to better deliver results and provide even greater value for Ontario families.

Here's a brief chronology of the agreement with the Korean consortium: in the fall of 2008, KC approached the Ontario government; in the summer and fall of 2009, intensive negotiations between Ontario and the KC partners; January 2010, agreement signed; July 2011, agreement was amended by Ontario and the KC; August 2011, amendment and original agreement were made public.

What were the changes to the agreement in the summer of 2011? Under the amended agreement, in exchange

for the same one-year commercial operation date extension that was provided to all existing feed-in tariff contract holders in February 2011, the economic development adder payments to Samsung were reduced. If the maximum economic development adder is obtained, it means that the cost to average ratepayers in Ontario over the next 20 years will be about 36 cents a year. The amended agreement will also see four clean technology manufacturing plants open their doors earlier: three plants in December 2011 and one in August 2012.

It's also important to note that the Korean consortium is required to create a total of 900 jobs by the end of 2012. If a partner manufacturing plant closes prior to 2016, the economic development adder is reduced by 25%.

Samsung and three manufacturing partners, meaning Siemens, CS Wind and SMA, have had their facilities in commercial operation since December 2011. Siemens has built a wind blade manufacturing plant in Tillsonburg. Siemens expects the plant to create 300 jobs at peak capacity, and 600 indirect jobs. CS Wind has built a wind tower plant in Windsor. The plant is expected to employ up to 300 people when running at full capacity, and 400 indirect jobs are also expected with this plant.

Celestica and SMA are expanding the Celestica GTA facility to manufacture solar inverters. The plant is expected to create up to 100 direct jobs and 100 indirect jobs.

On September 8, 2011, KC announced that they have selected London, Ontario, for the site of a new solar module manufacturing facility. The manufacturing partner is still to be determined, and per the agreement it is expected to be operational by August 31, 2012. This plant is anticipated to create 200 direct manufacturing jobs and 120 indirect jobs. As per the amended agreement, KC will be eligible for an economic development adder, contingent upon meeting job commitments at these four manufacturing facilities.

I want also to take this opportunity to cover some misconceptions and inform this House of the First Nations involvement in the proposed green renewable energy park in Haldimand county.

The Minister of Energy is committed to the success of the green energy investment agreement. We will work with the Korean consortium and their developer partners where possible to help facilitate green energy projects. The Korean consortium and their partners have the responsibility to meet the requirements under the renewable energy approval process, including consultation with First Nations and the Métis communities. We take the crown's duty to consult First Nations and the Métis very seriously. As part of the consultation required under the renewable energy approval process, Samsung is consulting with the Six Nations elected council. We understand that business arrangements between Samsung and the Six Nations elected council are currently being negotiated. Six Nations launched a 30-day consultation period to discuss Samsung's projects and potential community involvement. The Six Nations elected council voted to move forward with the Grand Renewable Energy Project

in Haldimand county. Six Nations elected council and Samsung are negotiating final equity and capacity funding agreements.

Mayor Hewitt of Haldimand county is a strong supporter of the Samsung project. Actually, he has appeared in Samsung TV commercials, and Samsung, Pattern, NextEra and Capital Power helped launch the community vibrancy fund for the county on September 2011. This is a \$2-million-per-year fund for the 20-year life of the project.

The agreement will lead to approximately 16,000 green energy jobs over six years and bring \$7 billion of renewable energy investments to Ontario. Jobs will be created during the construction, installation and operation of renewable energy projects, as well as direct employment in manufacturing plants. In addition, the increased renewable energy development and the manufacturing activities will support indirect job creation in areas such as finance, consulting and other manufacturing, service and development industries.

Here are some of the key facts about our green energy initiatives:

- kick-starting our renewable manufacturing industry by bringing four green manufacturing projects and partners to Ontario, with an investment totalling \$7 billion;

- creating approximately 16,000 direct and indirect jobs over six years;

- generating approximately 110 million megawatt-hours of emissions-free electricity for the lifespan of the FIT contract—enough power to supply every home in Ontario for three years;

- displacing up to 40 megatonnes of carbon dioxide—equivalent to moving every single car off Ontario roads in one year; and

- creating even more economic development opportunities for aboriginal communities, municipalities, manufacturers, etc.

0940

Over the longer term, the additional manufacturing will deliver a very real contribution to Ontario's GDP, estimated at a net \$1 billion over 10 years.

The economic development adder is an incentive over and above the feed-in tariff paid for green energy generation. The EDA payments will be reduced on a pro rata basis if job levels fall below 85% of 900 jobs. Average jobs between 2013 and 2015 are to be maintained at 765 jobs. If jobs fall below 765 by 15%, KC's EDA will be reduced by 15%. If a manufacturing partner ceases operation before December 2016, the EDA will be reduced by 25%.

I would like to take a few moments to talk about our nuclear fleet. We are refurbishing Ontario's nuclear capacity. We'll create almost 25,000 jobs and generate annual economic activity of \$5 billion.

It would interest this House to know that we have conserved 1,700 megawatts of electricity since 2005. Investments in conservation of energy from 2006 to 2010 will result in \$3.8 billion in avoided system costs.

In 2011, the OPA launched the province-wide save-ONenergy electricity conservation program. According to the Canadian Energy Efficiency Alliance, we have improved Ontario's conservation rating from a C grade in 2004 to an A-plus grade in 2009.

We have introduced the industrial conservation initiative, which lowers costs for participating large businesses that shift consumption away from peak times.

We have brought forward the Energy Consumer Protection Act—tough new rules that greatly strengthen protections for consumers from unfair practices in the retail sector.

The Ontario energy and property tax credit has provided up to \$1,025 in tax relief for seniors. The Ontario clean energy benefit provides a 10% reduction in electricity bills for eligible Ontario families, with an estimated \$150-per-year saving for families, \$1,700 in savings per year for farmers and \$2,000 in savings per year for small businesses. The northern Ontario energy credit gives up to \$200 in tax relief for families in northern Ontario.

As of May 1, 2011, off-peak hours started two hours earlier, at 7 p.m. instead of 9 p.m., on weekdays. This provides an extra 10 hours a week during the lowest-cost period.

Mr. Speaker, we are modernizing our electricity grid for the 21st century. We have invested over \$9 billion since 2003 in improvements in Hydro One's systems, including upgrades to 5,000 kilometres of power lines, the distance from Toronto to Whitehorse, Yukon.

We have rolled out smart meters to Ontario homes and small business consumers on time and on budget, with over 4.7 million units installed already. As of February 1, 2012, approximately 3.6 million customers were on the time-of-use program. We have launched a \$50-million smart-grid fund to help advance smart-grid and economic development opportunities for Ontario's local distribution companies and businesses.

Ontario has a balanced and diversified portfolio of strengths with various sectors in the industry. As in the corporate world, only a diversified company with a balanced portfolio can use its strengths to truly capitalize on its growth opportunities. In particular, you will note Ontario's traditional strengths in nuclear, hydro power and natural gas, along with Ontario's more recent leadership in grid automation, data management and electric vehicles.

The smart grid is an adaptive, flexible and responsive 21st-century electricity system and the next logical step in Ontario's energy future. The smart grid is the digital way of the future. Think of it as modernizing our energy infrastructure, like going from the rotary dial phone to a smart phone, or as having the Internet applied to our electricity system, allowing real-time information to be used almost instantaneously to balance supply and demand at the retail level.

Smart grid development is an area with tremendous potential for economic growth in the electricity sector, but also in financing, technology, research and develop-

ment, building design, construction and manufacturing. Ontario is an early adopter. When it comes to smart grid technology, we are already ahead of our main competitors in the world. We currently have over 4.7 million installed smart meters in this province. But smart meters, our highly successful feed-in tariff program, and even the move toward electric vehicles are just the beginning.

The province is now home to many innovative companies researching developing ground-breaking smart grid technology and using it in their businesses. Ontario's Smart Grid Forum, a utility- and industry-led initiative focused on creating a road map for smart grid implementation, estimates that Ontario's electric utilities will invest approximately \$2 billion in smart grid technology over the next five years.

Actually, it's already started. In 2009, Hydro One, the province's largest electricity distributor, launched its Smart Zone initiative in Owen Sound. This project is focused on integrating various solutions in the areas of distributed generation, distribution automation and planning tools. The project has attracted international private sector planning tools, including system integration and project management services from IBM. In April 2011, Ontario launched a \$50-million smart grid fund to support innovative Ontario-based projects, advancing the smart grid and bringing a range of associated benefits to the province.

Mr. Speaker, by taking a leadership position in advancing the smart grid, Ontario is leveraging its current advantage to become a global leader in clean energy technology. We plan to be the test bed for new products and innovations, and the manufacturing base for them too. Globally, jurisdictions are moving towards incorporating renewable technologies into their energy mix. Ontario has the knowledge base and the expertise to help fill this demand.

Now I want to touch on the role of key organizations in our electricity system. I want to quickly give an overview of the various key organizations and players in the Ontario energy sector. The Ministry of Energy primarily provides policy direction and the framework; it also enacts the legislation and regulations to advance policy. The Ontario Energy Board is an independent, quasi-judicial board that regulates local distribution companies and sets distribution rates. Local distribution companies deliver electricity to consumers and plan, expand and manage distribution infrastructure. They are mostly municipally owned. Finally, the Electricity Distributors Association, which is actually celebrating its centennial in 2012, represents local distribution companies and is active in policy discussions.

0950

Let me say a few words about the Independent Electricity System Operator. The Independent Electricity System Operator, the province's electricity market operator, manages Ontario's electricity system and operates the wholesale electricity market. It forecasts the demand for electricity and ensures that there are available supplies to meet demand.

More than half of all electricity consumed by this province is paid for at wholesale prices. Most lower-use consumers, such as homeowners and small businesses, pay the regulated rate that is revised every six months based on market and contract prices paid to generators.

Generators offer electricity into the market at varying prices, depending on technology and fuel type.

The IESO dispatches the cheapest generators to the point where supply is sufficient to meet demand.

The Independent Electricity System Operator is responsible for maintaining the bulk electricity system reliability by balancing province-wide supplies and demand in real time; operating Ontario's electricity market and managing settlement and the billing for generators and load customers; and operating the metering data management and repository, a core part of the province's smart metering program that tracks information on time-of-use electricity consumption.

The MDM/R enables local distribution companies to bill consumers on time-of-use rates; assembles valuable data on consumer response to time-of-use prices to facilitate further research and policy development on conservation and demand management initiatives; periodically issues 18-month province-wide system reliability assessments; and conducts technical impact studies for proposed modifications to the bulk electricity system—for example, generator and load connections.

The Independent Electricity System Operator works in real time at the heart of Ontario's power system, connecting all participants: generators that produce electricity; transmitters that send it across the province; retailers that buy and sell it; industries and businesses that use it in large quantities; and local distribution companies that deliver electricity to the province and to people's homes.

Through research and policy development, the IESO also helps ensure that Ontario's electricity system and the markets continually evolve to adapt to changing economic conditions, evolving generation mixes and emerging policy priorities.

Let me say a few words about the IESO. Since its inception in 1999, the IESO has developed and implemented a broad range of rules, procedures and tools that allow the province's electricity system to function safely and reliably for the benefit of all Ontarians.

The IESO played a key role in managing the restoration of power following the August 2003 blackout that affected a large portion of the northeastern US and Canada.

On an ongoing basis, the IESO provides expert advice to the government and the Ontario Energy Board on a broad range of initiatives.

The IESO developed, implemented and is currently operating the metering data management repository, a core part of the province's smart metering program that tracks information on time-of-use electricity consumption.

Through prudent planning and effective communications, the IESO maintained system reliability through periods of extreme summer weather, including July 21,

2011, the day with the third-highest total energy consumption on record.

Recognizing the current economic climate, the IESO held its usage fee flat for the third consecutive year in 2011.

Let me say a few words about the OPA. The Ontario Power Authority is responsible for the following:

—medium- and long-term system planning; the procurement of generation supply; managing generation contracts; conservation programming; and aboriginal consultation and engagement.

The OPA plays a major role in executing the Ontario government's plan to transform Ontario's electricity system by helping to reduce Ontario's energy consumption and procuring clean, modern, cost-effective power to support sustainable electricity for the future of Ontarians.

Together with Ontario's local distribution companies, the OPA launched a suite of province-wide conservation programs to run from 2011-14 and has helped build the capability of delivery agents and customers to participate in conservation programs.

In 2011, the OPA continued to build on the success of the feed-in tariff and the microFIT programs by processing nearly 30,000 applications, awarding contracts and launching a planned two-year review of the programs. The OPA was selected as one of Canada's Greenest Employers in 2011. It was selected as Smart Commute Toronto-Central's 2011 employer of the year, and it was listed as one of greater Toronto's top 90 employers.

We are already leaders in innovation. Right here in Ontario, colleges and universities are producing the world's next generation of new-economy engineers and clean energy specialists. We are alert to the challenge—and the opportunity. Ontario is already halfway around the first lap while most jurisdictions are just coming out of the starting blocks.

So how do we all take advantage of this opportunity? How can we use Ontario's early adopter status to become a recognized global leader in the electricity sector, in energy supply, use and innovation? Ontario's energy system forms an essential part of our economy, and it is very important to every Ontarian. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Jeff Leal: No, just keep going a couple more minutes. You've got a couple more paragraphs there. Keep going.

Mr. Reza Moridi: Thank you, Ontario's energy system forms an essential part of the very foundation of our economic prosperity. We have proven our ability to provide innovative solutions to advance global clean energy objectives.

In 2010, investment in the global clean energy market—wind, solar and bioenergy—was nearly \$200 billion, and global investment in renewable energy projects is expected to mobilize nearly \$7 trillion of new capital over the next 20 years. I believe that Canada's next great economic opportunity is to capture global product mandates for clean energy technology and innovation. In other words, in addition to investing in new

ways to extract energy, we should be investing in the innovative use of energy.

The Canadian Council of Chief Executives has long acknowledged that Canada's natural resources in renewable energy like wind, tidal, biomass, geothermal and solar resources make us well positioned to be a clean energy leader.

Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the debate.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member from Richmond Hill has moved adjournment of the debate. Agreed?

Second reading debate adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The debate has been adjourned. Orders of the day?

1000

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I seek unanimous consent to move the following motion without notice:

That when Bill 13, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to bullying and other matters, is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of Bill 13 without further debate or amendment, and at such time, Bill 13 shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy; and

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

That Bill 14, the Anti-Bullying Act, 2012, the private member's bill sponsored by the former member from Kitchener-Waterloo, be reinstated at the Standing Committee on Social —

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Point of order—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Point of order, the member from Timmins-James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: You accidentally skipped the fourth paragraph.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I'm only on the third paragraph—oh, I'm sorry, Speaker. Yes, I did. Thank you, Gilles.

Let me start again, Speaker.

That when Bill 13, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to bullying and other matters, is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of Bill 13 without further debate or amendment, and at such time, Bill 13 shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy; and

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

That Bill 14, the Anti-Bullying Act, 2012, the private member's bill sponsored by the former member—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Point of order—

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: Then I don't have the right copy.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Can I read that sentence for you?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: Sure.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: With the indulgence of the House, I'll read that sentence.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: Can I rise on a point of order?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The Minister of Energy, point of order.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: Thank you very much, Speaker. I'd like to stand on a point of order. I just want to make sure that all of the things are proceeding as they need to be proceeding and that we actually make sure that we're all at the same—are you ready now? I think my point of order has been addressed, so thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The Minister of Education.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: Thank you very much, Speaker. I'm very pleased to seek again unanimous consent to move the following motion without notice:

That when Bill 13, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to bullying and other matters, is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of Bill 13 without further debate or amendment, and at such time, Bill 13 shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy; and

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

That Bill 14, the Anti-Bullying Act, 2012, the private member's bill sponsored by the former member from Kitchener-Waterloo, be reinstated at the Standing Committee on Social Policy at the same status it was as of April 26, 2012; and

That sponsorship of Bill 14 be transferred to the member from Nepean-Carleton in order to allow Bill 14 to receive public hearings simultaneously with Bill 13 and that its clauses be considered at the clause-by-clause stage of Bill 13 in accordance with the terms of this motion; and

That the committee be authorized to meet in Toronto during its regular meeting times on Monday, May 7; Tuesday, May 8; Monday, May 14; and Tuesday, May 15, 2012, for the purpose of conducting public hearings on Bill 13 and Bill 14; and

That the committee be authorized to meet beyond its normal meeting times on Monday, May 14, 2012, and Tuesday, May 15, 2012, for the purpose of conducting public hearings but must adjourn on both days no later than 8 p.m.; and

That the committee be authorized to sit on one day during the constituency week of May 21, 2012, through May 24, 2012, for the purpose of holding public hearings on Bill 13 and Bill 14 in Ottawa, Ontario; and

That the committee be authorized to meet in Toronto during its regular meeting times on Monday, May 28, and Tuesday, May 29, 2012, for clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 13; and

That the committee shall be authorized to meet beyond the normal hour of adjournment for clause-by-clause consideration on Tuesday, May 29; and

That during clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 13, the committee shall dedicate Monday, May 28, to considering which, if any, elements or clauses of Bill 14 should be incorporated into Bill 13, and that any remaining time on May 28 and all of May 29 shall be dedicated only to dealing with remaining clause-by-clause amendments to Bill 13; and

That the committee be authorized during clause-by-clause consideration to incorporate such provisions of Bill 14 into Bill 13 as the committee deems appropriate; and

That the filing deadline for filing amendments to Bill 13 with the clerk of the committee shall be 5 p.m. on Thursday, May 24, 2012. At 5 p.m. on May 29, 2012, 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 Bill 13 and any amendments thereto. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession, with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

That, despite the deadline for filing amendments, amendments that arise during discussions at committee on May 28 incorporating Bill 14 into Bill 13 may be introduced during the course of clause-by-clause hearings on that day, provided the amendment relates to the scope and principle of Bill 14; and

That, upon completion of clause-by-clause of Bill 13, the committee shall refer Bill 13, as amended, only back to the House to commence third reading debate on Bill 13, as amended; and

That the committee shall report Bill 13 to the House no later than Wednesday, May 30, 2012. In the event that the committee fails to report Bill 13 on that day, Bill 13, as amended, 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 committee, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time, Bill 13, as amended, shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called on that same day; and

That, when the order for third reading of Bill 13, as amended, is called, four hours shall be allotted to the third reading stage of Bill 13, as amended, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of Bill 13, as amended, 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 Bill 13, as amended, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Please sit.

You've all heard the motion from the Minister of Education. Shall the motion carry? The motion is carried.

Motion agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Orders of the day.

ACCEPTING SCHOOLS ACT, 2012

LOI DE 2012 POUR DES ÉCOLES TOLÉRANTES

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 1, 2012, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 13, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to bullying and other matters / Projet de loi 13, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'éducation en ce qui a trait à l'intimidation et à d'autres questions.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to the order of the House just passed, I need to put the question on Bill 13.

Ms. Broten has moved second reading of Bill 13, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to bullying and other matters.

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

I heard a no.

All in favour, please say "aye."

All against, please say "nay."

I believe the nays have it.

This vote will now be deferred until after question period.

Second reading vote deferred.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Orders of the day.

Hon. James J. Bradley: No further business, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: A point of order, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Nepean–Carleton on a point of order.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's not even a point of order, but please don't cut me off. I just want to say thank you to all members of this assembly. I'd like to point out my colleague Peter Tabuns for his great work in working with us, as well as the Minister of Education and other members here who feel very strongly about anti-bullying legislation.

A week ago tomorrow, my colleague from Kitchener–Waterloo decided to retire from this place, and I appreciate the opportunity to carry on what I think is a significant legacy of hers, an issue that she has fought for for many years, the anti-bullying legislation.

I have great gratitude for my members, from all parties, who want to see that flourish. Thank you all very much, and I really appreciate that.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member knows that's not a point of order.

This House now stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1010 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. James J. Bradley: I'm pleased to welcome to the Ontario Legislature today Ms. Caroline Brendon, mother of page William Alexander from École L'Héritage in St. Catharines, as well as William's sister Caroline Alexander. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Phil McNeely: It's my pleasure to introduce in the east gallery today the mayor of all the people of Ottawa, Jim Watson, a former cabinet minister and MPP, of course, and his assistant, Serge Arpin.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'd like to welcome, from Community Living here today: Karen McNeilley from Community Living Lindsay, Randy Netherton from People First, and Richard Semple from Community Living. I'd like to welcome them to Queen's Park today.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: On behalf of Minister Milloy, I would like to welcome some visitors to the Legislature today from Community Living Ontario. Visiting with us today is Deborah Rollier, the president; Garry Cooke, the past president, and his daughter Laurie; Theresa Somerton, a board member; Alan McWhorter, interim executive director; and Gordon Kyle, director of social policy and government relations. I'd like to welcome them to the Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the organization, I would like to advise everyone that there's a reception between 3:30 and 4:30 today in the dining room, and everyone is invited.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm pleased to welcome today the Community Living group from my riding of Durham: Mathew Ritchie with Colleen Arbuckle. There are a number of other people that I'd like to recognize, but when they show up, Mr. Speaker. I'll be introducing them during question period, perhaps.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Nice try.

The member from Windsor West.

Mrs. Teresa Piruzza: I'm pleased to introduce today some members from Community Living Windsor-Essex who are with us here today. We have Karen Charette, the director of Community Living supports and operations; Lisa Raffoul, manager of Community Living supports and also a founding member of Ensemble; and Jessica Martin. They're also here today for Community Living Day. Thank you for attending today, and welcome to Queen's Park.

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: I'd like to welcome to the Legislative Assembly Dalia Mukherjee, the mother of page Dia Mukherjee. I'm hoping that she'll enjoy watching her daughter in action this morning during question period.

Mr. Bob Delaney: I'm pleased to introduce four special guests who've come to observe question period. They were here this morning for the clause-by-clause reading of Bill 2. I'm pleased to introduce Adina Lebo from CARP's downtown chapter, and she's the chair; Kevin McLean, who is the district D veterans service/seniors officer for the Royal Canadian Legion; Gail Simpson, who is the manager of professional develop-

ment and practice support for the Ontario Society of Occupational Therapists; and Vanessa Foran, who is the director of policy partnerships and government relations of the Parkinson Society Canada. I welcome them to the Ontario Legislature.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'd just like to echo the sentiments from the member from Windsor West and welcome members from Essex Community Living: Karen Charette, Lisa Raffoul and Jessica Martin. I'm really proud to welcome them here today, and I'm so proud of the work that you do in our community. Thank you so much.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I would like to introduce to the House today Mr. Ranjit Singh Dulai, who is the president and CEO of Petroleum Plus Inc. He'll be joining us shortly in the gallery. He has been very active in the community with youth and with the Malton action committee. Mr. Dulai has guests from the UK, very importantly from the border force of the United Kingdom, who are joining us: Mr. Manmohan Vij and Ms. Sukesh Vij.

Mr. Norm Miller: I'm pleased to introduce page Sabrina's school, that isn't quite here yet but will be shortly, and that's Jeff Mann, teacher, and the Muskoka Montessori School, which will be at Queen's Park today. I'd like to welcome them once they eventually get here.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We do welcome them.

Further introductions? There being none, it is now time for oral questions.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question to the Deputy Premier: Your government continues to put the interests of the Ontario Liberal Party ahead of the interests of Ontario families. In the face of a credit rating downgrade, you should have brought in more reductions in expenditures, but instead you've triggered a by-election. You signed a deal with the NDP that increased taxes and increased spending in trying to save your Liberal skin instead of doing the right thing. And the same thing is happening with hospital projects around this province, Mr. Speaker.

Last night I attended a rally with 10,000 folks in Grimsby, standing behind a good project at West Lincoln Memorial Hospital. But sadly, this is one of six projects cancelled by the Liberals, including South Bruce Grey, Wingham and District Hospital, Brockville General Hospital, St. Thomas Elgin, and Sunnybrook.

Can the deputy minister explain why he cancelled projects in PC ridings but is putting a \$1.2-billion megahospital into the city of Windsor? Why won't you do the right thing and move projects forward instead based on their merits and not—

Applause.

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

Hon. Dwight Duncan: It's nice that the Leader of the—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Finance.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The black knight of Ontario politics strikes again, Mr. Speaker. Where have you been? You haven't raised the issue for the last month. And by the way, this week we had to close racetracks that cost jobs in my riding, in the member for Windsor West's riding and in the member for Niagara Falls-Fort Erie's riding.

The budget is very fair. What is difficult to comprehend is: How can he tell us yesterday we need to cut spending and now today increase spending? You're trying to have it both ways; you can't have it both ways.

First you said we should adopt every one of Drummond's recommendations and you said not to cherry-pick; then you started to cherry-pick, one by one by one. No, Mr. Speaker. The people of Ontario see through it. He's been absent without leadership even in his own riding. It's—

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Let's bring it down.

Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Minister, your budget is partisan pork-barrelling at its ugliest. You cancel five projects in PC-held ridings and now you're boasting about a \$1.2-billion mega-hospital in your own riding that was never on the list in the first place.

We support all efforts to rein in after nine years of their gluttonous spending spree that has put us into huge debt. But now they've got a brand new project in the Deputy Premier's own riding that miraculously appeared, a \$1.2-billion project.

Last night I stood proudly with the folks in Grimsby behind a good project for West Lincoln Memorial. We believe projects should be based on their merit. What will they do for health care—not for the political parties, not for the Ontario Liberal Party?

If it's true you're making decisions based on merit and not what riding they're in, will you table today the criteria you used to reject PC riding projects and to put your own on the top of the list of \$1.2 billion?

Applause.

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

Deputy Premier.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I know the Leader of the Opposition hasn't read the budget yet. He voted against it before he read it.

Let me just remind him now: The riding of Simcoe North, which I believe is represented by the Conservative Party—the leader may not know that—\$474 million for the Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care. The Leader of the Opposition may not know this. You have a member from Barrie. That would be one of those people

back there—Mr. Jackson. The Royal Victoria Hospital: \$258 million.

1040

I had a little contretemps with your member from Cambridge who voted against the Cambridge hospital. You may not know it, but you have a member from Cambridge. He's got his Cambridge hospital redevelopment. His local newspaper told him he shouldn't follow your lead; he should vote for it.

You ought to learn who's in your caucus in the cities you represent—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Sit down. A reminder for all members that you are to use the—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A reminder for all members: You are to use the member's title or their riding.

Final supplementary: the member from Leeds-Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: This government is putting politics ahead of our province. The Premier continues to force unwanted industrial wind farms on PC ridings like Prince Edward-Hastings, Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, Lambton-Kent-Middlesex and Chatham-Kent-Essex, yet cancels wind projects in Liberal-held Scarborough—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member will make sure that the question is relevant to the first two.

Mr. Steve Clark: Speaker, he racks up billion-dollar bills to cancel unpopular power projects in Liberal ridings like Oakville and Mississauga.

Minister, making billion-dollar decisions based on politics instead of merit is no way to run a government. It speaks to the Premier's utter incompetence and disregard for taxpayers. It's shameful. I join with my leader and ask you, Minister: Will you table in this House the criteria you use for which hospitals remained and which were cut?

Interjections.

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

Deputy Premier?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Mr. Speaker, I did want to also go back to the Leader of the Opposition and say to the people of West Lincoln—here's what he had to say when asked about the West Lincoln hospital on budget day. He said, "I'm more interested in a balanced budget than any individual project."

Well, you know, you can't have it both ways. He's been absent without leadership. He takes one position one day and another position another day.

With respect to the final supplementary, I remind him that we have green energy jobs going on in Burlington, Cambridge—

Hon. Christopher Bentley: Tillsonburg.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: —Tillsonburg and a variety of others. Why do you want to close down those jobs in the member from Cambridge's riding and in the member from Burlington's riding?

You know what? We're about jobs, Mr. Speaker; they're about games. They've been absent without leadership. The people of Ontario demand leadership. They're getting it only from this side of the House.

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. Frank Klees: My question is to the Attorney General. AgustaWestland, the company that sold Ornge 12 helicopters for \$144 million and then kicked back \$6.7 million to Ornge in the form of a marketing agreement, is under investigation in Italy for a surprisingly similar deal.

Here is what was reported in the Italian media about the interrogation of the former director general of AgustaWestland's parent company: "The discussion focused on the bribes and kickbacks that it appears were paid by the public group's company responsible for helicopters—AgustaWestland—to win foreign sales."

My question to the Attorney General is this: Given the similarity between the Ornge deal and what is under investigation, will the Attorney General agree to refer this information to the OPP, the RCMP and the justice department of the United States of America?

