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(Hansard)**

Tuesday 1 October 2013

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des débats
(Hansard)**

Mardi 1^{er} octobre 2013

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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Deborah Deller

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Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
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Tuesday 1 October 2013

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 1^{er} octobre 2013

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PROTECTING STUDENTS

ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 PROTÉGEANT

LES ÉLÈVES

Mrs. Sandals moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 103, An Act to amend the Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996 with respect to discipline and other related matters / Projet de loi 103, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1996 sur l'Ordre des enseignantes et des enseignants de l'Ontario en ce qui concerne la discipline et d'autres questions connexes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Ms. Sandals.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm pleased to be able to stand in the House this morning and speak in support of the Protecting Students Act, which would, if passed, make an important amendment to the Ontario College of Teachers Act. I will be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the member from Scarborough–Rouge River.

Speaker, we know that the vast majority of Ontario teachers do an excellent job supporting our students. They are dedicated to our students' success and are passionate advocates for their safety and security. It is because of their efforts that we have seen so much progress in our schools over the past 10 years. The percentage of students in grades 3 and 6 who are meeting or exceeding the provincial standard in reading, writing and math has increased 17 percentage points since 2003. In other words, 150,000 more elementary students are reaching the provincial standards than would have had the rates remained the same as in 2003.

We are also seeing more students graduating from high school than ever before. Back in 2003, 68% of high school students were graduating from high school. Today, 83% of students are graduating and moving on to post-secondary education, a skilled trade or into the workforce. What that means is that there are 150,500 more students now on a better path in life than had the graduation rate remained the same as in 2003.

This progress has been no accident. It has been the result of a collective focus by the entire education sector

to pursue ambitious goals for our students: to raise the bar of achievement; to close the gaps in achievement by giving our struggling students every opportunity to succeed; and to increase confidence in publicly funded education. Speaker, we have been able to make important progress on all of these goals because of the commitment, professionalism and dedication of Ontario's teachers.

Our teachers have also been instrumental as we implement new and exciting initiatives that will take our education system to the next phase of student success. For example, by September 2014 all four- and five-year-olds will have access to full-day kindergarten, which is the most significant transformation in our education system in the past generation. This year, more than 180,000 of the province's younger students will benefit from full-day kindergarten in approximately 2,600 schools. In September 2014, approximately 265,000 students across Ontario will benefit from this program, which features the expertise of both a teacher and an early childhood educator in the classroom.

The early indicators for full-day kindergarten are already extremely encouraging, Speaker. Much of the program's success can be attributed to the enthusiastic teachers who have embraced the goals of the program. They have worked tirelessly to prepare their classrooms to accommodate their young students throughout the day, and they have worked closely with the early childhood educator in their classroom to build a cohesive and effective team environment.

It goes without saying that everyone in this Legislature knows what kind of incredible influence a teacher can have in the lives of our children. In fact, I'm sure that everyone here today can recall a teacher of their own who was instrumental in their life and help put them on a path to success. A great teacher can make the words of a good book come to life. A great teacher can show you how an abstract math problem can have application in the real world, and a great teacher can see the potential for success in every student. Speaker, this describes the vast majority of teachers across Ontario. It is what sets our education system apart from so many other jurisdictions. Whether our education sector thrives is based on the quality of our people, and we are privileged to have some of the best people right here in Ontario.

Along with quality, dedicated teachers, we also need to ensure our students are able to learn in a safe and accepting environment. Students who feel safe, welcome and connected to school are more likely to succeed academically. They cannot be expected to reach their full

potential in a school environment where they feel intimidated. As a grandmother, I want to know that my grandchildren, along with all children in Ontario, are safe and protected when they walk through their school doors each and every morning. That is why our government has taken a number of steps to increase the safety and security of our students.

For example, we introduced the Accepting Schools Act nearly a year ago. The act requires all school boards to take preventative measures against bullying, consider tougher consequences for bullying in certain circumstances, and support students who want to promote understanding and respect for all. But more than any other legal requirement, the legislation sends a strong message that respect and understanding for all students, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability or any other factor, are important components of a safe and successful school environment. We were incredibly pleased as a government that so many teachers were some of the first people to be enthusiastic supporters of the Accepting Schools Act.

0910

In addition to that act, we've taken other steps to increase student safety. Just last year, we reopened the Safe Welcome Program to allow more elementary schools to purchase and install security access devices that provide school staff with greater control of who enters the school. As a condition of receiving the funding, schools must lock their front doors during school hours in order to restrict access and help keep schools safe.

Speaker, whether it is the Accepting Schools Act, the Safe Welcome Program, or the many other resources we have provided school boards, teachers and support staff, we have had an ongoing commitment to student safety in Ontario, and it is a commitment that continues today with the Protecting Students Act.

While we know that the vast majority of teachers are committed to the success and safety of their students, we need to ensure that in those rare circumstances when discipline is necessary, teachers, students, parents and administrators can all count on a disciplinary system that is open, transparent and effective. The Ontario College of Teachers is an independent regulatory body that is responsible for regulating the teaching profession in Ontario, including disciplinary proceedings. These proposed changes would help give the college the tools it needs to ensure there is a transparent process in place when disciplinary action is required. It would also give the college increased ability to protect our students when there may be an immediate danger to a student.

Most of the proposed changes in the bill reflect recommendations from a review of the college's investigation and disciplinary procedures conducted by the Honourable Patrick LeSage. Justice LeSage's report contained 49 recommendations to modernize the Ontario College of Teachers' investigation and discipline processes. Since the release of this report, our government has been working closely with the College of Teachers to address

all 49 of the recommendations. For example, back in January 2013, the college began posting the outcome of disciplinary proceedings on their website to ensure that these decisions were open and transparent to the public. We've continued to work with the college and other areas where they could take action to address the recommendations on their own authority.

I want to acknowledge the leadership at the college, not only for asking Justice LeSage to conduct the review, but also for moving quickly to address his recommendations. However, while the government and the college have been working hard to address many of the recommendations, some of the recommendations do require legislative changes, and the Protecting Students Act would address the remaining recommendations. The proposed legislation and subsequent regulations in the Protecting Students Act would improve the college's disciplinary processes, reduce the potential for conflicts of interest and help increase the protection of our students.

Speaker, I know my parliamentary assistant will go into further detail about the legislation, but I want to take this opportunity to talk about a few key elements of the bill. First, the legislation would, if passed, ensure that a teacher's certificate is automatically revoked if they have been found guilty of sexual abuse or acts relating to child pornography. This is an area where we are actually proposing stronger provisions than what Justice LeSage originally recommended. While LeSage did not recommend mandatory revocation of a certificate, we don't believe there is any reasonable circumstance where there is a confirmed case of sexual abuse or child pornography where a teacher should be able to keep their teaching certificate.

There is also a provision in the bill that would prevent an individual from reapplying to the college for a teaching certificate for five years if they have been found guilty of sexual abuse or child pornography. I should explain that while people can reapply, it is in fact rare that they do reapply; however, if they do reapply after five years, the college still maintains ultimate decision-making power over whether a certificate is reissued. And even if a certificate is reissued, it is unlikely that the individual would ever actually be hired by a school board now that all the disciplinary information has been posted. But the five-year mandated time period is an increase compared to the current college practice of one to three years of revocation, depending on the circumstance. The five-year time period is consistent with other regulated professions in the health sector.

Another component of the bill would allow the college to move swiftly to remove a teacher's certificate if the college has reasonable grounds to believe that a child is at risk of harm or injury. If such a case arises, the college would have the ability to suspend, on an interim basis, a member's certificate, and notify the school board immediately so as to limit the risk of the teacher remaining in the classroom.

These are examples of provisions in this bill that would improve the protection of our students and en-

hance the efficiency and transparency of the Ontario College of Teachers' disciplinary processes. These are processes that we know the vast majority of teachers will never experience, and only in rare circumstances do our teachers require disciplinary action. But in those rare cases where they do, they need to know that the process will be fair, open and transparent. Teachers need to know that if there are allegations made against them, the discipline process will not drag on unnecessarily, and it's important for parents to know that the college has taken swift and appropriate action when discipline is required, especially in cases involving sexual abuse or child pornography. By improving the disciplinary process for these rare circumstances, we can increase the already strong public confidence in the vast majority of teachers who dedicate their lives to helping our students succeed every day. This proposed legislation, if passed, would strengthen the authority of the Ontario College of Teachers to take action, while ensuring the process is open and transparent for everyone involved.

Speaker, this is one more example of our commitment to improve student safety so that students have every opportunity to succeed. I look forward to the support of all the members of this House on this very important piece of legislation.

I would now like to call on my parliamentary assistant to provide some more details of the legislation.

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

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Thank you, Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to add my voice in support of the Protecting Students Act, Bill 103. As the minister pointed out, we know that so many of our teachers are professionals and are committed not only to their students' success but also their safety. But for the very small percentage of teachers who require disciplinary action, we need to ensure an effective and transparent process is in place at the Ontario College of Teachers.

In the fall of 2011, there was greater scrutiny of the discipline practices of the college. The college was criticized for not being transparent enough about disciplinary decisions and also for the substance of some of those decisions. It was clear that we needed to give the college more tools to strengthen its disciplinary practices as well as open up those processes so they are transparent to the public. This is what the bill will do.

The minister touched on a few details of the bill that specifically deal with sexual abuse and cases of child pornography. But I would like to take this opportunity to highlight a few of the other important elements in the bill. For example, if passed, the proposed act and subsequent regulations would help address any perception of conflict of interest of the college. Ontarians expect the college to govern the teaching profession independently, and even the perception of a conflict of interest has the potential to erode some of that public confidence. By restricting who can sit on the college's committee panels, specifically restricting the ability of union officials to sit on those committees, the proposed bill will ensure that there isn't even a perception of a conflict of interest.

Speaker, the bill will also help improve the communication between school boards and the college, particularly when a school board has restricted the duties of a teacher. If passed, the Protecting Students Act would also allow the college to share information with the school board if the subject of a complaint poses an immediate risk to a student. If a complaint is made against a teacher by someone other than the school board, there is a risk that the board may not be aware of the complaint until the college has completed its investigation into the allegation. We think that this is too big a risk to take, especially if a child could be in harm's way. By improving the communication between the college and the board, the school board can take the appropriate action locally to ensure student safety.

0920

The act would also permit the college to disclose personal information to other regulators and to the police to assist in their investigations. We think that there are reasonable steps to ensure co-operation between agencies and to better protect the public.

To improve transparency of the college, all decisions of the discipline committee would be published on the college's website. In cases where allegations have been determined to be unfounded, the teacher would have the option to include the decisions in the college's official publication.

Speaker, the proposed bill would also ensure the college resolves cases more quickly and efficiently, while maintaining a rigorous investigation process. For example, the investigating committee should review and dispose of most matters in 120 days, while allowing some flexibility to account for circumstances beyond the control of the committee. Teachers, as well as parents and administrators, need to know that complaints will be addressed in a timely manner, and this provision will help the college avoid unnecessary delays in resolving cases.

We also think that it is important to recognize the distinct responsibilities of a principal or vice-principal, particularly in disciplinary proceedings. Therefore, the proposed bill would require that an investigation or disciplinary panel include a principal or vice-principal when hearing a matter relating to conduct of a principal or vice-principal. We believe it is reasonable to expect that if you are a principal or vice-principal who is the subject of a complaint, part of the disciplinary panel will include someone who is familiar with the role of a principal or vice-principal and will be able to offer that important perspective during proceedings.

In response to Justice LeSage's recommendations, the bill will also provide greater clarity on when the dispute resolution process should be used, rather than a full investigation. Relatively minor complaints that might normally result in a caution or admonishment of the teacher could be directed to dispute resolution by the registrar of the college. This will allow a greater amount of the college's time and resources to be spent on more serious complaints, which would be referred to the normal investigation process.

There would also be clarity about what complaints could not go to dispute resolution, including cases of sexual abuse or child pornography. Those cases quite rightly require an open and transparent investigation process.

Speaker, these are some of the key elements of the bill that will improve the safety of our children and give the college the tools it needs for the rare circumstances when discipline is required. It is important for Ontario families to be confident that appropriate action has been taken in those rare cases, and it is important for teachers to know there's a fair, transparent and effective process in place.

I believe the proposed provisions in this bill strike the right balance between student safety, increased transparency and accountability, while improving efficiency and effectiveness of the current processes.

I know we can all agree that Ontario's children are our most precious resource. Our schools must support safe and healthy learning environments where students can succeed and reach their full potential. Part of ensuring that environment exists is making the changes proposed in the Protecting Students Act, and I encourage all members of this House to support this very important bill.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I listened carefully this morning to the opening remarks made by the minister, as well as the parliamentary assistant, and it was brief, given that they would normally have an hour on this Bill 103. I listened with some intent, I've read the explanatory sections of the bill and I have two or three things that are interesting. I'm certain our critic, Mr. Leone, would be able to respond; he'll likely get two minutes as well, as well as an hour if he needs it.

I know in our caucus there are people who have been teachers. I've been a teacher; I have a daughter and two or three daughters-in-law who are teachers; my wife is a teacher. She's now a school trustee. I see Mr. Leal is here; his wife is a teacher—now a principal. So we're all concerned about the safety of children and the quality of education.

More importantly than this bill itself, I'm more interested in the regulation that recognizes seniority over quality and education and training. That's one of the regulations that we're hearing a lot about in our constituency as a result of a prior piece of legislation by this same minister.

But if you really look at this thing here, there is an ability to suspend and revoke a licence of a teacher in circumstances where a committee has determined that inappropriate conduct occurred. I agree fully that they should revoke the licence. Now, there is a provision here to reinstate them within a five-year period, but most of the record would show that persons who have issues with pedophilia are not rehabilitable—not able to be rehabilitated; let's put it that way. It troubles me that there's a way to get back in, and if they're not just in a classroom, maybe they're going to be left on the supply list or some out-of-classroom function. So I still have questions on—

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: I listened with some attention as well to the Minister of Education and the parliamentary assistant on Bill 103. No one is going to argue against measures that go that extra step to protect children. I think that we actually have to have some context, though, here. They're moving forward. I mean, there's been a lot of conflict in the education sector. In many sectors across the province, teachers are already feeling that, post-Bill 115, they are being attacked and that the level of professional attention that they pay every day in our schools has been undermined.

The professionalization of the teaching profession is an ongoing journey; I think most teachers would say that. A lot of this starts actually at the faculties of education. Interestingly enough, there's a seminar going on right now in Waterloo which is looking to radically change public education in the province of Ontario, and they talk openly—and I think the Minister of Education may be going there this week—about the engagement of teachers and the connection with the engagement of students. That relationship has to be honoured. At the same time, you've reeled in the parameters and the framework to protect children in all cases.

Section 6, number 1, the new section under 29, requires the registrar to refer a complaint to the executive committee. A lot of this bill deals with: Once the complaint has come forward, what is the most responsible way to deal with that complaint? And, of course, reporting the matter under the Child and Family Services Act needs to happen. I think that it has happened under most cases, but there are always that one or two situations where it doesn't happen.

So we support having a stronger process in place, but I think that we have to find a balance between ensuring that the safety of children is honoured and that the professionalization of the field is honoured as well.

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

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to speak on a very important bill, the Protecting Students Act.

I think none of us in this House will dispute the fact that we are really blessed in the province of Ontario to have some of the best teachers in the world: teachers who are professionals; teachers who are dedicated; teachers who are passionate about children and the education they provide to children. I have regular interaction with teachers in my riding and I'm always amazed by their level of commitment and professionalism and their drive to make our school system one of the best.

I think all of us have personal stories as well—teachers who made an incredible impact in our lives. I've had the opportunity to receive education on three different continents, in three different countries in this world. In every respect, in every aspect, in every grade that I was in, I can recount a teacher or two who changed my life and has enabled me to do what I'm doing.

I think, for me, as I look at this piece of legislation, our drive is to keep that going for all children and make sure no child is left behind. In that very rare circumstance, that very rare situation where a criminal offence is done, where a child is endangered, we need to make sure we have the best system in place, that we do not leave that child behind and there are support systems and mechanisms in place for not only that child to survive and sustain through the trauma they may have received, but also to make sure that that type of situation is never repeated again.

Ensuring that we're putting in a system with greater transparency, accountability and efficiency in the disciplinary system relating to teachers is very important, and I look forward to debate on this bill.

0930

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

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. As always, it's a great pleasure and honour to rise here in the chamber and debate certain bills that come forward, in this case Bill 103, the protection of children act.

Being a former teacher myself—and my wife is an elementary teacher, and I know there are quite a few people here. As the member across the way alluded to, they are extremely dedicated to the profession. They get into the profession because they love nurturing young minds and enabling young people and giving them hope for the future. I would like to think that's the intent of all teachers when they go into that profession—although it's not necessarily the case. Of course, there are predators who go into the profession specifically to target our young children. So absolutely, we have to have mechanisms in place to address this. There already are mechanisms in place.

This bill is going to need some tweaking, and that's what it does: It does some minor tweaking. I think that all parties can obviously agree that this bill is going to move forward at some juncture after debate.

But again, let me just point that out we have graver concerns in the education system than Bill 103 that's being proposed and brought forward here today. Regulation 274 is a huge concern for ourselves and young teachers trying to break in to the profession. I know I'm inundated back home in my own riding from young people who are frustrated, who have accumulated massive amounts of debt to get their teacher qualifications and are frustrated, as are their parents, that they're unable to get a job here in the province of Ontario.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for your time.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The Minister of Education has two minutes to respond.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'd like to thank the members from Durham and Kitchener–Waterloo, the Minister of Labour and the member from Northumberland–Quinte West for their remarks.

I want to just pick up on something that the member from Northumberland–Quinte West said. In fact, the

Ontario College of Teachers Act already has extensive mechanisms. What has happened here is that Mr. Justice LeSage did a review of those disciplinary and investigative processes and said, "Here are 49 ways in which you can make them even better." These are the 49 recommendations that we are following up on.