Hon. John Gerretsen: I'm pleased to refer this to the Deputy Premier.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean–Carleton and the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke will come to order.

Deputy Premier?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Mr. Speaker, my understanding is that the Ontario Provincial Police are investigating the situation at Ornge—all the events. We've had the Auditor General go through there. We have the public accounts committee looking very closely at all matters with respect to Ornge.

I think the last piece is the fact that that party opposite is obstructing Bill 50, which is designed to deal with the problems that the Minister of Health identified and dealt with in a very timely fashion. I hope that they will do what they've now done with two bills this morning and stop obstructing and let Bill 50 get passed.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: After yesterday's testimony from a former employee of Ornge who was responsible for the deliverables under that \$6.7-million kickback marketing agreement, it's interesting to note that the circumstances are uncannily the same as is being investigated in Italy. Ornge bought 12 helicopters from Agusta. India bought 12 helicopters from Agusta. According to Mr. Borgogni, the cost of the helicopters in India had been inflated in order to pay a multi-million-dollar kickback to the political party Lega Nord with the approval of AgustaWestland's CEO. We have reason to believe that the Ornge deal is very similar in terms of the inflated price.

I ask the Attorney General again: Given the information that we have now conveyed to him, will he agree

to ensure that that is conveyed to the OPP, the RCMP and the US minister of justice?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: To the Attorney General.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Come to order, please. The member from Durham and the member from Leeds–Grenville will stop.

Attorney General.

Hon. John Gerretsen: Thank you very much, Speaker. First of all, the member is fully aware of the fact that our legislative committee, public accounts, is looking in to this issue. If issues come out of that that lead to further investigations by the police officials of this province, obviously that will be done.

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

Mr. Frank Klees: When will the ministers of the crown in this government start to put the public interest ahead of their political self-preservation?

If any member of the executive council is responsible to look beyond politics, it is the Attorney General. That is his responsibility. I have conveyed to him important information that I am asking him to ensure that the OPP investigation is familiar with. I'm asking him, because the deal was struck in Philadelphia, that he provide the same information to the US ministry of justice. I'm asking him to inform the RCMP because of their international jurisdiction. Will the Attorney General take on his responsibility and ensure that that information is conveyed to the appropriate enforcement agency?

Applause.

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

Attorney General.

Hon. John Gerretsen: First of all, we are very proud of our system of justice here.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I am going to refer to individuals, which I've already started to do. I will tell you that when I get the quiet, it's not the moment in which you start up again.

Attorney General.

Hon. John Gerretsen: First of all, I think we can all be very proud of our system of justice here in Canada and in Ontario on an ongoing basis. I'm very proud of the members who work in the Ministry of the Attorney General on a day-to-day basis.

As the member is fully aware, the OPP is already investigating all of the various allegations that have been made around Ornge, etc. With the information that the member has provided here—and it has become public—I'm quite sure that the OPP will do the right thing and investigate that as well.

We, as a government, do not direct our policing authorities as to what to investigate. They know their job. The member knows that. Let the OPP do the work that they are entitled to do on an ongoing basis on this issue as well.

JOB CREATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Acting Premier. Last October, the people of Ontario sent us here to focus on the issues that matter to them. They're worried about their jobs, the cost of everyday life and the state of their health care. They expect us to work together to get things done for them. This week, I've asked the government to look very seriously at New Democrat proposals, especially on jobs. Is the government ready to do that?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Oh, absolutely, and we welcome that commitment on the part of the third party. Unfortunately, the official opposition ruled themselves out of any discussion on these matters, preferring instead to be nominating candidates around the province, preferring instead to be obstructing important legislation.

1050

We, in the budget, as the leader of the third party will be aware, set up a jobs and prosperity task force. We are putting approximately \$2 billion together in a fund that they will give us advice on. We have already indicated our willingness to refer your ideas to that commission to look at. I know we'll be announcing the makeup of that commission in fairly short order.

I welcome those ideas and I welcome the opportunity to look carefully at them, to discuss them to see where we might find common ground.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Sadly, folks who were happy to see some real progress made last week saw more of the same old cynical politics when they tuned into Queen's Park this week: squabbles over process in legislation, even though we share a goal; political insiders making big bucks from the mess at Ornge; and desperate manoeuvres from a government to take back an absolute majority instead of working with the mandate that the people gave them not so long ago.

Is this government ready to roll up their sleeves and work on new ideas to create jobs that get people back to work, or are they completely—completely—determined to play the same old political games?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I'm pleased that the Legislature was able to get the bullying legislation into committee, working together with all parties. That's a very pleasant change of pace.

I am given to understand that in committee this morning, the official opposition has now officially backed down on their attempts to block Bill 2. There were a lot of members of CARP there, and the committee member from the official opposition ran upstairs to check things out with his leader, came back and said, "Okay, we're not going to block this anymore." Well done. We're glad to hear that.

We will continue to make this Legislature work. We will remain focused on health, on education and on jobs. The leader of the third party is absolutely right: That's extremely important.

Jobs are important. We're proud of the fact that we brought forward a number of initiatives in the budget. I

look forward to having the opportunity, in consultation with the jobs and prosperity task force, to look at further suggestions from the leader of the third party.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, these are very tough times in Ontario; I think everybody knows it. The people who get up every morning to make this province work want us to talk about the jobs that we can win for them, not the power that the government can win for itself.

Is this government ready to focus on the right priorities, roll up their sleeves and get to work on new ideas to create jobs to get people back to work in this province?

Interjection.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: As my colleague says, we're doing it each and every day, Mr. Speaker.

We look forward to hearing more about the leader of the third party's ideas on a job-creating tax credit. That certainly sounds promising, although we don't have the details yet from the leader.

This morning, the Premier was at Agfa HealthCare. More than 86 jobs were created there; 276 were retained. That's an important investment that we made. The third party often calls that corporate welfare. We don't think it's corporate welfare. The leader of the third party ought to be careful, because they criticize, on one hand, that we do this with businesses—and by the way, sometimes they're not successful; that's part of the risk you have to take—and then on the other hand says that she wants us to do more.

I'm looking forward to the specifics of your proposal so that we may have the opportunity—

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

JOB CREATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Acting Premier. Yesterday, the Premier said that the jobs council would put our job creation tax credit on the table. Today, there are more than half a million Ontarians out of work. They're looking for work now. When can Ontarians expect to see that jobs council actually getting down to work on job creation in this province and on our tax credit—

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

Hon. Dwight Duncan: As I've indicated, we expect that announcement very soon. But I don't want the leader of the third party to leave people with the impression that other good work isn't going on as we speak.

Last month, Ontario employment increased by 46,000 jobs, all full-time—more than half the jobs created in Canada. The CFIB cited an increase in small business confidence that shows that our confidence grew for the seventh month in a row. Statistics Canada: Ontario's GDP grew by 2% in 2011, led by a 2.4% increase in manufacturing. KPMG rates Ontario fourth in business costs among nine mature economic countries.

Mr. Speaker, there is more to do. There are too many Ontarians still looking for work. We will continue to

work every day to find those jobs, and I look forward to her proposals and her party's proposals with—

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, wages in Ontario are stagnant, but the cost of living isn't. In fact, wages in Ontario are growing at the slowest rate in all of Canada. A job creation tax credit gives a bigger reward to companies that pay their employees better salaries.

Now, I might be incorrect, but I thought I heard the Acting Premier say that they agree that a job creation tax credit makes some good sense. Can I get that confirmed?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Mr. Speaker, what I haven't heard, for instance, in our discussions here, and I look forward to seeing absolute, concrete proposals from the NDP, instead of—for instance, would your tax credit be refundable? That's an important question.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Yes.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: So it would be refundable. We've now established that. How long would it apply for and what would the undertakings have to be?

We'd love to see more of this, because the member opposite knows that we have a number of refundable tax credits that are designed to create jobs that haven't, frankly, been as successful as we'd like. We welcome her input and her ideas, Mr. Speaker. Just send us over the information, if you want to do that now.

Is it refundable? What industries would it apply to? How much would it be? What would the impact of the fiscal plan be? All of those things. We look forward to discussing that, and we will take their proposals very seriously.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, a job creation tax credit to incent businesses to boost wages is part of Obama's 2013 budget plan. Is the Acting Premier going to look at the half-million unemployed people in this province, look at them straight in the eye, and admit that the Liberal plan isn't working but they're going to continue to offer more of the same? Or is the government finally going to step up to the plate, stop the games and start making some changes and making some new ideas implemented in this province?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Mr. Speaker, earlier this year myself and officials from the Ministry of Finance had an opportunity to meet with officials from the Obama administration. Much of what she's referring to is already in place in Ontario.

We need to get off of reading the headlines and just asking a question and start talking about the specific improvements. I welcome those ideas, but I would remind her that much of what she's spoken of in terms of what the Obama administration is doing is already in place in Ontario.

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for the Minister of Health. For months now, the Minister of Health has

refused to be held accountable for her failed leadership. She has ducked and dodged and twisted herself up in knots trying to explain her failure and inaction. Her performance has been so weak that the mild-mannered House leader has been dispatched to clean up her mess and uncomfortably defend the indefensible.

But Speaker, he knows, as every other Liberal member knows, that Minister Matthews spent last August and September ignoring reports about scandal and corruption at Ornge, and chose instead to spend that time testing the waters for her upcoming leadership bid.

Given this, Speaker, I'd ask the Minister of Health if she's embarrassed by having to drag her cabinet colleagues in to clean up a mess that she has created.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I think that I'd turn to the Auditor General for advice on matters like this. The Auditor General has actually said that we have moved substantially and taken significant action to clean up the mess at Ornge. I'd be happy to review that, but I think if you went back and checked Hansard, I may have mentioned that before once or twice.

But you know, Speaker, a fundamental problem, I think, at Ornge, was that the board did not exercise the responsibility that was entrusted to them. One of the members of the board is someone named Kelly Mitchell. Now maybe we could talk about who Kelly Mitchell is, Speaker. I do think he resigned from the board immediately the story hit the front page. I think he was also absent without leadership in his role on the board at Ornge. He, of course, is a top fundraiser, a very close adviser—

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's funny; she talks about private citizens but doesn't talk about her own role in this scandal.

Again to the minister: David Caplan walked the plank for his role in the eHealth scandal, the member for Eglinton–Lawrence was sacked for his fondness for cricket clubs and the Attorney General was demoted for his poor handling of the eco fees fiasco. Countless other Liberal backbenchers are sitting there, rotting away, while the Minister of Health stumbles her way through the biggest scandal in Ontario's history.

1100

While less-preferred members of the Liberal caucus were hung out to dry, this minister has been granted immunity. The Premier has ignored the fraud, concealment and kickbacks at Ornge. He's ignored the ineptitude and inexcusable failures on the part of this minister.

So I ask the minister: Have you looked your colleagues in the eye and justified your continued presence on this front bench, or are you prepared to do the right thing—

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

Applause.

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

Minister?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, my responsibility as Minister of Health is to clean up problems when I find them, and I did act aggressively: completely new leadership at Ornge.

But I think people might want to know about the old leadership at Ornge, the leadership that simply did not do their job. Kelly Mitchell is the former chief of staff to several PC Party ministers, including John Snobelen. He served as a board member for Ornge, but he also did some other work as—he's a co-founder of something called Picea Partners. He worked for PC leaders in leadership campaigns and billed a rather remarkable \$176,000 to the PC Party in 2011. So this guy was busy, but I don't think he should have been too busy to be exercising his responsibility on the board of directors at Ornge.

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My question is to the Minister of Labour. Minister, media reports have indicated that the recently appointed chair of the WSIB is making a compensation package of roughly \$188,000 a year. Can the minister verify that this compensation package is accurate?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: Mr. Speaker, I'm really pleased to take this question, because the WSIB is responsible for delivering services to over 230,000 employers and over four million workers across Ontario. It's a very serious responsibility, and the former Minister of Labour, Minister of Health and Deputy Premier, Elizabeth Witmer, is very exceptionally well-qualified to be the chair of the WSIB. I'm really pleased about that.

I want to remind the House that over the last three decades, other governments of all stripes had difficulties with this file, and the WSIB has seen their unfunded liability go up. A few years ago, that financial crisis came to a head and it became more apparent.

Since the release of the Auditor General's report in 2009, the WSIB has worked very hard to improve its financial sustainability. This includes posting a surplus last year, for the first time in a decade.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: The last WSIB chair didn't make the sunshine list and was only a part-time employee. We understand the government is giving Elizabeth Witmer \$188,000 a year to be the WSIB chair, and it has suddenly been made a full-time position.

Can the minister explain why the WSIB chair has suddenly become a full-time gig and why the pay has gone up as well?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I think this sounds more like an election stump than worrying about injured workers. We have a very serious task here, and we want to make sure that we have a strong chair, because they need to bring strong leadership to the WSIB board. They need to work to eliminate the unfunded liability. They need to help injured workers and reduce tape for business.

Our government has already begun steps to address the unfunded liability, including asking Professor Harry Arthurs to conduct a comprehensive funding review of the system.

I look forward to working with the new chair of WSIB to retire that unfunded liability, to protect injured workers and to ensure that the WSIB operates in a businesslike fashion. I want to thank Steve Mahoney for his dedicated service and commitment to the chair of the WSIB over the last six years.

ORGAN DONATION

Mr. Bob Delaney: This question is for the Minister of Government Services. Many Ontarians have loved ones requiring an organ to save their life. Every day, hundreds of Ontarians wait for the gift of life. One of them is Fatima Baig, a young woman who lives in the Middlebury area of Mississauga–Erindale and needs a liver donor.

There were 946 organ transplants in Ontario last year. The number of yearly organ transplants in Ontario has grown by 53% since—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member of Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, come to order.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Organ donation registration is a critical part of our world-leading health system, and we need to attract more Ontarians to register as an organ donor.

Minister, how is ServiceOntario meeting this challenge and improving our organ donation system?

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: I want to thank the member from Mississauga–Streetsville for asking this question. Every donor who provides donations of organs and tissue can save up to eight lives. So our government is absolutely committed to helping people like Fatima Baig to get the gift of life.

Our government is already asking all people who are coming to renew their health cards for donor donations. So I am very pleased to announce today that we are expanding the organ donor registration request to those who renew their driver's licence and photo ID cards as well.

We have already rolled this out in four locations and will be expanding to 91 locations of ServiceOntario very shortly, with the remaining over 200 locations added next year—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Bob Delaney: Minister, when an individual registers to be an organ donor, they can help save the life of someone like Fatima Baig. I know Fatima Baig, and I know her family. She's a young woman who's a teenager, and she's a good student.

Ontario is one of only a few provinces with organ donation registries. However, 1,500 people like Fatima Baig still wait for an organ in Ontario. Only 21% of Ontarians have registered to be an organ donor. People like Fatima will surely die unless more Ontarians register to be organ donors.

This initiative at ServiceOntario is one measure of an integrated strategy to increase organ donation registrations. We need to do more to encourage Ontarians to register as organ donors.

Minister, what else is Ontario doing, in partnership with the Trillium Gift of Life, to increase organ donor registrations?

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: To the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The reality is that every three days someone in Ontario dies waiting for an organ transplant. We can do better. We must do better. That's why I'm very pleased the Trillium Gift of Life has launched their beador.ca campaign. That has dramatically increased the number of people who are registering to be a donor.

In addition, they've launched the Gift of 8 campaign, and I am very pleased that I personally have got a page on that Gift of 8 campaign. I encourage all members of this House to register a page and challenge their community to do better. Last year, 280,000 people gave their consent to donate. That's an increase of 110,000 people over the last year. We must do better for people like Fatima.

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Ms. Laurie Scott: My question is for the Deputy Premier. The corruption at Ornge and lack of accountability in the Liberal cabinet have revealed much about the character of this government. It's evident that Ontarians are governed by a party, a Premier and a cabinet whose sense of entitlement colours every decision they make. Surely this sense of entitlement is driving the complete and utter failure of the Liberal government to take responsibility for the corruption and hold the appropriate people accountable.

I'm troubled by the government's refusal to demonstrate that decisions have consequences and that accountability is a fundamental principle in ensuring public confidence in government.

So I ask the minister: Why has no one in the Liberal government been held accountable for corruption at Ornge?

1110

Hon. Dwight Duncan: It's unfortunate that the Conservatives have repeatedly tried to undermine the public accounts committee. In fact, we've now had 20 hours of hearings with 28 witnesses. I've had the opportunity to watch them on television, and it's astounding what we've been able to determine. Kelly Mitchell: over \$17,000 in donations made from him and his companies; 15 PCs benefited, including the member for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock.

Boy, oh boy. Now, she's making faces, Mr. Speaker, and I don't blame her, because she's been absent without leadership. She can toss over drive-by smears, but when we start to look at this, we look at Lynne Golding, we look at Guy Giorno, Kelly Mitchell, Kelly Long—the

fingers of this creep into that caucus even more deeply than the scent that's coming from Ottawa.

You know what—

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

Ms. Laurie Scott: Again to the minister: He is setting the example to the extent of the decay that has set in in that Liberal government. It's troubling to see that a government has become so detached from the obligations and responsibilities bestowed upon it by Ontarians. This government's sense of entitlement is destroying any credibility it once had. The Minister of Finance knows what he's doing is wrong. He knows that by defending the Minister of Health, he's undermining his personal integrity. He knows that the Minister of Health should have resigned months ago, that her excuses have been less than truthful and that she is undermining public confidence in our system of government.

So I ask the minister again: Why is he protecting the Minister of Health, and why is he so willing to compromise his personal—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Question.

Ms. Laurie Scott: —for political gain?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Deputy Premier.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Kelly Mitchell was paid \$400,000 to lobby and schmooze the PC Party for Ornge and for its profits. Among the riding associations that benefited from his lobbying contracts was Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock.

I really think the party opposite should stop obstructing the committee and let it do its work. Let's find out how many other Tories have been at the trough on this one.

The Minister of Health has done an outstanding job in, first of all, addressing the problem—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Durham is now warned.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And I have tried to make it clear that when I do get attention, I don't need these extra shots when it's quiet.

Finish your answer, please.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: If the member is that serious, stop blocking Bill 50. Let us fix the mess that people like Kelly Mitchell and your riding association benefited from. They can't have it both ways. They've been absent without leadership. Let Bill 50 pass. Let's get this fixed once and for all.

Interjections.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: They can yell and call names and not do the work of the people; we will.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Minister of Energy. This morning, we started a debate on your Bill

75, merging two hydro agencies. Minister, on the verge of decisions to take a risky gamble to spend billions on new nuclear reactors, why is it that your bill is shutting down full public assessment of those decisions?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: It's doing no such thing—doing no such thing at all.

As the member opposite would know, any large power facility in the province of Ontario will have a very, very robust environmental assessment process which, in the case of the Darlington site, has actually been going on since 2006, but, in addition, for any nuclear facility in the province of Ontario, there is a very robust process conducted by the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission itself, which provides a report on safety and related issues.

The bill that was tabled today strengthens planning overall, takes out cost, but does none of the things suggested in the member's question.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: The reality is that this government consistently acts to shut down public scrutiny.

In 2006, the environmental assessment that should have been brought forward for the power plant was set aside by this government. In the Darlington review panel, this government urged that panel not to consider any alternatives to what was put forward. Now, in this bill, you're further limiting the ability of the public to get in there and assess what's going on. Why are you afraid of scrutiny, Minister?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: Just reminding all of us and for the information of those at home, nuclear siting is the jurisdiction of the federal government, which has the most robust environmental assessment on these issues anywhere, and there's a safety assessment. Nothing the Legislature of Ontario passes can get in the way or hinder in any way the federal regulatory oversight process. In fact, those involved in our atomic energy facilities in the province of Ontario—Tom Mitchell, Duncan Hawthorne—were leaders in the world effort to deal with issues in Fukushima. We have the leaders here, the strongest regulation anywhere.

The member opposite should not run down the very strong nuclear industry in the province of Ontario and the 80,000 jobs that go with it.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Ms. Helena Jaczek: My question is also for the Minister of Energy. I've heard that Ontario's clean energy economy is employing thousands of people across the province and is attracting private sector investment at a time when we need it the most. Clean energy manufacturers have established facilities and are employing Ontarians while—

Interjection.

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

I don't know what has happened today, but I am going to ask the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek to come to order, and this is his final warning.

Ms. Helena Jaczek:—while they contribute to Ontario's broader goal of replacing coal-fired power gener-

ation with cleaner sources of energy. Along with the direct jobs associated with these manufacturing facilities, tens of thousands of skilled trade workers are also being employed as projects are constructed across the province.

Minister, can you please update this House on the overall status of Ontario's clean energy manufacturing sector?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: The member for Oak Ridges–Markham is exactly right. She's very concerned about where the jobs of the future are coming from, and the clean energy economy in the province of Ontario is positioning us for those future jobs.

In the past couple of years alone, we've seen manufacturing facilities set up in Windsor, Tillsonburg, London, Guelph, Welland, Newmarket—it sounds like a Via Rail commercial—Burlington, Peterborough, Hawkesbury, Cambridge, Sault Ste. Marie, among others—already 20,000 jobs related to the green energy economy, just in the last couple of years.

The member is right: When we put up those facilities, you've got construction jobs all around the province, in every riding, that are benefiting from the completion of these clean energy facilities.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Thank you, Minister. I'm pleased to hear that Ontario's clean energy manufacturing sector continues to succeed and employ Ontarians.

Minister, General Electric, one of the largest companies in the world, has decided to invest in Ontario; in fact, in my riding of Oak Ridges–Markham. It is now home to the new GE Grid IQ Innovation Centre, a first in smart grid development in all of North America.

Clearly, Ontario's clean energy economy has become a beacon for companies to come and invest in our province. I know that investments in our clean energy economy have reached some \$27 billion, and this is good news for Ontario.

Minister, can you please tell this House what impact General Electric's investments will have on Ontario's clean energy economy?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: The member is right. It was just last year that the member from Oak Ridges–Markham and my colleague the Minister of Economic Development and Innovation were there with GE to open the GE Grid IQ Innovation Centre. There are hundreds of jobs. They just added 150 more jobs. There are 340-plus jobs there already. GE is making a \$150-million investment in the province of Ontario.

Where is this investment going to take us? Well, it's going to take us to be leaders in the clean tech sector. That sector is going to be a \$3-trillion market in 2020. I know my colleague the Minister of Economic Development and Innovation is travelling all over, talking about Ontario's leadership in this area.

With leaders like GE and Siemens and so many others, we're positioning Ontario for the jobs of the future in that \$3-trillion market.

1120

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. Rod Jackson: My question is to the Minister of Health. Speaker, the minister's failure to give a straight answer on the scandal and corruption at Ornge is reflective of her inability to manage her portfolio. Every day, more brown envelopes are showing up in PC inboxes. She has lost control of the Ministry of Health, and is consequently unable to fulfill her duties as minister. So I ask her: Will she finally put her province before her political ambitions and resign her position?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: For just a brief moment there, I thought the member from Barrie was going to rise to talk about the hospital that's being built in his community. Unfortunately, he voted against it, and I guess we'll just have to wait for that thank you. I'm sure it's going to come, as it will come from other members with hospitals being built in their communities.

There is no question that there were serious problems at Ornge; that the leadership there was not doing their job. They forgot who it was they were working for. One of those people in leadership was none other than Kelly Mitchell. Not only did Kelly Mitchell sit on the board at Ornge; he also hired Dr. Mazza's girlfriend in 2005 at the request of Dr. Mazza.

I think the people opposite have to let the committee do their work.

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: There is work to do. The most important thing we do—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. I would ask all members: Please do not make me get up when I say thank you.

Supplementary question?

Mr. Rod Jackson: My question had nothing to do with Kelly Mitchell; it had everything to do with the minister's failure of leadership on the air and land ambulance files that are indicative of her inability to oversee the Ministry of Health.

Throughout the Ornge scandal, she has been perpetually uninformed and unprepared. After nearly a year of inaction on the sorry state of medical transfers in the province of Ontario, the minister has yet again failed to make any progress. The minister is barely treading water, and patient care is suffering as a result.

I ask her this: Given that, under her watch, patient safety has been compromised on a number of fronts, and she does not appear to be able to take the necessary action, will she put the safety of Ontarians before her leadership ambitions and resign today?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I understand that the members opposite are kind of uncomfortable with the links between Ornge and their caucus, but I can tell you we are taking action. There's one piece of action that I

am very determined to move through this Legislature, and that is Bill 50.

If the members opposite really care about what's going on at Ornge, they will support Bill 50. Bill 50 is what we need to do to complete the transformation at Ornge, and I expect—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I want to ask the member from Renfrew if I have already warned him or not.

Mr. John Yakabuski: No.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I haven't? Just asking.

New question.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Cindy Forster: My question is for the Minister of Health as well; she's popular today.

People in Niagara have been frustrated for many years with their health care. Countless promises by this government to improve care have instead closed our emergency rooms and hospital departments and, recently, the cancellation of an entire project in West Lincoln.

Last night, 12,000 people came out to voice their opposition to the cancellation of this project. The Niagara Health System is expected today to unveil major recommendations for changes to health care services. This time, will the government listen to the people of Niagara before making changes that affect them?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Sending in a supervisor to a hospital is the last thing a health minister wants to do, but sometimes, I have no choice but to do that, and in the Niagara Health System, that was one example where sending in a supervisor has turned out to be exactly the right thing to do. Dr. Kevin Smith, I think, has done an exceptionally fine job as supervisor. I look forward to seeing his recommendations on what more needs to be done. I can tell you that Dr. Smith has put a very high priority on listening to the members of the community, and I expect we'll see that reflected today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Cindy Forster: Today an announcement by the Niagara Health System supervisor, Kevin Smith, will lay out the future of the NHS in recommendations. It's expected to be concerning news for people who have been relying on health care in their local communities. Centralizing services and making people travel farther from their homes seems to be the direction that the NHS has been going.

Can the Minister of Health assure the people of Niagara that this time local communities will be seen as an equal partner, that their voices will be listened to and that short-term, Band-Aid fixes will be avoided?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I would urge the member opposite to actually wait until she's seen the report from Dr. Smith before she dismisses it. I expect that Dr. Smith will come forward with some strong recommendations. We will, of course, review them very carefully, but I do

know that Dr. Smith has travelled throughout the region and has listened to people in the community. He is a leader in our health care system. He is determined to deliver the highest-quality care that is possible. So let's look forward to see what the next steps are on the Niagara Health System.

VOLUNTEERS

Ms. Soo Wong: My question is for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Minister, my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt is very fortunate. Our community benefits every day from the hard work of our countless volunteers. They volunteer in our schools, hospitals and community organizations. Volunteers touch our lives and make our communities a better place to live. That's why I was so proud this past March 26 to participate in the Scarborough Volunteer Service Award presentation. This year, 277 worthy recipients were honoured at our ceremony. I know many members of this House will want to attend the Volunteer Service Awards in their own community this year.

My question: Can the minister tell the House more about the Volunteer Service Award and how they can help recognize the outstanding volunteers in Ontario communities?

Hon. Charles Sousa: I thank the member for Scarborough–Agincourt for her commitment to helping others. I was pleased to join her at the VSA ceremony in Scarborough. Every year these awards celebrate the enormous impact volunteers have on our lives. Five-million-strong, volunteers are found in every corner of our great province. All of our selfless volunteers make a difference. These awards are just one way that we show our appreciation.

The annual Volunteer Service Award ceremonies are now in full swing in communities across this province. This year more than 10,000 volunteers will receive the Trillium pin for continuous service to local organizations. Congratulations to all of this year's VSA recipients and thank you all for what you do to make Ontario a better place to live.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Soo Wong: The Volunteer Service Awards are always a great event in my community. They reinvigorate the spirit of volunteerism and get people thinking about how we can recognize and thank the dedicated volunteers—volunteers like grade 12 students George Xu, Mimi Daimiao Tan, Bryan Babiarz and Celestine Oi Han Chan-Liu.

Ever since the ceremony, constituents in Scarborough–Agincourt have asked me how they can recognize volunteers who have made a difference in their lives. Minister, who is eligible to receive a VSA and how can Ontarians get involved to help recognize volunteers in our communities?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Thank you to the member for being a champion of volunteerism in her community.

Ontario volunteers can receive a VSA for unpaid continuous service to their community for up to five years or

more. Youth under the age of 24 can be recognized for two or more years of service. And organizations can nominate up to six of their volunteers—seven if one is a youth.

It's important to know that the deadline each year for submitting nominations is January 25. Even though the deadline is many months away, it's never too early to start thinking about recognizing our outstanding volunteers. Ontario has a strong and proud tradition of volunteering. I extend heartfelt thanks to those who do so much to make our communities better for everyone, every day.

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr. Frank Klees: My question to the Deputy Premier. I would ask a page to deliver this material to the Deputy Premier. That is the amount of information that was ordered for one witness by a government member of the public accounts committee. Under the terms of reference of the government accounts committee, we are limited in most cases to eight minutes per caucus to question that witness.

1130

The kind of slurs that the Minister of Health and other members of this committee, of this government, are throwing at individuals without an opportunity for them to give a proper explanation for what they have done is evidence of why we need a full inquiry into the Ornge scandal.

I will ask the Deputy Premier this: Will he agree to honour the motion of the public accounts committee to adopt the terms that we have proposed to ensure that we get to the bottom of this mess?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Deputy Premier?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon. John Milloy: It's hard not to comment on the honourable member's accusations here in the House, someone who has repeatedly stood up and tried to hold hearings here on the floor of the House with drive-by smears. The simple fact is that the public accounts committee has the power and authority it needs to conduct the hearings. They are doing an excellent job.

I point out to the members opposite that yesterday, I believe, the committee felt there was one particular individual they wanted to hear longer from, so they adjusted the timing. The committee has the authority and has the controls that it needs.

As I say, Mr. Speaker, if the member wants to do this kind of kangaroo court here in the House, I will raise the issues—

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

Mr. Frank Klees: Speaker, I know the government House leader would have a hard time holding that material that I passed across. I'd like him to try to lift it,

at least. Eight minutes, in most cases, is what we have to question a witness. The motion that was put forward, that we're asking the government House leader to bring to this Legislature to approve, simply provides the Chair to call hearings at his will, subject to the subcommittee. It allows us to broaden the scope of those hearings so that we can get to the bottom of this.

I want to know this from the government House leader: What is he hiding? Who does he want to protect? If he wants to get to the bottom of it, as we do, he'll bring that motion forward and allow this House to—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.
Government House leader.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound will withdraw.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, you won't. You'll stand and withdraw.

Mr. Bill Walker: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you.
Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, what's kind of interesting—and I think all members will find it interesting—is, it's my understanding that most of the documentation that was sent across has to do with the PC lobbyist Kelly Mitchell, linking him to the Ornge situation. I think we all know who Kelly Mitchell is. He's a very prominent Conservative with very, very close ties to the PC Party and the Leader of the Opposition. He was paid almost \$400,000 to lobby and schmooze Progressive Conservative MPPs. He is a huge donor and fundraiser for the PC Party. He was involved in the hiring of Kelly Long.

Perhaps the PC Party wants to provide a little bit more—

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

TOURISM

Ms. Sarah Campbell: My question is to the Minister of Tourism. This government cited declining numbers as the reason for closing the tourist information centres in Kenora, Fort Frances and Rainy River, but the government's own numbers show that the traffic at Pigeon River is lower, yet it remains open. Minister, can you please explain how these decisions were made?

Hon. Michael Chan: I want to thank the member for asking the question. Tourism in Ontario is an economic driver, and we are committed to promoting tourism across Ontario, including northwestern Ontario.

Speaker, allow me to give you some numbers—that over the years that we have been promoting tourism in northwestern Ontario. Since 2003, we have invested or committed over \$68 million to support tourism initiatives in the north, including in Kenora, Rainy River and Fort Frances.

Northern Ontario offers visitors beautiful natural landscapes and a variety of vibrant festivals and events. Since 2010, we have also provided approximately \$5 million annually to the new northern regional tourism—

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

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I didn't hear an answer, so I'm going to ask the same question again. This government cited declining numbers as the reason for closing tourist information centres in Kenora, Fort Frances and Rainy River, but the government's own numbers show that traffic at Pigeon River is lower, and yet it remains open.

So I am wondering if the minister can please explain to me, the people of this House, the people of Thunder Bay and the people of Kenora–Rainy River why and how these decisions were made.

Hon. Michael Chan: As part of our plan, we will realign our tourism marketing services by focusing on online travel marketing activities. This will allow us to meet consumers' travel research preferences through major redevelopment of Ontario's tourism information website, call centre and brochure distribution service.

Travellers are turning increasingly to the Internet to organize their trips. In 2010, over four times more travellers used the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corp.'s website to make travel plans than those who visited a travel information centre.

USE OF QUESTION PERIOD

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Oshawa on a point of order.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: Mr. Speaker, this is at least the third time that I have risen in this Legislature on this very issue. The Speaker in the past has ruled regarding this practice, and I will quote a couple of those.

December 13, 2007: "I would therefore remind the House that as much as possible, ministers should refrain from using question period to make statements that might more appropriately be made during a ministerial statement, particularly in response to questions asked by the members sitting on government benches."

Although some members may think this is not a serious matter, it is a breach of the protocols of this Legislature, and I will continue to bring these forward.

Then, on November 2, 2009, he specifically stated—
Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. This is a serious point of order. I need to hear it.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: Speaker Peters stated, "I can say that regarding last Wednesday's question period, the matter is a little more definite. In replying both to the main question and the supplementary, the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities quite specifically used the opportunities to make announcements regarding his ministry's response to certain problems with a private career college.

"The member for Oshawa has a valid point of order and was correct that this is an improper use of question period."

Mr. Speaker, I would go on that, today, during question period, the member from Mississauga–Streetsville very specifically asked the Minister of Government Services a very important question, and the minister responded, “I am very pleased to announce...”, and then he goes on to explain the announcement.

The Speakers’ rulings in the past have been very much against all parties regarding this aspect and very much against parliamentary protocols. As such, announcements are better served during ministerial statements. I would ask the Speaker to now take appropriate action.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On the same point of order, the member from Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, I don’t want to belabour the point, but I think the member raises an important point, and I’m just going to make this, to add to it.

It’s pretty clear that the way that our standing orders are written, there’s a time for ministers to be able to make the statements, and that’s properly done under standing order 35, where it says a minister of the crown may make a statement.

I think the member made the points that I don’t need to repeat. I would just urge the government, especially in the ability to make this House work a little bit better, to respect the rules as written, and the idea is to have ministerial statements so ministers can make those types of statements, and it allows the opposition to respond. Doing it in this way, I think, is not helpful.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On the same point of order, the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I’ll declare it the same point of order. I think you will agree, probably, because it talks about the contents of questions directed in the House.

Mr. Speaker, if you listened carefully to the innuendo and inflammatory language used by the opposition, accusatory questions that are directed to members of the government, then I think that we have to recognize that people who live in glass houses shouldn’t be throwing—

Interjections.

Mr. John Yakubuski: Could we strike that testimony from the record?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I might remember.

That is not germane to this point of order.

I’m prepared to rule on this point of order. Not only does the member have a point of order; he is correct.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me. Be seated. Be seated.

Question period is not to be used by the government as a forum in which to announce a new policy. I would ask that that be adhered to in this House at all times.

Another point of order: the member from Mississauga–Streetsville.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Speaker, I rise on a point of order pursuant to standing orders 23(h), 23(i), 23(k) and standing order 37(d).

In his question to the Deputy Premier, the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke made repeated remarks that imputed motives and used insulting language, par-

ticularly in reference to the member from Kitchener Centre.

I would ask, Speaker, whether or not, upon reflection, the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke would wish to withdraw the offending remarks, and I would ask the Speaker to consider the transcript in relation to standing orders 23(h), 23(i), 23(k) and standing order—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): To allow somebody to hear this, it is a point of order until I decide it’s not a point of order.

Number two: The member does know that I’ve made reference to this once before, and that is, I will not be reviewing Hansard, as I need to hear it as the day is presented for itself. Any member has the opportunity to withdraw or correct their own record. If I did not hear it and yet there was an opportunity for the member to withdraw, he or she will do so.

DEFERRED VOTES

ACCEPTING SCHOOLS ACT, 2012

LOI DE 2012 POUR DES ÉCOLES TOLÉRANTES

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

Bill 13, An Act to amend the Education Act with respect to bullying and other matters / Projet de loi 13, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l’éducation en ce qui a trait à l’intimidation et à d’autres questions.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We now have a deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 13. Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1142 to 1147.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On December 7, 2011, Ms. Broten moved second reading of Bill 13.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Duguid, Brad	Meilleur, Madeleine
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Duncan, Dwight	Miller, Paul
Balkissoon, Bas	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Milloy, John
Bartolucci, Rick	Forster, Cindy	Moridi, Reza
Bentley, Christopher	Gerretsen, John	Murray, Glen R.
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Gélinas, France	Natyshak, Taras
Best, Margaret	Gravelle, Michael	Orazietti, David
Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Piruzza, Teresa
Bradley, James J.	Hoskins, Eric	Prue, Michael
Broten, Laurel C.	Jaczek, Helena	Qaadri, Shafiq
Campbell, Sarah	Jeffrey, Linda	Sandals, Liz
Chan, Michael	Kwintar, Monte	Schein, Jonah
Chiarelli, Bob	Leal, Jeff	Singh, Jagmeet
Colle, Mike	MacCharles, Tracy	Sorbara, Greg
Coteau, Michael	Mangat, Amrit	Sousa, Charles
Crack, Grant	Mantha, Michael	Tabuns, Peter
Craitor, Kim	Marchese, Rosario	Takhar, Harinder S.
Damerla, Dipika	Matthews, Deborah	Taylor, Monique
Delaney, Bob	Mauro, Bill	Vanthof, John
Dhillon, Vic	McGuinty, Dalton	Wong, Soo
Dickson, Joe	McMeekin, Ted	Wynne, Kathleen O.
DiNovo, Cheri	McNeely, Phil	Zimmer, David

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

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Jackson, Rod	O'Toole, John
Bailey, Robert	Jones, Sylvia	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Barrett, Toby	Klees, Frank	Pettapiece, Randy
Chudleigh, Ted	MacLaren, Jack	Scott, Laurie
Clark, Steve	MacLeod, Lisa	Shurman, Peter
Dunlop, Garfield	McDonnell, Jim	Smith, Todd
Elliott, Christine	McKenna, Jane	Thompson, Lisa M.
Fedeli, Victor	McNaughton, Monte	Walker, Bill
Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Hillier, Randy	Milligan, Rob E.	Yakabuski, John
Hudak, Tim	Nicholls, Rick	Yurek, Jeff

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 66; the nays are 33.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. I find this interesting. I'm in the middle of a vote.

I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House earlier today, the bill is referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A point of order for the Minister of Government Services.

Hon. Harinder S. Takhar: Mr. Speaker, when I was answering the question from the member for Mississauga–Streetsville, I did use the words "I am pleased to announce," but what I really wanted to say was, "I am pleased to inform the House." So I wanted to correct my record.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That is a point of order. The member can correct his record. I thank the member for that point.

There is no further vote. This House stands adjourned until this afternoon at 1 p.m.

The House recessed from 1152 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I would like to introduce a group of people here from Community Living Tillsonburg. I believe they've been here almost every year since I've been here. We want to welcome them back to Queen's Park.

I don't believe they're in the gallery just yet, because I had lunch with them in the dining room here at the building and they ate slower than I did.

Mr. Michael Coteau: In about 10 minutes, we'll be joined by a class from Victoria Park Collegiate. I'd like to welcome them to the Ontario Legislative Assembly. It's my former school and I look forward to them being here.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Huron–Bruce.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. And speaking of Bruce, I'm very privileged to welcome some great people here from Walkerton Community Living: Linda Batte, Harv Potts, Crystal Wales, Heather Munro, Craig Harrison, Doris Weber, Nicole Kreager, Crystal Kreager and Carol Patterson. They're in your Speaker's gallery and directly across. Welcome, you guys.

Mr. Jonah Schein: I'd like to welcome Rick Ciccarelli and members of the Clean Train Coalition to the House today. Thanks for coming.

Hon. Margaret R. Best: I would like to acknowledge from the Consumers Council of Canada, who are with us in the gallery today, Mr. Don Mercer, president, and executive director Ken Whitehurst.

I would also like to acknowledge Paul Lee-Chin, my sister, Clara, and some of my staff who are here from the Ministry of Consumer Services.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm very pleased to have a number of guests from north Durham Community Living. I welcome you to Queen's Park. They are: Colleen Arbuckle, Felishia Charles, Alysha Graham, Erik Giffin, Niko Pupella, Blair Graham, Bing Pangilinson, Cathy Parker, as well as Garry Cooke and Lori Cooke. I'm expecting that Janet Hutchuk, Christopher Grondines and Dwayne Pemberton should be here as well this afternoon.

Welcome to Queen's Park. Enjoy the day.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'm pleased to welcome here at Queen's Park today members of the Canadian-Polish Foundation who are here to celebrate the 221st anniversary of the proclamation of the Polish Constitution. We have with us its founder and chairman, Marek Goldyn, Bogdan Labecki, Elizabeth Hamulka, Stan Saalborn and Alicja Czech. Welcome to Queen's Park.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ELAINE STANDEAVEN

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Agriculture is a vital part of our economy and our lives. It's true across Ontario and especially in Perth–Wellington.

The agri-food industry contributes more than \$33 billion to the Ontario economy and employs nearly 700,000 people. In Perth county, 20% of all jobs are tied to agriculture, and it's a similar story in Wellington.

However, such impressive numbers don't just happen. They are due to the skill and dedication of Ontario's farm families.

Today, I want to pay tribute to one of my constituents, Elaine Standeaven of St. Marys, who is making a difference. That is why the Ontario Holstein association gave her the Outstanding Dairy Woman Service Award. This award recognizes the accomplishments of Ontario women devoted to serving, promoting and enhancing the dairy industry.

Elaine's contributions are indeed impressive. To name just a few, she has served as director and president of the

Stratford agricultural society and as executive director on the National Holstein Convention committee for Perth county. She has also been a dairy educator, informing our students about the dairy industry.

I congratulate Elaine on her leadership and thank all farmers in Perth–Wellington and across Ontario for their work each and every day.

ELLIOT LAKE SENIORS ROUNDTABLE

Mr. Michael Mantha: There are many incredible and active seniors' groups in my riding, and over the course of my privileged time here in this Legislature, I hope to share many of them and recognize their efforts. These groups are always eager to meet with me and discuss how we can make communities more friendly for seniors.

Today I want to highlight a group in my riding who have been doing outstanding work. The Elliot Lake Seniors Roundtable is a group who have discussions, conduct research, do advocacy work and have become a positive force in the community, working with the municipality and other partners to improve the quality of life for seniors through the development of age-friendly policies.

Recently, the Elliot Lake Seniors Roundtable has been contacted by researchers from the Centre for Rural and Northern Health Research at Laurentian University. They are in the final stages of completing a report for Human Resources and Skills Development Canada entitled *Social Inclusion of Seniors and Informal Caregivers in Elliot Lake: A Scoping Study*.

After viewing their website, this group from Laurentian University became very interested in the work that the Elliot Lake Seniors Roundtable is doing, because it merges with the analysis they have completed based on the same parameters they are exploring from *Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities: A Guide*.

Seniors in our province experience unique challenges, and even more so in northern and remote communities. I look forward to working with all groups and making Algoma–Manitoulin the most seniors-friendly riding in the province.

ANNIVERSARY OF POLISH CONSTITUTION

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I am delighted to rise today to commemorate the proclamation of the Polish Constitution on May 3, 1791. Being of Polish descent myself, I'm proud that Poland's Constitution is recognized as the first in Europe, and second to the United States worldwide.

Situated in Central Europe, Poland, with its bountiful natural resources, has been the target of invading armies for centuries. Celebrations of Polish Constitution Day were banned during years of foreign occupation and partition by neighbouring states. But the memory of the Constitution and its ideals were passed down from generation to generation and help keep alive the dreams and hopes for an independent and just society.

In 1918, Poland regained its independence and May 3 was again declared an official holiday, only to be banned again by Nazi and Soviet occupiers. May 3 was restored as an official holiday in April 1990, after the fall of Communism.

I've had the good fortune to be in Poland during this important day, to witness the display of ethnic pride, from costume dances to marching bands, and of course, to sample the perogy, the kielbasa and all the glorious Polish cuisine.

To Poles and their descendants, May 3 symbolizes the fierce Polish spirit of independence, and its priceless heritage of humanitarianism, tolerance and democracy.

Remarks in Polish.

Long live an independent Poland.

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Ontario's economy has suffered under the misguided policies of this government. Their next victims are those people directly and indirectly affected by this government's decision to cancel the slots-at-racetracks program. Their other victims are the 2,000-plus horses that will be slaughtered as a result of this decision.

As a result of a contractual agreement going back to 1997 with municipalities and racetracks, the province agreed to share the revenues generated at slot machines at racetracks across Ontario. The province receives billions of dollars in economic stimulus, which is invested in hospitals, the volunteer sector and municipal projects, without the need to use tax dollars.

The province also secures over 60,000 jobs. This amounts to \$1.5 billion in wages and salaries being sustained annually. This economic activity helps create thriving communities. As the Destination Campbellville Community Association has said, within this community at Mohawk Racetrack and Woodbine Entertainment, there are hundreds of people: grooms, trainers, jockeys, veterinarians, farriers, feed dealers, hay and straw suppliers and many other workers.

The horse racing industry is an economic driver in Ontario. The horse racing industry creates and sustains jobs in Ontario. The horse racing industry helps rural communities to thrive. As this government stalls and fails to give the industry information about the transitional funding, they are threatening the lives of the newly born foals.

Despite the promise of transitional funding, this government still plans to cancel the slots-at-racetracks program, another misguided economic policy that will further hinder the economic prosperity of Ontario and its residents.

CONDOMINIUM LEGISLATION

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It has been 14 years since Ontario's Condominium Act was last updated. Since that time, we have witnessed an explosion in the number of condos being built.

1310

Today, there are 525,000 condominium units in this province and over one million condo dwellers, yet the legislation that governs their homes, that dictates how their buildings' reserve funds are spent, that determines who sits on their condo board of directors, remains unchanged. Surely we can recognize that this legislation does not work for Ontarians.

Under our current law, disputes are settled in courts at great cost to all parties. Under our current law, new condo owners are subject to unclear sales contracts and unlicensed property managers. Under our current law, condo owners discover inadequate building standards and units that may not be covered by warranty.

It's time to face reality. Over the past four years, members from all parties, including some of my Liberal backbenchers, have publicly supported the various changes I have proposed.

On May 10, we will be debating Bill 72. I encourage all members to support it and demonstrate that Queen's Park understands the concerns of these one million Ontarians.

YOUNG SINGERS

Mr. Joe Dickson: I'm delighted to rise today to commend the Young Singers of Ajax on 20 years of success. This year, 2012, the Young Singers celebrate their 20th anniversary of empowering and educating our youth through the power of music.

Founded in 1992 by artistic director Anna Lynn Murphy—and originally in co-operation with the town of Ajax—children from the age of six and up are provided with opportunities to combine the discipline of learning with the joy of singing and the art of performing.

Since 2002, the Young Singers have recorded three full-length albums and have travelled to Nova Scotia; British Columbia; Nashville, Tennessee; and prior to that, they had a successful 10-day performance tour of the United Kingdom.

The Young Singers have also given their youth participants the opportunity to work and perform alongside notable celebrities such as Donny Osmond and Chantel Lauren.

I'm proud of this hometown group that was born in my riding of Ajax-Pickering.

In closing, you won't want to miss the Young Singers' 20th anniversary concert on May 26 at the Trinity Pentecostal Church in Oshawa. I urge you to visit www.youngsingers.ca for more information.

DAWN PAXTON

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I am happy today to recognize Dawn Paxton on her retirement. Jennifer Adams, the director of education at the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, called Dawn a "teacher of teachers."

She's many things. She's a wife of more than 35 years, a working mum to three kids who are now grown.

She has been a friend to many. As I just mentioned, she was a great teacher, and not only that, she is an internationally recognized educator in the area of special needs.

She has helped educate this province's children in Ottawa, Kitchener, Waterloo, London, as well as in Winnipeg—I'm sure my colleague from Toronto Centre would agree.

After six years as superintendent of learning support services with the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, Dawn is going into her well-deserved retirement to spend more time with her husband and her family.

As the superintendent of learning support services, Dawn introduced many programs and developed a large variety of community partnerships. She has "significantly improved access to special education funding," something I think all in this chamber appreciate her doing.

She has continually strived, as superintendent, to improve teaching and learning for children with special needs in Ottawa and has been a champion for these children and their families.

She's a well-respected educator who has worked in kindergarten classrooms, high school labs and lectured at universities to new generations of teachers.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Speaker, to Dawn, her husband, Joe, her son, Jay, and daughters Taylor and Whitney—I know they're going to enjoy this retirement

Speaker, thank you for your indulgence for letting me go over my time.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I have indulged. Members' statements.

PETERBOROUGH FISHING FESTIVAL

Mr. Jeff Leal: I rise today to offer my personal congratulations and thanks to Councillor Dan McWilliams and Mr. Bill Mortlock and their team of Ducks Unlimited volunteers and local residents for their commitment to the Peterborough Greenwing Fishing Festival. This is the 25th anniversary of this great event. This year, 5,000 trout were released in the Trent-Severn Waterway just south of the lift lock in Peterborough.

There's always a great deal of excitement when Walter is released each year. Walter is the ultimate catch, sometimes weighing close to the weight of the child who hooks him. Saturday is kids' day, and only children under the age of 15 are allowed to fish. Sunday is open to the young and the young at heart.

This is one of the most popular events in Peterborough. Participants start lining the shores, many times before 7 a.m. Many attendees first come as children but now attend as a parent; residents who took their children are now taking their grandchildren. Through Ducks Unlimited, the children learn about fishing, conservation and the importance of respecting nature.

Mr. Speaker, this is a fantastic community event that brings thousands together for a weekend in April on the shores of the Trent-Severn Waterway. I know I have

stood with my own children in snow, sleet and rain and wind and sunshine as they tried to catch Walter.

Without the dedication of Dan McWilliams and Bill Mortlock and their devoted team of volunteers, including Ducks Unlimited, this great event would not happen. Congratulations to everyone involved.

ANNIVERSARY OF POLISH CONSTITUTION

Mr. John Yakabuski: It gives me great pleasure to rise today on the occasion of the annual commemoration of Poland's May 3, 1791, Constitution, which was the first in Europe and the second in the world.

To Poles and their descendants, May 3 is a national holiday, for it bestows upon them a priceless heritage of humanitarianism, tolerance and freedom, conceived at a time when most of Europe lived under the existence of unconditional power and tyranny. The tyranny deemed the Polish Constitution too dangerous, and Poland lost its independence, its territories annexed by Austria, Russia and Prussia. In terms of a national life, Poland lost the entire 19th century, being reborn again in 1918.

In the mid-1800s, the ancestors of my father, Paul, immigrated to Canada from the Kashubian region of Poland. In 1963, he became the first person of Polish descent to be elected to this Legislature.

My riding is home to Wilno, Canada's first Polish settlement, where each year the Wilno Heritage Society gathers to celebrate our Kashub Polish heritage on the first Saturday in May. I look forward to joining them this weekend to celebrate friendship, fellowship and freedom from Communist rule, as well as the recognition of the tremendous impact the Polish Kashub culture has had and the contribution it has made to our community, Ontario and Canada.

This will be a day of celebration for Polish people everywhere, as they mark the 221st anniversary of their constitution. We join them in that celebration.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Mr. Bob Delaney: Speaker, I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs and move its adoption.

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

Bill 2, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to implement a healthy homes renovation tax credit / Projet de loi 2, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts en vue de mettre en oeuvre le crédit d'impôt pour l'aménagement du logement axé sur le bien-être.

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

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Therefore ordered for third reading.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Kenora–Rainy River has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, concerning Ontario tourist information centres. This matter will be debated Tuesday, May 8, at 6 p.m.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

WIRELESS SERVICES AGREEMENTS ACT, 2012

LOI DE 2012 SUR LES CONVENTIONS DE SERVICES SANS FIL

Ms. Best moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 82, An Act to strengthen consumer protection with respect to consumer agreements relating to wireless services accessed from a cellular phone, smart phone or any other similar mobile device / Projet de loi 82, Loi visant à mieux protéger les consommateurs en ce qui concerne les conventions de consommation portant sur les services sans fil accessibles au moyen d'un téléphone cellulaire, d'un téléphone intelligent ou de tout autre appareil mobile semblable.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Hon. Margaret R. Best: I will make my statement during ministerial statements.

1320

METROLINX AMENDMENT ACT, 2012

LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR METROLINX

Mr. Schein moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 83, An Act to amend the Metrolinx Act, 2006 / Projet de loi 83, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur Metrolinx.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Jonah Schein: The bill amends the Metrolinx Act, 2006, to require Metrolinx to ensure that any passenger railway system established between downtown Toronto and Toronto Pearson International Airport is not powered by diesel fuel. It has huge support from folks in my community, huge support from Toronto city council,

from the medical community and from political leaders across Toronto. There are huge costs if we don't do this: huge financial costs and huge health costs.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Introduction of bills?

I will take this opportunity to remind all members that when we do introduce a bill, it is the tradition of the place to read from the explanatory notes, just as an example.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Hon. Margaret R. Best: It is my pleasure to introduce the Wireless Services Agreements Act, 2012, a bill that, if passed, would better protect Ontario consumers who enter into wireless and cellphone services agreements in Ontario.

I would first begin by thanking my colleague who sits here next to me, Mr. David Oraziotti, MPP for Sault Ste. Marie—thank you, David—for his earlier introductions of Bill 133 and Bill 5.

Our government is taking strong action to protect Ontario's consumers and to stop cell shock. This bill, which would apply to agreements for wireless services that are accessed from cellphones, smart phones and similar mobile devices, will, if passed, protect and empower consumers while strengthening confidence in the marketplace.

The bill we are introducing today, if passed, will further protect consumers by allowing consumers to cancel agreements at any time without high cancellation fees; requiring that service providers use clear and comprehensive language and fully disclose all the terms of their agreements so that consumers understand what they are agreeing to; ensuring all-inclusive price advertising—if companies advertise prices, they must include all costs; and giving consumers the right to recover three times the amount of a refund that is owed to them under the proposed new law, if passed, if the consumer has to sue to recover the amount owed to them. As long as a device is under warranty, a provider could not charge for services that cannot be used while the device is in for repairs. And finally, the bill, if passed, would require companies to have a system in place to remind customers that they are close to exceeding their maximum service limits and may incur additional charges.

This bill, if passed, would help stop cell shock, help to strengthen confidence in the marketplace, and help Ontario families and individuals make smart and informed choices about how they spend their hard-earned dollars.

We are taking care to see that this bill, if passed, is broadly consistent with policies being undertaken in other provinces, easing the burden of compliance on service providers. If the bill is passed, there will be a six-month implementation period to give wireless service providers time to comply with these rules.

The Wireless Services Agreements Act, 2012, if passed, would build on our government's commitment to consumer protection, providing more disclosure, fairness and confidence in the marketplace. Giving consumers back their rights is a priority of the government of Ontario and the Ministry of Consumer Services, and we continue to build on the foundation we have laid in protecting Ontario's consumers.

In closing, I again thank Mr. David Oraziotti for his leadership in this regard, and I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

COMMUNITY LIVING DAY

Hon. John Milloy: I rise in the House today to recognize Community Living Day here at Queen's Park.

It's been many years since the first families came together to promote a community living approach to support people with a developmental disability. These parents wanted a better life for their sons and daughters. They rejected the accepted practice of institutionalizing people with a developmental disability. They envisioned a future for their children that allowed them to be contributing members in the life of their communities, so they set out to campaign for community services and supports that allowed their children to live where they belong, in loving families and actively involved in their communities.

The Community Living movement began as community-based, grassroots advocacy by families who simply wanted their children to attend local schools. In fact, it was the beginning of dramatic changes in how we support people with developmental disabilities in Ontario. That has resulted in a complete culture change. Today, people with a developmental disability are being included in all aspects of community life.

These pioneers spoke on behalf of their children and, as a government, we listened. We created the hugely successful Passport program. Through a \$45-million investment in Passport, 3,800 adults with a developmental disability have had more options to stay connected to their communities after leaving school. We closed the three remaining institutions and brought the residents back into our communities. We passed modern legislation that reflects these changes, and we created the community networks of specialized care for people with high needs. That is just the beginning of the changes we envision.

We are in the midst of transforming our entire developmental services system. We are creating a system that's more responsive and accountable, more transparent and sustainable, a system that is focused on the independence and resiliency of individuals.