I also want to pick up on the remarks from the member from Kitchener–Waterloo about balance, because I think that's very important. We know that the relationship, as she mentioned, between teacher and student is key. We need to recognize that the vast majority of teachers are doing a wonderful job and that there needs to be balance in the process.

One of the things that my parliamentary assistant mentioned was that we are trying to actually make the process so that there are timelines where the college will deal with complaints more expeditiously. Obviously, parents want complaints dealt with expeditiously, but it's to the advantage of the member to have complaints dealt with expeditiously, because if the complaint is found to be unfounded, we want to get that black mark off the teacher, the accusation dealt with and dismissed, as quickly as possible. So that's part of the balance. In fact, the registrar has actually been given more authority to deal with frivolous and vexatious complaints, where clearly they are unfounded.

I would suggest that, in fact, there is balance in dealing with that which is truly bad very definitively, and where we need to look at finding whether or not complaints are truly founded, that we also have the ability to deal with unfounded complaints more quickly, too.

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

Mr. Rob Leone: I'm pleased to rise on behalf of the PC caucus to discuss this bill, which, obviously, amends the Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996. I wanted to start off my comments—I know that I've been newly appointed as the education critic—

Applause.

Mr. Rob Leone: Thank you.

This is the second day on the job, and they asked me to do a one-hour lead right off the bat, so I'm a little enthused by the results of how this all transpired. Maybe it's a conspiracy among House leaders who have put this on my table.

What I do want to say is—I think I can speak for all members of this House, and certainly for members of the Ontario PC caucus—that we have the best front-line teachers in the world. I think it's important to remember that in the course of our deliberations during this bill; we have to keep in mind that we do have the best teachers in the world. They're practising and teaching our students right here in the province of Ontario, and we should do our best to celebrate, I think, what can amount to no less than miracles in the classroom every day.

As a parent of three young boys, I feel especially privileged to have this opportunity to talk about education policy here in the province of Ontario, because it strikes right to the heart, right to the core, of what we are. I do note, and I think that members of this Legislature do

know, that my youngest boy is about five months old—almost six months old now—and I know the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex had a child in August. The member for Kitchener–Conestoga—their family is actually expecting a baby this December. Three new, tiny Tories are going to be born into this world this year, so we have lots to celebrate on this side of the House, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Catherine Fife: That’s good for declining enrolments.

Mr. Rob Leone: The member for Kitchener–Waterloo says that’s good for declining enrolment, and I think that’s absolutely true.

Madam Speaker, as I am taking over from my colleague from Nepean–Carleton, who was the education critic up until yesterday, I want to offer very publicly my sincere gratitude to the member for Nepean–Carleton for the hard work that she has done on this file. Thank you.

I think that it’s important to understand that this caucus has a lot of young children in it. I know the member from Nepean–Carleton has a young daughter whom she cares about very deeply, and so this policy area strikes to the core of what we are as parents. I think that it’s very important to have an ability to debate a piece of legislation like this that is charged with the task of protecting our children. I think, as a parent, I feel very strongly about that.

I hope to have a little bit of indulgence to talk about some of the things that my predecessor, the member for Nepean–Carleton, has said in this Legislature. I think that the Minister of Education had the opportunity to enumerate some of the policies that her government has brought forth that have obviously involved children and teachers and parents as well, and protection of all the above groups.

I also want to talk about some of the things that we’ve been working on, because I think the member for Nepean–Carleton has ushered in a number of ideas that merit the consideration of this Legislature. A lot of those ideas are enumerated in our Paths to Prosperity document on education to try to give our kids the best start possible, because we do know, and I think everyone acknowledges, that education is the great equalizer of society. Certainly, I believe that and I think that we owe it to our children—not even just our own children, but all children in Ontario—to have the best sort of education policy.

One of the things I love about that white paper is the fact that we talk about the need to incorporate greater financial literacy in our curriculum. I think it’s important to understand that in an era where we have mounting household debt, sometimes the understanding of how to actually balance a household budget gets lost on some folks. If we teach children at a young age to be responsible about their finances, I think it would be a very important step into, when they grow up and start their own families, having the literacy and numeracy skills that obviously are important to success in life.

0940

The white paper also talks about protecting rural schools. I know there’s an issue in rural Ontario with

declining enrolment and what we do with the surplus space that is in our schools. Some very tough decisions are made by our school boards each and every day in terms of what kind of schools and what schools actually have to close, whether we build new ones to replace them, whether we bus students from place to place. These are obviously very important aspects to many of my colleagues who are from rural Ontario. We have a desire to just talk about the policies that will obviously alleviate some of those concerns—and we do talk in the white paper about how we have a desire to utilize some of that school space for a community purpose, so we can multi-purpose our schools and perhaps we can keep some of these schools open. Those are some of the ideas that we talk about in that white paper.

Certainly I know the government will love to talk about how we actually discuss Don Drummond’s findings in that white paper. I’ll leave that for another day, but obviously those are important elements that we have to discuss. Some serious choices have to be made at the end of the day, when you have an education budget that has increased by more than \$8 billion since 2003 and we have almost 300,000 fewer students in the system. What has transpired? Why is that the case? I think we’re going to have some great debates in the future about how we deal with that particular issue and that particular problem. That’s one of the tasks that I’ll certainly be charged with going forward as the new PC critic.

At the same time, Madam Speaker, as the new critic I do leave, at least partially, a critic portfolio that I truly had a passion for, which was the critic portfolio for training, colleges and universities. I do want to state on the record that I enjoyed immensely the opportunity to speak to a variety of stakeholders in that portfolio who helped shape the white paper that I helped author, our Paths to Prosperity document Higher Learning for Better Jobs, which is also a document I feel very strongly about: how we can actually get our children who are going through the education system and primary and secondary schools into a post-secondary education field that will ultimately provide them with the gainful employment that I think every parent desires. So I think this is a great place to start with respect to my interest in this area, my interest that is shaped by the conversations that I’ve had since I’ve been elected as the MPP for Cambridge and appointed the critic for training, colleges and universities.

I am very excited to begin this new task as a critic for the Ontario PC Party and our leader Tim Hudak, because I think we have a lot to say about education, certainly in the course of debating this bill, and we’ll have some debates going forward as well.

Madam Speaker, I want to first start off by suggesting that as a father of three young boys—I had a conversation with my wife about this, actually, last night. She read a media report last week when the bill was introduced about what the content of the bill was. She said, after reading the article, that she found it a little strange, as a parent—she’s not overtly political, by nature; she leaves that task up to me—but she said to me, “I read the article

on that, and something seemed a little off to it. Can you tell me what the bill is about?" So I began to explain what the bill was actually about—at least as I knew it at about 8 p.m. last night. I actually know a lot more by 8 a.m. this morning, because I had to do my homework, given the hour lead that I've been given today. But one of the things that struck her as being a little odd was the fact that there was a five-year reinstatement policy for folks who have been tasked with misconduct and potentially sexual abuse in the classroom. She thought that that five-year reinstatement policy was a little bizarre. If you actually are subject to and penalized for engaging in that kind of misconduct, her belief as a mother was that you shouldn't be allowed to teach anymore.

We have questions about some of those issues, and I understand the bill tries to address the differences between what the college is supposed to do and what the school board and the employer are supposed to do, but these are the kinds of points that, once we put them out in the public realm, folks obviously have questions about. We have to have some indication, some response, about how we're going to deal with those issues.

That one, as well, struck me as being a little interesting, perhaps a little odd, that we would allow a provision for someone who has participated in any kind of sexual misconduct back into the classroom at all. I would hope, as a parent, as a father of three boys, that the answer in most cases is no. We have a responsibility to protect our kids, and that's what this legislation is supposed to do. I would hope that as we discuss and debate and deliberate over this piece of legislation, we actually think about that. I don't know what it's like to have been subjected to that kind of misconduct. I am not a student who actually has gone through that, but I know that students who have had those incidences of misconduct and inappropriate sexual misconduct have life-long issues that they will deal with—mental health issues in particular.

I would suggest at the very start, before we get into the meat and potatoes of this piece of legislation, that we actually talk about and focus on exactly what we're doing here to protect our kids. We should do whatever it takes to make sure that the teacher in front of the classroom is not going to be tempted by having these young people at their doorstep, basically, Madam Speaker. We have the responsibility to our kids to talk about what this reinstatement policy is. I'm sure that throughout the course of debate I'm probably going to learn a bit more about what that means in the larger scheme of things. I would have to hope that even if the reinstatement does occur, our schools and our school boards are also not subjected to hiring these people. I think there are going to be background checks that school boards and employers will obviously perform on these teachers, that they are subjected to that, Madam Speaker.

Which brings me to another point that I think the member from Nepean–Carleton put forth very vocally last week, which is her private member's bill to deal with what the member from Northumberland–Quinte West

had talked about: to ensure we have the best teachers in front our classroom and providing the principals with the tools for doing so. We know that regulation 274/12 has an effect on the hiring practices of our schools and our school boards. We feel that the greatest indicator of whether someone should get a job or not is that the most qualified person for that job sees the day. I know that current practice has been challenged lately by this regulation.

I remember very early on in my tenure, I guess, as the MPP for Cambridge meeting with a group of principals who talked about their challenges in hiring teachers to fulfill their particular needs. For example, Madam Speaker, I remember going to a high school and meeting with the principal there—I think it was a vice-principal, actually—who talked about how she had a very good teacher, an occasional teacher, who was the coach of the volleyball team or the hockey team; I can't remember what. But the season spanned both semesters and the occasional teacher was to end in February. In the course of ending in February, for the second semester that teacher would no longer be the coach of that sports team, which then defaults, in that case—the principal actually has to take over that sports team or that sports team has to fold.

If we don't arm our principals with the ability to fill those particular teaching needs, I think we are doing a disservice not only to qualified teachers but to students who have a desire to participate in extracurricular activities that only some teachers can perform. So we have to be cognizant of the environment in which we're making these decisions. I think we have to do our utmost to ensure that the principals in our schools have the tools necessary to hire the appropriate teacher and to fit the needs of that school, and that also includes doing appropriate screens with the appropriate investigations, whether it's done by the college or the school board, or the police in certain instances where criminal activity is involved; we have to ensure that the principal has the tools to actually make the decision that's appropriate for their school.

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So while 274/12 in the legislation brought forth by the member for Nepean–Carleton does talk about hiring the best teachers in the classroom to do the job that I think everyone wants in the school, it actually applies in this case, too: that we want to, to the greatest extent possible, arm our principals with the tools necessary to hire the teachers who meet their particular needs at that school, whether that teacher is at the highest end of the seniority list or the lowest end of the seniority list. What I have a lot of interest in particularly is the fact that we currently have a lot of young teachers who have gone through their education and aren't able to find work, and we have a lot of students who are faced with this task. We have a mismatch, in essence, with the production of graduates from our teacher colleges with what's happening in the labour market. I think there has to be some mechanism by which we address that concern, because it's hard to

tell a student who wants to be a teacher, who has a passion for being a teacher, that they might not get a job in the province of Ontario due to some of the policies that are taking place right here.

So we have a lot of work to do. The member for Durham talked about how there are a number of members on this side of the Legislature who are teachers. I know that the member for Northumberland—Quinte West was a fine teacher before entering politics. I know that the member for Durham and my seatmate from Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry and the member for Prince Edward—Hastings—we are all related to or married to people in the education field. Prior to entering politics, I was also an educator—perhaps not in the same way as my friend from Northumberland—Quinte West was, but I was a university professor prior to entering politics, and I share that love of teaching, that passion for teaching. I miss it dearly.

Forgive me, members of the Legislature, if this sounds like a university lecture. I hope that I am at least providing some level of interest to the debate, because—

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's not bad.

Mr. Rob Leone: The member for Kitchener—Waterloo actually says it's not bad. I think that's a great compliment coming from her, so we'll keep going at that.

On that note from the member for Kitchener—Waterloo, in her remarks that she just provided to the Minister of Education I did note a very interesting seminar that's taking place in the region that's talking about radically altering the scope of education in the province of Ontario and how, rather than being behind the curve, we have to actually be ahead of the curve. I think those kinds of discussions are very appropriate to how we teach the child in the 21st century, particularly the child whose attention span, in the mass media market, is shrinking at an exponential rate—much like members of this Legislature, I might add, who may or may not be listening to this enlightening discussion that I'm providing today. Given the fact that very few people actually laughed and raised their heads at that, I can guarantee that the attention span is actually quite low here. But that's okay; that's fine. I'm sure they can read the Hansard or download the YouTube video later on to hear the comments that the new critic for education in the PC Party has to say about this.

The concept of engagement—I think the member for Kitchener—Waterloo was at the summit, but I did read a lot that came from it. The question of engagement is actually a very pertinent one to this discussion as well. We want to ensure that we have the best teachers in our classrooms. We want to make sure that that teacher is qualified, which is why we have the Ontario College of Teachers and we had an act that was established to promote that idea. This act obviously strengthens the components of that piece of legislation. But that question of engagement is paramount—how we ensure that we're engaging children in the future.

I'm actually very interested in this, Madam Speaker, because just last night I was talking to a constituent who

was complaining—an older gentleman, mind you—about how either the child or the grandchild is no longer learning cursive writing, is no longer talking about or learning the times tables. This shocks me. I don't know if it's actually true or not. I do want to seek some answers on whether we are abandoning what I think a lot of parents actually want, which is their children to read, write and do math.

But we're talking about the old form of education, and yet we have a seminar taking place almost next door to where this constituent lives, talking about the engagement, the challenges of a 21st-century education. How do we harness technology in that? What is the entrepreneur of the future going to look like? All of these are pertinent questions that I think a lot of parents would like some answers to, which is why I think the Minister of Education would agree that this is a very exciting field to be in and to debate and discuss.

Now, I read with interest, in doing my homework after 8 p.m. last night—I did have the opportunity to read the report by the Honourable Patrick LeSage, which was called the Review of the Ontario College of Teachers Intake, Investigation and Discipline Procedures and Outcomes, and the Dispute Resolution Program.

So I guess the judge, or the former judge, is not an expert at crafting good political titles like the short name of this bill, when you have a title of the Review of the Ontario College of Teachers Intake, Investigation and Discipline Procedures and Outcomes, and the Dispute Resolution Program.

Right away—

Hon. Liz Sandals: “Protecting Students” is so much simpler.

Mr. Rob Leone: The Minister of Education states that the Protecting Students Act is so much simpler—and it is; it sounds nice—rather than the—what's the official bill title here? I have it here, which is An Act to amend the Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996 with respect to discipline and other related matters. So you know the lawyer wrote that title, and the minister's communication director wrote the other one. We're good with that.

I thought, when I read the title—and you're never supposed to—I know, when you're younger, you're told never to judge a book by its cover. Well, I have to say, thank goodness I didn't judge this report by its cover, because if I had just read the title and it wasn't part of my homework, I probably wouldn't have read it.

Hon. Liz Sandals: It's a good report.

Mr. Rob Leone: It is a good report.

One of the things that I like about what Justice LeSage has done is that he actually talked about some of the other self-regulated bodies that we have established and have a long history of in the province of Ontario, and looked at the Ontario College of Teachers to see how the two could link and if we could have best practices and learn what other organizations are doing and try to infuse those ideas in this legislation, which I think is a positive step.

For example, he has consulted the College of Nurses of Ontario, the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of

Ontario, the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario and has consulted the CEO and a number of benchers of the Law Society of Upper Canada. So, obviously, there's a lot of discussion between the regulated professions, that have a long history—and some of the ideas that other pieces of legislation talk about and discuss were certainly listed in his—what is it?—70-some-odd-page report.

I actually learned quite a bit about the College of Teachers, and I have to say I'm much more informed today than I was even last evening about the contents of what has been discussed.

One of the things I think is very important, in terms of understanding, in terms of the history of the Ontario College of Teachers, is that this process of trying to modernize our self-regulation of the teaching profession is actually quite—there's a long history of that, and one that actually involves all three political parties.

In 1993, I think, the Ontario government commissioned—has a Royal Commission on Learning, and the stated goal of that royal commission was to ensure the Ontario youth are well prepared for the challenges of the 21st century.

I don't think there is a member of this Legislature who wouldn't agree that we have to do our utmost to ensure that youth are well prepared for the challenges of the 21st century. I'm not quite sure the adults are prepared for what's going to happen in the 21st century, but I'm pretty sure our youth are going to adapt well.

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In December 1994, after extensive public consultation, the commission completed its report. You can tell that there was a good spinner writing the title of this report; it's called *For the Love of Learning*.

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: That's crazy.

Mr. Rob Leone: Isn't that interesting?

Interjection.

Mr. Rob Leone: I like that title. It appeals to my inner sensibilities. Who wouldn't want to ensure that students have a love of learning? Unfortunately, I didn't have time to pull that report out in preparation for this discussion today, but I am grateful for the fact that, at some level, LeSage actually did try to highlight some of the pertinent points, and I think some of those pertinent points are worth discussing here.

Let me just take a couple of excerpts: "The commission believes that the teaching profession in Ontario must now be considered equal to other established professions." It's funny that we had to wait till 1994 to actually state what I think is obvious to a lot of people, that the teaching profession should be equal to other professions. In fact, these are people who are shaping the hearts and minds of our children.

They should be, in essence, trying to ensure that, to the greatest extent possible, we treat teachers with the respect that they deserve. Certainly, we feel very strongly about that because, obviously, the outcome of this report was the creation of the Ontario College of Teachers,

which was established by a PC government. So we take the words here quite well.

It suggests here that "Structures such as the Ontario Teachers' Federation and its affiliates are in place to protect the economic interests and workplace rights of teachers." No one suggests that we should seek otherwise.

They also respond to some of the professional development needs of teachers but not to the need to develop the profession of teaching itself, which is why we have the Ontario College of Teachers.