To the families, friends and community partners who are with us here today, let me just say that you are doing great work. As we continue with transformation, we need you to be thinking about the years and decades ahead of us. We need you to continue to come to the table ready to work hand in hand with us as we continue on this path of transformation. The people you help, as well as the entire developmental services sector, have progressed because

of your original vision. Thanks to you, our communities are more inclusive and welcoming than they ever were for people of all abilities. You have helped to transform lives and inspired thousands of people to live up to their fullest potential. That, to me, is community living at its best. Thank you for the important work you do every day for Ontarians who have developmental disabilities. We've come so far together, and I'm confident that we will continue to move forward together.

Mr. Speaker. I invite all honourable members to join me in welcoming Community Living Ontario to Queen's Park. To our guests, I hope you have an informative and productive day.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We thank our guests for being here.

SOUTH ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Hon. Charles Sousa: I invite honourable members in this House to join in celebrating South Asian Heritage Month. This annual observance in the month of May was proclaimed by the House in 2001.

1330

It was on May 5, 1838, that the first immigrants from the Indian subcontinent arrived in the Americas. This date, South Asian Arrival Day, is viewed as a watershed moment by the South Asian community. It marks the passage to a new world and the start of a new era. These first arrivals settled in the Caribbean. More than a century later, they made a second migration to Canada and Ontario. They joined immigrants who moved to Canada from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Uganda, Kenya and many other places.

Our South Asian community is extremely diverse in their religion, language, tradition and culture. Over the years, South Asians have had a profound impact on all aspects of Ontario life, from business and government to science and the arts. I think of outstanding South Asian Canadians like acclaimed filmmaker Deepa Mehta; Amit Chakma, president of the University of Western Ontario; award-winning film producer Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy; world-famous wrestler Tiger Jeet Singh; and Rahul Singh, who has led disaster-relief missions around the world.

May is a month to celebrate the remarkable contributions that South Asian Canadians have made and continue to make in our communities. It's a month for all of us to share in the richness of South Asian culture through celebrations and festivities around the province. And it is a month to rejoice in the tremendous strength we gain as a society from our unparalleled diversity.

Mr. Speaker, thank you to all those who contribute to our great city, our great country and our great province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Responses?

COMMUNITY LIVING DAY

Mr. John O'Toole: I, along with Tim Hudak and the members of our caucus, am pleased to stand today and to

welcome the members of Community Living, their families and friends. Welcome to Queen's Park. I can only say that earlier today in my remarks I did introduce members from Community Living Clarington as well as north Durham. I thank them and their families. Those are people I see in our community, integrated fully into the community.

What they said to me today is that the real goal of Community Living is for all people to live within our communities in dignity. I think we all share that element of including people in our communities every single day. What they're really asking for is more support, in a time when it's appropriate to be here. But I think we're listening to them today to say, "I hope the Premier and his cabinet make sure these people have the skills and the tools to live in our community."

SOUTH ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mrs. Christine Elliott: On behalf of the Ontario PC caucus, it's an honour to recognize South Asian Heritage Month. Initiated by Ontario's Progressive Conservative government in 2001, South Asian Heritage Month is a time to commemorate the significant contributions this community has made to our province.

Today, Ontario is home to over 800,000 individuals of South Asian descent. Settling in towns across this province, this community strengthens our proud legacy of multiculturalism. Guided by a belief in hard work and entrepreneurship, the South Asian community embodies values all Ontarians cherish. Their story of industry and perseverance is one all Ontarians should honour.

On behalf of the Ontario PC caucus and all Ontarians, I wish the South Asian community all the best as they celebrate their proud history.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. Todd Smith: A response to the bill that was put forward by the Minister of Consumer Services, Margaret Best, on behalf of David Oraziatti.

Our critic for consumer services, Jim McDonnell, was just presented with the legislation about an hour ago, but we have had some information come out about the proposed government bill, what it does contain and what its aims are. They talk about cell shock. They talk about strengthening contracts for consumers and allowing consumers to cancel services without paying large cancellation fees, which are all good things that we would support here as well.

But we are a little bit concerned about the timing of this legislation coming out of the provincial Legislature when we know full well that the Canadian Wireless Telecommunications Association, the CWTA, led by Bernard Lord, is working with the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, the CRTC. Its members are working with the federal government right now to bring in national regulations that would cover a lot of these areas of concern and bring in one

piece of legislation that would cover all 10 provinces, and the territories as well.

So we're a little bit concerned about the fact that what's going to happen as a result of this legislation coming forward is that it's going to create a patchwork of different regulations. As you know and anybody out there knows, when you add more regulations, what you end up doing is adding more red tape, which ends up costing consumers; it ends up costing users and customers in the end. So I believe we have to move very carefully to ensure that, if we are bringing in new regulation, it does match up with other provinces so we don't end up with more red tape.

Again, we do question the timing of this, because the government knows full well that the federal government is working towards bringing in legislation right now on Parliament Hill that would cover off all of these areas of concern.

We look forward to working with the government and ensuring that we can streamline the regulation so that we're not duplicating services, so that we're not making it more onerous on the companies that are out there and then, in the end, costing consumers more than what they're paying now, which is totally the opposite of what this bill is intending to do.

SOUTH ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: On behalf of the NDP Party and my leader, Andrea Horwath, I take great pride in rising today to celebrate South Asian Heritage Month.

This month is a time to celebrate the diversity of South Asia, which includes people from various and diverse backgrounds—Punjabis, Gujaratis, Tamils; those speaking various languages—Urdu, Hindi, Malayali, Bengali; from various regions across the world—from the Caribbean Islands and from Africa; and from diverse religions, including Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, Jain, Buddhist, Zoroastrian, Christian and Jewish communities.

We celebrate that diversity, we celebrate their contribution and we are honoured to rise today. But we also remember that we must reinforce the principals of diversity and inclusion, and work towards creating a more equitable society.

In addition, I'd also rise today in solidarity with the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem, who honour Holocaust survivors. It's very crucial that we honour them in terms of recognizing harms done in the past to prevent them in the future.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I'd also like to respond to the Minister of Consumer Services with respect to wireless contract fairness. This bill is clearly a step forward, clearly a step in favour of consumers to right some of the issues and the confusion that arise under cellphone contracts, particularly given the complex language and some of the hidden cancellation fees. So it's a step in the right direction.

But I'd also like to raise the concern that in Canada, we are paying some of the highest cellphone rates in the world. These cellphone rates are the highest in terms of voice plans. We rank the highest amongst 10 countries, including Denmark, Finland, Hong Kong, India, Japan, South Korea, Sweden and Taiwan. We are the highest in terms of voice plans and the highest in terms of text plans, above Denmark, Finland, Hong Kong, India, Japan and South Korea, again. We are also paying the highest in the world with respect to data plans.

While this is certainly a step in the right direction, and I commend the minister for taking this initiative, there is certainly a long way to go. We have serious issues in the cellphone industry where we are paying exorbitant fees. Consumers are hard hit, and we need to take steps to ensure that consumers are being treated fairly and that legislation protects their interests.

COMMUNITY LIVING DAY

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's an absolute privilege to rise on behalf of Community Living Ontario and to welcome them here to the Legislature on behalf of the New Democratic Party and our leader, Andrea Horwath. It's incredible work they do across our province.

In response to the Minister of Community and Social Services, I just have a few things to say, and it's really their asks. What they would like to see this government do is to address the 20,000 individuals who are languishing right now—to use their term, “languishing”—on wait-lists. To use their words, they would like to see a long-term strategy that would address the dire poverty of those who live with disabilities. This is what they've asked for, this is what they would like to see, and it's a critical one.

They would also like the government, before they do anything, to wait for the social service review that is now ongoing and whose results will be coming in June, and that will have a great deal to say about the situation of those who are under the umbrella of Community Living Ontario.

Those are direct asks. We also add our voice to theirs and we say, “Please respond to them. Give them some answers. Give them a plan. Give them a reason to hope.”

1340

I, myself, in my own riding, have brought individuals down here. One particular family came down, not once, not twice, but three times asking for Passport funding because they couldn't get it and they desperately needed it. It was not the current Minister of Community and Social Services; it was another one at that time. It took three visits before they even had a call from anybody in the ministry to address their issues, and finally, they got Passport funding. It shouldn't take that. It should not take that to get a response from across the aisle.

We're asking for a response. We cannot possibly, any of us, bring down every family on that wait-list. We speak, really, with Community Living for all of the 20,000 and those who are coming: Please, a plan. Please

wait for the review. Please address the dire poverty and the problems that this community faces. Please do it now.

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for York Centre on a point of order.

Mr. Monte Kwinter: Mr. Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent that up to five minutes be allotted to each party to speak in memory of Yom ha-Shoah.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House? Agreed? Agreed.

The member for York Centre.

Mr. Monte Kwinter: Mr. Speaker, in a ceremony at Queen's Park earlier today we recognized and honoured 19 Holocaust survivors whose stories of anguish, suffering and survival of both body and spirit are a testimony to the human life we live. Those Holocaust survivors, who are in the House today, came to Ontario, rebuilt their lives, and were honoured for their wonderful contribution as citizens of Ontario. Those honoured are: Amek Adler, Andrew Adler, Livia Eva Adler, Claire Baum, George Berman, George Fox, Lea Hochman, Chava Kwinta, George Lysy, Judy Lysy, Sara Marmurek, Felix Opatowski, Morris Rosenberg, Miriam Schlanger, Gerta Solan, Gena Tenenbaum, Joe Tenenbaum, Emma Weisz and Erich Weisz.

Today, we recognize Yom ha-Shoah V'Hagvurah, Holocaust Memorial Day, a day designated for Holocaust remembrance in communities around the world. This is the 19th year the Ontario Legislature has observed Holocaust Memorial Day, and I'm proud to say that Ontario was the first jurisdiction in the world, outside of the state of Israel, to officially recognize it.

As we mourn the death of the six million victims, we also celebrate the life of those who survived.

I have visited Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial and museum in Jerusalem, several times. Two years ago, Premier Dalton McGuinty, Minister Eric Hoskins, MPP Mike Colle, MPP David Zimmer and I were at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem and laid a wreath, on behalf of all Ontarians, in the Hall of Remembrance. The memorial is dedicated to preserving the memory and story of each of the six million people who died in the Holocaust.

As a Jew, these memories strike the heart and the soul. Every Jew is touched by the Holocaust. We lost loved ones, family members or friends. All members in the community lost someone.

The Holocaust echoes through generations. The loss is extraordinary. At Yad Vashem, that loss is made real. It is concrete. You can touch it. In the Valley of the Communities, you stand before wall after wall, carved out of the solid rock, listing the names of more than 5,000 communities that lived, breathed, had life, in which men and women loved, married, raised children, worked, laughed and worshipped. Today, in most cases, nothing remains of these Jewish communities except for their names forever frozen in the bedrock of Yad Vashem. It was there that I found the name of the city where my

father was born, Czestochowa, and the city where my mother was born, Sosnowiec.

The Holocaust reaches out of the past and touches the shoulder of every Jew. The central theme of Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day, 2012, is "My Brother's Keeper."

Holocaust Memorial Day commemorates all who died in the Holocaust, not just Jews. We also remember those whom the Nazis targeted for their race, their religion, their politics, their disabilities or their sexual orientation.

I want to take a moment to share my visit to Babi Yar, which means "Grandmothers Park." This is a ravine outside of Kiev, in north-central Ukraine. In 1989, as Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology, I led the first-ever trade mission of 100 Canadian-born Ukrainian businessmen to Kiev. At that time, it was still a part of the Soviet Union. I was greeted at the airport by the Prime Minister, and during the drive to our hotel, he asked if I had time to visit Babi Yar. He obviously knew that I was Jewish. I had heard of Babi Yar for years, but really didn't know exactly what it was. I can tell you, I soon found out.

In September 1941, the Nazi occupiers informed the Jewish community that they'd been asked by the International Red Cross to transport the entire Jewish community to a safer location, away from the battle front. Some non-Jewish citizens, hearing of the plan, joined the group, hoping for the same kind of safe haven. On September 28 and 29, 1941, 33,771 Jews were slaughtered in the Babi Yar valley and their bodies were then bulldozed and covered with earth.

In October 1966, a granite obelisk was erected at the site of the mass execution, memorializing the slaughter of over 30,000 Soviet citizens. For years, Edgar Bronfman, president of the World Jewish Congress, had tried to get the Soviet Union to recognize that these were not just Soviet citizens, but they were Soviet citizens who happened to be Jewish.

I knew nothing of these events. When I arrived at Babi Yar, there was the granite obelisk and a Jewish monument, as well as a large menorah. I assumed the Prime Minister wanted me to know that the non-recognition had been rectified.

It's important to set aside time to remember all these victims whose lives were taken by the Nazis. In remembering, we bear witness to what these men, women and children endured.

Tragically, other genocides have followed since World War II in Cambodia, Rwanda, Darfur and in the former Yugoslavia. It's evident that we must continue our struggle to keep alive the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights approved by the United Nations 64 years ago in the shadow of the Holocaust. The declaration recognizes the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family as a foundation of freedom, justice and peace throughout the world. It called on the world to protect human rights by the rule of law. We are indeed fortunate to live in Canada and in Ontario, but we must never take our good fortune

for granted. We must guard our democratic institutions and democratic freedoms. We must appreciate, nurture and protect them, and we must constantly remind ourselves how easy it is to lose them.

On Yom ha-Shoah, Jewish communities around the world recite a brief traditional mourners' prayer, the Kaddish. On the evening of April 18, some of our members were at Beth Tzedec synagogue for the annual Holocaust community commemoration service, and there were hundreds of people who recited the Kaddish.

I want to continue our tradition of saying Kaddish in memory of those people whose *yahrzeit* is unknown. On behalf of the victims, the survivors and their families, I would like to recite that Hebrew prayer that is something for which all people may pray. I ask for unanimous consent to allow me to do that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from York Centre has asked for unanimous consent to recite the Jewish prayer. Agreed? We would rise.

Prayer in Hebrew.

Mr. Monte Kwinter: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, there's one line in this prayer that translates as, "He who creates peace in His celestial heights, may he create peace for us." We must always remember, so that the world will never forget.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): As a point of deflection, I believe it was intended for the honourees today. Thank you.

The member for Thornhill.

1350

Mr. Peter Shurman: I rise today on behalf of the official opposition to pay tribute to those survivors honoured by the Premier and by our province today. This is a ceremony that I have had the privilege to attend each and every year since arriving at Queen's Park, and indeed it has been my honour.

There are a range of very personal reasons for me to speak on this subject and for me to attend with my colleagues when we remember those lost in the Holocaust and when we honour our survivors.

I have a middle name. It is Emil, pronounced in the German way. My late father was German-born. His name was Fritz, but that quickly changed to Fred when he came to Canada. In any event, the name I proudly carry, Emil, memorializes my grandfather, my dad's father, Emil Shuermann, a man I only know by the sepia photo mounted in a frame and displayed with other family memorabilia and photos on a credenza in my home.

Emil Shuermann and his wife, my grandmother, Elfriede Shuermann, died of starvation in a camp called Theresienstadt.

Some years ago, I visited the Yad Vashem Memorial in Israel. Many of you have done so. When you enter that dimly lit and very solemn area filled with ashes, you feel the breath leave your body; you cannot help it. And if you have a family history like my own, you cannot escape the question you ask only in your own mind: "Are

my relatives here?" The answer, in a very real way, is, "Yes, they are." Memorials are entirely about that.

The six million Jews who died at the hands of the Nazis don't rest in neat graveyards with headstones where we can visit when the spirit moves us. So we create an ability to keep them in our thoughts, to keep their spirits alive by building a Yad Vashem Memorial in Israel or, right here in Toronto, a memorial like the one in Earl Bales Park, and we remember. In fact, the Holocaust is memorialized in law here in Ontario, as my colleague has said, as a direct result of the work of my PC colleague Ted Chudleigh, the member for Halton, who did that in 1997 in this chamber.

Today at Queen's Park, we have paid tribute to survivors, people who went through hell, eventually to arrive on our shores to rebuild shattered dreams, to have families, to take up their professions, to build businesses, to make new lives.

And now it is 2012. World War II ended 67 years ago. So even the youngest survivor, at this point, is part of an elderly and dwindling group that remains with us. In a few short years, we'll have to honour only their memory, but today we can still pay tribute to living people whose indomitable spirit and canniness kept them going until they were finally liberated.

Our task—in Hebrew it would be called a *mitzvah*—is to tell and retell their story, because the story itself is not only one of courage and will under horrific circumstances; it is about unspeakable inhumanity on a scale never witnessed before or since. However, under the aegis of regional war, civil war, ethnic cleansing or whatever term you wish to apply, genocide indeed does still exist.

One would have thought that Hitler's so-called final solution would have put an end to the hideous thought that any one race or class of people is somehow inferior to another. Sadly, we know the answer to that is, "not yet." I use that term by way of reminding myself and each of you that "not yet" means that someday we shall succeed. It is through a continuous effort and acts of remembrance and tribute that we persevere in this work.

For the rest of my life, my pledge is to remember all of you honoured here today and to remember all of your families, your friends, your comrades, who paid the ultimate price in the camps of Europe, not in vain but so that others might never repeat the heinous acts perpetrated on the Jews of Europe, and so that no other group may ever be singled out for annihilation anywhere, at any time, or for any reason. Never again.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further comment? The member from Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's a privilege to speak again on this Yom Ha-Shoah and to recognize those who are here who are survivors, those who are ancestors and, my colleagues from Thornhill and also York Centre, to recognize those as well.

I speak not as a Jew; I'm a gentile. In fact, I'm a United Church minister. So as a gentile and as a United Church minister, the very first words that should be out

of my mouth and out of many mouths is, “Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa,” which is not, of course, Hebrew; it’s Latin. It just means “My grievous sin, my most grievous sin,” because the first words out of any gentile’s mouth should be, “Sorry, sorry, absolutely sorry.”

I’ll tell you why, as Canadians, we must say that over and over again to those who have survived and to their ancestors. First of all, in 1939, a ship arrived in Canada. It was called the SS St. Louis. It carried many Jews from Europe, and it was refused. It was turned back. Some 5,000 Jews that day went back to what we can only imagine as an absolute nightmare. Possibly all were killed. We did that. We Canadians did that. We also had one of the worst records in the world of receiving countries for accepting those who were fleeing Nazi Germany. We did that. We Canadians did that.

Speaking as a Christian, I can say that the Confessing Church in Germany—it was a church of a mere 1% or 2% of all Christians—actually stood up. People like Dietrich Bonhoeffer stood up—most paid with their lives—on behalf of their Jewish brothers and sisters. The vast majority of the Christian church in Germany hung Nazi flags, and people walked past them and worshipped them as well as the God they came to give homage to. So we did that too.

Now in my community we are accepting refugees from the Roma community. Roma were also massacred by the millions in the death camps in Nazi Germany. Now we have a chance to welcome them as well. So, again, it’s a chance to say to another group touched by this, “I’m sorry. Mea culpa, mea culpa.”

The member across, from York Centre, mentioned that there were also, of course, people who had a different sexual orientation. There were also people of disability. We had Community Living here today. The disabled were among those who were massacred as well. But, of course, the numbers pale in comparison to the number of Jews.

I went to Huron Street public school. In those days, it was a mainly Jewish—some Italian—school. Most of my friends lived in and around the Spadina area. That was a Jewish area. When I’d go to the bar mitzvahs and the bat mitzvahs back then, I would sit with my friends and I would witness their grandparents with numbers on their arms. So it was very near and very close in those days, as it’s near and close today.

So that we can prevent it from ever happening again, we have to at least admit what we’ve done. In all religions, and in the Christian religion too, there’s an order of service. First you say you’re sorry and then you get forgiven, but first you say you’re sorry. My role here today is to do just that.

I’m, of course, proud that it was the New Democratic Party that started this tradition in this House. I’m proud of that. That aside, I’m proud of a joint bill—the first joint bill, I think, in Canada—that the Speaker himself initiated that was a tri-party bill that recognized the Holodomor as a genocide. I’m proud of that too. I’m proud of much of the work that we do here together.

But—the big “but”—my role here is to say to my colleagues who are Jewish, and to all Jews and to all survivors today: I am sorry; mea culpa. That’s the only way that it will ever never happen again.

1400

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): To the members that spoke today, thank you for your very passionate words. To the entire House, thank you for participating in the activities today. To the honourees, again on behalf of the entire House, our congratulations and thanks for carrying the black spot in your heart for all these years and for making a success of the province of Ontario.

It is now time for petitions.

PETITIONS

GREENBELT

Mr. John O’Toole: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was almost ready; out of respect, I was listening.

I’m pleased to present a petition from my riding of Durham which reads as follows:

“Whereas the Greenbelt Act was passed by the Ontario Legislature in 2005, affecting property rights in Ontario; and

“Whereas the right to own, use, enjoy and the opportunity to earn a living from private property is the basis of freedom and democracy; and

“Whereas the greenbelt restricts property owners in the use, enjoyment and ability to earn a living from their private property; and

“Whereas property owners are not being compensated for” the loss of their rights;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend” the Greenbelt Act “at the 10-year re-evaluation in 2015 to allow additional development when requested by” communities and supported by both environmental studies and by the local municipality, unlike the current government’s plan of exempting municipalities from their duty to protect their communities under the Green Energy Act.

I’m pleased to sign and support this and present it Dia.

RADIATION SAFETY

Mr. Reza Moridi: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas subsection 6(2)8 of the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act identifies dental hygienists as persons deemed to be qualified to operate an X-ray machine; and

“Whereas dental hygienists in independent practice need to be able to prescribe X-rays and to be designated as radiation protection officers in order to provide their clients with safe and convenient access to a medically necessary procedure, as is already the case in many comparable jurisdictions;

“We, the dental hygienists in independent practice, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To express support for the motion filed on April 17, 2012, by the member from Richmond Hill that asks the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to establish a committee consisting of experts to review the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act (1990) and its regulations and make recommendations on how to modernize this act and bring it to 21st-century standards, so that it becomes responsive to the safety of patients and the public and to include all forms of radiation that are currently used in the health care sector for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes.”

I fully agree with this petition. I'll sign it and give it to page Sabrina to deliver it to the desk.

RAIL LINES

Mr. John Yakabuski: I have a petition signed by several hundred people in my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Canadian Pacific Railway has begun lifting rails on its line between Smiths Falls and Mattawa; and

“Whereas once the rail is gone it will never be replaced; and

“Whereas the still-intact Pembroke-Mattawa section of the line is essential to the economic development of the upper Ottawa Valley; and

“Whereas the Pembroke-Mattawa section is a key element of the shortest rail link between eastern and western Canada; and

“Whereas the Pembroke-Mattawa section is a key element of the only alternative all-Canadian rail route to the heavily loaded Canadian Pacific Railway and Canadian National Railway main lines through Toronto; and

“Whereas rail is the most energy-efficient and least polluting mode of land transportation, and these advantages will increase as the fuel costs of land transportation continue to rise;

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

“To do everything in its power to ensure that the rails between Pembroke and Mattawa remain in place.”

I support this petition, I affix my name to it, and I want to thank Mike Stephens for all the work he and his committee did in getting this petition together, and I send it down with William.

DOG OWNERSHIP

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas currently the law takes the onus off of owners that raise violent dogs by making it appear that violence is a matter of genetics; and

“Whereas the Dog Owners' Liability Act does not clearly define a pit bull, nor is it enforced equally across the province, as pit bulls are not an acknowledged breed;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly passes Bill 16, Public Safety Related to Dogs Statute Law Amendment Act, 2011, into law.”

I couldn't agree more—for the 1,000 dogs that have died. I'm going to give it to Shaunik to be delivered.

RADIATION SAFETY

Mr. Joe Dickson: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas subsection 6(2)8 of the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act identifies dental hygienists as persons deemed to be qualified to operate an X-ray machine; and

“Whereas dental hygienists in independent practice need to be able to prescribe X-rays and to be designated as radiation protection officers in order to provide their clients with safe and convenient access to a medically necessary procedure, as is already the case in many comparable jurisdictions;

“We, the dental hygienists in independent practice, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To express support for the motion filed on April 17, 2012, by the member from Richmond Hill that asks the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to establish a committee consisting of experts to review the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act (1990) and its regulations and make recommendations on how to modernize this act and bring it to 21st-century standards, so that it becomes responsive to the safety of patients and the public and to include all forms of radiation that are currently used in the health care sector for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes.”

I will pass this petition to page Jenny and sign it appropriately, as I agree with it.

ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

Mr. Rick Nicholls: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Bill 13 is unnecessary as an anti-bullying measure because Ontarians already have Bill 157; and

“Whereas Bill 13 promotes radical revisions to school instruction on sex and gender that a majority of parents do not support; and

“Whereas Bill 13 fails to provide any protection for students of faith or students of distinct physical characteristics;

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

“To vote against Bill 13 or to so amend Bill 13 as to equally protect all students, including students of faith.”

I approve this petition, and I will sign my name, and give it to our legislative page Manak.

TAXATION

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this very short petition from the people of Nickel Belt, and it reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario" to "immediately exempt electricity from the harmonized sales tax."

I fully agree with this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Ranbir to bring it to the Clerk.

EASTERN ONTARIO DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Phil McNeely: This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the community of Orléans will be hit hard with the movement of 10,000 jobs from downtown to Kanata;

"Whereas the eastern Ontario development fund is designed to help businesses create new jobs and invest in new technologies, equipment and skills training...

"Whereas another goal of the eastern Ontario development fund is to support economic development projects that will attract or retain investment in Ontario-based industries and communities; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario has pledged to continue the EODF past its original four-year mandate;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request that the Legislature ensure that the eastern Ontario development fund extends to the geographic area including Orléans to assist job growth in the face of a federal decision to dramatically affect the sustainability of areas east of the downtown core of Ottawa, including Orléans."

I support this petition and send it forward with Noah.

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the price of gas is reaching historic price levels and is expected to increase another 15% in the near future, yet oil prices" continue to drop; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government has done nothing to protect consumers from high gas prices; and

"Whereas the high and unstable gas prices across Ontario have caused confusion and unfair hardship to Ontario drivers while also impacting the Ontario economy in key sectors such as tourism and transportation; and

"Whereas the high price of gas has a detrimental impact on all aspects of our already troubled economy and substantially increases the price of delivered commodities, adding further burden to Ontario consumers;

1410

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and urge the Premier to take action to protect consumers from the burden of high gas prices in Ontario."

I affix my signature in full support.

AIR-RAIL LINK

Mr. Jonah Schein: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I support this bill. I affix my name to it and I give it to page Manak to present.

GO TRANSIT

Ms. Laurie Scott: "To the Premier and Legislature of the province of Ontario:

"The city of Kawartha Lakes is the chosen home of the largest per capita population of senior citizens in the province of Ontario; and

"There is an inability to attract a sufficient number of primary caregivers to service this population, causing many to travel to the greater Toronto area to seek medical attention; and

"The city of Kawartha Lakes is the proud home of Sir Sandford Fleming College (Frost campus), which attracts students from across the province who are unable to access the provincial rail link in the city of Oshawa; and

"Students from the city of Kawartha Lakes travel across this province to various institutions of higher learning and are unable to access transportation from the city of Oshawa to the city of Kawartha Lakes (town of Lindsay); and

"A large number of citizens of the city of Kawartha Lakes are required to travel daily to the greater Toronto area to avail themselves of employment opportunities that are not available locally; and

"The province of Ontario has a stated policy to improve air quality through the reduction of traffic on provincial highways by the provision of mass transit;

"We, the undersigned citizens of the city of Kawartha Lakes, petition the Ontario government to provide, as soon as possible, a direct GO Transit link from the town of Lindsay, in the said city of Kawartha Lakes, to the city of Oshawa; and

"We ask you, Laurie Scott, MPP for Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, to carry this petition on our behalf to the provincial Legislature."

I'm happy to hand it over to page Sarah. I affix my signature, and thank again Fred Barnes for gathering them.

TOURISM

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I have a petition from the constituents of Thunder Bay–Atikokan which reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas tourism is a vital contributor to the economy of northwestern Ontario, bringing hundreds of millions of dollars into the province’s economy from other provinces and the United States, unlike other regions in the province whose target demographic is people who already reside in Ontario;

“Whereas northwestern Ontario’s tourist economy has been under attack by government policies such as the cancellation of the spring bear hunt, the harmonized sales tax (HST), the strong Canadian dollar and difficulties passing through the Canada/United States border; and

“Whereas studies have shown that tourism in the northwest nets significantly more money per stay than other regions of the province, in part due to visitors frequenting historical sites, parks and roadside attractions that they learn about through travel information centres;

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

“To keep the travel information centres in Fort Frances, Kenora and Rainy River open permanently to ensure that northwestern Ontario maximizes the benefit of our tourist economy.”

I proudly support this and will give this to Constantine.

WATER QUALITY

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

Applause.

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to everyone in the House. This particular petition will be good for my rural colleagues.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas we, the non-profit organizations ... of Cumberland village, which include St. Andrew’s United Church, St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church, St. Mark’s Anglican Church, Cumberland Lions Club, Cumberland Curling Club [and] Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama’ at Centre, request that the small drinking water systems testing requirements for non-profit organizations (NPOs), MOE regulation 413/09, be amended to allow NPOs to have water testing done at existing public laboratories at no cost. Provincially designated private laboratory costs are excessive and prohibitive to Ontario’s NPOs;

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

“Please amend regulation 413/09 as outlined above.”

I agree with the petition, and I will affix my signature and give it to page Georgia.

UTILITY CHARGES

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Cambridge.

Mr. Rob Leone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thought I was going to have an opportunity, since he questioned whether he liked you or not—the member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

Anyway, this is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas section 398(2) of the Municipal Act ... allows a municipality to add public utility arrears incurred by a tenant to the municipal tax bill of the owner; and

“Whereas Ontario regulation 581/06 permits such arrears to have priority lien status under the act; and

“Whereas these provisions reversed the long-standing law in this area that held that a landlord was not responsible for utility charges where the landlord was not the consumer; and

“Whereas landlords may now be burdened unfairly, and potentially catastrophically, with fees and charges they have no control over; and

“Whereas these provisions will also impact tenants who are not in arrears with their utility payments but who will now face rent increases and/or increases in utility payments where such payments are pooled as landlords attempt to recoup these outstanding liabilities; and

“Whereas a number of municipalities, including Penetanguishene, Bracebridge and Niagara Falls, have reversed such policies as a result of the demonstrated and unprecedented negative impacts on landlords and tenants; and

“Whereas municipalities and utility providers in Ontario already have at their disposal a number of means by which they can control or collect outstanding arrears, including by requiring deposits for the utility service pursuant to the Public Utilities Act and by seizing personal property in the possession of the ratepayer;

“Now therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to:

“Repeal section 398(2) of the Municipal Act, 2001, and amend Ontario regulation 581/06 accordingly, to ensure that property owners are not responsible for the payment of outstanding utility arrears where they are not the consumer.”

I agree with the petition, and I will hand it to page Manak.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’
PUBLIC BUSINESSLABOUR RELATIONS
AMENDMENT ACT

(FAIRNESS FOR EMPLOYEES), 2012
LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR
LES RELATIONS DE TRAVAIL
(ÉQUITÉ À L’ÉGARD DES EMPLOYÉS)

Mr. Natyshak moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 77, An Act to amend the Labour Relations Act, 1995 with respect to enhancing fairness for employees /

Projet de loi 77, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur les relations de travail en vue d'accroître l'équité à l'égard des employés.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Mr. Speaker, thank you. I think members of the House can tell that this is my first private member's bill, and I'm very proud to introduce it today.

En français : ça me donne un grand plaisir, un énorme plaisir et honneur, de présenter ce projet de loi, mon premier comme membre privé, and I am exceptionally proud to have members of the Ontario Federation of Labour here today in the gallery to support this initiative.

Mr. Speaker, the act is subtitled Fairness for Employees. Before I get into the specifics of the act, I'd like to provide a little bit of context, a little history of labour relations in this province, if you will. In 1995, the government of the day, the Mike Harris government, passed something called the Labour Relations and Employment Statute Law Amendment Act. The act effectively wiped out 50 years of progressive labour law tradition in Ontario, and it has had a corrosive effect on labour relations in this province ever since.

I want to repeat that. I want to repeat what I just said, because it is at the heart of our argument here today. In that 1995 act, the progressive legacy in labour law that existed under Premiers such as John Robarts, Bill Davis and David Peterson was wiped out in one fell swoop. What we're trying to do here today with this bill is to begin to take the very first steps back towards resuming that progressive tradition, the tradition presided over by Premiers Robarts, Davis and Peterson, with a very modest set of reforms.

Now, some of you may remember the 1995 Mike Harris labour act as a corrective to some of the labour reforms passed in the 1990s, but the Harris act went far beyond that by destroying the fundamental structure of the Ontario labour relations, which, since the 1940s, had recognized the imperative to stop employers from interfering with the right of working people to exercise their democratic right to join a union. In fact, the 1995 act introduced destructive American labour law practices and did so in a manner that repudiated a set of balanced, made-in-Ontario labour law traditions going back 50 years. That act effectively destroyed Ontario's tradition of civilized labour legislation, and that's pretty much where we are here today.

1420

But enough history. Here's what we're proposing in this act. Firstly, the act deals with successor rights in the contract sector. Currently, the act includes provisions governing successor rights when a business is sold. This bill amends the act to extend the rules to the contract sector. Essentially, what we're doing here is providing a little more protection for some of our most vulnerable workers when a business is sold. We're talking about cleaners, food service employees and the folks who work in laundry facilities.

Secondly, the act makes some very modest changes in the interest arbitration procedure for a first contract. Currently, parties who are unable to effect a first collective agreement may apply to the Ontario Labour Relations Board to direct the settlement of a first collective agreement by arbitration. The bill amends the act to provide an additional route to binding arbitration.

Basically, what it does is it allows either party to request first-agreement arbitration if no collective agreement has been entered into by 30 days after it becoming legal for the employees to strike or for the employer to lock them out.

Thirdly, the act makes some small changes in reinstatement procedures during an organizing campaign. Basically, too many employees are getting fired during organizing campaigns. The provision in the act would better protect employees from employer reprisals, especially part-time employees.

Fourthly, the act requires early disclosure of employee lists—the folks who would be eligible to be part of a bargaining unit. What we're doing here is permitting a trade union to ask the Ontario Labour Relations Board to direct an employer to provide the trade union with a list of employees in a bargaining unit that could be appropriate for collective bargaining when the board is convinced that a threshold of 20% of the employees have expressed a desire to form a union. That sounds pretty reasonable to me.

Finally, the act makes possible neutral off-site voting and telephone and electronic voting for certification. Currently, the act sets out procedures for representation votes, when a trade union applies for certification as a bargaining agent. The bill amends the act to provide that the board may direct that representation votes be held at a neutral site or be conducted electronically or by telephone.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, I think that it is the belief of every member of this Legislature that Ontario workers deserve to be able to exercise their democratic rights without fear of employer reprisal. The truth is that current Ontario labour law simply doesn't allow that.

We desperately need to bring balance back to the Ontario Labour Relations Act and give vulnerable workers the tools to lift themselves out of poverty. That is a long-term goal, but on this side of the house, we recognize that that project is very long-term; that this bill is just the first small step towards that end. The Fairness for Employees Act takes very few, modest, uncontroversial reforms that we believe have widespread support, and we should get them to committee, where they can be examined thoroughly.

People on the other side of the House will notice that card certification is not included in this bill. We on this side of the House—and myself in particular, being a member who was certified under the provisions of card-based certification—strongly support card-based certification as one means of certifying a bargaining unit. But I have to be honest: Despite being in place under Conservative, Liberal and NDP governments in Ontario,

card certification is a controversial subject in this province.

Nor will you find any mention of banning replacement workers in this package. And I'll be honest again: We on this side of this House feel very strongly that replacement workers, more commonly known as scabs, should not be allowed in this province's workplaces during a lawful strike.

It was very, very hard for us to introduce a set of labour relations reforms without including anti-scab provisions. But as I said, this package is not about controversy, and banning replacement workers is a controversial topic in this province, so we purposely left it out. In fact, we left a lot of things out of this package so that we could have all-party support and get these things off to committee, where the modest proposals we are putting forward can have a thorough going-over.

So I repeat: The issue before this House is not whether you are pro-labour, anti-labour or somewhere in between; it's about whether these very modest reforms get to committee where they can be studied in detail. If the majority of committee members decide, in their wisdom, to make amendments to this act, well, that's the democratic process. No bill is perfect, and I kind of doubt that this bill is an exception to that rule. However, that's not what this House will be voting on at 4:30 this afternoon. Getting these modest proposals to committee so that labour groups, employer groups and neutral labour relations experts can have their kick at this legislation is what it's about.

The question before this House this afternoon is this: Do we take the first small steps toward resuming the progressive labour law tradition of John Robarts, Bill Davis and David Peterson, or do we stay where we are in the acrimonious, unbalanced world of labour relations that Mike Harris left us? Make no mistake: When you cast your vote at 4:30 this afternoon, that is what you will be voting on. I therefore urge everyone in the House to vote second reading approval of this very modest bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Randy Hillier: I'm quite surprised that the Minister of Labour wasn't responding to this private member's bill today, seeing that the minister is indeed in the House listening to this debate.

I have to start off by saying that I think the member for Essex has a different dictionary than I and others have when he uses the words, about Bill 77, that it is "enhancing fairness for employees." When I hear the term "fairness," I think of freedom, justice. I think of privacy. I believe in due process, respect for democracy—things of that nature.

This bill compels employers to provide personal information about employees to a third party who may wish to have an agreement or a contract, but a third party with no ties to those employees or to the business they're employed in. I think it's a really dangerous slope to be on when a business can be compelled by a third party to release such private and important information. It's not

just the person's name, but also their address, their contact information, their job classification, the number of hours of work and any other information they may deem appropriate to find.

This also doesn't have any safeguards in it whatsoever for the protection of democratic ideals when it comes to secret ballots and the necessity for secret ballots when voting on collective agreements. This allows telephone voting and online voting, but doesn't prescribe any levels of security for those types of voting. It certainly can be left to significant potential abuse of privacy and the results when there aren't prescribed methods to protect that privacy and that information.

The member spoke about how this would protect employees from their employers during the certification process. I'd like to just mention to the member and to the House that it's not employees needing protection just from employers. Here's an article from March 14 in the Toronto Star, where 13 members of LIUNA Local 183 are being ejected from their union. Their union cards are being withheld so they'll not be able to work on any construction projects. And that follows an earlier one in February where two others—there had been a number of fights and scuffles at LIUNA. Of course, I know the member knows this as, prior to politics, he was director of training at LIUNA.

Maybe I should restate, just for the record, that unions are just another business. We safeguard people by putting checks and balances in things, not by skewing the workplace with legislation.

1430

I'll say for the record here: Back in 1995, the US Department of Justice prosecuted LIUNA bosses for racketeering and ties to organized crime. Some 35 officials were sentenced—57 embezzlement charges; 46 criminal charges. To give organizations that blanket authority to go in and demand private information from individuals with no checks and balances on what they can do with it, we do allow and maybe actually create a situation where wrongdoing will happen.

I will state it for the record as well that these processes for certification can be, and indeed are, abused, as the legislation sits today. Speak to Gary Oosterhof at Oosterhof Electric in Kingston and he'll tell you about the tragedy of the certification process in his shop. Or speak to Good Mechanical in Smith Falls, Ontario; or Bergeron contractors in Sudbury; or Sculland Electric in Almonte, Ontario—I could go on—Power-Tek Electrical in Ottawa. All these people have been subjected to vigorous abuses in the certification processes that we have today, such as card-based certification.

A bill like this will only exasperate that problem. It will allow unions to have significant, unchecked power over the information and the voting process in certification processes. We do need to have fairness, but that fairness can only be achieved by respecting privacy, protecting freedom of choice and ensuring that due processes are prescribed within the legislation so that wrongdoing can be prevented.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I want to thank the member from Essex for introducing this bill and for engaging in the debate on this issue.

We recognize that fair and balanced labour laws have been the foundation for the province's prosperity for decades. That is why our government has worked hard to restore the principles of balance and fairness to Ontario's labour laws. Productive labour relations are key to economic growth, productivity and prosperity, and give Ontario a competitive advantage.

Over the past eight years, our government has worked hard to rebuild the relationships that were damaged by the governments that came before us. Our government stands by our record of labour peace and productivity in Ontario.

Through hard work, we have restored fairness, balance, dignity and productivity to labour relations in our province. With the co-operation of both employees and employers, we have succeeded. I'm proud that almost 98% of labour contracts in Ontario are now settled without disruptions.

I want to commend the individuals who represent employers and unions that work together at the negotiating table to develop an agreement that reflects the needs of both. Agreements reached at the negotiating table are the best agreements—the most stable and the most productive.

That's the cornerstone of Ontario's economic success. During labour disputes, this government has been focused on assisting the parties with the collective bargaining process because it's a shared responsibility.

The Ministry of Labour has a highly skilled mediation and conciliation team with a tremendous record for helping to resolve disputes. They work tirelessly to bring the parties together and help find the common ground which leads to healthy negotiations. Our government believes that fair and balanced labour laws are the foundation for the province's prosperity.

I would like to take a look at the past legislative changes, if you would allow me. I know that the member from Essex has mentioned a few of them.

In 1993, Bill 40 made significant changes to the then Labour Relations Act, including banning replacement workers, expanding access to first-contract arbitration, providing just cause protection after certification and during bargaining for renewal of a collective agreement, and requiring expedited hearings for certain unfair labour practice complaints.

Key elements of Bill 40 were repealed by Bill 7 in 1995, which repealed the Labour Relations Act in its entirety and replaced it with a new act, the Labour Relations Act, 1995.

Over the years, labour stakeholders have routinely urged a return to Bill 40's approach in certain areas. The most recent significant amendments to the Labour Relations Act were in 2005, under the Labour Relations Statute Law Amendment Act, Bill 144. Among other

things, the legislation restored certain key powers of the Ontario Labour Relations Board, particularly in the area of union certification and the ability to make certain types of substantive interim orders. That's why we restored the principles of balance and fairness to Ontario's labour laws with the introduction of Bill 144 in 2005.

This bill restored powers to the Ontario Labour Relations Board to let it effectively handle situations where an employer or a union violates labour law during a union organizing campaign. The bill ensures that an employer who threatens, terminates or intimidates employees who are trying to form a union can be taken before the Labour Relations Board.

Bill 144 restored the Ontario Labour Relations Board power to make certain types of substantive interim orders; specifically, the Ontario Labour Relations Board can make interim orders reinstating a dismissed employee, restoring terms and conditions of employment that were changed by the employer, and redressing discipline imposed by the employer.

Thanks to our government, the Ontario Labour Relations Board is now able to order the interim reinstatement of employees fired during an organizing drive. And in response to the worst cases of employer misconduct, the Ontario Labour Relations Board has the power to immediately certify the union. The restoration of these powers helps to ensure that the certification process works fairly for both the employees and employers.

I want to thank the member for Essex for introducing this bill and for engaging in the debate on the issue. I think he brings forward some very positive points in a number of proposals that would require some further analysis if they should be undertaken. But many of them are very positive. So that would be needed to determine if any policy, any legal or operational issues were there, and would need to be considered by the ministry or by the government.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I want to thank my colleague from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington for sharing his expertise in Ontario's labour industry with regards to this bill. I think his advice should be well taken.

Speaker, it is my understanding that labour unions were first formed to protect workplace employees from coercion or abuse by their employers. It seems odd to me, now in modern day, descendants should now be pressing for legislation that once again exposes their members to undue invasions of privacy and, heaven forbid, a reduction in the transparency of union voting systems.

First, this bill seeks to allow a minority of workers to gain access to information about their colleagues that is currently, and should remain, strictly private. For example, in a workplace of, say, 107 employees, it would take a minority of just 21 people—that's 20%—to demonstrate a desire for a union—a demand of private information of every one of us here. That information would include the employees' names, departments, job

titles and the number of hours per week that they work, and, curiously, any other information specified by the board in its direction. The sheer vagaries of that stipulation boggle the mind.

This is about more than simply a small minority helping itself to the personal information of the majority on a whim. It's about the employee-employer relationship, something that I've spoken about in this House in the past. It would begin to dissolve the relationship that has been formed by a boss and his or her staff, perhaps over years of work, in the interests of an exceedingly small minority whose desire for a union may not be the same as the 80% of their colleagues.

1440

Second, Speaker, we know that this bill would change the normal procedure for representation votes. No longer would votes take place at the workplace, where access for workers is a legally protected right. No, it would stipulate that votes must now take place outside of the workplace at a location where the right of entry is not protected by law.

Further, it allows for voting to take place electronically or by telephone. Speaker, I must point out to the House that with all of the technologies available to us today, we still have not sought to tinker with our provincial voting system to such a tremendous degree, and why? I suspect that it's because electronic and telephone voting are still very much open to tampering and abuse of privacy. Imagine going to vote with your family in a provincial or federal election. Do you not feel safer knowing that every other voter must undergo the same procedure you are?

Showing up in person, having your vote subject to the strictest privacy guidelines, conducting votes in designated locations staffed by impartial officials—these are all hallmarks of a safe, secure voting process that are never tampered with by necessity. Yes, voting can be an irritant—it means waiting in lines and filling out forms—but the wait time isn't like that of our health care system. But whether the issue is a federal election or a union vote that will directly affect your paycheque, our democratic society must keep these safeguards in place, not eliminate them.

Finally, this bill would allow both sides of the collective agreement bargaining process to proceed straight to arbitration, if desired, by bypassing the crucial first step of negotiating in good faith. I think it should be clear to anybody that this is a wrong-headed move. Despite the friction that inevitably arises from these processes, an initial sit-down on both sides for a vigorous negotiation session still provides a clear understanding of the needs on both sides, much like we're doing right now.

I greatly respect my colleague the member for Essex. We share a segment of southwestern Ontario that has some of the best workers in the nation. Yet the opportunity for abuse by a small minority is just simply too great. Workers have a right to privacy, they have a right not to be subject to the will of a small minority, and they have a right to peace of mind when it comes to casting

their ballot in workplace matters. This bill would strike a very serious blow to all three, and I must oppose it in the strongest terms.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? The member for Hamilton Centre—the leader of the third party.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Thank you very much, Speaker. I appreciate that.

Speaker, I want to start by acknowledging some friends from the labour movement who are here, including the president of the Ontario Federation of Labour, Mr. Sid Ryan.

Applause.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Yes, absolutely. They're here for a particular reason, obviously: to hear the debate on this bill.

I think it's quite interesting to listen to what has been said around the room so far. I first want to say that this is not the typical type of bill that New Democrats have brought in the past in terms of labour law reform. It's not the typical kind of bill that New Democrats have brought in the past for a specific reason: because this is not the typical kind of Legislature that we've had in the province of Ontario. What we have now is a Legislature that has an opportunity to find ways to work together, to move some of the yardsticks, and that's what this bill tries to do.

I found it very interesting that the member from York South–Weston was talking about balance and fairness. We know very well just by the remarks that the member for Essex made at the beginning of his speech that the playing field has changed drastically in Ontario. It has changed drastically and has remained drastically unbalanced for many, many years. In fact, it was much more balanced under former Conservative governments, former Liberal governments and former NDP governments. So I think if we're seriously talking about returning things to balance and fairness, we need to look at what some of that balance and fairness has been in the past, and that's what this bill does—not all of it, mind you; not all of the balance and fairness that we think needs to be there is captured in this bill. Why? Because we came at this in a very practical way, in a way that says there are things that we firmly believe in that we know that this government, the McGuinty Liberal government, has refused to enact the many, many times we've brought these things forward—things like card-based certification, for example. We have brought bills on card-based certification many, many times. You'll note that it is not in this bill; it's not in this bill on purpose.

We have brought bills to get rid of scabs once and for all in this province many, many times—and proudly—but this bill does not have anything about that in it, not because the member from Essex doesn't want it in there, not because New Democrats don't want it in there, because we do want it in there, and we will probably bring those bills as well at some point, as we've done proudly in the past. But with this particular bill, we're

actually appealing to the members of the government and to the members of the Progressive Conservative Party to consider moving some of the yardsticks, to consider moving a little way down a path to making labour relations, to making the playing field, if you will, in terms of the process of certification of unions and other things, a little more balanced.

I'm not going to go over the specifics. They have to do with first-contract arbitration, they have to do with making sure that certain sectors are able to have their bargaining rights carry on after employer changes. For the employees, it talks about making sure that people who organize or who are doing part of the organizing drive, when a union is brought into a place of employment, are not reprimanded by the employer, that they're actually reinstated to work if those reprimands take place; and the provision of lists to make sure that it is fair, that an employer can't load up a list at the end of the process and keep away from the union a bunch of information that is necessary for an effective and fair organizing drive.

Speaker, these are modest proposals, they are thoughtful proposals, they are reasonable proposals, and in that spirit of trying to find some balance and fairness and in that spirit of a minority situation where there is opportunity for parties to reach across and work together to make this province a better place for working people, I ask that the members of this House of all parties at least get this bill through second reading so it can go to committee and we can have some positive steps forward, some positive movement on the labour relations situation here in Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. Further debate?

Mr. Phil McNeely: This act would amend legislation to permit a trade union to ask the Ontario Labour Relations Board to direct an employer to provide a trade union with a list of employees in a bargaining unit that could be appropriate for collective bargaining.

Currently, the act sets out procedures for representation votes when a trade union applies for certification as a bargaining agent. The act is amended to provide that the board may direct that representation votes be held at a neutral site, electronically or by telephone.

Our government is making thoughtful choices to build a stronger economy that supports Ontario families and their jobs. The choices we're making support the goals, needs and aspirations of Ontario families. We stand by our record of labour peace and productivity in Ontario over the past eight years. We have worked hard to rebuild the relationships that were damaged by the governments that came before us.

Since 2003, for example, there have been no teacher strikes and no lost teaching days for our students. In working together with teachers, Ontario is now ranked in the top five education systems in the world, a really truly momentous gain since 2003.

As a government, we've had to work hard to restore fairness, balance, dignity and productivity to labour

relations in Ontario. With the co-operation of both employees and employers, we have succeeded. I'm proud to say that almost 98% of labour contracts in Ontario are now settled without disruptions.

I want to commend the individuals who represent employers and unions that work together at the negotiating table to develop an agreement that reflects the needs of both. Agreements reached at the negotiating table are the best agreements—the most stable and the most productive. That is the cornerstone of Ontario's economic success.

1450

During labour disputes, this government is focused on assisting parties with the collective bargaining process. It's a shared responsibility. We have a highly skilled mediation and conciliation team with a tremendous record for helping to resolve disputes. They work tirelessly to bring the parties together, to help find common ground, which leads to healthy negotiations.

So what has our government done in regard to labour relations, Mr. Speaker? Our government believes that fair and balanced labour laws are the foundation for the province's prosperity. That's why we restored the principles of balance and fairness to Ontario's labour laws with the introduction of Bill 144 in 2005. That bill restored powers to the Ontario Labour Relations Board to let it effectively handle situations where an employer or a union violates labour law during a union organizing campaign.

This bill ensures that an employer who threatens, terminates or intimidates employees who are trying to form a union can be taken before the Labour Relations Board. Thanks to our government, the Ontario Labour Relations Board is now able to order the interim reinstatement of employees fired during an organizing drive.

In response to the worst cases of employer misconduct, the Ontario Labour Relations Board has the power to immediately certify the union. The restoration of these powers helps to ensure that the certification process works fairly for both employees and employers.

Mr. Speaker, let us look at the record of the opposition when they were in government. The PCs turned the labour climate in Ontario to chaos. They tarnished the government's relationships with our teachers and health care workers. Their Labour Relations Act was dubbed "an act to gut the rights of Ontario workers." We remember that. The previous PC government reversed almost half a century of history in revamping the way unions are certified, and labour unrest with teachers led to the loss of 26 million school days—not a good time in our schools.

Let us look at some of the past legislative changes.

In 1993, Bill 40 made significant changes to the then Labour Relations Act, LRA, including:

- banning replacement workers;
- expanding access to first-contract arbitration;
- providing just cause protection after certification and during bargaining for a renewal of a collective agreement;

—requiring expedited hearings for certain unfair labour practice complaints.

Key elements of Bill 40 were repealed by Bill 7 in 1995, which repealed the LRA in its entirety and replaced it with a new act: the Labour Relations Act, 1995.

Over the years, stakeholders have routinely urged a return to Bill 40's approach in certain areas. The most recent significant amendments to the LRA were in 2005, under the Labour Relations Statute Law Amendment Act, 2005, Bill 144. Among other things, the legislation restored certain key powers of the OLRB, particularly in the area of union certification and the ability to make certain types of substantive interim orders.

Mr. Speaker, this government takes labour relations very seriously. We want to work with both sides to make labour relations in this province to the benefit of the people involved and the taxpayers of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure and I take great pride in rising to support my colleague's bill today. What's being suggested today is a very modest approach, and it's a modest approach because we're very serious about taking some positive steps in the right direction. We're serious about doing this, and that's why we call on the support of all parties in this House to address this modest step in the right direction, to address fairness. This is about fairness for employees. It's about fairness for the working people of Ontario.

We need to change the discourse when it comes to labour in Ontario. The discourse shouldn't be, "Am I pro-labour? Am I anti-labour?" It's about working people in Ontario. We need to support people who are working. We need to support them by ensuring that they have the right to organize. This is a democratic right. We need to support that. If employees desire to exercise that right, an employer should not put their jobs at risk, should not put their jobs in jeopardy. That's simply wrong. That's counter to the democratic rights that we want to build in this society. That's counter to the rights of workers who've worked so hard and made so many sacrifices to achieve. That's simply the wrong direction for this province. That's the wrong direction for the discourse on how we treat workers in this province.

The requests are simple, but they are in the spirit of where labour laws were not too long ago. We took a very disastrous turn under the Mike Harris regime, and we need to correct some of those mistakes that have not yet been fixed.

A wise man once said, "You can make a mistake once, but if you don't correct that mistake, you've made another mistake again." Let's not do that. Let's change that direction. Let's move and shift things back in favour of employees.

We've seen too much, in terms of the overall direction of society in the world, that more and more wealth is being kept in the hands of fewer and fewer people. That has to change. There will be a time when their unrest will—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I've been told that maybe your own microphone is not on. You might want to be closer to your own seat and your own mike.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Thank you.

We've seen too much, as time has progressed, that the concentration of wealth is shifting from the middle class, from the working people, more and more into the hands of fewer and fewer people. That's the wrong direction for our society. Unrest will increase. We can't build walls around our cities. We can't build walls around those who are wealthy to protect us. We need to ensure we live in an equitable society where everyone has the opportunity to prosper. That's a society where we can be safe, where we can enjoy freedom and where we can all enjoy prosperity. That's the direction we need to head in, and making a small step in the right direction to achieve greater fairness for employees will ensure that we move in the right direction for our society. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? The member for Essex to respond.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Sorry, did I miss—the member for Nickel Belt.

M^{me} France Gélinas: Sorry, Mr. Speaker. I kind of thought there was some time left on the clock from the other parties.

I wanted to add my voice to what the member from Essex has to say. When he talks about succession rights from business, and when he talks about the small steps he wants to do, he's bringing forward those small steps because there are tons of evidence out there that it is not working.

I would like to give the example from UNITE HERE, who are trying to organize people who work in the hotel industry. They have that big poster. The poster is really telling, because for every picture that they took of people who were helping, trying to help organize their workplace, people who make barely above minimum wage—most of them don't have a full-time job; they work when there's work; none of them have benefits—of all of the pictures that they have taken, all of those people have lost their jobs.

I'll give an example in Ottawa, where this mom has a few kids and her youngest one, unfortunately, came out with childhood leukemia. She needed a little bit of flexibility to bring this child, who's really just a baby, for chemotherapy and other treatment to make him better. So she needed a little bit of flexibility from her employer, and her employer, by and large, had been accommodating her needs. I mean, here she is with a baby who's dying of cancer. The employer was reasonable in allowing her a little bit of flexibility so that she could bring her child to the doctor and to the different appointments.

But you know what happened, Mr. Speaker? The minute that she tried to organize her peers and started to talk about, "Maybe we should join a union. Maybe if we had a union, we would make better than minimum wage. Maybe if we had a union, we would have a little bit more

job security, and some of us who have been here longer would get the good hours, and the new ones who happen to know the boss wouldn't get all of the good shifts. Maybe if we form our union, we could ask for a few little benefits"—the minute she started to talk to her co-workers, the flexibility was gone. If she wanted to take her son to the cancer treatment centre, she would have to do this by quitting her work. This is how she was treated.

What we're trying to bring forward is a little bit of fairness. I can give you a multitude of examples that will show you that what we have now is often failing the most vulnerable of workers in Ontario. The way to help those workers most of the time would be to organize them, to help them form a union that will speak for those workers, most of them women, most of them first-generation immigrants. They need our help. By passing this bill and sending it to committee so we can talk a little bit more, we will help them.