It goes on to suggest that, "In order to promote teaching to full professional status, we propose that a professional self-regulatory body, a College of Teachers, be established. The college would be responsible for determining standards of teaching practice, regulating initial and ongoing teacher certification and accrediting teacher education programs, both pre-service preparation and ongoing professional development."

Now, I know the act was established some years ago: The act, in terms of going through that, was introduced as Bill 31 in 1995 and received royal assent in 1996. But there obviously needs to be a place where we discuss teaching as a profession and the promotion thereof. I know from when I was a university professor that that's one of the things we actually still struggle with. How do we ensure that these fantastic researchers are in a position to actually transmit that knowledge to students? There seems to be a need; we should talk about how university professors or college professors can actually do that in their day-to-day activities. It's actually a topic that we talked about at the university level—and we talk in the high schools and our secondary schools—starting in the 1990s, which I think was quite remarkable in itself.

"A majority of members of the college would be professional educators selected by their peers, but there would be substantial representation from the public, that is, non-educators." So the College of Teachers was initially designed to have representation from the teachers, the teaching profession, and the public at large. So there would be some joint membership in the committee. Obviously I think that speaks to a need that legislation on the report actually talks about as well, which is to protect the public interest. Protecting the public interest obviously is a valuable asset that we have to make sure happens and exists always. Having non-educators as part of the Ontario College of Teachers has been one of the mainstays of the legislation.

Now I know that, over time, particularly with the change in government that happened and the Liberal government taking power, they wanted to change the composition of the Ontario College of Teachers and, in fact, did change that composition to include more teachers, more educators, in the composition of the college. That was with heavy discussion with stakeholders in the education field—with teachers' unions and so on and so forth. Even though the legislation does, as I understand it, make sure that a member of union leadership can't actually be part of the College of Teachers—they actually have to resign their role as part of a union—the fact is

that more teachers were desired to be part of this college to shape its course and so on. That happened probably about eight years ago.

We are now faced with the discussion of whether the public interest has been maintained. I think there are certain questions of whether that is the case. I think the fact that we're actually seeing this piece of legislation come forward speaks to the need to make the whole College of Teachers much more robust than it may have otherwise been. I noticed that the ebbs and flows of what happens have changed and evolved over time, and that, I think, is a very important component of what we're dealing with here. Ultimately, we provide or produce self-regulating bodies to ensure that teachers are making decisions about teachers and that we have other people involved that aren't teachers to protect the public interest. I think that's a very valuable thing. I certainly would have loved to and probably will desire to read more in terms of why that changed—in 2006, I believe. But I think it's very important to actually understand and enumerate some of those ideas going forward.

There's much more in the report, Madam Speaker, that I could discuss, but I do want to perhaps—I don't have a whole lot of time left in the deliberations today. In total, the report talked about 49 different recommendations, which are a lot of recommendations that have come forward in this report. These recommendations are far-reaching; I read all of them. They either can be produced through regulatory changes in the bylaws of the Ontario College of Teachers or they have to be legislated. I think that's why we see this particular piece of legislation come forward: because they're responding to those recommendations that need to be addressed.

Some of the key provisions that we've seen and discussed—for example, ensuring that a teacher's certificate is automatically revoked if they have been found guilty of specified acts of sexual abuse or for acts relating to child pornography. The recommendation is for five years, at which point the teacher can then reapply. As I stated in my initial comments to this bill, these are in fact one of the first questions that I think people of the public are going to ask: Is this five-year requirement the requirement that is necessary? Should we allow people who are perhaps involved in child pornography the ability to teach again? Should we revoke that right permanently? I think members of the public are certainly going to have a debate about that. I would hesitate to speak on behalf of my caucus, but I think that that's the role I have now. But I'm sure lots of members of my caucus are going to raise some issues, particularly in relation to that five-year period.

Another point that this piece of legislation establishes is publishing all decisions of the college's discipline committee. In an era of open disclosure, I think it's prudent to make sure that we actually know what has happened, what has transpired. I know the legislation talks about the notice period, an appropriate length of time between the notice being issued and the decision rendered. I think it's up to 120 days. There are lots of ins

and outs in terms of the timelines. I think that there's going to be discussion about that, as with all pieces of legislation that establish certain timelines. We're going to have questions about those timelines. Should they be rendered quickly? Should they understand whether 42 days or 100 days, whether it's business days, whether it's calendar days, whether all of that is sufficient time to complete the investigation of whether misconduct does in fact exist or, on the flip side of that, to ensure that the student and his or her family has the appropriate resolution in a more meaningful and manageable timeline? If we think about it, if the length of time is 120 days between the start and end of this procedure—I know there are lots of different dates and times in the Legislature for different acts—but if that timeline is established, that is a semester of school. That's a long time for a student to wait, and I would hate for a student, who has frankly been sidelined because they don't want to go back to a school because of the potential emotional and psychological despair that they may be in, to wait four months for a resolution to a case to occur. It might seem to be a little much.

So I know as we go forward and debate this piece of legislation which we, in principle, agree with, we are going to obviously seek to make certain amendments and debate in committee these kinds of provisions.

The bill also does a particular job of outlining clear rules for the use of an alternative dispute resolution process in confirming that no cases involving sexual abuse, sexual misconduct or child pornography will be eligible for alternative dispute resolution. In essence, what that means is that these are serious issues that have to be investigated thoroughly and within the dispute resolution mechanisms that the bill ascribes to, which I think is a good aspect because obviously these kinds of acts are ones that seriously affect the social and emotional well-being—and sometimes the physical well-being—of our children. So we actually have to talk about this in very meaningful ways.

The act does a particular job in clarifying when school boards must inform the Ontario College of Teachers of cases where the board has restricted the duties of a teacher or dismissed them for misconduct. One of the things that I found very interesting, in the course of reviewing the legislation and the report, is the seeming lack of communication between the school board and the Ontario College of Teachers. We would hope that that kind of communication actually is facilitated rather than hindered in any particular way. If this legislation is necessary to foster that area of communication, we have, I think, a responsibility to support that issue because we need to have those lines of communication established. That shouldn't be distracted by any other particular issue that might arise. Whether that issue deals with a criminal proceeding, whether that issue has to do with minor offences, but certainly what we have to do is make sure that those lines of communication between the school boards and the Ontario College of Teachers remain totally intact.

Another aspect is allowing the Ontario College of Teachers to take swift action and share information with the school board if it is determined that the subject of the complaint may pose immediate risk to a student. Madam Speaker, one thing that I'm shocked about is that such a provision in 2013 actually has to be implemented in legislation. Why does this not exist already? I'm shocked, as a parent, that we actually have to legislate this today when it should have been in the books far, far, far into the past, or long, long, long ago, if you like that better, in terms of my 10 a.m. English this morning.

Why are we sitting here in 2013 talking about making sure that we're doing everything we can to make sure that information is shared to the appropriate people in order to protect our children? I find that astonishing and remarkable—I think, Madam Speaker, you're about to stand up and make me sit down. You can do so at any time, and I will be happy to oblige.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): It being almost 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1014 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I want to again recognize friends from the federation of co-operative housing, Ontario, here. I recognize, of course, Harvey Cooper, who is here, I believe. The federation is hosting a reception this evening, I believe in the legislative dining room, and I encourage all members to attend that.

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I appreciate that the Minister of Labour stole my thunder about my guest today, but I would like to formally welcome Harvey Cooper, Simone Swail and Denise McGahan. They're here today at Queen's Park for the co-operative housing day, and they will be hosting a reception in committee rooms 228 and 230. I would encourage all of you to come and hear about the great work that the Co-operative Housing Federation is doing for the people of Ontario, and I know that my critics will be there to speak as well, so it will be a wonderful evening. I implore all of you to come.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I am very pleased to introduce all visitors from Rethink Breast Cancer who are joining us today, including M.J. DeCoteau, the executive director; Alison Gordon, the vice-president; Ashley Mac Isaac-Butler, senior advocacy manager; and Silvana Langley, a volunteer. Welcome to all of you.

Mr. Todd Smith: I would like to invite all the members of the Legislature out to the front lawn after question period today. The 64th National Day for the People's Republic of China is occurring. We'll have a flag-raising out there. I'd like to welcome Consul General Fang Li as well to Queen's Park today. So if we can encourage all the members of the Legislature to make their way out to the front lawn after question period, that would be appreciated.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm sure everyone heard that announcement about the flag-raising for the People's Republic of China.

ORAL QUESTIONS

JOB CREATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is to the Premier. Premier, we met in your office several weeks ago. It was very kind of you to invite me to meet with you. You put a list of bills on the table. You said that if we could agree upon these bills that both parties support, we could basically clear the decks so we could get to work on jobs and the economy. I agreed to that, and the programming motion is now well under way.

I guess I'm a bit frustrated here because we did our share of the deal. We're moving forward with the bills. We opened up now the decks for jobs legislation, but the only thing we see from you so far is an online plea for ideas on jobs and the economy. So I guess I'll ask you directly, Premier: Why are you shying away from your end of the deal? Effectively, why are you reneging on your commitment to act on jobs and the economy?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question from the Leader of the Opposition, and I hope that this question signals that he will be supporting our initiatives, such as the Supporting Small Businesses Act, which will help 60,000 small businesses by helping them with their payroll taxes. I hope that it signals that the Leader of the Opposition will support our social enterprise initiative, which should create 1,600 new jobs. I hope that it means that the Leader of the Opposition will support our investments when we make investments like the \$70.9 million in Ford that will protect 2,800 jobs and create a platform that will allow Ford to be able to compete globally and increase their capacity.

I hope that the Leader of the Opposition's question signals that he will be supporting those initiatives, including the initiative yesterday that I worked with the Toronto Region Board of Trade on to increase the agri-food sector. I hope he's going to be supporting us.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: It's unfortunate, as I said, Speaker, that the only ideas the Premier has put on the table are warmed-over NDP ideas that came through the 1-800-Horwath line the last time around. She has now launched her own website consultation. We need a plan.

One thing I always enjoyed with my grandparents in beautiful Sarnia, Ontario, was playing euchre with my grandparents—a lot of fun. I learned that reneging was against the rules. That was just a game. Reneging in a real-life deal has real-world consequences. This means young people are not being put to work. It means companies are passing over Ontario.

Premier, it's time to get on with the job of creating jobs in the province of Ontario. If you're out of ideas,

why don't you take some of ours and put people into good jobs in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment is going to want to speak to some of the specifics.

But I want to just react to what the Leader of the Opposition talked about. In fact, the Conservative Party, when we put forward a proposal that a couple of bills that are job-creating, the Supporting Small Businesses Act and the Waste Diversion Act—both of which will directly create jobs. We suggested that those be put in the programming motion, and they said no. They said they didn't want to have anything to do with two bills that are direct job creators.

The Leader of the Opposition has thrown into his questions in the last couple of days the notion that somehow, as we create jobs, because of the work that we're doing on those pieces of legislation—and the investments that we're making are creating jobs—it's not okay to be asking the people of Ontario to engage with us and talk to us about what other ideas they might have. I reject that notion categorically. I think it's our responsibility to talk to the people of Ontario.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: But, Premier, your idea is to increase red tape, increase tax and increase spending. That's what drove us into the ditch in the first place. So of course we're going to say no to those ideas. But I hope you'll say yes to some of ours.

What I'm perplexed with is why you're reneging on your side of the deal. I don't understand what the paralysis is. I don't understand what the deadlock is.

Why aren't you moving forward with a jobs plan? We put our plan on the table. In fact, I invite you to steal any of our ideas—for example, to stop the Green Energy Act, the imposition of wind turbines that are dividing communities and driving up hydro rates; to change the way apprenticeship works in this province and put young people into good jobs, like Garfield Dunlop has recommended.

There are so many ideas. Why don't we actually move forward on one together to put people back to work? Why are you reneging on the deal that we made?

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I appreciate that the Leader of the Opposition met with me. I appreciate that we had a conversation about some bills where we might have agreement and we could move forward.

But what I did not commit to was slashing jobs. I did not commit to cutting programs and stopping the progress that we've made on renewable energy, on education, on health care. I never committed to that, because that is the plan that the Leader of the Opposition is putting forward. I never—I never—would agree to such a plan, because what we believe is that investing in people,

investing in infrastructure and supporting a business climate that allows businesses to expand is how we get the economy cooking. That's working, Mr. Speaker. Jobs are being created in the province.

PAN AM GAMES

Mr. Rod Jackson: My question is to the Premier. Premier, recently we learned that top-paid Pan Am executives had run amok with expense claims in bad faith, claims without receipts and incomplete claims. You indicated this was unacceptable and that rules needed to be strengthened. Premier, that's rich. You knew these were the rules. You made these rules, and you stood by while the rules were abused for years. Don't just be disappointed and have a conversation with these people; get the money back, Premier.

Premier, tell me when a review of all TO2015 expense claims will commence, and when the executives will be ordered to repay all their bad-faith claims back.

1040

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I said yesterday that it was unacceptable, some of the expenses that had been reported. The minister responsible for the Pan/Parapan Am Games had already directed the board to tighten the rules. I've said that it wasn't acceptable; I've said that it needed to change, and it is changing.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew will not use the moment while I'm getting quiet. Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As I said, this happened before these reports came out. The minister had already spoken to the board, and the rules are being changed. As I said yesterday, if there were breaches of the rules and if there is reimbursement that needs to happen, we will ask for that to happen.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Rod Jackson: Clearly, there is no evidence that the minister ever did have a conversation with anyone about expenses there. If you follow the pennies, you'll find the dollars. The bad-faith expense claims are indicative of a much greater endemic problem at the upper levels and the upper echelon of the Pan Am organizational structure—entitlement. Indeed, there are tens of thousands of dollars that have been burned partying in lavish hospitality suites and jaunts to Mexico and Guadalajara and London. When I FOI'ed the minister for all expenses on these trips, including travel, we received an incomplete response, only with flight itineraries—an act of bad faith, Premier.

To be clear, this isn't about Starbucks or dog travel or parking; this is nickel-and-diming, and it's just the tip of the iceberg. That's why, Premier, you must intervene. When will you set an example from the top and order repayment of all bad-faith expenses and expenses outside of the rules?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport is going to want to speak

to this, but I want to say, as I said yesterday, that the reports of these kinds of decisions and these kinds of expenses are unacceptable. The minister had already acted before these reports came out so that the rules had to be tightened and that they had to be changed, and that is happening.

What I did say yesterday is that I make a distinction between these kinds of abuses of the rules and the fact that in order to land these games, there did need to be travel. There did need to be trips to Guadalajara in order to get these games, because we know that these games are going to be a great opportunity for Ontario, for Ontario athletes and for job creation—26,000 jobs—and we want to make them the best that they can be.

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

Mr. Rod Jackson: Clearly, everyone is scrambling today for the best excuse for this binge-spending by Pan Am executives. Just today, Premier, your own minister practically abdicated responsibility for the games in estimates. The TO2015 executives themselves will tell you that the government knew and approved the guidelines for expenses. The Pan Am minister will tell you that the executives followed policy but not common sense. The Premier will tell you that we need to tighten the rules—a day late and a dollar short. Everyone is so busy backpedalling that they've actually lost sight of who they serve: the hard-working families of Ontario whose money has been exploited.

Enough is enough, Premier. When will you order repayment of all bad-faith expenses? When will it happen?

Interjections.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: Enough is enough.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Yes, I agree with you: Enough is enough, the member from Leeds–Grenville. You set it up; I knock it down.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you very much for the question, and the opposition honourable member. This morning we started our estimates. It was five hours, and we engaged in a very fruitful conversation for one and a half hours of that, so this is good. We will be answering more questions from the critic over there. I wish he'd also listen to our explanations, other than just keep asking questions without really listening to the answers, or refusing those answers.

In terms of the reimbursement, I think we answered this question already. The Premier just said that under the Broader Public Sector Expenses Directive, TO2015 must establish rules for all individuals in the organization with respect to—

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

Hon. Michael Chan: —travel, meals—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Minister, when I stand, you sit.

New question.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. After dodging our questions for days, the Premier admitted yesterday that her staff met with Liberal lobbyists hired by EllisDon to pass legislation on behalf of their company. Can the Premier tell us when those meetings actually occurred and who attended on her behalf?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I don't know exactly when the meetings took place. What I said yesterday was that we meet with a range of people from across all sectors, as, I assume, does the leader of the third party, so I cannot give the leader of the third party the time and date. In fact, I never denied that those meetings took place, and I recognize that if the leader of the third party wants times and dates, I can undertake to get those for her.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. I'm going to nip this in the bud. The member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, the Minister of Rural Affairs and the Minister of the Environment will cease holding up any kind of prop. It stops now.

Supplementary question?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I believe we would like those dates, Speaker, and so would the people of Ontario.

Yesterday, the Minister of Labour told reporters that he had told EllisDon lobbyists that he didn't have anything to say to them because it would be inappropriate to discuss a matter that was before the courts.

Why did the Premier's team agree to such a meeting? The minister's wouldn't.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, Mr. Speaker, I will just say that in government and in opposition, there are many people in the province who want to speak to us about issues of concern to them. There are meetings that happen every single day in this place and in our offices, where people with concerns come to us. They raise issues, and they propose solutions; they propose paths forward. Some of those paths forward are adopted, and others are not. Sometimes a private member's bill is developed as a result of some of those meetings, and sometimes there is nothing that happens as a result of those meetings. But the responsibility of politicians is to meet with people to hear their concerns and to determine if there's a way we can facilitate a response or whether there's actually nothing that we can do. I hope that the leader of the third party understands that that's all of our responsibility.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: On September 9, the Premier told reporters that she supported Bill 74, and she seemed very well briefed with EllisDon's talking points on that bill. She said, "This is an anomalous situation. The situation arose in the 1950s.... From my perspective it's about a level playing field."

Now, if the Minister of Labour thought it was inappropriate to comment on an issue before the courts, why was the Premier commenting on it?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I was outlining my understanding of what the issue was. I was not taking a position in terms of the court case. I was outlining my understanding of the situation, Mr. Speaker. That was and is my understanding.

There has now been a court ruling that we're reviewing. There's a 15-day appeal period. As that process unfolds, we will see where the legislation goes.

I have at no time put myself in a position where I was interfering with a court case, Mr. Speaker. I was outlining my understanding of the situation, and I think the leader of the third party knows full well that that was the situation.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. It seems that the Premier and her office were all too eager to sit down with Liberal insiders working for EllisDon even though the Minister of Labour thought it would be completely inappropriate.

Can the Premier tell us whether she or anyone on her team made a commitment to pass a bill as long as it was introduced by another political party?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I spoke to this issue yesterday. The leader of the third party is seeing conspiracy where there is none, because there was no such arrangement. This was a private member's bill that was put up by the opposition. Members debated the bill in the House from all parties, and we comment on legislation. We comment on the substance of legislation. That's what we've commented on. That's how the situation arose. Now, the Divisional Court has made a decision. There is a 15-day period in which there could be an appeal, and we are reviewing the decision of the Divisional Court.

1050

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Gee, Speaker, a conspiracy between the Liberals and the Conservatives to ram through legislation for one company—who would have thought it?

People have serious, serious questions about this government's priorities. The government keeps blindly pressing on trying to ram this bill through the Legislature on behalf of one single company, a well-connected company at that, even while their arguments for doing so fall apart before their eyes.

Ontario families are looking for life to get more affordable for them. They're looking for jobs for the young people in those families. They're looking for the health care system to be there for them when they need it. Does the Premier really think that one well-connected donor should come ahead of those families?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm trying to just get at what this is really about. I think what we're talking about is the programming motion. I think that's what the problem is here for the leader of the third party. As we have said, the Divisional Court has made a ruling that we're reviewing. There's a 15-day appeal period, but

there seems to be a ruling that is in place now. So I think that, really, what is at issue here is whether the leader of the third party and her members would be interested and supportive of a programming motion that would actually move ahead some pieces of legislation, like the Local Food Act, like the act that would protect young kids from tanning beds. If the leader of the third party and her members would support those pieces of legislation as part of the programming motion, then I think that would be a good thing for the people of Ontario. She doesn't seem to want to sign onto that and work with us on those pieces of legislation.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: There are pressing, pressing issues that face the people of this province. They're worried about jobs. They're worried about health care. They're worried about the cost of everyday life, which keeps going up and up and up for them. Instead of delivering for those people, the Premier seems determined to deliver for one well-connected company even while she frantically denies that she's doing so.

Is the Premier ready to stop these games and shenanigans, admit this bill is not a priority for the people who are facing tough times in this province, and stop her efforts to ram it through this Legislature?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I believe that the 2,800 people who work for Ford are very pleased that we made that \$70.9-million investment. I believe that the 535 young people who are going to have placements as a result of the Youth Employment Fund are very pleased with what that accomplishes. I think that the 60,000 small businesses that would benefit from the small business act that would help with their payroll taxes are very pleased with that legislation, because that will give them the opportunity to hire more people.

I would have thought that the leader of the third party would have been supportive of those initiatives and that she would have wanted to work with us, because those are job-creating initiatives and they are moving forward, and that's our priority on this side of the House.

Interjections.

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

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is to the Premier. Tomorrow, when your government marks 10 years in office, Ontario taxpayers—

Applause.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: You may want to stop the clapping, because Ontario ratepayers and taxpayers are going to be lamenting the high and skyrocketing costs of hydro in this province.

When you release, later this fall, your new long-term energy plan for the province, you're going to have to make up for the enormous amount of credibility that you've lost, particularly with the Green Energy Act and,

of course, now with both of these cancelled power plants that the Auditor General will report on later.

So the question that I have for you is a simple one, Premier, and it's one I expect a direct response on: Before the new long-term energy plan is tabled, will you assure us in this assembly that you will do a cost calculation of what those cancelled gas plants, as well as the Green Energy Act, have cost Ontario taxpayers on their hydro bill per month for the last 10 years?

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I remember, and I think everyone here will remember, in 2002-03, when we were campaigning, we didn't know when the election was going to be called. It was on again, off again. But I remember how unstable the electricity system was. I remember the brownouts; I remember the blackouts. I remember that when we came into office—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. Order. The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke will come to order, as will everyone in the House.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister, you always find that perfect moment, so I will give you the attention you're asking for. The minister responsible for seniors' affairs will come to order.

Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The party opposite howls, but we have rebuilt over 80% of our electricity system, because it was in disarray.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Cambridge, come to order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We have a stable supply. We've jump-started a green energy industry. They'd like to slash that; they'd like to kill those jobs, Mr. Speaker—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. I shall give those people who want attention the attention. The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is warned.

Wrap up, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I was done.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'd like to welcome the Minister to 2013. Her government has been in power for a decade and hydro rates have tripled on their watch because, on their long-term energy planning, they've either ignored it completely by saying they're going to build power plants and then cancelling, or coming to this very chamber and promising 50,000 jobs from a green energy plan that has cost Ontario taxpayers and rural communities a lot of money.

This government has a lot to answer for. Before they bring forward that next long-term energy plan before the assembly and before the people of Ontario, I have asked

her directly, and I will do it one more time: Will she go to the people of this province and tell them exactly how much that Green Energy Act has cost them on their power bill, will she tell them how much those two cancelled gas plants will cost them on their hydro bill and will she do it immediately?

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me. As I begin to sit down, people begin to ramp it back up again. Both sides are making comments before I even sit down.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I think the member opposite knows full well that the issues around the cost of the gas plants—we've had a report from the Auditor General on Mississauga, the report on Oakville is coming forward and we will continue to have that discussion.

But I think the member opposite should remember that if we talk about going to the people of Ontario and talking about what's actually happening, when the PCs capped energy prices in 2002, it caused energy prices to spike 30% in 30 weeks, and that created a \$7-billion stranded debt. So when you talk about being honest with the people of Ontario and talking about what costs really are, that's what we're doing, Mr. Speaker. That is not what the party opposite has done. And on the long-term—

Interjections.

Interjection: You're done.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Okay. I'm done; you're right.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. While someone is giving an answer, if that happens, that's their time. Then, when that time is up, you don't get any more time; your time is up.

New question.

PAN AM GAMES

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Premier. Yesterday the Premier reacted with apparent shock to news about the Pan Am Games' outrageous expenses. But in an interview, Ian Troop, the CEO of the Pan Am Games, insisted that the government knew and approved of the guidelines for expenses and salaries. This morning, the minister said that the government did not approve these, but the board did.

1100

Speaker, can the Premier explain who has the full set of books with every expense listed, who approved these expenses and salaries, and to whom the Pan Am board actually does or should report?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Michael Chan: TO2015, the operations side, reports to the board, and the board of the Pan Am Games consists of five partners: provincial, federal, municipal, and also the sector, which is the Canadian Olympic Committee as well as the Paralympic committee.

The board approved those expenses, and also the board implements those policies and provides guidance and guidelines for those expenses.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Paul Miller: Speaker, this is sadly not the first time this government has faced questions of inappropriate spending of taxpayer dollars. We still remember eHealth and Ornge. This government has allowed the Pan Am Games to operate outside the expense rules and accountability that should apply to the expenditure of all Ontario tax dollars. The minister passed the blame to the board today, acting as an independent transfer agent, as though taxpayer dollars were not at stake—just like eHealth, Ornge and the gas plants.

Has this government learned nothing over the last few years? Can the Premier tell Ontarians why they should trust her government any more than they would trust the McGuinty Liberals with their hard-earned tax dollars?

Hon. Michael Chan: Let me clarify here: The broader public service expense directive requires designated organizations to establish expense rules where expenses are reimbursed from public funds. These expense rules do not have to be the same as those required by government agencies and ministries within the Ontario public service.

The province's financial oversight of TO2015 includes administering the transfer payment agreement, review and approval of TO2015's business plan, reporting from TO2015, and auditing compliance with provincial directives.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: Mr. Speaker, my question, through you, is to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment.

Minister, our government has outlined a strong plan for jobs and growth that includes investing in people and infrastructure and creating the right conditions for businesses to grow and stay in Ontario. We all know that social entrepreneurship represents a sustainable way to build a diverse and vibrant economy. This includes people who live in my riding of Scarborough Southwest, who I know will also benefit from the investments our government is making. My residents have already seen the work our government is doing through the Ontario Network of Entrepreneurs, which serves my constituents.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment, could the minister please update this House on the government's recent social enterprise strategy announcement?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I thank the member from Scarborough Southwest for his question. Social enterprises

are for-profit and not-for-profit entities that are run like businesses but have as their overarching goal contributing to the social good and creating a better society. Ontarians are global leaders when it comes to social enterprise. There are roughly 10,000 social enterprises in the province today, employing more than 150,000 people.

Last week, the government announced a three-year, \$25-million social enterprise strategy to help build the sector in Ontario. A portion of that funding will be used to create a new \$4-million social enterprise demonstration fund to support early-stage social enterprises.

The strategy will benefit Ontarians by creating thousands of new jobs, particularly for youth and other populations that have traditionally had barriers to employment. In partnership with the social enterprise sector, our aim is to make Ontario the leading jurisdiction in North America for social enterprise.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: I want to thank the minister for his response. It's great to hear that social entrepreneurs will have access to the right funding opportunities and support across this province. It is important that people across the province can depend on a sustainable economy, for, as you said, Minister, it's about investing in people and infrastructure and creating the right business climate for companies to come and grow in Ontario.

When I speak to constituents in my riding, they say our government needs to continue to take action and invest in social programs that will help increase employment opportunities across the province.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment: Could the minister tell the House how pairing economic development and social impact will create economic and employment opportunities for Ontarians?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Our social enterprise action plan includes support for the recently announced Social Venture Exchange, or the SVX, which brings together impact investors, investors that also want to seek enterprises that are making a positive difference in society, with social enterprises looking for funding.

We've created an Office for Social Enterprise in my ministry, as well, to coordinate efforts across government and work with the sector, including promoting partnerships between the private sector, of course, and the not-for-profit sectors. It's due to the leadership in the sector itself that the great social enterprises Bullfrog Power, the Brick Works, Goodwill, TurnAround Couriers and others are thriving and contributing to our communities. Another good example is Rise Asset Development, which is a partnership between CAMH and the Rotman School of Management where they mentor individuals with mental health challenges to become self-sustaining entrepreneurs and business persons.

Social enterprise is well proven, and we have demonstrated our commitment as a province with this \$25-million investment.

GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Good morning, Speaker.

My question is for the Premier. Premier, it took 136 years for Ontario's debt to reach \$139 billion, but it took the Liberals only 10 years to double it to \$273 billion. Because of your uncontrolled spending, interest is now our third-largest expenditure, after health and after education, and that's with low interest rates. Because of your uncontrolled spending, you've turned the once mighty Ontario into a have-not province. All other provinces have recovered from the recession and are roaring ahead.

It's clear, Premier, that you have no plan, but we do. Will you work with us to implement our ideas, Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: A couple of things here: One, Ontarians should recognize and be proud of the fact that we are the only jurisdiction in North America to exceed job recovery like no other: 183% of jobs have come back to the province since the recession. We are the only government in Canada in over a decade to actually cut spending year over year, and as a result, our deficit targets have been reduced by over \$5.6 billion.

But we always know we need to do better. We will always aspire to do more. That's why we're going to continue investing in people, we're going to continue investing in infrastructure, and we're going to continue to support our businesses to make them even more competitive. That requires investments, and we're prepared to take on that debt for their benefit.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Premier, what we've seen from you so far is a lost decade for Ontario. Our debt has doubled, our hydro rates have doubled, we have high unemployment, and business is sitting on \$500 billion that they will not invest in Ontario. Instead of taking action, you've taken us further down the wrong path of the last 10 years.

The solutions to Ontario's problems aren't hard to figure out, Premier; they're just not easy to do. Ontario needs a government that has a plan to reduce spending and create jobs and has the courage of its convictions to stick to that plan.

Premier, we've put out a plan for discussion. We have 14 white papers, 200 pages—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me. The Minister of the Environment will come to order, along with the Attorney General, and that's the last time for the Minister of the Environment.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Our plan: We have 14 white papers and 200 pages of ideas. Premier, since you have no plan to turn Ontario around, will you please adopt ours?

Interjections.

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

Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: As noted, Ontario has exceeded its targets. Our deficit is going down; our spending has

been cut. We're doing all that's necessary to make Ontario—in fact, we are the largest jurisdiction in North America, second to none, in regard to investment in this province.

1110

The plan that the opposition has put forward is a plan of across-the-board cuts, something that would harm the sensitive recovery that we now have in Ontario. They want to drive down wages through harmful right-to-work legislation—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Chatham, come to order.

Hon. Charles Sousa: They want to fire 10,000 education workers. They want to fire 2,000—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Just in case he didn't hear me while he was yelling, I asked the member from Chatham to come to order.

Continue.

Hon. Charles Sousa: So, Mr. Speaker, part of their plan is about firing even more workers—2,000 health workers. They want to cancel something that is so critical to the well-being of our future, and that is investing in our children, investing in our youth, investing in our students and not cancelling the 30% reduction in tuition—that is about producing skills and making Ontario better.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question is to the Premier. In 2010, this government slashed statutory accident benefit payouts by 50% across Ontario and 70% in the GTA. Yesterday, we finally received official confirmation that the insurance industry has pocketed every single penny of these savings, passing none of them on to Ontario drivers. In stunning testimony yesterday in committee, insurance actuary Bill Andrus presented hard evidence that the actual return on equity in the province of Ontario for the insurance industry was an incredible 25%. When are we going to see these billions in savings for insurance industries being passed on to Ontario drivers to result in a lower premium?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: As noted by the Auditor General's 2011 report, FSCO retained two experts to review the ROE benchmark and develop recommendations. We've adopted the widely accepted financial market principles to ensure the ROE benchmark reflects those market conditions. Using that methodology on an eight-year rolling average, the ROE benchmark for 2013 is, as noted, at 11%. But currently those benchmarks by auto insurance rate regulators in other similar Canadian provinces range up to 12%.

But notwithstanding that, we've taken the steps to reduce rates to ensure that we pass on the savings of those claim cost reductions to ensure that consumers benefit from further rate cuts, and that's what we're working towards.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: The numbers speak for themselves. For three straight years, auto insurers have pocketed virtually every penny from the savings flowing from the 2010 benefit cutbacks: \$2 billion in savings each year for the insurance industry and nothing for Ontario's nine million drivers.

It comes as no surprise that the insurance industry, like EllisDon, is a large donor to this Liberal Party. When will the Premier start taking the side of Ontario drivers and not the well-connected auto insurance industry?

Hon. Charles Sousa: As mentioned, FSCO is looking into a return on premium model, which would make the benchmark more transparent to Ontario drivers. Of course, we note—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Health will put that down. I've already ruled on that, and it's not going to happen anymore.

Please.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The benchmark, of course, is not a guarantee of the rate of return, but this is what is: We're taking strong action to bring them down. We've established an industry-wide average of 15% for the next two years—8% by August.

But this is important, Mr. Speaker. Here is a quote by one of the NDP members. It reads as follows: This "is a step in the right direction." "I'm pleased to say that something is finally being done." Sarah Campbell, NDP for Kenora–Rainy River. We agree with her as well.

SENIORS

Mr. Vic Dhillon: My question is to the minister responsible for seniors. Seniors have made and continue to make outstanding contributions to our communities. In my riding of Brampton West, seniors are extremely active, and many are affiliated with organizations like the Canadian Association of Retired Persons. I'm delighted to say that, in May of this year, CARP Brampton chapter 52 held the largest inaugural chapter meeting the national CARP has ever had to date.

Today is the International Day of Older Persons. Can the minister outline some of the ways our government is supporting Ontario seniors?

Hon. Mario Sergio: I want to thank the member from Brampton West for this important question. Let me say that we recognize the fundamental role that seniors play and the remarkable contribution that seniors have made in shaping in our province.

It is an honour for me to serve as minister responsible for seniors, and let me say that the government is working very hard to make sure that seniors remain healthy, safe and independent for as long as possible. Our government has put one of many plans in place so our seniors, indeed, can continue to live healthy and independent.

The Action Plan for Seniors is a very comprehensive program supporting age-friendly communities, renewing Ontario's strategy to combat elder abuse and releasing a

new guide to programs and services for seniors in Ontario in 16 languages.

Let me say, Speaker, that we're always looking for new ways and new solutions for our seniors in Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Vic Dhillon: Thank you, Minister, for that response. Minister, as you're aware, Ontario is home to 1.9 million people over the age of 65. That represents almost 15% of Ontario's population and 38% of Canada's seniors population. By 2036, the number of Ontarian seniors will more than double, to 4.2 million.

Minister, this demographic shift will present both new opportunities and challenges for the province of Ontario. Can the minister tell us more about the steps our government is taking to support seniors in Ontario?

Hon. Mario Sergio: Again, I want to thank the member from Brampton West because he's very well conversant with the challenges and opportunities of seniors in his particular area.

Let me say that in addition to the Ontario Action Plan for Seniors, for the first time in our history, we've regulated all retirement homes. In 2010, we passed the Retirement Homes Act.

Since 2003, we have invested more than \$8 million in elder abuse prevention and awareness initiatives. This includes \$900,000 a year in support of the Ontario Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse.

On top of that, we have put in place the Finding Your Way program, which is an awareness program for people—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer.

Hon. Mario Sergio: —with dementia. We also implemented the home renovation tax credit, worth up to \$1,500 annually.

It is my and the government's intention to make Ontario the best province for seniors.