1500

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I want to commend my friend from Essex for, I think, a thoughtful piece of work; I know a lot of effort has gone into it. As someone who comes from a family of trade unionists who works in that field, I think my friend from Nickel Belt articulately put out a very good summary of some of the issues involved. The Minister of Labour, I think, has very thoughtfully engaged and identified very positively some parts of the bill that members on this side think would be positive steps forward.

I am hopeful that this bill will get serious discussion at committee. I think there's a lot of value in it, and I think it speaks to the co-operation and reasonableness of the third party that these are areas where we might not agree 100%, but there is substantive enough common ground here for us to work reasonably on it. I think it's awesome that we have newer members like the member from Essex, who brings a great deal of sincerity and intelligence to this Legislature. We should be encouraging newer members to go forward with some of their brighter and better ideas.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

The member for Essex, you have two minutes for a reply.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I want to thank the members from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington—

Mr. Randy Hillier: Really?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I do—Chatham–Kent–Essex, of course, York South–Weston, Hamilton Centre, Ottawa–Orléans, Bramalea–Gore–Malton, Nickel Belt and, of course, the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities for adding his commentary today, too, and the Minister of Labour as well. Thank you very much.

I quite expected the response from the Progressive Conservative side as being standoffish and not willing to look at any opportunities for us to advance the cause of labour reform and the cause of working people in this

province. Again, the intent of this bill is to take a look at where some modest reforms can be made: increases for participation and protection, really.

The member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington superficially mentioned the aspect of off-site voting. In this day and age, I can buy a car with my cell-phone, so technologies exist that protect relevant personal information. We are there today, and we can afford workers the ability to exercise their democratic rights when they want to organize their workplace or participate in an organizing drive without the fear of reprisal, and that's what this is all about. It's not about messing up any type of democratic process of voting or organizing.

What the member suggests is that we continue along a process that is akin to—if you can appreciate, we've all participated in elections. Imagine we had to go to the polls and only Tories were running the polling booth? Who would dare vote against that? You'd be subjected to intimidation.

That's what happens in a lot of workplaces here, and we want to absolutely protect any workers from even being put into that position. This is one way we can do it, but we can certainly talk it through at committee, and I look forward to the support of members from across the way to get it there.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. We'll take the vote at the end of regular business.

ENSURING LOCAL VOICES
IN NEW CASINO GAMBLING
DEVELOPMENT ACT, 2012

LOI DE 2012 VISANT
À GARANTIR LA CONSULTATION
DES POPULATIONS LOCALES
AVANT LA CRÉATION
DE NOUVEAUX CASINOS

Mr. McNaughton moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 76, An Act to amend the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation Act, 1999 / Projet de loi 76, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1999 sur la Société des loteries et des jeux de l'Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Thank you very much, Speaker. It's an honour to rise in the House today for the second reading of my first private member's bill, Bill 76, Ensuring Local Voices in New Casino Gambling Development Act, 2012.

When I was first elected back on October 6 last year, I was eager to roll up my sleeves and get to work for the people in my riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex and for the people of Ontario. I have to say that having been in office for almost eight months, I remain committed to

helping Ontario be the best place to own and operate a business and, more importantly, to call home.

As the Ontario PC critic for economic development and innovation, I've had the pleasure to meet with many individuals, stakeholders and groups who have been voicing their concerns about the direction we are headed here in Ontario. I have received a wealth of information regarding the challenges that Ontario is facing and the issues that are concerning Ontarians. I believe that it is essential that the people of Ontario have a voice in local decision-making, and that is why I am proposing this bill here today.

Speaker, as you know, with recent plans to modernize the OLG, it has been announced that new casino development is among the top considerations currently ongoing. No doubt there is opportunity in new casino development. Jobs, investment and increased tourism are all cited as important benefits that new casinos could bring, and I don't disagree. But new casino development also causes great debate and even concern from segments of our communities. Social and other economic costs, increased pressures on families, addiction issues and strain on our communities have all been cited as potential drawbacks, and there is merit to these concerns as well.

It is for this reason that I have brought forward my bill, Bill 76, here today. My bill will require that a successful municipal referendum be completed prior to any new casino development. I believe that a local referendum is an excellent way to allow the local people and local communities to have a direct voice in large and potentially controversial decisions that might impact their communities.

Speaker, as you know, our party has long advocated for local voices in decisions like these. Personally, I have seen the successes of local referendums first hand in my hometown of Newbury. Prior to serving as a municipal councillor, the villages surrounding Newbury were beginning to amalgamate. The possibility of amalgamation for the people of Newbury was of great concern, and the residents there felt that it would be better for them to remain on their own.

Due to these concerns, there was a local referendum that placed the decision to amalgamate in the hands of the local people. Today, the village of Newbury is thriving and is benefiting from choosing not to amalgamate with the surrounding villages. I served as municipal councillor for three terms, and through this experience, I realized the value and the importance of local voices in decision-making. The people knew what was best for them. They knew what would work and what wouldn't, and today our community of Newbury is benefiting greatly from this local input.

Local decision-making is a fundamental aspect of Canadian politics, and I'm sad to say that it is a value that has slowly faded over the last nine years here in this province. Our province is now at a point where the people of Ontario are being told what to do, a top-down approach that has proven to fail. There is no longer consultation on the part of the government, and, indeed

local voices are often squeezed out. This is something that I am fundamentally against, and that is why I have decided to take action and introduce my private member's bill.

The PC Party understands the importance of ensuring local voices in decision-making. Earlier this session, my fellow caucus member MPP Smith introduced his first private member's bill, Bill 10, the Local Municipality Democracy Act. This act aimed to help restore local decision-making on the issue of wind turbines in local municipalities. Despite strenuous objections from families and local residents, the government continues to plow ahead with industrial wind farms without receiving local approval. MPP Smith's bill aimed to ensure that local families' concerns were no longer ignored.

Mr. Speaker, if the people of Ontario don't want to have something built in their community, they should be allowed to say no, and this bill will help ensure their voices are listened to and respected.

1510

When it comes to new casino development, I strongly believe that the local community must be willing hosts of new casinos, that the local community must want and accept any new casino development before it can occur. This bill would ensure local families' concerns are no longer ignored. Our caucus wants to see action that places decision-making back in the hands of local residents, and we have long advocated that local governments, businesses and families know what's best for their communities. We will continue to fight to ensure that the local residents are given a voice in deciding if their community will host a casino.

The current government wants to expand gambling in Ontario in the hopes that they will increase tax revenues. We can debate about it, but the fact remains that casino gambling is not the best way to grow Ontario's economy. Ontario should be growing its tax revenue from increased jobs and prosperity, not from increased casino gambling. We need to ensure that we are promoting good tax policy for the people of Ontario and for our communities.

The government should be putting their energy into growing our economy through innovation and supporting Ontario's small businesses. The government should be focused on reducing taxes, reducing energy costs and making the changes necessary to create jobs and to help grow and develop our local economy.

Casinos provide important local job opportunities and do lead to countless other spinoffs—they do bring investment dollars—but it is essential that when a casino comes to town, local residents have a say in that decision.

I cannot stress it enough that new casino development comes with real responsibilities and calls for a serious, inclusive planning process. The people must be given a say on issues that significantly impact upon their lives and their communities.

I am proud to introduce my first private member's bill, again, a bill entitled Ensuring Local Voices in New Casino Gambling Development Act, 2012. I'm excited about this bill. I'm proud to stand up to help ensure local

voices in new casino development are heard. I would urge all members of this House to stand with their local communities, their people, and to support my bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: There are occasions from time to time where some New Democrats agree with Tories, only—

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Exactly. It's amazing how that works every now and then—

Interjection: God bless. God bless.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: God bless.

And so, on this bill, I am happy to support the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, and I agree with much of what he has said.

I'm looking forward to the Minister of the Environment speaking to this bill, because I remember the days when he would be on this side of the House condemning the one-eyed monsters, the slot machines. What did you call them there, Jim?

Hon. James J. Bradley: One-armed bandits.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: One-armed bandits. He used to stand up every day in the House, attacking the one-armed bandits and the effects they had on communities. So I hope they will give you a couple of minutes to speak to this bill, because I want to hear from you.

I love to hear Minister Duncan these days, the Minister of Finance, because he is one of the biggest boosters of casinos I have ever seen—God bless again—and the language he uses; he speaks of this as an unalloyed bonanza in economic, cultural and recreational benefits. He talks about casinos as “an entertainment destination...unparalleled in the country.” This is strong language from the Minister of Finance.

He also argues that this would fix the waterfront. I think he's absolutely wrong. I know my friend the Minister of the Environment—we've been here for a long time together—agrees with me on this, and I'm looking forward to his comments.

I know that David Olive, a good journalist with the Toronto Star, who I admire, says of the minister that he is a prime candidate for Gamblers Anonymous with his \$2-billion addiction. I think he's right on the money on that one. And it could be that it isn't just the Minister of Finance connected to this addiction and the only member of Gamblers Anonymous; I suspect there are a number of Liberals in that caucus who feel the same way. But I also believe that there are many Liberals who disagree, and I'm looking forward to one-minuter kind of responses to say, “We agree with the member for Lambton–Kent–Middlesex and his bill.” We'll wait and see.

Now, I know the government has got a financial problem. I know that this minister and this government have been cutting corporate taxes for a long time, just as the Tories did. They cut income taxes—

Hon. James J. Bradley: We stopped them.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No, no, no. You can play that song if you want, but you guys have been cutting

income taxes for a long time, and all of a sudden you need money and what do you do? You introduce a harmonized sales tax and you want now to reform the OLG to go out and get more money from younger people who are not spending. In order to get more than the \$2 billion and get the extra \$1.3 billion, you need more casinos and you need the online kind of gambling. Why? To be able to attract more and more young people to gamble—the very ones who are graduating with good degrees and got no money, or the ones who don't graduate and got no jobs. What do they have? More opportunities from the Minister of Finance to be able to go and gamble the few dollars that they possibly might have saved here or there, have they the ability to save.

The casinos produce little wealth; in that regard, I agree with the member. They produce more gambling and they spur gambling addiction, and we know that 30% of gambling revenues come from problem gamblers—30%.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Minister of the Environment, please come to order.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Marcus Gee makes reference to what the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health says: “4.8% of Ontario adults, or 449,000 people, have moderate or severe gambling problems.” This is a huge number; we're talking half a million. “Another 860,000 people are considered ‘at risk’ for problem gambling.” These are serious, serious numbers.

I understand the minister and his desire to be able to raise more money. We believe that this is not the way to do it, and on this I agree with the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex.

Richard Florida, someone who the Liberals respect a lot—and I do, too—says legalized gambling's costs in crime, bankruptcies, lost productivity and diminished social capital exceed supposed gains from added jobs, the very few that they produce, and revenues by a ratio of three to one, according to the person who has done the research, whose name is Grinols, on this subject. The benefits of the few jobs that are produced are outdone by the social costs, which are two to eight times higher. That's what the research says. I don't know what the Minister of Finance is looking at by his research, but everything that we have looked at speaks against any comments made by the Minister of Finance on this subject.

The Toronto waterfront is a shared asset. We're talking about green space and public space that belongs to people, families and children. When you have green space, we believe it makes people more satisfied and happy to be part of a community. David Olive again—the same journalist—says, “A casino is among the least promising means of spearheading a waterfront revival.”

I'm looking forward to see which Liberal will speak on this bill.

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: They won't let you either? Well, let's just see who's going to speak. I don't know.

They won't let you either. God bless. There has got to be someone. We'll see who comes along.

But I have to say, a previous bill on this matter allowed referendums up until 2003, and that was sunsetted. We no longer have the ability to give communities a say in this regard.

1520

And I've got to tell you, I'm not a fan of referendums in general. I've never been a fan because powerful interests can skew the results in ways that, as a New Democrat, frighten me. But on this one, I believe that the public is smarter than the few wealthy people who the Minister of Finance is associated with, and I believe that the majority of people will make the right decision on this one.

Minister of post-secondary, do you agree with that? Nod your head yes or no.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would ask the member to confine his remarks to the bill.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I believe that a referendum has to happen before a casino is adopted in any city, wherever in the province of Ontario. This is the way it should go. In this regard, this member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex has done a good thing.

We agree with the Tories on this one, because I suspect most of the Tories are onside on this. I suspect we're going to have a couple of ministers standing up in agreement, or at least sitting down in agreement. Either way—standing up in agreement or sitting down in agreement—it's all fine by me.

I'll leave time for my colleague here to say a few words in this regard.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I'm certainly pleased to rise and discuss Bill 76, the first private member's bill brought by our colleague from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex. It certainly is an opportunity to review the work of the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation Act and consider the many ways that we can ensure that any future gaming sites are situated in municipalities that are, in fact, willing hosts.

First of all, I'd like to start by reviewing some facts related to OLG. It does generate some \$3.7 billion in economic activity in Ontario, and it does provide some \$2 billion in revenue to Ontario. That's revenue that goes to schools and health care, as well as providing jobs to some 18,000 employees across the province. Locally, this revenue provides some \$1.9 million for sponsorship of community festivals and events, and some \$7.1 million goes to participating local charities. So there are clearly some benefits that municipalities will want to consider as they think about the option of becoming a gaming site.

The Ontario government has recently received a report from the OLG that proposes modernization of the gaming system in Ontario. These initiatives will increase revenues by more than \$1.3 billion a year by 2017-18 and will create 2,300 net new jobs in the gaming industry and

nearly 4,000 additional jobs in the hospitality and retail sectors.

The government will also enhance its problem gambling strategy, which is delivered by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, to determine where funding and programs can be enhanced. Ontario already spends nearly \$40 million annually on problem gambling treatment, prevention and research, more than any other jurisdiction in North America. The government is committed to the renewal and growth of Ontario's problem gambling strategy.

This is particularly important to me as a former medical officer of health. While most people can enjoy gambling as a harmless pastime, a small proportion do become addicted. However, most people in our society believe that we should have the right to choose whether we are going to indulge in gambling or not.

Lest we forget, casino gambling was brought in by the NDP and was expanded dramatically under the previous Conservative government.

What do the changes at OLG actually mean? With Internet-based gaming growing, a higher Canadian dollar and US border communities building their own gaming sites, our gaming system has to change. We need to reform and modernize gaming in Ontario by allowing safe, responsible access to gaming opportunities. To ensure Ontario taxpayers receive the greatest value for their tax dollars, the government has directed OLG to reconfigure the number of gaming sites and tailor the types of gaming activities made available at each site; launch multi-lane sales of lottery tickets at major retail outlets, including grocery stores; increase operational efficiencies by expanding the role of the private sector; implement a new fee model for municipalities hosting gaming sites; and allow one new casino in the GTA, subject to an OLG business case and, most importantly, municipal approval.

Again, the revenues will be used to fund vital public services like health care and education that Ontarians count on.

I would now like to turn to the issue of requiring referendums, as Bill 76 does. This requirement, apparently, is to inform municipal and First Nation decision-making related to the establishment of a casino. First of all, where a municipality or a First Nations reserve may wish to conduct a referendum, they already have the power to do so. A referendum is certainly one way to canvass public opinion, and its use in Canada has been increasing. But municipal councils should have the power to retain control of making that decision. Municipalities are a mature level of government. Our friend opposite was a councillor; municipal councillors are elected to make decisions on behalf of the electorate. They have a number of ways in which to consult their electorate apart from referendums, such as town hall meetings, deputations to council, and meeting with their constituents.

In terms of referendums themselves, first of all there is a cost issue, not only of conducting the poll itself—and I'm surprised that a Conservative member would want to

impose increased spending on a municipality—but also the need to provide information on the question. Since the question often involves a highly emotional issue, both proponents will also want to disseminate their point of view through advertisements and other media. This will involve costs to both sides on the question as well as to the municipality that will be required to conduct a public education campaign. If that campaign is not properly resourced or is seen to be biased, the referendum campaign is unlikely to have a positive effect on political engagement and may even increase disillusionment with the political process. Expenditure ceilings will have to be established and need to be set at a level to ensure that referendums cannot be bought, as has been alluded to, by the richer side. All these complications may undermine public confidence in the result.

For all these reasons, I therefore believe it is most appropriate to leave this decision in the hands of local councillors and thus maintain the status quo.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I am very pleased to rise to speak to Bill 76. I would like to start by thanking my friend and colleague the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex for bringing forward this important bill as his first private member's bill in this Legislature.

As my colleague has pointed out, the Ensuring Local Voices in New Casino Gambling Development Act would make it mandatory to hold a municipal referendum before a new casino development could go forward.

Our party has always been committed to working with local communities and with local municipal governments to reach decisions that are not only good for our province but are also good for our local communities. Perhaps more importantly, however, ensuring that local decision-making powers stay with local communities is a cornerstone of the democratic process.

Unfortunately, the Liberal government clearly doesn't believe that communities should have the right to decide what happens in their backyard and that the McGuinty Liberals know best. This was certainly made clear, Mr. Speaker, when the Liberals passed the Green Energy Act and withdrew local decision-making powers specifically from our rural communities and from others. Since then, the Progressive Conservative caucus has tabled numerous pieces of legislation to restore these powers but has been consistently shut down by the Liberals.

It's important that the Liberals begin to support our local communities and ensure that they will have a say in what their environment looks like. Supporting this bill, I would suggest, would be a very good place to start.

Clearly, some communities will welcome the building of a gambling facility, and others will not. But this piece of legislation will ensure that new casinos will be built in communities that will welcome the business, embrace the industry and ensure it becomes a valuable part of the community. For all of these reasons, this bill is welcome and vital to the development of a healthy and democratic province and of healthy communities as well. That's why

I'm pleased to voice my support for this bill and again to thank the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex for bringing it forward.

1530

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's a pleasure to rise also in support of this bill. I'm going to be very specific about my comments because—guess what?—both the riding of the member from Trinity–Spadina and my riding of Parkdale–High Park actually almost abut—his does directly; mine, almost—to Ontario Place, and what I'm concerned about is Ontario Place. We have petition after petition that's going out. We had a rally here at Queen's Park. I can tell you that in my riding, nobody wants a casino at Ontario Place. Not one person wants a casino there, for a variety of reasons.

First of all, we want a family-friendly access place to the lake. It's our lake. It doesn't belong to a casino; it doesn't belong to private interests. It belongs to the people who live there and their children. We hope that this government—I know they're going down the slippery slope with online gambling. That is truly the crack cocaine of gambling addiction. But this is yet another assault on young people, on children, because this is their lake and this is a place that they should have access to with their families.

I also must point out that it's probably only about a mile from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health—literally under a mile, just up on Queen Street. This is an incredibly addictive practice, and you know that in Parkdale there are many, many homes and many, many individuals who suffer from addiction issues. It was so, so sad to see the member from Oak Ridges–Markham, a doctor, get up—and she knows about addiction; she knows the incredible toll addictions take on families—and stand up, basically in favour of gambling. What? What is this place coming to? This is sad.

Here is the lake. Often in the west end of Toronto, we really look with longing at what they have in the east end of Toronto, which is access points to the lake, the lake being public. We don't have that. We have lanes of highways between us. Here's an opportunity to redress that problem. Here's an opportunity to actually have something that works for everyone.

I might point out, Mr. Speaker, that a referendum is something supported by the majority of Toronto councillors and Toronto council itself. In fact, it was on the books here, and sneakily, this government just brought in this initiative after they realized that that particular statute had been sunsetted.

So I applaud the member. I don't have a problem supporting Tories when they do the right thing; we just wish they'd do the right thing more often, that's all. We support Liberals when they do the right thing; we just wish they'd do the right thing more often. We certainly appeal to all sides of the House. Here's the right thing to do. Vote for the will of the people, is what we're saying, and the will of families and the best interests of our children. That's it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I'm pleased to be able to rise and comment on Bill 76 and the scheme that is laid out here for municipal referendums. But first I would like to back up a little bit and talk about the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp.

As the member from Oak Ridges–Markham has noted, Ontario gets about \$2 billion annually in net revenue from OLG. What's interesting about that revenue is two things. One is that the net revenue that comes to the province goes to support health care and education and, in fact, the Ontario Trillium Foundation, which means that we get things done that we need to get done in our communities. The second thing that's interesting about that net revenue is that Ontario gets less money per dollar wagered than any other province in Canada. So the wagering is going on, but we, the taxpayers of Ontario, people who use the education system, who use the health care system, get less money from that wagering than in any other province in Canada.

So what has happened is that the government has asked OLG to look at ways in which we can increase the amount of revenue, the share of the revenue—both of those—that we are receiving. A number of the members have mentioned Internet gambling. The thing about Internet gambling is, it's already happening, and that's the gambling of choice of young people. It's already happening. Money is pouring out of the province.

We've said to OLG, let's look at a way to set up some safe Internet gambling sites in Ontario, where we can actually cap the amount of money that young people are spending, as opposed to getting themselves in over their heads. But we've also said that we need to have a look at where the slots are, where the casinos are. Should we reconfigure/relocate them?

It's important to note, according to this scheme with OLG, that the location of a casino anywhere in Ontario is subject to there being a business case and municipal approval. Similarly, the decision to relocate a slot casino or slots is also dependent on the municipal approval of the host.

Now, what Bill 76 would do—and it's a very oddly drafted bill, I must say, because although in the explanatory note it says it's about referendums on casinos, in fact, the word "referendum" is never actually mentioned in the bill. Nevertheless, I'll take it from the explanatory note that that's what it's about because it says that's what it's about.

If you're a municipality in Ontario, you already have the right for the council to decide to have a referendum. I think of my home constituency of Guelph, where there was a decades-long debate that went on about, should we have elections at large for city council? Should we have a ward system for city council? It was a very fractious, emotional debate. Finally, council said, "You know what? We'll just have a binding referendum and we'll let the taxpayers solve it." Well, we now have a ward system, and once there was a ward system for the municip-

pal council, the school council could also move to a ward system, which I must say made campaigning a whole lot easier if, as one person, you didn't have to walk the whole city of Guelph. But I digress.

But the point is, I think that a lot of the people around here can think of instances in which their municipality chose to hold a referendum, or maybe a neighbouring municipality. The right to choose to have a municipal referendum already exists.

What this bill does is take away the right of the council to decide how it's going to make up its own mind. Does it want to have a town hall? Does it want to accept delegations at council? Does it want to have a referendum? That's a council decision. As the member for Parkdale–High Park noted, here in Toronto it appears that the city council might choose to have a referendum on the subject of casinos. That's fine. That's what the law already says.

But why would we want to force the municipality? Why would we want to tell a municipality how it has to go about making up its own mind. People elected their councillors. The councillors should be able to decide how they go about having these decisions.

I find this very rich, that the people who forced amalgamation of school boards, who forced amalgamations of municipalities, without asking the municipalities or the school boards, now say that, for a zoning decision, you have to have a referendum.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. Can I ask members to quiet down a little? It's very noisy in here.

The member for Newmarket–Aurora.

Mr. Frank Klees: Thank you. Speaker, I'm pleased to rise to speak to the bill presented by my colleague the member for Lambton–Kent–Middlesex. I particularly like the title of this bill—and when you see the title, you also get to know the member himself—Ensuring Local Voices in New Casino Gambling Development Act. The member is all about supporting his constituents and being a voice here for them, not the other way around.

1540

Speaker, I only have a couple of minutes to speak, but I have to address the issue that the member from Guelph raised here about the fact that, "Well, we have to leave this to the municipal councils to determine." I will agree with the member on this point if, in fact, that municipal council ran on a platform of bringing in casinos. Then, her argument stands. But if this very important issue has not gone to the people and those councillors did not make it clear, as they were looking for the votes from their community, that they would support the establishment of a casino or expanding gambling, then I say to the member from Guelph, she couldn't be more wrong. It is absolutely contrary to the political process and the democratic process. We, here, should be representing our constituents. Municipal councillors should be representing their constituents.

The establishment of a casino is not a simple decision. It's not a matter of building a road or a bridge. This is

something that affects the quality of life in every community.

Let's talk about Ontario Place, the place that was established where people from all across Ontario could come together and celebrate Ontario, celebrate its heritage. To even suggest that on that pristine piece of property there would be a high-rise glitzy casino that would attract people from all across Ontario and the United States and they'd come here for the purpose of gambling, I say is robbing the people of Ontario of one of the jewels.

I trust that the government and the Minister of Finance would listen to the Minister of the Environment, because we know that he stands with us on this issue, as I know many other Liberal backbenchers do.

The Minister of the Environment may be the only cabinet minister there, but we are going to encourage him to take a stand amongst his cabinet colleagues for what is right.

Interjection: Like you did with Mike Harris.

Mr. Frank Klees: Yes, that's right; I did with Mike Harris. As a matter of fact, Speaker, I take great pride that in that government, we insisted that a fund be set up to address problem gaming. One of the questions I'm going to ask the Minister of the Environment is whether or not that fund is actually being used the way it was intended to be used.

Speaker, I'm going to defer to my colleagues. I want to thank my colleague once again for bringing this issue forward. It is all about ensuring that the people in our communities are properly represented, that we take their quality of life into consideration when these important decisions are made. That's what this bill does. Anyone who would vote against this is really voting against the local decision-making that we get elected to protect.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm proud to rise in support of the member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex's Bill 76. I think it's important to understand what the member is trying to do with this legislation. He's simply trying to enshrine in legislation, in the OLG act, a principle that I think the majority of Ontarians support, and that is that if a facility is going to be proposed for a municipality, that local residents have that forum to make sure that that community is a willing partner.

As I said, this is nothing new. In fact, it has been in practice for some time. I think it speaks to democracy being served, by allowing municipalities to have that say. Certainly, when it comes to the members opposite, I think, as well, Bill 76 provides us a bit of an insurance policy against the members opposite.

A referendum is nothing new. Back in November 2000, four communities in Leeds-Grenville were short-listed for an OLG casino. They all held referendums. Brockville was the nearest of margins, 52%; Leeds and the Thousand Islands township was 59%; Gananoque was 62%; and the town of Prescott was 72%.

Ultimately, the OLG Thousand Islands casino was opened in 2002 and it's shared between Leeds and the Thousand Islands in Gananoque.

I think the point is that when our party was in power, they allowed that opportunity for a referendum to be held by the municipality, because you know what, Speaker? It's all about respect for our municipal partners. I understand, and I think we all understand, that those local residents—whether it be in a debate, but certainly with the vote, it gives communities that sense of whether a gaming facility is really a fit for them, and I want to compliment the member for tabling Bill 76. Frankly, Speaker, I think, from all of our perspectives on this side, it's an issue of respect.

So I want to just briefly talk about the situation, really the short-sighted attack that the McGuinty government has on the horse racing industry. They've done so by unilaterally tearing up an agreement in closing the slots facilities at racetracks across the province.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would ask the member to restrict your comments to the bill in front of us.

Mr. Steve Clark: But Speaker, it was with no consultation, it was with no discussion. There was no local discussion—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would ask you to confine your comments to the bill and not argue with the Speaker.

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to quote Mark Steacy, Canadian horseman of the year, a trainer in the village of Lansdowne who employs 12 people—this is what he recently wrote—

Interjection: You're ignoring the Speaker.

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm not.

He's making a very good point that in terms of casinos, "It appears that the Liberals have a plan to oversaturate our province with casinos by building more and finding other 'in-your-face' venues for slot machines. In my mind, this is ludicrous given that the current system has a reasonable balance between job creation, profit and gambling addictions.

"I feel that all forms of gambling including betting on horses should be done where a dollar lost is a dollar worth of entertainment for the customer, similar to a night out at the movie theatre.

"A casino is a voluntary tax and in some cases it plays on people's addictions. It is not meant for people to win, or it wouldn't be there. Although they are great places to visit, do we want an Ontario like a Las Vegas or an economically depressed Atlantic City, where the social costs outweigh the initial profits?"

His final quote: "Do we want our children to be exposed daily to slot machines at our local restaurants or Walmarts? My thoughts are absolutely not." I want to thank Mr. Steacy for providing those comments.

Just in closing, because I know the member for Durham wants a minute, I have to commend democracy by Bill 76 and the member opposite. I know in my heart

that this bill should pass today and we should move forward.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Durham.

Mr. John O'Toole: Thank you to the member, as well. I have the greatest respect for the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, but in fairness, in my riding of Durham there's a very unique casino—and I've written to the Minister of Finance and I've spoken to the Minister of Finance. It's the Great Blue Heron Charity Casino, which is a First Nations casino. I can tell you this: They are the greatest supporters of Durham and that immediate area for needy and important groups.

But the issue here is about local democracy. The way he spoke about it—and as the member from Newmarket–Aurora mentioned, support municipalities in this. I'd urge the government members to stop for a moment. Their plan for Ontario, their job and economy plan, is more casinos; what a terrible vision for the province of Ontario. We need more hope and opportunity for our young people. We need to allow municipalities to grow. They've put their fingers around their neck on the Green Energy Act and they've done it on the casino thing and the horse racing business. I can only say that the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex speaks for many on Tim Hudak's team. Give municipalities the freedom to do the job, and don't be so hard on people that need the opportunity.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, you have two minutes to reply.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Thank you very much, Speaker, and I want to thank my fellow colleagues for their comments and feedback. I also want to thank the parties opposite for their ideas and input in relation to the piece of legislation that I'm proposing with Bill 76.

Specifically, thank you to the MPPs from Leeds–Grenville, Whitby–Oshawa, Newmarket–Aurora, Durham, Trinity–Spadina, Oak Ridges–Markham, Parkdale–High Park, Guelph, and all others. Also, thanks to the member from St. Catharines for all of his input to the debate today.

1550

I believe that it's important to listen to the voices in this Legislature, to respect all members of this House and to give careful thought and due consideration to what everyone in this House has to say.

Speaker, I believe it is even more important to listen to the people, to listen to the local voices and hear what they have to say. I believe that Ontario can recover from the current challenges this province is facing. I believe that Ontario can lead again, but in order to do that, I believe it is essential to include the people of Ontario in the decision-making process. Men and women throughout Ontario know what's best for their own communities. They know if a casino will help them or hurt them. They know if it will contribute to their community or take away from it, and they know if they want such a development or not.

Bill 76 will guarantee that local people have a say. We believe that, collectively, local communities and residents are best suited to make important decisions on issues like these. It has long been our party's position to ensure local decision-making before any new casino is built.

I would encourage all my honourable colleagues in this House to join with me today in support of this bill on second reading, and I look forward to discussing this bill further at the committee stage.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. We'll take the vote at the end of regular business.

ELEPHANT PROTECTION ACT, 2012 LOI DE 2012 SUR LA PROTECTION DES ÉLÉPHANTS

Mr. Berardinetti moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 69, An Act to amend the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act to protect elephants / Projet de loi 69, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société de protection des animaux de l'Ontario afin de protéger les éléphants.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I want to start off by saying that on April 18, 2012, I introduced Bill 69 to amend the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, otherwise known as the OSPCA Act. Bill 69 is designed to provide greater protection for elephants in the province of Ontario. These amendments will prohibit the use of abusive weapons such as bull hooks against elephants and will restrict the amount of time elephants can be chained without the ability to move around freely. These amendments are necessary for both elephant welfare as well as public safety.

The preamble to this bill addresses the purpose of Bill 69 in detail. I would like to focus on several key aspects of Bill 69.

The bull hook is a tool of discipline used in elephant management programs and circuses. The bull hook, or ankus, is a sharp, pointed hook used for prodding and to discourage undesirable behaviour. The bull hook is embedded into the most sensitive areas of an elephant: around the feet, behind the ears, under the chin, inside the mouth and other sensitive areas around the face. Other similar devices are used to electric shock elephants.

The use of these implements is to dominate through fear and violence. Fear-based training methods are never in the best interests of the animal. Often, the animal suffers from permanent scarring, lifelong injuries and, ultimately, death.

Serious threats to public safety are inherent, due to the cruel and abusive training methods involved with performing captive animals. Elephants are known to escape their chains and, because of that type of abusive fear

training, they will rampage, causing incredible damage, injury and death.

There are some who would argue, “Why are we considering this bill on elephant welfare right now?” I’m happy to address this issue. This is an issue of concern, and it focuses on highly intelligent animals across the province. This widespread interest in elephant welfare is evidenced by all the media coverage of elephants in Ontario in the past week alone. More than 100 articles about elephants have been printed in Canadian newspapers, and this week, elephant stories have been on the front pages of both the Toronto Star and the Globe and Mail.

As members of this Parliament, it is easy for us to lose sight of the fact that people across Ontario have concerns in a wide area of issues. In this Legislature, we debate important issues such as the economy, health care and education. All, of course, are critical for our province and our constituents.

I want to be clear that this bill is focused on elephants. This bill will not impact other animals, and there will be no implications to the agriculture industry from the bill. It is important to note that the courts have divided animals into two classifications: those that are used domestically, such as farm animals and companion animals; and secondly, those that are wild by nature, including elephants.

A column that appeared in yesterday’s Toronto Star, by Thomas Walkom, contained the following comments:

“The battle is over the relationship between humans and animals—or, to be more precise, between humans and other animals.

“At issue is a fundamental question: Do animals exist merely to accommodate human beings, or do they have a purpose of their own? ...

“Those surprised at the bitterness of this battle should harken back four years to the debate in Parliament over strengthening animal cruelty laws.

“That issue, too, initially seemed one of motherhood. Who could object to efforts designed to protect animals from being abused?

“But it turned out that many did object—from the hunting and fishing lobby ... to the research lobby to the agri-business lobby, to the aboriginal lobby....

“They successfully derailed the bill.

“Nor is the battle confined to Toronto and Ottawa. The Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals ran into a buzz-saw in late February after inspectors raided 16 farms northwest of London.

“Many farmers view OSPCA inspectors as meddling do-gooders. In this case, members of the radical-right Ontario Landowners’ Association rallied to protest the raids....

“And the OSPCA? Except for reporting the barest details, it kept a low profile. History suggests that when the debate over animals is addressed head on, those who believe such creatures exist solely for the pleasure and profit of humans generally win.”

That article basically expands on a very important point that I want to make. Elephants are highly intelligent

wild animals, and because of this and their sheer size and stature, they are considered to be dangerous and have been responsible for injuries and deaths of many people when these animals are pushed to their limits through abuse or constant confinement.

When elephants are required to perform in animal shows and performances, including circus shows, some elephant handlers still employ abusive and outdated disciplinary tools. The elephant managers who try to justify the use of bull hooks by claiming they are used just as a guide similar to a dog leash, however, are not in line with what the truth really is. For example, a dog is not fearful of the leash; in fact, most dogs wag their tails when they see it. On the other hand, the bull hook, designed to cause the animal pain and invoke fear, is something that elephants don’t like.

An appropriate analogy would be holding a gun to someone’s head. It does not matter if the weapon is loaded; the threat of injury or death is enough to scare someone into submission. The same is true of the bull hook. This is why the beatings go on behind closed doors away from public view or from any government agency’s view. But the animals, in this case elephants, do not forget what may happen to them if they do not perform.

Modern, progressive zoos and sanctuaries around the world have stopped using fear or dominance-based training of elephants in favour of safer, more humane systems such as protected contact management systems. This system is used in the Toronto Zoo. I’m going to repeat: It’s the protected contact management system. This system rewards elephants for good behaviour rather than disciplining them for unwanted behaviours. The elephants are not restrained for substantial periods of time and only restrained using specially designed barriers.

According to Dr. Jane Goodall, elephants are unique in the animal kingdom and are a species of animal that is not suitable for captivity. World-renowned elephant scientists such as Dr. Cynthia Moss, Dr. Joyce Poole, Dr. Keith Lindsay and many others who have spent their entire careers studying elephant behaviour agree that elephants are highly intelligent social animals with family structures similar to humans, and should never be trained using weapons such as bull hooks and should not be chained or otherwise confined in very small spaces for a long period of time. These practices cause them physical and physiological harm that not only injures the animal but creates a very dangerous situation.

1600

Additionally, Dr. Bradshaw has studied psychological issues for elephants, and because of her work we now know that elephants are self-aware and can suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder when they’re attacked or under constant threat. One of my colleagues will be discussing this issue in more detail.

The question in front of us today is: Why is this law necessary, given that the OSPCA Act covers all species of animals? The answer is simple. The OSPCA Act only deals with animal suffering in a retroactive fashion,

punishing harmful behaviour only after it has occurred and only if it's seen by a member of the public or an enforcement officer, but does not prevent suffering occurring in the first place. In the case of elephant abuse, the abusers are very careful to do the beating when there are no enforcement people present and are careful to hide the weapons they use on elephants from the public at large.

I want to read part of a transcript from a former elephant trainer working in the United States who quit his job and stated: "Whenever the" United States Department of Agriculture "inspected the circus, the circus always knew in advance that they were coming. We were always told to clean up; don't hit the elephants when they come around. I know for a fact that any attempt by the USDA to regulate the circus or to enforce laws is a joke. I was present at many inspections where the inspectors" were told not to handle the elephants in any kind of bad fashion and to hide the bull hooks. "Obviously, they would not be able to regulate a situation that they see only two or three times a year."

Circuses easily get away with routine abuse because no government agency monitors the training sessions, which are separate from the actual performances. Undercover video footage of animal training sessions has shown that elephants are beaten with bull hooks and shocked with electric prods, and some circus trainers have even been documented using blowtorches towards elephants. Because these practices are so abusive, they're never done in the presence of the public, or when an inspection agency is doing inspections at the circus. These abusive beatings are "necessary" in order for the elephants to be in constant fear of pain and reprisal whenever they see a handler using a bull hook.

Frustrated by years of beatings, bull hooks and shackles, some elephants snap. When an elephant rebels against a trainer's physical dominance, trainers cannot protect themselves, let alone the public.

In 1994, an elephant named Tyke killed her trainer and injured 12 spectators before being gunned down while running terrified through downtown Honolulu. She was shot almost 100 times.

In 1992, Officer Blaine Doyle was forced to shoot and kill Janet, an elephant who charged out of the Great American Circus arena with five children on her back.

In more than 35 dangerous incidents since 2000, elephants have bolted from circuses, run amok through streets, crashed into buildings, attacked members of the public and killed and injured their own handlers.

The argument is that it has not happened here yet, but the Florida Legislature could have done the same thing today before Janet rampaged, or any other jurisdiction had it happened there. We could remind them that Tyke was in Canada just weeks before rampaging in Hawaii; it could have happened here. Also, there was an elephant handler killed in Timmins by a circus elephant in 1999. An elephant keeper at the Toronto Zoo was gored by an elephant in 1993 before they moved to more humane and safe training and handling at that zoo.

Recently, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, the largest zoo association in North America, put out a new policy on elephant management which restricts the use of bull hooks, also known as free contact, citing this form of elephant handling as a risk to occupational health and safety after a number of elephant handlers have been killed.

For the reasons listed above, Mr. Speaker, I feel that the amendment I am proposing will be widely supported by residents of Ontario, and I urge all members to support this important elephant protection initiative. Thank you.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I'll ask all the members to my left—this is the second warning. There's a lot of conversation going on, the place is very noisy and I can't hear the speaker.

Further debate?

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's my job to join the debate today on Bill 69, the Elephant Protection Act, re the OSPCA Act. I have to ask myself, I have to ask this Legislature and I have to ask the member from—is it Scarborough Southwest?

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: Yes.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Scarborough Southwest; I didn't have time to look it up.

There must be a more pressing issue in your municipality or in your constituency than this act that you're bringing forth today. However, this is your right as a private member, so we will respond to it.

I do ask why would we—what is the necessity to bring this special protection into the OSPCA Act with regards to the treatment of elephants? In fact, when the act was reformed not that long ago, the minister—Minister Bartolucci at the time—said, "The Provincial Animal Welfare Act includes new animal protection and investigation powers. For example, the OSPCA inspectors now have the authority to enter zoos, circuses, petting farms and any other property where animals are kept for exhibition, entertainment, boarding, hire or sale."

And the definition in the act of "distress," which is already in the act: "'distress' means the state of being in need of proper care, water, food or shelter or being injured, sick or in pain or suffering or being abused or subject to undue or unnecessary hardship, privation or neglect." It covers all of the possible wrongs that an elephant may be forced to endure.

So I ask myself why the member is making this specific thing. This act would only allow the restraint or tethering of an elephant if they were being loaded for transportation or for medical treatment. That's why I can see the bill—and it's in here somewhere. It would essentially prohibit any circus from having elephants for entertainment or whatever purposes.

Barnum and Bailey—you know, the Greatest Show on Earth, as they say—has many, many elephants. In fact, it is world-renowned for its Center for Elephant Conservation, which is an institution in Florida. In fact, it's a place where elephants are trained, but they are also taken there

when they are retired from the show, and they are treated in such a fashion that none other than Jack Hanna, the director emeritus of the Columbus Zoo—you might remember years ago when Jack Hanna was a pretty familiar and regular guest on the Johnny Carson show and a world-renowned animal expert.

I'll tell you what he had to say about it. He said, "A concerted effort to save the Asian elephant is imperative. Zoos are doing their best with the resources they have, but most can't afford to maintain a large breeding group of elephants. The Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Centre for Elephant Conservation is dedicated to saving the Asian elephant and has both the resources and the commitment to succeed." That's from none other than Jack Hanna.

So what I would say to the member from Scarborough is that perhaps he should be asking himself what his government is doing. This is how well Barnum and Bailey treats their retired elephants. Maybe he should be asking his government how well we're treating our seniors in this province in their retirement years. Perhaps he could come up with a private member's bill that would help with the treatment of them.

The other issue I would like to say to him with respect to—you know, I saw some of that press conference today and it was a little disturbing to watch some of the videos, but I don't believe any of those videos were from Canada. I don't believe any of those videos were from Canada, or Ontario. In fact, one of the stampedes, I believe, was from the Philippines. So if you're going to try to make your case, you should at least do it in a straight-up way and not try and bring the worst of the worst from all across the world to try to imply that this is something that we need to be dealing with in Ontario today. We've got some serious problems in this province.

Every one of us here who has ever had the opportunity to view elephants, either in captivity or for those who are fortunate and blessed enough to have ever viewed them in the wild—me not being one of them. But we're all aware of the importance of elephants.

There's no argument about one thing: All of the studies that have been done—elephants are one of the most intelligent and sensitive creatures on the face of the earth. They may be the largest land animal, but they're also one of the most intelligent and sensitive. We have to do everything we can to protect elephants, as we protect all wildlife that is not in a position to defend or protect themselves.

But I will say that there must be some more important piece of legislation that the member could have brought out today than this bill to protect elephants. This province is in trouble. I have no objection to this bill because I don't believe that it will be supported by the government through third reading, because it's unnecessary. The regulations are already in place in the OSPCA Act to protect elephants and all animals that are part of any kind of entertainment act or circus.

We are here to protect all animals—elephants not being excepted, but not being exceptional either. All animals need to enjoy the same protection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Of course it's a privilege, always, to speak in this House. I listened to the comments from the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, and he was absolutely right that the OSPCA Act does in fact cover the abuse of exotics. There's no question in considering elephants an exotic; they aren't in most of the world, but they are here.

The member was pointing to particular practices. To give him the benefit of the doubt, he was pointing to particular practices where elephants are concerned, that are not practised on other animals. I understand the motivation. I understand that he's bringing this bill forward from the goodness of his heart for creatures that he feels are being maltreated.

That being said, I have to look at the broader context within which this bill has been brought forward. I'm going to limit it to animals. There's no question, we could go on for days if we wanted to talk about humans, as well.

But just for animals, we were privy to a horror in BC, when 100 sled dogs were killed because they were no longer useful. Yet we live in a province where, by the most conservative estimates, we have euthanized, since 2005, over 1,000 dogs just because of the way they look. These were family pets, some of them taken out of people's backyards when they weren't home and didn't know and had to find out where they were—because that's part of the mandate for the OSPCA.

Currently, as we all know, there is a committee looking at Bill 16, which is a bill to overturn the so-called pit bull ban, even though, by the way, there's no such thing as pit bulls—I can't say that often enough. There are only—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Can I ask the member to confine her comments to the bill in front of us?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I'm taking the scenic route, Mr. Speaker, but I'm getting there. Again, these are animals, like the elephants that he feels such a great deal of compassion for—these are animals that are a little closer to home; i.e., in our homes. They're family pets we're speaking about here. Only 114 of them are covered by that statute. The rest that have been euthanized aren't anything related to pit bulls. They're simply animals that look a certain way; they're elephants. But I wonder why this government isn't concerned about all animals, not just elephants. We're talking about animals here. So there's a particular instance.

I'll give you another instance where his concern for elephants might actually be redirected to animals that this government seems to have no concern for, and that is, for example, under the OSPCA there were something like 100 dogs killed because they had ringworm, when we know it's a very curable illness. All the veterinarians, who, by the way, all testified before the Bill 16 issue—not one has testified against Bill 16. Everyone who has

come has testified for it—overturning the pit bull madness. We had the member from Newmarket–Aurora, who brought forward a motion to have government oversight over OSPCA. There you have a direct bill dealing with OSPCA. Clearly, they were out of control on this one particular issue, and out of that came something called the LeSage report, which called for a task force—a task force—to look at the way OSPCA was handling things, among others, and look at the welfare of animals. I would issue a challenge to this government: Where is that task force? You know, they said, “We’re dealing with it. We’re going to strike a task force.” Where is the task force? Where is the work? As far as we on this side of the House are concerned, the same kind of lack of training and the same kind of ridiculous, reactive behaviour on—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I would ask the member once more to speak to the bill.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Yes, I’m coming back. It’s an OSPCA bill; it opens up the OSPCA.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I’m sorry. The member has a bill in front of us that is specific.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Yes, that is specific to opening up the OSPCA Act, and I’m talking about the OSPCA Act that he wants to open up, all things considered.

To get back to elephants, I have no doubt that there are elephants being abused. My friend from Timiskaming–Cochrane is also going to take some time. He’s going to speak about the agricultural component, because I think he was a little bit dismissive about that as well. The member from Timiskaming–Cochrane is going to deal with that aspect of this bill as well.

To get back to elephants, I have no doubt there are some elephants being abused; I have no doubt that the techniques he’s talking about are abusive. But one has to question this focus. We’ve asked for oversight of the OSPCA in terms of their practices for all animals, and this government has refused to do it, and they refused to strike a task force to even look at doing it.

First, we would like to say, draw the lens back, do first things first. Look at the OSPCA, which is dealing, of course, with the OSPCA Act. Let’s look at what they’re doing generally with all animals, and of course with elephants as well—with elephants as well as all other animals. The single focus on one particular animal, while laudable, gives cold comfort to those dog owners who have seen their dogs taken away and euthanized. It even gives cold comfort to his own member from Willowdale, who I remember introduced an exotic zoo animals act. What ever happened to that? That kind of died; that died on the order paper.

So there’s a big picture here. He’s pointing at a small part of it. Kudos for pointing out a small part of it, but really what’s important here is to look at the big picture: to look at the OSPCA Act, to open it up and change many aspects of the OSPCA Act; in particular, to have government oversight over this agency, which has occasionally acted in a peculiarly rogue fashion, I might say.

I look forward to the comments of the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane, and I say from the bottom of my heart: Do I love elephants? I love elephants, Mr. Speaker. Do I wish that all elephants could be treated well? Absolutely, and I think all New Democrats would say we love elephants and we wish all elephants could be treated well. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Grant Crack: I’d like to thank my colleague from Scarborough Southwest for bringing this important animal rights issue to the forefront. I’d also like to thank the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and the member from Parkdale–High Park for their comments.

Like many of my colleagues in this House, I’m an animal lover. Throughout my life I have been blessed by having pets at home, primarily dogs. Presently, I enjoy the company of a two-year-old Great Dane and also a nine-year-old pug. Both are females. They’re both beautiful dogs, and of course there’s quite a size difference between these two wonderful pets. But surprisingly it’s the pug that is the dominant one. So you have the small dog dominating the bigger one. I can also tell you that they’re very cuddly and there’s not too much room in bed at night.

I mention the size difference of the pets because it reflects the aspect of Bill 69, which my colleague brings forward, where a larger being is dominated by a smaller being. For a century, elephants have been used for human entertainment. They’ve been taken from their natural habitats in various regions of the world and brought and used as spectacles, and for what reason? They’ve been brought for human entertainment.

As the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has indicated, they are the largest animals on earth and live an average of 50 to 70 years: beautiful creatures, great memories, highly intelligent with intelligence levels comparable to dolphins.

What’s disturbing in today’s world is that some elephant trainers still use outdated, cruel methods of training such as bull hooks or ankuses or even electric prods. So instead of using positive reinforcement—positive reinforcement—this is negative reinforcement. It’s not something that we use on our children or our own pets, but this is what elephant trainers do use. In today’s world, that’s no longer acceptable.

1620

I encourage all members of this House to support Bill 69, an act to amend the OSPCA Act.

But I also want to encourage members of this House to watch a wonderful movie, a wonderful romance story, called *Water for Elephants*. Has anybody heard of that in the House? It tells a story about what circus life was like back in the 1930s, and it clearly shows excessive use of a bull hook while training elephants. These bull hooks were used to make the elephants compliant. I’m not going to divulge too many more details of that particular movie, because I’d like everybody to go out and rent it and enjoy it, but I will say the elephant eventually com-

plied once they determined that the elephant understood Polish. He didn't understand the bull hook; he understood Polish. So it pays also to learn a second language.

This brings me back to my previous point regarding memory and intelligence. My colleague from Scarborough Southwest has done great research, and we found out that there were about 65 instances where elephants have rebelled with tragic consequences. I suspect that this behaviour is due in part to the fact that they remember the abuse that they have endured from their trainers.

Instead of using bull hooks as negative reinforcement tools, they should be using positive reinforcement. Using bull hooks or any other tools used to inflict pain on elephants is not acceptable, and it's time to end this practice and pass this legislation.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Ms. Dipika Damerla: I rise today to speak to the elephant protection bill.

I'd like to begin by thanking all of the members who spoke: the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke; the member from Scarborough Southwest, who has introduced this bill; the member from Parkdale–High Park; and, of course, my seatmate, the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

You know, as elected officials, we often talk about the fact that we have been elected to represent the people in our riding, to give a voice to those who have no voice. Well, I believe truly that we have been elected not just to represent the people in our ridings or the people in Ontario but the truly voiceless, and that includes the animals who inhabit this planet with us. I know it's very easy to ridicule this idea, but really, when you think about it, we do have a duty not just to the people of Ontario but to everybody: all sentient beings who live in this province of ours and, for that matter, on this planet.

I believe that through the ages—

Mr. Paul Miller: What about seniors?

Ms. Dipika Damerla: I'm sorry?

Mr. Paul Miller: What about seniors?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Would the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek please come to order.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: I'll get to that.

Through the ages, I believe that man has had an uneasy relationship with animals. On the one hand, we have often shown exemplary affection and devotion to animals, and on the other, we have shown exemplary inhumane cruelty to them as well.

I think that while the details in this bill are really important, which is about how to treat elephants humanely, this bill is more important than just the details, because I think it recognizes the basic fact that all sentient beings have the right to be treated right. That's what this bill really is about.

Quite frankly, even as a child, I recall that I was quite uncomfortable going to zoos, not because I didn't like animals or I wasn't curious, but because I really, really

didn't like to see them caged up. Even today, I am very uncomfortable, for instance, going into a pet store to see little puppies in these little, tiny cages waiting for somebody to buy them. It breaks my heart.

This bill really is about giving a voice to the voiceless, and I'm really pleased to be able to stand up today and do that. I hope all sides of the House will respect this idea and support this bill.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Durham.

Mr. John O'Toole: The member from Scarborough Southwest certainly could have concentrated on the 600,000 people in Ontario that are out of work, not that we have any disrespect at all for animals. I did watch the video, his press on this thing, and I think as was mentioned, it's kind of inappropriate, really, in terms of quite a push message on it. But I want to be very clear: On this side of the House, no member here whom I can see would in any way be in favour of any kind of support of cruelty to animals—let's be truthful about that—whether they're domestic animals or animals for our quality of life.

There's a huge issue here, but in my riding, I put it on a different level. In my riding of Durham I have three quite significant zoos as well as animal sanctuaries. I'd like to give a little credit to them because, from that perspective, Bowmanville Zoo in my riding is the oldest private zoo in North America. It's a voice in conservation and education. It has really been quite a leader in CAZA and the other organizations. The owner, Michael Hackenberger, is among the world's leading trainers, and his animals are in demand—some might disagree with this—for movies, TV commercials, magazines and advertising. You might say that the three most famous constituents in my riding, who have all appeared in many movies—Angus, Vance, Caesar and Limba are a few of the names of the animals that come to mind from the Bowmanville Zoo. I was happy to bring my grandchildren there. They have a great Christmas pageant. It has been filmed by CBC. It's a wonderful zoo and a very caring place for children to be exposed to animals and to learn how important they are in our lives.

In fact, Limba stopped briefly in front of my constituency office just this past week on the way downtown in Bowmanville for a local promotion. They're a very important part of the community.

The zoo is an accredited member of CAZA, the Canadian Association of Zoos and Aquariums, and it's a popular tourist destination as well. But I would be wrong not to mention that there are other zoos in my riding that I believe are worth mentioning.

Jungle Cat World: Some of you would see that on the way to Peterborough. Its proprietors are Wolf and Christa Klose, and it's operated by their sons Peter and Michael. It's Jungle Cat World; they have all the exotic cats in the world.

On the other end of my riding, up in the north part, is Northwood Zoo, an animal sanctuary, where Norm Phillips is the owner and trainer; and Anthony Vanzuilekom,

also a world-recognized trainer in zoos and in animal training, I guess. Some people may not like that.

I want to acknowledge that Susan Morris from my riding, who is probably involved with organizations like PETA and stuff like that, called. I did try to call her and speak to her.

But I in no way would condone anything that causes cruelty to animals.

I want to leave some time for my constituent. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: I appreciate the opportunity to speak to Bill 69. As a cattle farmer myself, I think I have a very clear perspective on the importance of the safe and humane treatment of animals. No one—at least, no right-thinking person—condones animal abuse.

Let me start off by saying that time permits me only a truncated opportunity to speak to this bill. If the member from Scarborough Southwest had the memory of an elephant, he would remember that just two weeks ago, his colleagues and he voted against changes to the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, the act that covers the humane treatment of animals in this province. His rationale for voting against any changes proposed by the member from Carleton—Mississippi Mills was that the current act offered all the necessary protection for animals. By his vote, he indicated that he didn't believe that there were any deficiencies or oversights in the act, and yet just two weeks later, he is singling out one animal for extra attention.

This is an animal—one of hundreds of species—not native to Ontario. Was it one of the domesticated farm animals that exist, one of the millions in this province? No, Mr. Speaker. Presumably, after watching the movie *Water for Elephants* or maybe his copy of *Dumbo*, the member from Scarborough Southwest decided that elephants should be singled out for extra protection.

The other elephant in the room is why he has not sought to protect other circus animals or exotic animals. Aren't snakes cuddly enough for the member opposite? I guess he doesn't care about giraffes, lions or tigers. Those animals travel in circuses too. They need the protection just as much.

The act actually suggests that it be made illegal to restrain an elephant with a rope or other tether. Fairly light mesh-wire fences allow free-range chickens in this province. A slightly stronger fence allows free-range cattle. Does the member from Scarborough Southwest believe that we should have free-range elephants in Ontario?

1630

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. John Vanthof: I appreciate this opportunity to comment on Bill 69, An Act to amend the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act to protect elephants. It was the choice of the member from

Scarborough Southwest to bring this forward, and I think we should talk about it, because it's his choice.

I've spoken to him a couple of times privately about animal issues, and he's very concerned about animals, as everyone here is; we are. But I do speak against this bill, and why I do is because he wants to put a subsection under "distress." To me, and to many, especially in the rural communities, distress is the same for all animals. If an animal is under distress, it's under distress, be it an elephant or a mouse. That's the one fault that I find with this bill. You can't have a bill that covers animals in general, which is the OSPCA Act, which we do have problems with; we would like to change other parts of this bill to make it into what we think would work better. But to specifically point out one animal in this legislation, to me, defeats the purpose of the legislation.

One thing that turned me here, and I don't pretend to be an animal expert—I'm not—but I do know all about cattle. I've worked with them my whole life. It said you couldn't use an electric prod on an elephant. That may or may not be true. We should have someone who actually is an expert in elephants decide that, and I'm sure somewhere they have best management practices for elephants, because we do for cattle. There are occasions that you have to use an electric prod to save a cow's life. I'm not going to go into it, but I would be happy to do that. If a cow is stuck in a stall or something, they'll get really stressed out, and sometimes the only way—and I wish the member from Guelph was here; her husband is a vet. Sometimes they're so stressed out that if you give them a prod, it kind of shakes them so that they realize—and they sometimes will get up from that.