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Yesterday, Minister, 250 hairdressers from 37 First Choice Haircutters salons joined thousands of other tradespeople in Ontario trying to stop your government's trades tax. It is costing their industry jobs, and they simply cannot afford to pay for your new bureaucracy—provides them absolutely no benefit whatsoever. It's one more tax that the consumer has to absorb.

On top of that, now your trades tax enforcement cops are visiting—get this—hairdresser salons and barbers across the province. It's just a big joke, Mr. Speaker.

Will the minister finally stand up for the hard-working tradespeople and abolish the College of Trades once and for all?

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You've left me with an opening again. I won't take it, so he knows.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Too easy.

The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, I'll be happy to talk a little bit more about the situation with regard to barbers in the supplementary, but first I want to respond to the last request that member made.

This organization, when it comes to things like apprenticeship ratios, has performed extremely well, and I just want to share with the member a comparison to apprenticeship ratio reductions that have taken place. When they were in office: zero apprenticeship reductions. When the NDP were in office: one. Since we've been in office, as a government, before the College of Trades, we did eight reductions. The College of Trades has been in place for approximately six months: 14 reductions in ratios since they've been in office. That's a heck of a lot better than the record of your government, which I remind the Legislature was—

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

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Well, what can you say, Speaker?

You don't even know the file on the ratio reviews. It's pathetic. You don't even know the file on it. When are you going to listen? The College of Trades is a boondoggle; it's that simple.

1120

Hairdressers across this province are being overtaxed and harassed by your government right today. First the HST, then the trades tax and now, of course, the trades cops out harassing them on the site. I've personally met with thousands of tradespeople across Ontario and heard their anger over this costly new boondoggle. How can the minister justify forcing hard-working tradespeople like these hairdressers to pick up the tab for the bureaucracy that offers no value to them, their business managers, their owners or the consumers? Minister, can you inform the House of even one—one benefit—the College of Trades is offering hairdressing salons or barbers in the province of Ontario?

Interjections.

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

Minister.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Mr. Speaker, let's talk about the benefits that the College of Trades is bringing. The party opposite talks about reducing ratios for apprenticeships. Just look at the record of the College of Trades. I'm going to repeat it again: 14 apprenticeship ratio reductions in less than six months. Let's compare it to their record: eight years, zero reductions of apprenticeship ratios. Mr. Speaker, he asked for an example of something good coming from the College of Trades: 14 reductions in apprenticeship ratios, creating greater opportunities for apprentices. When we talk about creating jobs for youth, jobs for apprentices, dealing with

the skills gap in the skilled trades, they're working hard, they're doing it and their record's a heck of a lot better than yours was.

WATER QUALITY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. It seems to be déjà vu all over again for the people of Sarnia, Wallaceburg and downstream First Nations communities as well. For the second time in a month, people are worried about the safety of their drinking water in those communities. Last week, two new spills followed hard on the heels of a major diesel fuel leak into the St. Clair River in early September, which we asked questions about at that time. When will the Minister of the Environment put the health of Ontarians first by stopping corporate polluters before they spill instead of reacting after the fact?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: To the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Mr. Speaker, you would recognize that we do that each and every day. First of all, we have in the province of Ontario some of the strictest laws that would exist anywhere in North America in terms of spills that are taking place in this area. We recognize, as well, that there is an opportunity to prosecute those who are seen to be in violation of those laws. So whenever a spill happens to take place, it is the responsibility of the Ministry of the Environment to do a full and complete investigation, if there is sufficient evidence to prosecute those who are responsible, if there's been a violation of the laws of the province of Ontario. The ministry has been involved in these matters for some time, has cracked down on this area, and will certainly continue to do so, particularly as a result of some of the recent incidents.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Under the Liberal watch, chemical spills in the Sarnia area have been a regular occurrence. This year alone there have been toxic spills by Sun-Canadian, Suncor, Imperial Oil, and Enbridge, to name just a few. Instead of wringing their hands after a spill has occurred, when will this government actually protect the drinking water of Ontarians and work with those affected communities to develop stronger regulations and more effective enforcement so we don't have to sail down these troubled waters again and again and again?

Hon. James J. Bradley: In fact, I've been in discussion with the members in the particular area. The member from Sarnia, of course, has been very interested in this subject. The member for Chatham-Kent-Essex has been very much involved and has drawn these matters to my attention. Mr. McNaughton has been drawing these to my attention as well.

We do have, in the province of Ontario, very strong laws. If there is a violation of those laws, we are prepared to prosecute to the largest extent possible. It would be then, of course, up to the courts to make the judgments.

In the meantime, each of these establishments gets visited by the Ministry of the Environment to make a determination of whether they have in place the necessary equipment and procedures which would ensure—or at least limit the risk of any spills of this kind taking place in the future.

So I have met with the members in the area and we have discussed this matter thoroughly. You can be assured that the strongest of actions will be taken in each and every one of these cases.

AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: It's my privilege to rise in the House today. My question is for the Minister of Agriculture and Food. Minister, as you know, Ontario is home to one of North America's largest food processing sectors. In fact, you often say that we have 3,000 businesses that employ more than 95,000 people across the province.

There are many people in my riding of Scarborough–Guildwood who work in the sector. This summer, I had the opportunity to tour some of the local food stores in Scarborough–Guildwood with the minister.

Given that this is a sector that provides economic benefits to all areas of the province, from farms right up the value chain for the food processing industry, I think all in this House would be interested in seeing the sector increase in size. With that in mind, can the minister tell this House what her government is doing to help Ontario's food processing sector to attract investment, grow and continue to thrive?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I want to thank the member for Scarborough–Guildwood for the question. I also want to thank the Toronto Region Board of Trade for the conference that they put together with Food and Consumer Products of Canada yesterday. There's work being done on creating a cluster of food processors and producers in this region.

The food industry is a very important contributor to the economy, as the member has said—overall, a \$34-billion contribution to the GDP and more than 700,000 jobs in this sector. So it's very important that we support that dynamic and innovative business.

At the round table yesterday, many of the top innovators in the sector talked to me about transportation, they talked about skills development, and they talked about the things that we can do, working together, to make sure that we do what's necessary to make this sector grow. I was very appreciative of their input.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Thank you, Minister, for your response and for informing this House of the work that's under way. My constituents have told me that they really value knowing where their food comes from, and consumers here at home and around the world trust the quality and safety of Ontario food products.

I know that in my riding, our diverse population presents an opportunity for new and different food products that combine the need for convenience with the

comfort of one's cultural dishes. We also have an aging population looking for healthful foods; many reside in my riding of Scarborough–Guildwood. We have a growing trend of support for local food and people who read labels and want to know where their food is coming from.

What is your ministry doing to promote innovation in Ontario's agri-food sector?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I want to talk about a couple of initiatives. One is the partnership with the University of Guelph and the competitive research programs that are going on there. The other one is through the Growing Forward 2 program that was negotiated by my predecessor. He did a great job in working with the federal government and working with companies and the sector to make sure that we had in place the supports for innovation and expansion that are needed, and the kind of stability that's needed in the sector, because, as you know, the agri-food sector struggles with the vagaries of weather and those kinds of unpredictable changes that may happen.

One of the significant improvements to Growing Forward 2 this year is that food processing is now included. So it's not just the producers; it's also the processors. There were many processors at the table yesterday at the Toronto Region Board of Trade, and so we're working with them and Growing Forward 2 is supporting them in a very concrete way in their innovation, the acquisition of technology, and in supporting their businesses.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is for the Minister of Finance. Minister, yesterday in committee, the Insurance Brokers Association of Ontario, those people that represent us in our communities, obtaining the best rates possible for our homes, health and cars, implied that the idea of a 15% reduction in auto insurance is a pipe dream. Costs in the system are high and premiums just don't come down because you wish them to. They've seen no credible plan come out of your ministry, and without one, the reductions are an illusion. Even if the reductions do occur, the brokers say that no one outside the GTA will ever see those reductions.

I'm from St. Thomas. We have good drivers there and the city consistently has one of the lowest rates of accidents per insured vehicle in the province. Minister, why do you not think good drivers in my riding, in Collingwood, Timiskaming, Cochrane, Thunder Bay, Atikokan, Kenora or any other towns and cities outside of the GTA deserve any reduction?

1130

Hon. Charles Sousa: I really appreciate the question. I'm not sure where the member has been for the last two years, because that's exactly what we've been doing. We've been working with the industry, finding ways to reduce those very issues and those costs. We've implemented, in our strategy, safe driver protection so that those who are safe drivers, who do have good records, get better benefits.

It's working, because, as I've mentioned in the past, we have press releases from various insurance providers who have already started to reduce rates. You've already admitted that they already have reduced costs, so that's a good thing for those communities.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'm not sure, Mr. Speaker, if I did actually say they'd reduced costs, but I'm saying you promised a 15% reduction in auto insurance when in fact you cannot deliver that outside of the GTA.

It's not surprising, though, that you took this idea from the NDP, who a few months ago introduced a bill that would lower premiums for drunk drivers across this province.

The PC Party has a plan, and I wish the minister would implement it. We've told you for months now to reduce the red tape and bureaucracy in the system, reform the dispute resolution process, and actually take that anti-fraud task force report that's sitting on the desk beside Drummond's and implement it and ensure that we have increased insurer accountability. As our leader, Tim Hudak, said yesterday, we have the ideas. You're welcome to steal any one you want.

The experts agreed in the committee that your 15% pledge is unattainable. It's disrespectful, Mr. Speaker, for the minister to tell the Ontario people to stand by his pledge of—an empty promise. Will you stop playing the shell games and admit you have no plan to achieve savings for all Ontarians—

Interjections.

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

Minister of Finance?

Hon. Charles Sousa: What's really rich is that johnny-come-lately all of a sudden is talking about reducing rates.

We have already instituted rate reductions, in 2004. We've taken the anti-fraud task force recommendations, and we have been implementing them. We have releases from CAA and the Co-operators advancing the reductions in costs, and we've taken the steps necessary to reduce them over the last two years.

The member opposite is talking about the very issues, like dispute resolution, that we've already started to implement. Thank you for your recommendations; you're two years too late.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Minister, when last we spoke, at the plowing match a couple of weeks ago, you promised an update on the girder situation on the parkway. Yesterday, that briefing was to take place, but it was cancelled abruptly.

You've been looking into whether or not those girders have to be replaced. Can you update the House this morning on the latest information you have at your disposal, sir?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I want to thank the member for his very sincere concern about this, his watchfulness on this particular file and his collaboration. I'm very committed to continuing to work with him and ensuring he gets a full briefing.

It was just 24 hours ago that we received the report of the independent expert review panel. The deputy minister has received it. I have just become aware of some of the contents and details of it. It is now under the active review of the ministry lawyers and engineers. The chief engineer has had a day with it. It is his responsibility to make recommendations to the ministry and the government. I have said to the opposition members that I will ensure they have a full briefing prior to its release, and we are committed to doing that.

Again, this is a very serious matter—the safety and durability of our structures—which this government takes very critically. I look forward to working with the member, and I'm quite happy to take any meeting or time with him to ensure he's fully briefed and has all the information.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Perhaps I should have posed the question of Dave Battagello of the Windsor Star. He's running with a story today that says the girders are coming out. If the Windsor Star knows about it, why doesn't the minister know about it? And when are the people in Windsor–Tecumseh and LaSalle going to get some information from this government?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: When a minister of the crown becomes aware that there may be a serious safety issue, he doesn't run to the journalists; he goes to the deputy minister and has a thorough review, which is exactly what I did in May.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, based on the concerns that I had, I asked the deputy minister to investigate and review. Deputy Layton did that and did a very good job and came back, and we both agreed there was a need for an independent review, which I struck in June. That review worked very promptly over the last 60 days and tabled its report. This is a review of five of the country's most respected structural engineers and a gentleman with 40 years of legal experience.

This is a very serious matter. It is a safety issue. It is an issue of great concern. We will advance that report. I would like the member to have—

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

New question?

SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

Mrs. Laura Albanese: My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Ontario recently renewed its commitment to reduce poverty with the launch of province-wide consultations to hear how the government and our communities can continue to work together to break the cycle of poverty.

Just yesterday evening, I held a local consultation in my riding of York South–Weston. One of the many suggestions that came forward was that one of the gov-

ernment initiatives that is working the best is the Student Nutrition Program. A child's ability to learn increases tremendously when you have access to a nutritious diet.

My question to the minister is: Is our government committed to doing its best to expand and give our children the best opportunity to have a good environment to learn—

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

Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Teresa Piruzza: I'd like to thank the member both for undertaking the consultation in her community last night with respect to poverty reduction consultation and for her question about the Student Nutrition Program.

I'll say that this morning myself and the Minister of Health had a good start to the morning. We were at Church Street public school, spending some time with the grade 6 leaders there and talking about our commitment to providing children across the province with the best learning environment. One of the best ways we know to enhance that is to provide students with a nutritious diet.

This morning, I'm pleased to say that we announced we are expanding our government Student Nutrition Program. We will be investing—

Applause.

Hon. Teresa Piruzza: We've heard the same thing about the importance of this program.

We will be investing an additional \$3 million to provide students—this will create 200 new programs for 30,000 more children across the province.

Evidence shows that these programs lead to better concentration and getting more out of the school day. I'm very proud of our record.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1138 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to welcome some very special guests to the chamber this afternoon. The consul of the People's Republic of China and guests are here today: Consul Yang Shaojun, Shi Xiaoguang and Wang Jian. Welcome to the Ontario Legislature.

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

The member from Dufferin—Caledon.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): She was here before you.

Mr. John O'Toole: Okay.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Thank you, Speaker. It's my pleasure to welcome my friend Sheena Weir from the law society.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Now the member from Durham.

Mr. John O'Toole: I've been trumped.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

CHILD PROTECTION

Mr. Rod Jackson: Speaker, before I begin, would it be okay if I asked for unanimous consent to wear a purple ribbon in support of Child Abuse Prevention Month?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Barrie has asked for unanimous consent to wear the purple ribbon. Do we agree? Agreed.

Restart the clock, please.

Mr. Rod Jackson: Thank you, Speaker. Today, October 1, marks the beginning of Child Abuse Prevention Month. Children represent the future of our province, and so I'm honoured to stand and speak to the importance of this month, which aims to raise awareness of the signs of child abuse and neglect; that child safety and family well-being begin in the community and that everyone has a duty to report abuse and neglect.

The safety and well-being of Ontario's children should be one of our first priorities, certainly. So I was proud to introduce my children's-right-to-care bill, Bill 88, which aims to protect children in care and recently passed second reading. This protects children who are 16 and 17 years old who might find themselves in the situation where they've lost their family or have been abused by their guardians.

Purple is the colour of child abuse prevention, so today I will be wearing a purple ribbon in support of ending all forms of child abuse, and I urge all my colleagues to do the same.

We all have a responsibility to ensure that Ontario's children can grow up in the safest environment possible. That's the duty of all of us, not only as parents and legislators but certainly as members of our communities: to make sure that we care for each other and each other's children whenever we see signs of abuse and neglect and stand up and take notice and appropriate action.

If you think a child needs help, please don't stand by. Call the children's aid society immediately. Together, we can make Ontario the best place to grow up, for all of us and all of our children.

EQUINOX SUMMIT: LEARNING 2030

Ms. Catherine Fife: It was my pleasure this Sunday to attend the Equinox Summit: Learning 2030 in Waterloo. This unique event was hosted by Waterloo's Global Science Initiative, the Perimeter Institute, and the University of Waterloo, with the important support of TVO as a media partner.

The goals of the summit are summed up best by PI's Neil Turok's and the University of Waterloo's President Feridun Hamdullahpur's editorial in the *Globe and Mail* yesterday: "We need to create better schools if we want today's infants to grow into capable citizens, able to navigate future challenges and contribute positively to their communities." And because "134 million babies were born worldwide in the past year," we need to plan

for their high school experience in 2030. We need this plan to be inclusive and we need to start now.

Now, what is happening at this summit is truly amazing. A diverse group of thinkers of all ages are working on some of the fundamental questions that have emerged in today's world of education, including: What is the purpose of education? What are our hopes and aspirations for a strong public education system? How can we challenge and innovate within the system as it is currently constructed? Where are the First Nation, Métis and Inuit voices in education, and how can we establish more trusting and respectful relationships? If you have a connection with education, then you will understand that there is some urgency to these questions.

I would encourage every party to pay close attention to the work that emerges from the Learning 2030 summit, because if we get education right, everything else—justice, the economy, the environment and our health—will also fall into place.

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Ms. Soo Wong: Today I'm honoured to extend greetings to all Chinese Canadians on the 64th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, a milestone event which took place on October 1, 1949. Chinese National Day is a time when all Canadians can reflect on the tremendous contributions Chinese Canadians have made in Ontario and across this great country.

From the first railway workers in the 1800s to professionals from every field—scientists, engineers, journalists, restaurateurs, artists and many more—Chinese Canadians have overwhelmingly contributed to the cultural tapestry of this great province of Ontario and Canada.

Today, in recognition of this occasion, we raised the Chinese national flag on the south lawn of the Legislature in the presence of Consul General Fang Li and Mrs. Fang Li, several members of the Legislature, and many distinguished Chinese Canadians and community leaders.

Ontarians are proud to embrace and celebrate our collective diversity through histories, traditions, languages and beliefs. As a province, we draw strength from this vibrant and rich mosaic.

On behalf of our government and the residents of my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt, I would like to extend my best wishes as Chinese in Ontario celebrate this historic occasion.

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Mr. John O'Toole: This may be repetitive with respect to our guests in the visitors' chamber today. Mr. Speaker, I rise to remind this House that October 1 is the National Day of the People's Republic of China. Dignitaries attended the flag-raising at noon today, and we were fortunate to have Consul General Fang Li, as well as the other speakers and dignitaries, Liberal Minister Michael Chan, as well as PC MPP Todd Smith and NDP MPP Rosario Marchese, all of whom addressed

many people, including young students who were in attendance.

The People's Republic of China was founded on October 1, 1949, in Tiananmen Square.

Mr. Speaker, China is Ontario and Canada's second-largest trading partner in the world. In 2011, two-way trade between Ontario and China totalled \$29 billion. Perhaps soon to be the largest economy of the world—almost 1.5 billion people—it's a country to keep an eye on.

Certainly, in my riding of Durham last Friday, Mayor Adrian Foster, Clarington council and the Clarington Board of Trade had the privilege of hosting Fang Li, consul general for the republic, in a visit to local farms and local industry. Durham region itself is currently taking part in a trade mission to China led by Regional Chair Roger Anderson.

I'm confident there is much to be achieved as a diverse and prosperous Ontario continues working together with our friends from China on initiatives of culture and economic opportunity.

Welcome to this Legislature. Welcome to Ontario. Welcome to Canada. It's a pleasure to have friends like that around the world.

TAREK LOUBANI AND JOHN GREYSON

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Today I rise in the House to bring awareness of the plight of two Ontario residents who are at great risk in Egypt. Tarek Loubani, an emergency room doctor from London, Ontario, and John Greyson, an award-winning film director and professor from York University, have been imprisoned in Egypt for 45 days with no due process.

In mid-August 2003, Professor Greyson and Dr. Loubani found themselves caught up in some of the country's most violent demonstrations since the Arab Spring of 2012. After being arbitrarily detained and arrested by Egyptian authorities, Dr. Loubani and Professor Greyson's nightmare began. Disturbing reports have come to light of violent interrogation tactics, humiliation, as well as physical and mental abuse at the hands of Egyptian authorities.

1510

Now these two Canadians face charges of intent to kill, which stands as a capital offence in Egypt.

Hundreds of thousands of supporters have raised their concern and outrage. The federal government has called for their release, but we must do more.

I call on all Canadians to continue to raise awareness and support for Professor Greyson and Dr. Loubani. More importantly, I call on the Prime Minister to engage with his direct counterparts in Egypt to resolve this situation. This situation will not be resolved without continued pressure from the highest levels of the Canadian government.

Let us assure all Canadians that as a government and as a society, we will stand together to secure the freedom of any Canadian who has been unlawfully imprisoned

and whose human rights have been violated at home or abroad.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: In August, I had the privilege of hosting a youth jobs round table in my riding of Scarborough–Guildwood. I was joined by the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, as well as several local Scarborough–Guildwood non-profit leaders and front-line workers. It was a great opportunity for us to come together and discuss the future of Scarborough's and Ontario's youth.

This government's investment of \$295 million over the next two years is much needed. Ontario's youth unemployment rate is currently the highest in eastern Canada.

Scarborough–Guildwood is full of young families worried about the future of their children. Youth employment is consistently one of the most talked-about issues in my riding. I've already had a number of recent graduates visit my constituency office to talk about the lack of employment opportunities for youth. Youth living in my priority neighbourhoods need our support.

I am proud to work with a Premier and alongside a government that is listening to these concerns. The youth jobs strategy will help young people in Scarborough–Guildwood realize their full potential. The strategy encourages entrepreneurship and includes incentives for employers.

This government is having conversations, much like the one in my riding last month, all over Ontario. We are committed to listening to every Ontarian to make this province a more fair and prosperous place. A brighter future for our youth will also result in a stronger economy here in Ontario. There is much work to be done on this issue.

I know my constituents in Scarborough–Guildwood are welcoming this investment in our young people and their future.

WINGHAM BALL YOUTH COMMITTEE

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I stand today to salute a group of young men who lead by example and who have proven to be a source of pride and inspiration in their community. They are known as the Wingham Ball Youth Committee, but I have to tell you that based on their vision, their commitment to encouraging young people to play ball and their business plan to attract local sponsorship, they also have become known as leaders in the community.

Dawson Currie, Les Irvine, Mitchell Newson and Brad and Jeff Pewtress range in age from 12 to 15, but clearly, age does not matter when a group of individuals, committed to a vision and task, work together and inspire a community.

The Wingham Ball Youth Committee's project scope focused on the need for better fencing, a safer field and a pitching machine. Numerous local community groups,

the Wingham Hitmen and Libro Financial Group saw merit in this collective initiative and jumped on side to help the youth committee realize their dream.

The Township of North Huron Recreation Department worked along with the young men on all aspects of the project, including design, procurement, management and implementation.

All of the committee's hard work culminated in a great day this past Saturday—I can still hit the ball into centre field; just a little footnote there—when the community came out to Riverside Park to tip their hats to the young men and see first-hand how a vision with a proper plan and support can indeed become a reality.

Congratulations, Dawson, Les, Mitchell, Brad and Jeff. You hit this project right out of the park. Please don't stop leading by example. I look forward to seeing what you choose to do next.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I suspect you would hit it out of the park.

Members' statements.

BREAST CANCER

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Mr. Speaker, we are joined today by visitors from Rethink Breast Cancer, kicking off Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Welcome. They have been working hard to pioneer cutting-edge breast cancer education, advocacy and support that speaks fearlessly to the needs of young women.

When a young woman gets breast cancer, it often spreads more aggressively, leading to tougher treatment and a harder fight to survive. A young woman who is diagnosed with breast cancer also faces concerns that are somewhat different than those of older women, including diagnosis during pregnancy, effects of chemotherapy on fertility, and risk of the menopausal symptoms of osteoporosis.

Our government brought in the scope of the Ontario Breast Screening Program in 2011 so that high-risk women are screened earlier: starting at age 30. This means 90,000 additional scans over three years.

We know that there is more work to be done. That's why the work that Rethink Breast Cancer does is so vital.

I hope all the members are able to attend the reception this evening in the legislative dining room and support the important efforts of this dynamic group.

CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS IN DUFFERIN–CALEDON

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm pleased to rise today to recognize a special 20th-anniversary celebration for three organizations in the Headwaters region. The Dufferin County Museum, Theatre Orangeville and In the Hills magazine all began 20 years ago.

Under the attentive eyes of curator Wayne Townsend and archivist Steve Brown, the Dufferin County Museum and Archives showcases our community's heritage and culture through its artifacts, collections and records. The museum is a hive of activities in all seasons, with events

that educate and entertain by sharing the fascinating collections and stories from Dufferin. In fact, they are highlighted in Queen's Park this week.

Theatre Orangeville has entertained thousands since it opened its doors. With artistic director David Nairn at the helm, the Theatre Orangeville stage has launched the careers of talented professional actors. Many original Canadian works have premiered on the stage at Orangeville and have gone on to achieve national and international success. I am particularly impressed with Theatre Orangeville's dedication to the development of its youth programs and its partnership with Community Living Dufferin.

Publisher and editor Signe Ball of In the Hills magazine has been sharing our community's unique stories for two decades. In the Hills captures the beauty of our community and celebrates our past, present and future. With an award-winning magazine, Signe Ball and the talented writers and photographers are documenting the tales of the Headwaters region.

I congratulate these three organizations on their 20th anniversary.

REPORT, INTEGRITY COMMISSIONER

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table a report from the Integrity Commissioner responding to the request of the member from Ottawa–Orléans concerning the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that today the Clerk received a report on intended appointments dated October 1, 2013, of the Standing Committee on Government Agencies.

Pursuant to standing order 108(f)(9), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

RED TAPE AND REGULATORY REVIEW ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LA RÉVISION DES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES ET DES DISPOSITIONS RÉGLEMENTAIRES

Mr. Hillier moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 110, An Act to establish political oversight over legislation and regulations to reduce red tape and unjustified regulatory burdens / Projet de loi 110, Loi établissant un régime de surveillance politique des lois et règlements afin de réduire les formalités administratives et les fardeaux réglementaires injustifiés.

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.

Mr. Randy Hillier: This bill establishes a standing committee of the Legislative Assembly, to be known as the Standing Committee on Red Tape and Regulatory Review. Every public bill must be referred to the committee for a review or include a provision stating that it applies despite the requirement for a review. The review deals with whether the bill imposes a regulatory burden on persons or bodies other than the public sector, whether the bill infringes on the freedom of those persons or bodies to own and use property, whether the regulatory burden constitutes an unjustified burden and red tape, and whether the person or body that administers the bill is best suited to do so. The committee may amend the bill before reporting it back to the assembly.

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No person or body, including the Lieutenant Governor in Council, is allowed to make a regulation under an act without giving the committee at least 60 days' notice to review the regulation and to propose amendments to it, except if the person or body gives notice to the committee that the urgency of the situation requires the making of an emergency regulation. An emergency regulation can remain in force for no longer than 90 days.

The committee can also review acts after they have been enacted and regulations after they have been made and make a report to the assembly.

MODERNIZING REGULATION OF THE LEGAL PROFESSION ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LA MODERNISATION DE LA RÉGLEMENTATION DE LA PROFESSION JURIDIQUE

Mr. Gerretsen moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 111, An Act to amend the Law Society Act and the Solicitors Act / Projet de loi 111, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le Barreau et la Loi sur les procureurs.

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. John Gerretsen: I'll wait until ministerial statements, Speaker.

PUBLIC SAFETY RELATED TO DOGS STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI A TRAIT À LA SÉCURITÉ PUBLIQUE LIÉE AUX CHIENS

Mr. Hillier moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 112, An Act to amend the Animals for Research Act and the Dog Owners' Liability Act with respect to pit bulls / *Projet de loi 112, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les animaux destinés à la recherche et la Loi sur la responsabilité des propriétaires de chiens en ce qui a trait aux pit-bulls.*

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.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Speaker, this bill repeals provisions in the Animals for Research Act relating to the disposition of pit bulls under that act. This bill also repeals provisions in the Dog Owners' Liability Act that prohibit restricted pit bulls and provide for controls on pit bulls.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

LEGAL PROFESSION

Hon. John Gerretsen: Before making my statement, may I introduce, in the gallery: Cathy Corsetti, chair of the paralegal standing committee at the law society; David Wright, chair of the law society tribunal; André Brazeau, government and stakeholder relations adviser; Sheena Weir—introduced earlier—director of public affairs for the Law Society of Upper Canada; as well as Julia Bass, policy counsel with the Law Society of Upper Canada. Joining them in the House is Christine Shaver, a policy adviser in my own ministry, and Liz McLennan, my legislative assistant.

Applause.

Hon. John Gerretsen: Anybody who works in a political job here deserves applause. We all know that.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today to introduce legislation that would, if passed, help to modernize the regulation of the legal profession in Ontario.

The Law Society of Upper Canada regulates lawyers and paralegals in our province. The law society does excellent work to ensure that Ontarians who engage legal professionals receive competent and high-quality services.

The law society has requested the amendments contained in this bill, which were passed by its governing body, which is commonly called Convocation. We agree that these are both desirable and in the public interest.

As I mentioned before, today we have with us the chair of the law society's paralegal standing committee, Cathy Corsetti. It is in no small part through her outstanding leadership that significant progress has been made in advancing the status of the new paralegal profession. I look forward to continuing to work with you, Cathy, and the treasurer of the law society on these very important recommendations.

You may be interested, Speaker, that there are over 5,000 paralegals registered with the Law Society of Upper Canada here in Ontario today.

In short, the proposed bill before us today includes changes that would do the following: first of all, strengthen the hearing and appeals process governing lawyers and paralegals in Ontario; and increase the number of paralegals at Convocation to better recognize the importance of this maturing profession.

Mr. Speaker, our proposed legislation would reform the law society's hearing and appeals process, which governs allegations of professional misconduct brought against lawyers and paralegals. It would do this by establishing a new internal tribunal that would oversee the law society's current hearing and appeals panels.

To ensure that this tribunal would be both independent and effective, a full-time lawyer would act as its chair. The chair would be someone who is not currently one of the law society's directors or, as they're more commonly known, benchers. So it would be a non-bencher.

How the law society treats cases of potential misconduct is a matter of vital concern to the public, to its members and to all who have dealings with our legal system on a day-to-day basis. This step would provide for better coordination and consistency of the two panels and ensure greater transparency and accountability to the public.

The proposed amendments would also allow for a more cost-effective and timely process for recovering legal costs from lawyers and paralegals. It would achieve this by authorizing the law society to suspend a professional's licence for failure to pay legal costs relating to a discipline proceeding that has been awarded against that individual.

A third proposal would clarify that the law society can receive information that is solicitor-client privileged from any person in a hearing, including a client. Solicitor-client privilege is a person's right to refuse to disclose communications made to or received from his or her legal adviser. While the current legislation says that the law society can use information received from a lawyer or a paralegal in a hearing and that such information remains protected, it is silent about information received from others at such a hearing, such as, for example, the clients that may have been involved in that particular subject matter.

Ontario is the only jurisdiction in Canada to regulate paralegals, which gives consumers more choice, more protection and access to justice when obtaining legal services. This has been a highly successful initiative, with almost 5,000 paralegals now licensed and insured in this province since 2006.

The fourth legislative proposal would increase the number of paralegals on the law society's governing body from two to five. This change would provide for a more equitable representation and recognize the more mature status, as well, of the paralegal profession, as it has developed over the last eight or nine years. The proposal to increase the number of paralegals on

Convocation, the governing body, is time-sensitive, as it needs to be in place by December 31 of this year in preparation for the next four-year election cycle, which commences in March 2014.

The fifth legislative proposal will provide a house-keeping amendment specifying that paralegals may receive payment for representing an individual in a legal proceeding, to reflect the current practice.

1530

All of the changes contained in this proposed legislation would help to further modernize the regulation of the legal profession in Ontario. As a result, there would be more efficient, effective, accountable and accessible services, both for the public and for the professionals regulated by the Law Society of Upper Canada.

I once again want to thank the treasurer of the Law Society of Upper Canada and Convocation for exemplary leadership in helping to ensure that the fine reputation of Ontario's legal professionals remains second to none. I also once again want to thank and congratulate Cathy Corsetti for championing the development of her profession—the paralegal profession—here in Ontario.

I urge my fellow members to support this legislation and have it passed and enacted before December 31 of this year.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I rise in the Legislature today to recognize October 1 as the 34th anniversary of the proclamation of Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety Act in 1979. This single piece of legislation changed the way workplaces manage health and safety. The act extended three key rights to the vast majority of Ontario workers: the right to know about workplace hazards, the right to participate in matters affecting their health and safety, and the right to refuse unsafe work. Everybody became accountable for workplace health and safety.

On this occasion, it is important to recognize and reaffirm that in all workplaces across Ontario, people are our greatest asset. They must be properly trained, and we must strengthen our efforts to protect workers and their families. We must do whatever it takes to prevent workplace fatalities, injuries and illnesses—and to support their families and loved ones. We are making progress in our quest to make workplaces safer, working together with everyone who shares this goal.

Workplace injuries have been decreasing: on construction sites, in businesses, hospitals and schools. Health and safety advocates are making workplaces safer. Since 2003, we have significantly lowered the rate of workplace injury in this province. The number of injuries in Ontario has gone down 30%. Ontario is now one of the safest places to work in Canada, but we must do more.

Our government has taken significant steps to reduce and eliminate workplace injuries. We have increased the number of enforcement officers to make sure employers follow the rules. We had Tony Dean conduct a thorough health and safety review and provide recommendations,

which received all-party support in this House, to take a strong, proactive approach to workplace health and safety. We have brought enforcement and prevention together under the purview of the province's first-ever chief prevention officer, Mr. George Gritziotis, to help make sure that injuries do not happen in the first place. And we will soon launch the first-ever province-wide occupational health and safety strategy, developed with advice from labour, employers, injured workers and community groups, to establish clear priorities and rules that will guide our work in the years ahead. This includes mandatory safety awareness training for workers and supervisors, which we will be introducing shortly.

Together, as a society, all of us must work to build a strong safety culture, a culture of prevention in our province's workplaces. Together we can prevent workplace deaths and injuries. As the Minister of Labour, I am committed to ensuring that this goal becomes a reality for everyone.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It's now time for responses.

LEGAL PROFESSION

Mrs. Julia Munro: It's a pleasure to be able to respond today to Modernizing Regulation of the Legal Profession Act. I think that that embodies the essence of the bill that we are looking at, because I recall, several years ago, when there was a great deal of discussion between the paralegal community and the lawyers' community in terms of coming together and finding opportunities to be able to work together. It was at that time that the law society took the, if you like, stewardship of the paralegal community. So when I look at what we have here today, it seems to me that this is in keeping with the continual need to modernize and make their services available to the public as a whole.

One of the most important things, as legislators, that we must look at is assessment in terms of how this is going to affect the public. I think, when you look at this piece of legislation, which, of course, comes as a result of the paralegal standing committee, we're looking at the essence of bringing forward modernization methods that will continue to provide the public with a fair and balanced approach, which will then make sure that it meets those demands of accessibility, that people will be able to look at which avenue would suit them best.

I think that much of the debate that will follow on this bill will centre around the importance that this has for the citizen, for the consumer, and, quite frankly, that will be what serves them to allow us to look at this bill as it makes its way through the legislative process.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr. Monte McNaughton: It's a pleasure to rise today in recognition of the 34th anniversary of the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Created first in 1979, under the government of PC Premier William Davis, this act serves

as a legal framework and as an important tool to determine the duties and rights for all of those in the workplace.

With other pieces of contributing legislation, such as the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act and the Human Rights Code, employers, workers and partners in occupational health and safety all contribute to highlighting ways to prevent injury and illness in the workplace. All partners have key roles to play in taking responsibility and contributing to the success of this initiative.

Of course, the main purpose of the act is to protect workers from health and safety hazards on the job.

The act sets out duties for all workplace parties and rights for workers. It establishes procedures for dealing with workplace hazards and provides for enforcement of the law.

Speaker, after 34 years of this important act, Ontario has lessened the burden on the health care system by reducing the number of workplace injuries and illnesses, avoided costs for employers and provided a level playing field for compliant companies.