So if we bring this forward, and they say, "Okay, our next bill is going to be a private member's bill on cows, and we can't use electric prods"—well, who are we to say that electric prods are or aren't good? Maybe for elephants, they're not, and maybe the other things that are described aren't either, but this isn't the place to address that. The place to address that is whoever does the best management practices or makes the rules—the experts on elephants.

Elephants fall under this act. This act should treat all animals with respect, not point to one animal or another animal. I think that's where this fails, because you can't—it's too bad. When the member from Renfrew was talking—I have to get my joke in here too—I said, "Well, maybe we should have a special line for yaks," because they're also an animal.

Interjections.

Interjection: Yeah, we need to protect Yak. Protect Yak.

Mr. John Vanthof: And it's easy to make a joke, but the act should protect all animals, and it shouldn't pick one or another. We're opening a door. If this act actually comes into being, we're opening a door where we'll have to discuss, "Well, what do we do for cows?" or "What do we do for sheep?" or "What do we do"—best management practices exist for those, and we should make sure they exist, but they shouldn't be written specifically in

this act, because if you're going to do it for elephants, you're going to have to do it for an awful lot of species.

I know the member is trying to do the right thing. I know he is, and I respect him for that. All people who have had pets, who have commercial animals—the reason we have those, and the reason we have them for pets, or the reason we make a living from them, is because we love and respect animals. But to pick one out—I think we would be doing not only disrespect to the elephants but disrespect to the animal kingdom as a whole.

We should look for other ways to do it, to fix the act for all animals, but not make a specific clause for one species. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: I'd like to rise in support of this particular bill. I'd like to say something before I start. This is private members' business, not government business. This is a time when every private member has the right to bring forward what they believe in, to be able to move a piece of legislation forward based on their conscience. That goes for all members in this House, and ridiculing another member's bill is not respectful. In fact, if you don't like it, just vote against it, but ridicule serves no one well in this House—

Interjection.

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: I don't care where it comes from, it's wrong.

What we have in front of us is a bill that deals with two issues: elephants in zoos and the circus, not elephants running around on a farm. The fact of the matter is that an elephant prod is used on these animals in those two instances to make that particular animal submissive.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Would the member from Northumberland–Quinte West come to order, please.

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: This animal, proven by research—and I give you the research: It's Diana Reiss from Columbia University; they started with dolphins, and it goes on with the Bronx Zoo, Frans de Waal and Joshua Plotnik from Emory University in Atlanta. They did some work along the same lines with dolphins, and whether or not there's a self-identification with this particular animal. They concluded there are only three—apes, dolphins and elephants—that have an issue of self-awareness. What they did is they put a large mirror in front of the animal, the animal recognized itself and actually started to touch the mark with its trunk, which meant it had an issue of self-awareness.

All we're saying is that if someone comes into this country, this province, with an elephant, they must treat that animal respectfully, and we will not accept the use of a prod. Prods are painful for elephants, and they're used to make them submissive; actually, there's significant proof that states that it makes them also extraordinarily aggressive. In Timmins, for example, there was an ele-

phant that did kill its keeper because it was prodded just once too often and it went on a rampage.

Again, I appreciate the other issues that have been raised. I respectfully say, they need to be able to have those discussions. As I said, what we're talking about here is very specific to zoos, making sure that they don't use this device, and to circuses, that they're not permitted to come in and entertain our children by actually using a device that hurts the animal that supposedly is entertaining them to make them submissive. That's all this bill says.

The Toronto Zoo, in fact, no longer uses this particular bull hook, and the reason is because it was proven to them that it was painful and unnecessary, that in fact what they could do, and should be able to do, is find alternative methods, which they have done in zoos around the world. All we're asking is for the same to be here in this country and in this province in particular.

Again, I say, Mr. Speaker, I think all bills that come before us in this House, regardless of where they come from, especially private members' bills, deserve thoughtfulness and respect from all members, not to be chided because someone thinks that it's lesser than something they bring forward. If you really do believe in the whole process of democracy—I appreciate you may not like the bill; that's fine, you have the option to vote against it. But certainly, to ridicule it is unacceptable behaviour in this House.

What I again would like to share with you, if I may, is that when you make an elephant compliant and you use something that actually hurts that animal—and remember, they also chain them so they have no way, obviously, to retaliate—that animal has one of the largest brains and has a memory, so aggressiveness builds up in the animal, and we've had significant examples of that aggressiveness throughout the years.

There was an example where a number of children were on an animal at the Bronx Zoo—they've since changed their habits; this was years ago—where a number of children were riding on the animal. The animal didn't perform its duty, so the handlers took the animal to the back and proceeded to kill it by using the prods extensively, five of them, until that animal was dead. That's not how we deal with humane issues.

The OSPCA does have some protection, but not to this extent. What we're saying, and I don't disagree, is that's an act that also could have a review, but at least have the conversation about what you believe in. Let it go to committee. Let people have an opportunity to talk about what's important to them—not just to you here, but to all of the people of Ontario. I can't think of one person I know who would sanction any animal being prodded with a prod to make them compliant.

1640

Remember, this is only about zoos, circuses and elephants; nothing else. It doesn't open up doors, as has been suggested. What it does do is remind us of our responsibility to those animals that do not have a voice.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member from Scarborough Southwest, you have two minutes for a reply.

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I appreciate the comments made by various members around the House on this bill.

The important thing I'm trying to do today—I'm not unconcerned about the economy. I'm not unconcerned about education. I'm not unconcerned about health care. I'm just concerned about an issue that's dear to my heart. I own three rescue cats. Many here around the room own pets as well.

Elephants are a different category. They are perhaps the most intelligent animals on this earth, along with some apes and some dolphins. Elephants have cognitive abilities.

I'm trying to bring awareness to the issue. I honestly don't care if people want to defeat this bill today or move it to committee. What I want to do is bring awareness to a very important issue, and that issue is elephants.

The video shown earlier today, that was mentioned earlier, was filmed by people from PETA. The people from PETA were able to film the abuse that was used by Ringling Brothers Circus.

Tyke, the elephant I spoke about earlier, was in Canada just a week before it went to Hawaii. It was moved to Honolulu, Hawaii, and went on a rampage and killed people. A handler was killed by a circus elephant in Timmins, here in Ontario. If we don't consider this issue now, the problem is, it's going to happen in the future at some point in time. So I'm trying to be pre-emptive with this bill.

If someone believes that cows are intelligent—I'm not saying they're not—and they deserve special treatment, then bring forward a bill on that.

Through my research and through the science that I've seen, elephants are perhaps the smartest animals on the earth, and it's inappropriate to treat them the way they do in circuses and in some zoos.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

LABOUR RELATIONS
AMENDMENT ACT
(FAIRNESS FOR EMPLOYEES), 2012
LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR
LES RELATIONS DE TRAVAIL
(ÉQUITÉ À L'ÉGARD DES EMPLOYÉS)

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): We will deal first with ballot item number 34, standing in the name of Mr. Natyshak.

Mr. Natyshak has moved second reading of Bill 77.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is being referred to—

Mr. Taras Natyshak: The Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): It's requested that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. Agreed? The Bill is so referred.

ENSURING LOCAL VOICES
IN NEW CASINO GAMBLING
DEVELOPMENT ACT, 2012

LOI DE 2012 VISANT
À GARANTIR LA CONSULTATION
DES POPULATIONS LOCALES
AVANT LA CRÉATION
DE NOUVEAUX CASINOS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. McNaughton has moved second reading of Bill 76.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion, please say "nay."

I believe the ayes have it.

We will deal with the vote at the end of regular business.

ELEPHANT PROTECTION ACT, 2012
LOI DE 2012 SUR LA PROTECTION
DES ÉLÉPHANTS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Berardinetti has moved second reading of Bill 69.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is referred to—

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: The Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): It's requested to have the bill referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy. Agreed? It's agreed. So referred.

Mr. Frank Klees: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Point of order, the member from Newmarket–Aurora.

Mr. Frank Klees: Speaker, I had asked that Bill 77 be noted as division. I don't think you heard me. I would ask for consideration, please.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I'd advise the member that the bill carried on a voice vote, but it will be so noted that you requested on division.

ENSURING LOCAL VOICES
IN NEW CASINO GAMBLING
DEVELOPMENT ACT, 2012

LOI DE 2012 VISANT
À GARANTIR LA CONSULTATION
DES POPULATIONS LOCALES
AVANT LA CRÉATION
DE NOUVEAUX CASINOS

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Call in the members. It will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1646 to 1651.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. McNaughton has moved second reading of Bill 76.

All those in favour of the motion, please stand and remain standing.

Ayes

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Harris, Michael	Nicholls, Rick
Arnott, Ted	Hillier, Randy	O'Toole, John
Bailey, Robert	Hudak, Tim	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Barrett, Toby	Jackson, Rod	Pettapiece, Randy
Bisson, Gilles	Klees, Frank	Prue, Michael
Bradley, James J.	Kwinter, Monte	Qaadri, Shafiq
Campbell, Sarah	Leal, Jeff	Schein, Jonah
Cansfield, Donna H.	Leone, Rob	Scott, Laurie
Chudleigh, Ted	MacLaren, Jack	Shurman, Peter
Clark, Steve	MacLeod, Lisa	Singh, Jagmeet
Coteau, Michael	Mantha, Michael	Smith, Todd
Damerla, Dipika	Marchese, Rosario	Tabuns, Peter
DiNovo, Cheri	McDonnell, Jim	Taylor, Monique
Dunlop, Garfield	McKenna, Jane	Thompson, Lisa M.
Elliott, Christine	McNaughton, Monte	Vanthof, John
Fedeli, Victor	Miller, Norm	Walker, Bill
Forster, Cindy	Miller, Paul	Wilson, Jim
Gélinas, France	Milligan, Rob E.	Yakabuski, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Natyshak, Taras	Yurek, Jeff

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Please, could I have everybody let me finish the vote, please. And for other votes that we take in the House, it's really annoying that the House is so noisy and the Clerk is trying to get the count. I think a little bit of respect for the table would be really appropriate.

All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

Nays

Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Mangat, Amrit	Sousa, Charles
Broten, Laurel C.	McMeekin, Ted	Takhar, Harinder S.
Delaney, Bob	McNeely, Phil	Wong, Soo
Dhillon, Vic	Milloy, John	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dickson, Joe	Moridi, Reza	Zimmer, David
Duguid, Brad	Piruzza, Teresa	
Jeffrey, Linda	Sandals, Liz	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 57; the nays are 19.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is being referred to—

Mr. Monte McNaughton: To Finance and Economic Affairs.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Request that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs. Agreed? Agreed.

AMBULANCE AMENDMENT ACT
(AIR AMBULANCES), 2012

LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LES AMBULANCES
(SERVICES D'AMBULANCE AÉRIENS)

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 30, 2012, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 50, An Act to amend the Ambulance Act with respect to air ambulance services / Projet de loi 50, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les ambulances en ce qui concerne les services d'ambulance aériens.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Order, please. At the adjournment of debate, the member for Richmond Hill had completed his remarks. Questions and comments?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'm going to get a chance to speak to this a little bit later, but I've got to say, the government's handling of this particular file has been less than stellar, I guess, would be the right way to put it.

Clearly, what's happened at Ornge is that you've had something really go wrong when it comes to the decisions that were made by that particular board and the people in charge. Clearly, there's something wrong, and what is really galling is that the government could take the high road and say, "Listen, that was the board. We don't know what happened. We should have a full investigation and allow the truth to come out so that, number one, we're able to learn what happened so that we can learn from those mistakes and try to plug the holes so we don't have the same thing happening again."

The unfortunate reality is what happens around this place sometimes is that government, or opposition, depending, tries to take ownership of something. It's almost as if the government's trying to take ownership of the decisions of Ornge and trying to defend them.

I'm sitting here and I'm going, "Why would the government do that?" At this point of the game, you've got to say to yourself, is it because they knew more that actually happened at Ornge? My original assessment—listening to what the Premier said, "We don't know what happened. We're calling in the police, and we're doing an investigation." Clearly, if there is no sense that there's any wrongdoing on the part of the government, you would allow a full investigation to happen to get to the bottom of it. I just say to the government, I'm a little bit taken aback by the taking of ownership of this particular issue.

I think if we were to step back in time and the government would have allowed the kind of things to happen that should have, we wouldn't be seeing every day on the front page of papers across this province the

spectacle of what we're seeing that happened at Ornge. I think the House would have been able, by way of public accounts or a select committee, to get the hearings they need to ask the questions that need to be asked and, more importantly, so that we can learn from the mistakes so they don't happen again.

This is the public's money. It's not the government's money. We need to make sure that we respect that.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Because there were too many people standing when I asked for questions and comments, I missed the member from Durham, so I will recognize him.

Mr. John O'Toole: Thank you very much for that consideration, Speaker. I appreciate that.

On this bill, our critic on this, Frank Klees—for reference for members here, if they look up the Hansard from the 25th, his remarks, I believe, summarized our position almost perfectly. In that respect, what it says is, really, Bill 50 is redundant.

Under the current Ambulance Act, the provisions already exist for the oversight. In fact, with the witnesses in public accounts he was able to capture on the record from experts that the oversight of the minister was already in place, and yet in the House I'm told by the minister that she did not have that authority.

When I look at Bill 50, I'm wondering why we're spending time on this bill when we could have a select committee or, indeed, I believe, a full inquiry. There's been public money and health money on top of that—scandalous amounts of hundreds of millions of dollars wasted. We heard from witnesses just yesterday that some clerical person who submitted some clerical report was paid \$6 million. Other people were paid salaries over \$1 million a year, and yet patient safety, according to the records I read, was still at risk.

1700

This bill is the wrong way to approach this. We could have a select committee and get to the bottom of an organization that has gone rogue. I'm so disappointed that the minister won't do the honourable thing and step aside until this is resolved peacefully and amicably. This is about public health in Ontario. Bill 50 is the wrong way to approach it. I would like to use the word "cover-up," but you can't, so I won't. Well, I shouldn't. But in that respect, I think my point has been made.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Member for Trinity–Spadina, I have to go across because I mistakenly recognized the member from Timmins–James Bay.

The member for Guelph.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Thank you. I get to make my comments now.

I'm pleased to respond to the remarks of the member from Richmond Hill, but I do need to comment on the comments.

First off, this whole notion that we need to have a full inquiry, which the member from Timmins–James Bay mentioned: The Auditor General and the forensic audit team from the Ministry of Finance have both been in to

Ornge. All the material they discovered, which I agree was very distressing—nobody is saying we're happy with the situation. Their findings have been turned over to the Ontario Provincial Police. That's where the investigation is at the moment.

In terms of public accounts, we have been meeting hour after hour and have heard multiple witnesses from a variety of points of view. In terms of the member from Durham and his remarks, and this whole business around, "Do we need additional oversight," absolutely. I believe the Auditor General of the province of Ontario, who said there was inadequate authority for oversight in the old performance agreement in the old legislation. I believe the lawyer from the Ministry of Health.

Whom I don't believe, who is the authority that the member from Durham—we didn't get a chance to say where she was coming from, so I need her back. But the wife of the Minister of Health who actually initiated it—Mr. Clement initiated Ornge originally. His wife, who billed over \$11 million to Ornge, is the one who says the performance agreement was adequate. Well, of course. She was paid over \$11.5 million to defend the thing.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Newmarket–Aurora.

Mr. Frank Klees: What we have here is unfortunately a demonstration. We've just had a clear demonstration of what the government is trying to do and what they should not be doing.

First of all, there was an absolute misrepresentation about the billings of Fasken on the Ornge file. The member from Guelph knows full well, because she was given the billings, that it was not Ms. Golding's billings, and yet that's what she said. I would ask that the member stand up and correct her own record.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I would be very happy to clarify that it was Ms. Golding's firm that collectively billed Ornge \$11.5 million. Furthermore, we have asked Ms. Golding for the details—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Could you sit down for one second? I have not recognized the member from Guelph.

I have you on questions and comments.

Mr. Frank Klees: But it worked. It worked just fine, and I want to thank the member for Guelph for doing what I asked her to do.

Here is why we need to have that motion that was passed by the public accounts committee to broaden the terms of reference of the public accounts committee to essentially give us the terms of reference of a select committee, brought to the House and approved by this Legislature, so that we can properly investigate this, we can spend the amount of time with witnesses that we need.

The member for Guelph herself said she didn't have enough time with Ms. Golding and wants to have her back. That's why we need the broadened terms of reference so that we can have the appropriate time, truly investigate this; get to the bottom of it. I would say that what we will do is, we will continue to call on this government to respect the will of the public accounts

committee, the will of the Legislature. We'll continue to do that until this government listens.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Richmond Hill, you have two minutes to respond.

Mr. Reza Moridi: As we all know, there were problems at Ornge. The Auditor General reported that and also there were reports in the media. Our government took actions to fix the problems at Ornge. We all know that the old board of Ornge resigned, and the minister appointed a new board at Ornge. Since then, there have been various measures taken in order to fix Ornge.

One of the measures which our government has taken in order to fix the problems at Ornge is to amend the Ambulance Act, with Bill 50. Bill 50 is before us for debate in this House. I'm just going to quote a few major points of this bill.

One of the major points in this bill is the appointment of a supervisory special investigator when the ambulance service is not being operated in the public interest. It's like hospitals, where if—it's happened several times that when the hospital is not run properly, then the minister has the authority to appoint a supervisor. So this is one of the points in the bill.

The other one is, the minister can give directives to the air ambulance service providers in Ontario. Again, it's more or less like hospitals, where the minister can issue a directive if there are problems in the management of hospitals.

The other point is to prescribe performance measures and standards. This is another main point in the amendments to the Ambulance Act. Also, it allows the minister to establish terms that are to be deemed to be included in the performance agreement between the ministry and the air ambulance service providers. It also gives the provision to the minister to appoint provincial representatives to the boards of directors of air ambulance service providers.

So these are some of the measures which we have included in the amendments to the bill and that will help to refine the bill and finally fix the remaining problems at any service provider. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I'm now required to interrupt the proceedings to announce that there has been more than six and a half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader indicates otherwise.

Government House leader?

Hon. James J. Bradley: We'll continue the debate.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Rob Leone: I stand here to speak to this bill. I want to suggest, first, that as a political scientist, as a specialist in public policy, we often talk about the need—the first step is for problem definition. One of the things that we have sought on this side of the House is to actually understand the gravity of the problem at hand. One of the ways that we can understand the gravity of the problem is to ask for a select committee on Ornge; and failing that, we'd like the Standing Committee on Public Accounts to adopt the terms of reference to further elaborate what the problems are in that organization. Since that's not happening, Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of debate.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Order, please. The member for Cambridge has moved adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour?

All those opposed?

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1709 to 1739.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Can I have all members take their seats?

Mr. Leone has moved adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour, please stand and remain standing.

All those opposed, please stand and remain standing until you're counted.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 31; the nays are 2.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The debate has been adjourned.

Second reading debate adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Orders of the day.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The government House leader has moved adjournment of the House. Agreed? I have a bunch of noes.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

The ayes have it, in my opinion.

This House stands adjourned until Monday at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1741.

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Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

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Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
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Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
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Toby Barrett, France Gélinas
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Cheri DiNovo, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Ernie Hardeman, Tracy MacCharles
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha
Jane McKenna
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

Continued from back cover

DEFERRED VOTES / VOTES DIFFÉRÉS

Accepting Schools Act, 2012, Bill 13, Ms. Broten / Loi de 2012 pour des écoles tolérantes, projet de loi 13, Mme Broten	
Second reading agreed to	2070
Correction of record	
Hon. Harinder S. Takhar	2070

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman.....	2070
Mr. Michael Coteau	2070
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson	2070
Mr. Jonah Schein.....	2070
Hon. Margaret R. Best	2070
Mr. John O'Toole.....	2070
Mr. John Yakabuski	2070

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

Elaine Standaevan	
Mr. Randy Pettapiece	2070
Elliot Lake Seniors Roundtable	
Mr. Michael Mantha	2071
Anniversary of Polish Constitution	
Ms. Helena Jaczek.....	2071
Horse racing industry	
Mr. Ted Chudleigh.....	2071
Condominium legislation	
Mr. Rosario Marchese	2071
Young Singers	
Mr. Joe Dickson	2072
Dawn Paxton	
Ms. Lisa MacLeod	2072
Peterborough fishing festival	
Mr. Jeff Leal.....	2072
Anniversary of Polish Constitution	
Mr. John Yakabuski	2073

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES / RAPPORTS DES COMITÉS

Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs	
Mr. Bob Delaney	2073
Report adopted	2073

Notice of dissatisfaction	
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)	2073

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS / DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI

Wireless Services Agreements Act, 2012, Bill 82, Ms. Best / Loi de 2012 sur les conventions de services sans fil, projet de loi 82, Mme Best	
First reading agreed to.....	2073
Metrolinx Amendment Act, 2012, Bill 83, Mr. Schein / Loi de 2012 modifiant la Loi sur Metrolinx, projet de loi 83, M. Schein	
First reading agreed to.....	2073
Mr. Jonah Schein.....	2073

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES

Consumer protection	
Hon. Margaret R. Best	2074
Community Living Day	
Hon. John Milloy	2074
South Asian Heritage Month	
Hon. Charles Sousa	2075
Community Living Day	
Mr. John O'Toole.....	2075
South Asian Heritage Month	
Mrs. Christine Elliott.....	2075
Consumer protection	
Mr. Todd Smith.....	2075
South Asian Heritage Month	
Mr. Jagmeet Singh	2076
Consumer protection	
Mr. Jagmeet Singh	2076
Community Living Day	
Ms. Cheri DiNovo.....	2076
Holocaust Memorial Day	
Mr. Monte Kwinter	2077
Mr. Peter Shurman	2078
Ms. Cheri DiNovo.....	2078
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)	2079

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Greenbelt	
Mr. John O'Toole	2079
Radiation safety	
Mr. Reza Moridi.....	2079
Rail lines	
Mr. John Yakabuski	2080

Dog ownership	
Ms. Cheri DiNovo.....	2080
Radiation safety	
Mr. Joe Dickson.....	2080
Anti-bullying initiatives	
Mr. Rick Nicholls.....	2080
Taxation	
Mme France Gélinas.....	2080
Eastern Ontario development	
Mr. Phil McNeely.....	2081
Gasoline prices	
Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette.....	2081
Air-rail link	
Mr. Jonah Schein.....	2081
GO Transit	
Ms. Laurie Scott.....	2081
Tourism	
Ms. Sarah Campbell.....	2082
Water quality	
Mr. Grant Crack.....	2082
Utility charges	
Mr. Rob Leone.....	2082

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS /
AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC
ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS**

Labour Relations Amendment Act (Fairness for Employees), 2012, Bill 77, Mr. Natyshak / Loi de 2012 modifiant la Loi sur les relations de travail (équité à l'égard des employés), projet de loi 77, M. Natyshak	
Mr. Taras Natyshak.....	2083
Mr. Randy Hillier.....	2084
Mrs. Laura Albanese.....	2085
Mr. Rick Nicholls.....	2085
Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	2086
Mr. Phil McNeely.....	2087
Mr. Jagmeet Singh.....	2088
Mme France Gélinas.....	2088
Hon. Glen R. Murray.....	2089
Mr. Taras Natyshak.....	2089
Ensuring Local Voices in New Casino Gambling Development Act, 2012, Bill 76, Mr. McNaughton / Loi de 2012 visant à garantir la consultation des populations locales avant la création de nouveaux casinos, projet de loi 76, M. McNaughton	
Mr. Monte McNaughton.....	2089
Mr. Rosario Marchese.....	2091
Ms. Helena Jaczek.....	2092
Mrs. Christine Elliott.....	2093

Ms. Cheri DiNovo.....	2093
Mrs. Liz Sandals.....	2094
Mr. Frank Klees.....	2094
Mr. Steve Clark.....	2095
Mr. John O'Toole.....	2096
Mr. Monte McNaughton.....	2096
Elephant Protection Act, 2012, Bill 69, Mr. Berardinetti / Loi de 2012 sur la protection des éléphants, projet de loi 69, M. Berardinetti	
Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti.....	2096
Mr. John Yakabuski.....	2098
Ms. Cheri DiNovo.....	2099
Mr. Grant Crack.....	2100
Ms. Dipika Damerla.....	2101
Mr. John O'Toole.....	2101
Mr. Rob E. Milligan.....	2102
Mr. John Vanthof.....	2102
Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield.....	2103
Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti.....	2104
Labour Relations Amendment Act (Fairness for Employees), 2012, Bill 77, Mr. Natyshak / Loi de 2012 modifiant la Loi sur les relations de travail (équité à l'égard des employés), projet de loi 77, M. Natyshak	
Second reading agreed to.....	2104
Ensuring Local Voices in New Casino Gambling Development Act, 2012, Bill 76, Mr. McNaughton / Loi de 2012 visant à garantir la consultation des populations locales avant la création de nouveaux casinos, projet de loi 76, M. McNaughton	
The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon).....	2104
Elephant Protection Act, 2012, Bill 69, Mr. Berardinetti / Loi de 2012 sur la protection des éléphants, projet de loi 69, M. Berardinetti	
Second reading agreed to.....	2104
Ensuring Local Voices in New Casino Gambling Development Act, 2012, Bill 76, Mr. McNaughton / Loi de 2012 visant à garantir la consultation des populations locales avant la création de nouveaux casinos, projet de loi 76, M. McNaughton	
Second reading agreed to.....	2105
Ambulance Amendment Act (Air Ambulances), 2012, Bill 50, Ms. Matthews / Loi de 2012 modifiant la Loi sur les ambulances (services d'ambulance aériens), projet de loi 50, Mme Matthews	
Mr. Gilles Bisson.....	2105
Mr. John O'Toole.....	2106
Mrs. Liz Sandals.....	2106
Mr. Frank Klees.....	2106
Mr. Reza Moridi.....	2107
Mr. Rob Leone.....	2107
Second reading debate adjourned.....	2107

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Thursday 3 May 2012 / Jeudi 3 mai 2012

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Ontario Electricity System Operator Act, 2012, Bill 75, Mr. Bentley / Loi de 2012 sur la Société d'exploitation du réseau d'électricité de l'Ontario, projet de loi 75, M. Bentley

Hon. Christopher Bentley.....	2049
Mr. Reza Moridi.....	2050
Second reading debate adjourned.....	2056

Time allocation

Hon. Laurel C. Broten.....	2056
Motion agreed to	2057

Accepting Schools Act, 2012, Bill 13, Ms. Broten / Loi de 2012 pour des écoles tolérantes, projet de loi 13, Mme Broten

Second reading vote deferred.....	2057
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INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Hon. James J. Bradley.....	2058
Mr. Phil McNeely	2058
Ms. Laurie Scott.....	2058
Mr. Bas Balkissoon.....	2058
Mr. John O'Toole.....	2058
Mrs. Teresa Piruzza.....	2058
Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield	2058
Mr. Bob Delaney.....	2058
Mr. Taras Natyshak.....	2058
Hon. Glen R. Murray	2058
Mr. Norm Miller	2058

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

Hospital funding

Mr. Tim Hudak	2058
Hon. Dwight Duncan	2059
Mr. Steve Clark.....	2059

Air ambulance service

Mr. Frank Klees	2060
Hon. Dwight Duncan	2060
Hon. John Gerretsen.....	2060

Job creation

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	2061
Hon. Dwight Duncan	2061

Job creation

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	2061
Hon. Dwight Duncan.....	2061

Air ambulance service

Mr. John Yakabuski	2062
Hon. Deborah Matthews	2062

Government appointments

Mr. Taras Natyshak	2063
Hon. Linda Jeffrey	2063

Organ donation

Mr. Bob Delaney	2063
Hon. Harinder S. Takhar	2063
Hon. Deborah Matthews	2064

Air ambulance service

Ms. Laurie Scott	2064
Hon. Dwight Duncan.....	2064

Environmental assessment

Mr. Peter Tabuns	2064
Hon. Christopher Bentley.....	2065

Renewable energy

Ms. Helena Jaczek.....	2065
Hon. Christopher Bentley.....	2065

Air ambulance service

Mr. Rod Jackson.....	2066
Hon. Deborah Matthews	2066

Health care

Ms. Cindy Forster.....	2066
Hon. Deborah Matthews	2066

Volunteers

Ms. Soo Wong.....	2067
Hon. Charles Sousa	2067

Air ambulance service

Mr. Frank Klees	2067
Hon. John Milloy	2067

Tourism

Ms. Sarah Campbell	2068
Hon. Michael Chan	2068

Use of question period

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette.....	2068
Mr. Gilles Bisson	2069
Hon. James J. Bradley	2069
The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)	2069

Continued on inside back cover