Myself, Tim Hudak—our leader—and the entire PC caucus are proud to stand with our commitment for a sustainable workplace health and safety culture that will continually focus on educating to preventing workplace injuries and illnesses. With this, we can make Ontario the healthiest and safest province to work in.

LEGAL PROFESSION

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, I'd also like to add my voice to the debate. Particularly, I'd like to congratulate the law society for their great work. I think they all deserve recognition for their commitment to doing something which is very important in our province.

The interests of the public, particularly in our society, are that there needs to be access to justice. That's a principle. Particularly where we have a society based on the rule of law, we need to ensure that the quality of legal representation is maintained, and the law society does great work in ensuring that we have a qualified and competent bar.

In terms of the access to justice, the reality is that there are many key areas where we need the use and the skills of paralegals. The leadership that the law society has demonstrated by taking on a role in introducing that principle of allowing that access to be regulated, to be of the highest quality, is a testament to their forward thinking, and it's in support of that notion that we truly need to have access to justice in our society to make it an equitable society, so I really commend them on that. I think they deserve a round of applause for that great work.

1540

I think that the stronger our checks and balances are with respect to any profession, the higher quality the profession will be. It's important that we maintain the highest quality, particularly where it's such an important right. Our ability to navigate in this society depends

strongly upon our ability to access the services we need so that we can engage in this society, and that's why our legal representation and our legal checks and balances are so important.

Again, I commend the committee members, the Convocation, the treasurer, all the members who took the time and the effort to make sure that this legislation was brought forward. Thank you for finally bringing it forward and making sure that we have the highest quality here in Ontario.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

SANTÉ ET SÉCURITÉ AU TRAVAIL

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It's my pleasure to rise today, on behalf of the Ontario New Democratic Party, to recognize the 34th anniversary of the proclamation of the Occupational Health and Safety Act in Ontario.

En français, le 1^{er} octobre marque le 34^e anniversaire de la promulgation, en 1979, de la Loi sur la santé et la sécurité au travail.

This is a bill that came into law two years after I was born, so I have been a benefactor of the Occupational Health and Safety Act with each and every job that I have ever worked at. That has meant that I'm here today, safe and sound, and so are thousands of other workers in the province of Ontario who rely on that act to protect them each and every day at work. It's an act that is a living, breathing document, and one that is vital to the security and safety and efficiency of our workplaces in this province, and one that should be continuously evolving.

As always, I sense that my colleague the Minister of Labour has a deep understanding and a deep desire to continue to work with workers in this province to ensure that our occupational health and safety code is up to standards and does cover the evolving nature of our workplaces.

However—I knew you were waiting for that, Minister—the minister states that since 2003, there has been a 30% reduction in injuries. That may be so, but in the last couple of years, workplace deaths and fatalities in the province of Ontario have risen, and that is very unfortunate. One of these cases, unfortunately, happened in the province of Ontario, at the Stobie Mine, where two young workers were killed. No charges were laid.

We know that Vale Inco was charged the largest-ever financial penalty in the province, but that does not go far enough, because if one of your family members or friends were killed on the job due to the negligence of a company, there's no monetary compensation that could ever make that right.

I call on the minister, as I always do, to work with me and colleagues in the House to ensure that we are doing absolutely everything we can. That means evolving and refining and reforming the compensation system, which has massive pitfalls.

Again—and I've said this before—if my colleagues, as members in this House, aren't getting calls at their

constituency offices about the broken nature of our compensation system, then they aren't answering the phone.

I do wish to mark this anniversary. I am appreciative of the Occupational Health and Safety Act. It means that we are a safer, more progressive, more efficient and proactive province. It's one that I fully support and endorse, as well as my colleagues in the Ontario New Democratic caucus.

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

PETITIONS

WATER QUALITY

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I have an extremely competing interest for petitions. I have to go to the member from Durham to show a little love.

Mr. John O'Toole: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I respect your decision as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You'd better.

Mr. John O'Toole: "Whereas under the Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario regulation 319/08, public health inspectors are required to undertake risk assessments of small drinking water systems;

"Whereas many of these small drinking water systems are located in homes operating bed and breakfasts in rural Ontario;

"Whereas private homes that are the sites of bed and breakfasts already have potable drinking water used by the homeowners and their families every day;

"Whereas many of these bed and breakfasts have established the quality of their drinking water through years of regular testing;

"Whereas these home-based businesses are facing high costs" and taxes "to comply with the new requirements of regulation 319/08;

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

"That the Minister of Health amend Ontario regulation 319/08 to give the testing track record of a small drinking water system greater weight in the risk assessment process. Furthermore we, the undersigned, ask that bed and breakfasts operated within a private home with a drinking water supply meeting all the requirements of a private home not be subject to regulation 319/08."

I'm pleased to sign and support it and give it to Gabrielle, one of the pages, on the last—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Petitions? The member from Kenora—Rainy River.

TAXATION

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

"Whereas the cost of living in northwestern Ontario is significantly higher than other regions of the province

due to the high cost of necessities such as hydro, home heating fuel, gasoline and auto insurance; and

"Whereas an increase in the price of any of these essential goods will make it even more difficult for people living in northwestern Ontario to pay their bills and put food on the table;

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

"To reject any proposed increase to the harmonized sales tax, gas tax or any other fees or taxes in the northwest; and instead investigate other means such as increasing corporate tax compliance or eliminating corporate tax loopholes in order to fund transit in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area."

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

LYME DISEASE

Mr. Randy Hillier: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads:

"Whereas the tick-borne illness known as chronic Lyme disease, which mimics many catastrophic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn's, Alzheimer's ... is increasingly endemic in Canada, but scientifically validated diagnostic tests and treatment choices are currently not available in Ontario, forcing patients to seek these in the USA and Europe; and

"Whereas the Canadian Medical Association informed the public, governments and the medical profession in the May 30, 2000, edition of their professional journal that Lyme disease is endemic throughout Canada, particularly in southern Ontario; and

"Whereas the Ontario public health system and the Ontario health insurance plan currently do not fund those specific tests that accurately serve the process of establishing a clinical diagnosis, but only recognize testing procedures known in the medical literature to provide false negatives at 45% to 95% of the time;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to direct that the Ontario public health system and OHIP include all currently available and scientifically verified tests for acute and chronic Lyme diagnosis in Ontario and to have everything necessary to create public awareness of Lyme disease in Ontario, and to have internationally developed diagnostic and successful treatment protocols available to patients and physicians."

I agree with this petition. It's been signed by over 2,000 people. I will sign it and provide it to page Jasper.

AIR-RAIL LINK

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: "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 priced as an affordable transportation option between all points along its route.”

I couldn't agree more. I'm going to sign it and have it delivered to the table by Bridget.

PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ministry of Health has eliminated non-hospital physiotherapy service from the Health Insurance Act; and

“Whereas this will drastically reduce the number of allowable treatments to 12 per year for people who are currently eligible for 100 treatments annually; and”—

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Not true.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: You've got to listen.

“Whereas under the changes, the cost of visits under the CCAC (community care access centre) model will rise to \$120 per visit, rather than the current fee of \$12.20 per visit through OHIP physiotherapy providers; and

“Whereas funding for physiotherapy services to seniors in long-term-care homes would be cut by almost 50%, from an estimated \$110 million per year to \$58.5 million per year;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Ministry of Health as follows:

“That the province guarantee there will be no reduction in services currently available for those who are eligible for OHIP-funded physiotherapy.”

I'm happy to defend my seniors and to give this to page Megan.

1550

INCONTINENCE PRODUCTS

Ms. Cindy Forster: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care does not fund incontinence products for seniors;

“Whereas adequate funding for incontinence products for incontinent seniors would result in greater independence, make nutrition and housing more affordable;

“Whereas adequate funding for incontinence products for incontinent seniors would save valuable health care dollars by reducing the risk of skin breakdown, bladder infection, and sepsis;

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

“Immediately provide adequate funding for incontinence products for seniors.”

There are 1,142 seniors. I support this petition and will sign my name.

HOME WARRANTY PROGRAM

Mr. Todd Smith: I have a petition here on behalf of residents of Prince Edward–Hastings.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas new homeowners and home builders across Ontario have expressed significant dissatisfaction with the Tarion Warranty Corp.; and

“Whereas this government monopoly needs to be held accountable for the repeated failing reported by both new homebuyers and home builders they were created to benefit;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Minister of Consumer Services as follows:

“That the minister request the Auditor General do a value-for-money audit of Tarion.”

I agree with this and will sign it and send it to the table with Katherine.

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Sarah Campbell: “Whereas home heating and electricity are essential utilities for northern families;

“Whereas the government has a duty and an obligation to ensure that essential goods and services are affordable for all families living in the north and across the province;

“Whereas government policy such as the Green Energy Act, the harmonized sales tax, cancellation of gas plants in Oakville and Mississauga have caused the price of electricity to artificially increase to the point it is no longer affordable for families or small business;

“Whereas electricity generated and used in north-western Ontario is among the cleanest and cheapest to produce in Canada, yet has been inflated by government policy;

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

“To take immediate steps to reduce the price of electricity in the northwest and ensure that residents and businesses have access to energy that properly reflects the price of local generation.”

I support this wholeheartedly, will sign it and give it to page Aly to deliver to the table.

SHALE BEACH

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

“Whereas the Ministry of Transportation closed public access to Shale Beach off Highway 26 in the town of Blue Mountains suddenly and with no consultation; and

“Whereas the closure will impact fisherman, swimmers and visitors who have been frequenting the beach for generations with no problem; and

“Whereas the closure will remove one of the only wheelchair-accessible fishing locations in the area; and

“Whereas the McGuinty-Wynne Liberal government won't let Ontarians enjoy anything for free anymore without implementing a new tax or a new fee;

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

“That Premier Kathleen Wynne and the Minister of Transportation immediately restore access to Shale Beach so that residents can continue to enjoy the beach and all that it has to offer for generations to come.”

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

DOG OWNERSHIP

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas aggressive dogs are found among all breeds and mixed breeds; and

“Whereas breed-specific legislation has been shown to be an expensive and ineffective approach to dog bite prevention; and

“Whereas problem dog owners are best dealt with through education, training and legislation encouraging responsible behaviour;

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

“To repeal the breed-specific sections of the Dog Owners' Liability Act ... and any related acts, and instead implement legislation that encourages responsible ownership of all dog breeds and types.”

I couldn't agree more. Over 1,000 dogs have lost their lives because of this law. I'm going to give it to Taylor to be delivered to the table.

HOME WARRANTY PROGRAM

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: I have a petition here.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas new homeowners and home builders across Ontario have expressed significant dissatisfaction with the Tarion Warranty Corp.; and

“Whereas this government monopoly needs to be held accountable for the repeated failing reported by both new homebuyers and home builders they were created to benefit;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Minister of Consumer Services as follows:

“That the minister request the Auditor General do a value-for-money audit of Tarion.”

Madam Speaker, I agree with this petition and I will affix my name to it.

PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

Ms. Cindy Forster: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ministry of Health is planning on cutting physiotherapy services to seniors in long-term-care homes—from an estimated \$110 million to \$58.5 million; and

“Whereas with this change seniors will not receive the care they are currently entitled to through their current OHIP physiotherapy providers, who the government plans to delist from OHIP on August 1st, 2013; and

“Whereas the government has announced that the funding level, the number of treatments a resident could receive, has not been specified and will be reduced from a maximum of 150 visits/year to some unknown level, which means the hours of care and number of staff providing seniors with physiotherapy will also be significantly reduced as of August 1st, 2013; and

“Whereas our current OHIP physiotherapy providers have been providing seniors with individualized treatments for over 48 years, and these services have been proven to help seniors improve in their activities of daily living, mobility, pain and falls risk;

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

“To review and reverse this drastic cut of OHIP physiotherapy services to seniors, our most vulnerable population, and to continue with the \$110 million physiotherapy funding for seniors in long-term-care homes.”

I will affix my signature and send this with page Gabrielle.

AIR QUALITY

Mr. Steve Clark: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

“Whereas Ontario's Drive Clean program was implemented only as a temporary measure to reduce high levels of vehicle emissions and smog; and

“Whereas vehicle emissions have declined so significantly from 1998 to 2010 that they are no longer among the major domestic contributors of smog in Ontario; and

“Whereas the overwhelming majority of reductions in vehicle emissions is the result of factors other than Drive Clean, such as tighter manufacturing standards for emission-control technologies; and

“Whereas the environment minister has ignored advances in technology and introduced a new, computerized emissions test that is less reliable and prone to error; and

“Whereas the new Drive Clean test has caused the failure rate to double in less than two months as a result of technical problems with the new emissions testing method; and

“Whereas this new emissions test has caused numerous false ‘fails,’ which have resulted in the overcharging of testing fees for Ontario drivers and car dealerships,

thereby causing unwarranted economic hardship and stress;

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

“That the Minister of the Environment takes immediate steps to begin phasing out the Drive Clean program.”

I’m pleased to support the petition, affix my signature and send it to the table with page Megan.

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

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

“Whereas the Mary Berglund Community Health Centre is recognized as one of the leading primary care providers in northwestern Ontario, providing essential services to those living in not only Ignace, but across northwestern Ontario; and

“Whereas a 2010 rent increase by the government of Ontario has threatened the long-term viability of the health centre’s operations; and

“Whereas the rent being charged to the Mary Berglund Community Health Centre is much higher than rent being charged to similar operations in other communities and far surpasses ‘market rent’ for a small community in northwestern Ontario;

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

“To immediately rectify the situation and ensure the long-term viability of the Mary Berglund Community Health Centre by either reducing rent, transferring ownership of the building to the Mary Berglund Community Health Centre, or through capital funds to build a new facility that better suits the community’s needs.”

I support this petition wholeheartedly and will give this to page Kyle to deliver to the table.

SHINGLES VACCINE

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas one in three Ontarians will experience shingles in their lifetime; and

“Whereas shingles is a painful and stressful condition; and

“Whereas a vaccine is available for preventing shingles and is recommended for all seniors; and

“Whereas the shingles vaccine is currently not covered by OHIP;

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

“To ensure the shingles vaccine is covered under OHIP for all Ontarians.”

I agree with this and I will be passing it off to page Ravicha.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Resuming the debate adjourned on September 30, 2013, on the amendment to the motion to apply a timetable to certain business of the House.

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

Mr. Jonah Schein: Thank you, Speaker. As always, I’m happy to rise and speak on behalf of my constituents of Davenport, but I’m also extremely disappointed today to be speaking about the matter that’s before this House. Today we’re speaking about an agreement that was reached between the Liberal government of Ontario and the official opposition, the Conservative Party. They’ve reached an agreement where they’ve chosen to bundle a number of good bills together and hide among them a poison pill.

1600

It’s clear that the Liberals and Tories have been approached by construction giant EllisDon and that they’re now working together to prioritize and fast-track a bill that will interfere with the bargaining rights of folks in the construction sector, at the behest of this one company. Of course, as we all know, EllisDon is a major financial supporter of both the Liberals and the Conservatives.

Meanwhile, most of Ontarians are still waiting for this government to deliver on issues that matter to them, and most people in this province do not have tens of thousands of dollars to contribute to the parties in power. It seems that everyday people in this province are having trouble getting the attention of this government.

Speaker, as you know, I spend as much time as I can out in my community listening to constituents. What I hear is that they want to see government action. They want to see government action on transit, on clean trains, on quality child care, on decent income supports, on fair wages, on affordable housing, on good jobs. I have not heard from one single constituent who wants us to act on behalf of EllisDon, to break their collective agreement. Speaker, I wonder if any member in this House has heard that. Is there any member in this House who has heard from a constituent who said, “Put EllisDon first”?

It’s mind-boggling that the Liberal government and the Conservative opposition are now conspiring to pass Bill 74 and put this one special interest before all the other bills, all the other motions, and all the other business that is before this House.

Where is the programming motion for the issues that actually affect everyday people in this province? Where is the programming motion that puts the interests of people first? Where is the urgency when it comes to serving the people of Ontario? Where is the government action? Where is the collaboration amongst Liberals and Conservatives to pass legislation that would make Ontario a better place to live?

The Liberal government and the Conservative opposition will try to say that they are, in fact, acting in the

interests of Ontarians, that they need this programming motion to pass the seven other bills that have been bundled along with Bill 74. I want the people of this province to know—and maybe more sensible members of the government and official opposition will hear this clearly, too—a programming motion was not necessary to pass these bills. The other bills all had the support of the three parties in this House.

Bill 30 is the Skin Cancer Prevention Act. It is largely the result of the hard work done by my colleague the MPP for Nickel Belt, and it had support from all three parties. Bill 70 is the Regulated Health Professions Amendment Act; Bill 55, the Stronger Protection for Ontario Consumers Act; Bill 60, the Wireless Services Agreements Act: All of these had some weaknesses, but we support them in principle, and they would have moved forward. Bill 36, the Local Food Act, had the support of all three parties, and we had no problems with Bill 77, a private member's bill that promotes carbon monoxide safety.

It is unfortunate that the Liberals and Conservatives have chosen to bundle these bills with a poison pill, Bill 74. They have chosen to bundle these together in an attempt to ram through a bill and privilege one powerful company in the province of Ontario.

Speaker, now good bills have gotten dragged down in this debate. Let's take the example of Bill 36. It's unfortunate because today we should be in committee talking about Bill 36, the Local Food Act. We've been debating the Local Food Act for some time, and while the bill is pretty empty in many ways, it is something that constituents of mine and people across the province do want to talk about and make stronger. People are aware that the main reason the Local Food Act took so long to get through second reading in the first place was that the Conservatives put up 33 out of 37 members to speak to it. I want to make sure that people across the province understand that. It's a bill that they support, and it's a bill that they filibustered for hours on end. Of course, this isn't unique to Bill 36. The Conservatives have tied up—

Interjections.

Mr. Jonah Schein: It's always interesting when people start heckling. It means you've touched a nerve, and the nerve that we're talking about here is the fact that the Conservatives filibustered for hours and days on end on a bill they support and they're now trying to push through, mostly to push through an anti-democratic bill. The Conservatives have tied up this House by filibustering bills they support, and now they try to say that this motion today is necessary to get those bills passed.

Although the Local Food Act had already passed and gone to committee, hearings will be delayed now because the Local Food Act has been included within this programming motion which we're still debating today. How long will it be delayed? It's unclear, but if the Conservatives hadn't filibustered the bill and then included it in the programming motion, we wouldn't have this program. Another issue is, of course, as I mentioned, that hearings have been sped up and condensed. I know that

there are a lot of stakeholders that we've outreached to, people who want to provide input into the committee, and these stakeholders and food groups will not get a chance to make a presentation at the hearings because those spots have now been filled up.

So how can this government and the official opposition spend so much time saying that they support local food and the new Local Food Act, and yet they shut out the very folks who can advise on this bill and make it stronger? It's clear that the Liberal government and the Conservative opposition have chosen instead bills like Bill 36 as a shield basically to try to deflect criticism away from their collaboration over this one bill, Bill 74. In the process, they are slowing down the Local Food Act and they're forgoing inputs of people who should be having their voice heard, just to make sure that their wealthy friends are put first.

That is why the Liberals and Conservatives voted against our leader Andrea Horwath's motion for unanimous consent yesterday morning to remove Bill 74 from the programming motion. That is the issue that we're speaking to today. Our House leader has moved to remove Bill 74 from this programming motion so that we can debate it separately. But of course, the members opposite and beside us today refuse to speak to this amendment.

But what would be the issue with removing Bill 74? If the real issue is to fast-track legislation in this House, then why not remove Bill 74 from the package to ensure that the other seven bills do get to committee as soon as possible? In fact, I can assist the members opposite and beside us and can suggest a few replacement bills that could go in instead of Bill 74. If members in this House want to help out the construction industry, why don't they replace Bill 74? Why don't they replace it with the Prompt Payment Act, for example? All three parties support it, and it would make sure that people working in the construction industry get the payments they deserve on time.

What about a private member's bill from the Conservatives, Bill 56, to promote the recycling of aggregates? There you go. It's good for our environment. It's good for construction. It's good for industry. This would be a good bill to fast-track to committee.

What about Bill 83, the government-sponsored anti-SLAPP legislation? A member across the way has introduced this legislation before. It has the support of all three parties here. It's something we need to move ahead with to protect those who are speaking out on behalf of the public interest, much as the NDP is doing here today, but since introducing that legislation before the summer break, the government has barely moved on it at all.

Finally, there are plenty of great ideas coming from our side of the floor. We have greater protection of tenants. We have inclusionary zoning that would build more affordable housing. We have electric trains for the Union-Pearson express air-rail link. We'd like to protect servers working in our restaurants to make sure they can keep their tips. All these could have been included.

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The Liberal government and the Conservative Party, instead, have teamed up together for Bill 74, and they refuse to move it from this programming motion. Bill 74 is not the type of legislation anyone in this province should want to see go forward. First, the government should not be interfering with bargaining rights or the bargaining process. Secondly, it sets an extremely bad precedent: to use legislation to get a construction company out of a master agreement.

Why are these two parties supporting Bill 74? We know that the official opposition likes to position itself as anti-labour and anti-union, because, of course, we can't have the people in this province having good jobs, making good benefits. It's their agenda for the race to the bottom, the race to destroy pensions in this province.

But, Speaker, the most important question is, why is this Liberal government ramming through this legislation? Why is the social justice Premier of Ontario forcing through this legislation?

Interjection.

Mr. Jonah Schein: Exactly.

Speaker, for the folks who have read the papers, the investigative work has already been done, the numbers have been presented, and they tell us a story. The story is this: The Liberal Party received \$125,000 from EllisDon, making it their largest corporate donor. And the Conservatives also received \$32,000. This bill that they're pushing through today, they hope will curry favour for both of them.

Our leader and our members here on this side have tried very hard over the past few days to get an answer from this government on this bill. As my colleagues who spoke yesterday on this matter have said, sometimes a question unanswered is, in fact, an answer in itself.

On Wednesday, September 25, our House leader asked the Premier who she met with from EllisDon regarding Bill 74. She wouldn't answer the question and referred it to the Minister of Labour.

On Thursday, September 26, our leader, Andrea Horwath, asked the Premier again who has been lobbying her to support this bill. The Premier responded that there were "a range of bills" that were part of the programming motion and that "everyone in this House meets with people from across the business and labour spectrum." And, Speaker, we heard the Premier repeat a similar answer today in question period.

On September 30, our leader asked if the Premier or her staff had discussed the EllisDon bill with the company or anyone working on behalf of that company in the last six months, and whether the Premier could confirm reports that Bill 74 was crafted by lobbyists at StrategyCorp. The Premier first claimed not to understand the scope of the questions, and then she said it was due to the convolutions in the questions. But, in reality, the questions were very clear. It's just that the Premier didn't have a good answer for them.

Finally, today, after days of questioning, we received an admission from the Premier that her staff did meet

with representatives from EllisDon. Of course the Premier said, "I didn't deny those meetings took place," but what she did was to stall and obfuscate.

When pressed on the sticky issues, like why the Premier's office would take these meetings when the matter was, in fact, before the courts, and why the Premier would then feel it was necessary to weigh in on this matter and call it an issue of levelling the playing field, the Premier went back to her standard non-answer. Although the Premier and the House leader have tried to obfuscate and muddy the waters, their non-answers are answers in themselves, and the people in this province can see that.

The people of Ontario have not forgotten that the last time the Liberals and Conservatives worked so closely together to push legislation forward so quickly was when they teamed up for Bill 115. People in this province see this pattern when the Liberals and Conservatives work together and how this Liberal government prioritizes their own interests above the interests of the people of Ontario.

Here's a good example, Speaker: When the intensive behavioural intervention therapy was before the courts, the Liberal government, at that time, said they couldn't do anything to move the issue forward. Why? Because they didn't want to. But now, of course, with EllisDon's agreement before the courts, the Liberal government has no problem ramming through Bill 74. In fact, they can't pass it fast enough. Even while members of this Legislature are working together to put the interests of one company first, they're not putting the interests of families first—but just one company.

Families across the province, people in my riding of Davenport, have priorities that they want to see members of this Legislature focus on. Tenants at Standard Lofts in my riding of Davenport are still waiting to get some rent control. At the Stop Community Food Centre in my riding, people are lining up for food again today, waiting for government action so that they can feed their families. People across this province are waiting on this government, waiting for them to implement social assistance recommendations that they've stalled for years and years. They are waiting for this government to lower their auto insurance rates like they promised. They are waiting for this government to take action to create jobs for youth. The people of Ontario are waiting for this government to cut home care wait times. They are waiting for this government to create a sustainable transit plan for this province. They are waiting for a cycling strategy. People are waiting on this government to invest in our infrastructure, even as it crumbles around us. People on reserves in our province are waiting for clean water. People in Scarborough are waiting for the government to come to the table with a plan that actually makes sense. People on minimum wage are waiting for government action to make sure that we have a fair wage in this province of Ontario.

Members in this Legislature continue to wait, too, for answers when it comes to the gas plants and the way the government has abused the public purse here in Ontario.

But this Liberal government has a message for all of us, and it's this: Sorry, everyone. The Premier is too busy arranging for the passage of Bill 74 for their good friends EllisDon. So take a number. Get in line. Maybe get your chequebooks out.

Talk about a double standard. If it's Ontarians waiting for action from this government, they can wait, but if it's important for a major Liberal Party donor, hurry on up, whip the vote; everyone votes yes, and don't stray from the talking points.

Of course, it's not that the Liberals have a monopoly when it comes to double standards in this Parliament. I remember that just a few weeks ago, at the beginning of this session, two members of the opposition caucus lost their portfolios, one for exploiting a loophole for his own personal gain and the other for cautioning against creating a loophole to exploit for the party's gain. Did these two deserve the same punishment? It seems contradictory to me.

I think that both Liberals and Tories should consider this very carefully: What message does this legislation send to the people of this province? I believe it sends the message that the Ontario government's priorities and our democratic process are up for sale to the highest bidder. People are receiving this message loud and clear. I think it's why people just grow more and more cynical about politics in the province of Ontario. It's why people think that politicians are all the same. They look at these two parties, the Liberals and Conservatives, and they can't tell the difference, because there isn't any difference when you continue to put the interests of your party above the people of the province.

I hope members around this House will think long and hard about this debate today, think about their duties as representatives of all Ontarians, not just their own parties and not just some private company. I hope that at the end of this reflection by members of this House, their consciences will kick in and they will vote with us to remove Bill 74 from the programming motion.

I'm an impatient person. There are lots of things that I wish we could get done immediately, and it troubles me to no end that the one thing that the majority of members of this House are choosing to prioritize is an anti-democratic bill that serves the interests of one wealthy political backer in this province.

I hope that all members of this House will heed the call, will understand that this is not in the best interests of anyone except for the company that gives them money, and that they will vote with us to take Bill 74 out of this programming motion and to move forward with the business that's important to the people of Ontario.

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

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Mr. Percy Hatfield: I've been here a couple of weeks, but they tell me you know you're going to have a bad day when you show up for work in the morning and the mayor of Mississauga, Hazel McCallion, is outside your door, waiting to bend your ear on something. Well,

Hazel wasn't outside my door this morning, but I knew I was going to have a bad day when I showed up for work fighting a head cold, having a sore throat, and my party whip said, "Oh, by the way, get ready. You're going to speak for 20 minutes today on the EllisDon bill."

Let me say at the outset I have nothing personal against the company EllisDon. I know they're trying to circumvent a collective agreement signed decades ago by having their friends in the Liberal and Conservative parties impose legislation that overrides free collective bargaining.

I knew Don Smith, the founder of EllisDon. I was saddened to hear of his passing earlier this year. I remember his wife, Joan, when I was a reporter and she was a minister in David Peterson's Liberal cabinet. I've been to their home. A long, long time ago, my father-in-law, Andy Simko, was a friend of Joan's when they were active on the association of provincial housing authorities. My wife, Gale, went to Western with one of the Smiths's daughters, and the Smiths—I don't know if you know this—had a golden retriever. The dog's name was Molson. I know this because my wife ended up with one of the litter, a beautiful male dog named Boomer. He was a great dog, and he came from Molson's litter from the Smith family.

I can freely stand here and tell you that EllisDon builds fine buildings and facilities, and they do so with a qualified and a unionized workforce. Their work is top-notch. The employees excel in their trades. They set the standard for other construction trades. I like the fact that they're in a union that helped to set these high standards.

I used to be a reporter, and when I started out many years ago in the private sector, my goal was to get a job at the CBC because, at the time, I felt the CBC set the standard for broadcast journalism in this country; and yes, the CBC was, and is today, a unionized workforce. In my opinion, CBC journalism is unbiased and based on fairness to all. Integrity is earned by people basing their life's work on being fair and unbiased in their approach.

After working in private radio and TV, and a short stint as a print journalist at the Windsor Star, I joined the CBC in Windsor in 1975.

Before I get too far into this EllisDon debate, allow me the opportunity to thank the voters in Windsor-Tecumseh for placing their trust in me and allowing me to be their voice here at Queen's Park. I'd like to thank the hundreds of volunteers who worked over the hot, dog days of summer on my by-election campaign. I am truly honoured to be one of the 107 members of Ontario's provincial Parliament.

As this is my inaugural address to this body, I want to take the time necessary to tell you about myself, my riding and the journey that I've been on in order to get here. I'd like to say thank you again to all members from all three parties who have welcomed me to the Legislature, and that includes the Speaker, Clerk Deborah Deller, her staff, and all the dedicated young pages as well.

A special thank you, I believe, is warranted to my leader, Andrea Horwath, and the other members of my

NDP caucus who have welcomed me into their Queen's Park family with open arms.

I've mentioned one of my previous careers, as a reporter. Politically, I travelled the province reporting to the various CBC stations with David Peterson in 1985 when he became Premier, I was on the bus with Bob Rae in 1995 when he lost the job, and I went around the province twice with Howard Hampton on two of his provincial campaigns.

I was also active at the CBC with my union. Going back over the years, I was the national secretary for the old Canadian Wire Service Guild. I was the vice-president for central Canada with the Canadian Media Guild. We were affiliated with The Newspaper Guild, which is an international union based in Washington, DC. At the time, we had 30,000 members. I served as chair of the Canadian district council of The Newspaper Guild. I was actually the first Canadian elected at large to TNG's international executive board, and I served three terms in that position, leading the polls the last time, I might say, which meant that reporters at the Washington Post and the New York Times were voting for me, a television reporter from Windsor, Ontario, Canada.

Eventually our union TNG, The Newspaper Guild, merged with the much larger CWA, the Communications Workers of America, and we had 600,000 members. I served two terms as TNG-CWA's vice-president for eastern Canada before stepping down as I prepared to retire from the CBC. I was a member of the union's national bargaining committee and the national grievance committee. This was at the CBC, and I was on the picket line only once in more than 30 years as a CBC employee. I was on the bargaining team. We bargained for 18 months. We didn't get very far. I'd get on the train in Windsor on Sunday night, come up to Toronto, bargain all week and go home on Friday night. I didn't do it steady for 18 months. We'd sometimes take a break for a week or two, but then it was back on the train, back up here. Actually, it's much like I'm doing now, coming up on the train on Sunday night, only going home on Thursday instead of Friday.

That was a lot of fun, bargaining, except at the end of it the CBC decided the way to settle this was to lock us out for a couple of months, and they kept us out. They kept us out over the summer, and they only brought us back because it was hockey season. It's like now. They brought us back because they wanted Hockey Night in Canada back on the air. So I learned from that, and I learned to respect free collective bargaining, and that's why I oppose this bill.

I retired from the CBC in 2006, and I was elected to city council in Windsor a few months later. As a Windsor councillor, I was elected three times to the board of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and three times to the board of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, once as an AMO vice-president and chair of the large urban caucus.

My wife, Gale, and I have two wonderful children, Andrew and Lacey, two beautiful granddaughters, Paisley and Arwin, and a lovely daughter-in-law, Lisa.

Before me, Windsor-Tecumseh was represented by Dwight Duncan. I've known Dwight for—well, more than 30 years anyway. I knew him when he worked for Herb Gray, when he worked for Bill Wrye, and I covered him as a city councillor when he was on council and I was still reporting. I've always believed that Dwight came out of the womb wearing a red diaper, he was always so Liberal in everything that he did. But he was a good member here. He served in several provincial cabinets, but chose to retire and not to serve under the current leader of his party.

Before Mr. Duncan, my riding was held for 30 years by New Democrats. You may remember the names: Wayne Lessard, Dave Cooke and, if you go back far enough, Fred Burr. I'll get back to Mr. Burr in a moment.

Let me tell you about my great riding. People who live in the Pelee peninsula or the 100 Mile Peninsula or "Canada South" as my friend Fred Sorrell nicknamed it many years ago—we border the Detroit River and Lake St. Clair. We have a rich history dating back to the 1700s.

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The War of 1812 was fought in our area—General Brock and the great Shawnee warrior Tecumseh. Tecumseh helped save our nation from the American invaders, which helped carve out our Canadian identity. In fact, I recently had the opportunity to spend a bit of time with one of Tecumseh's direct descendants, who happens to be married to one of the direct descendants of the great American warrior Geronimo.

Last weekend, actually, I was in the neighbouring riding of Windsor West at the Les Amis de Duff-Baby fundraiser at the Duff-Baby mansion. This is a home that dates back to the 1700s. It was a fur trading post. It's still used today. In fact, several provincial ministries have offices in the building.

Windsor-Tecumseh was an important stop as well on the Underground Railway. We had a colourful past during Prohibition years. It's interesting when you think about it. During Prohibition, the ships would come into Hiram Walker in Walkerville, and there would be a bill of lading saying that they're going to Cuba. For some reason the geography must have been different then, because they would make three, four, five or six trips a day to Cuba and back, taking the alcohol to Cuba and coming back for another load. I don't know how they did that, but it happened.

It's also still the home of Canadian Club, Wiser's and the Walkerville Brewery. Windsor-Tecumseh is the home of the Canadian automotive industry. Chrysler and Ford still call Windsor home, but General Motors has pulled out.

We have our problems. Our local unemployment rate is among the highest in Ontario. Cross-border air pollution from steel mills and coal-burning power plants in Michigan and Ohio pose many challenges for us. We have higher rates of respiratory problems and certain cancers than other parts of Ontario. As I referenced at my committee hearing on government appointments earlier

today, our local public health unit, despite all of these extra concerns and problems, gets less provincial funding than any other health unit in Ontario, and that should be addressed as soon as possible.

I mentioned Fred Burr earlier. Mr. Burr was a bit of a prophet. In his maiden speech in 1968, he quoted Dr. John Hanlon, who was then the commissioner of health in Wayne county—or Detroit—just across the river from Windsor. Actually, it's directly across the river and it is due north from Windsor. Because of a quirk in geography and the way the river bends, Detroit is due north from downtown Windsor. In Mr. Burr's maiden speech, the topic was air pollution. The quote was—and this was 45 years ago: “Mankind will die of massive epidemics of respiratory diseases and suffocation within the next hundred years. There is an aerial sewer 12 to 14 miles thick all around the earth and there is just no more space to dump this pollution in the air.”

Think about that. They saw that coming, and we still haven't done very much about it. We continue to live in and suffer from bad air and air pollution to this very day.

Our native leaders remind us that we don't own this land; we are but caretakers for future generations. Unfortunately, we're not doing a good job as environmental stewards.

I've tried my part. I have been chair and vice-chair twice of the Essex Region Conservation Authority. ERCA has planted six million trees since it was founded back in the 1970s. I'm a member of the Citizens Environmental Alliance, a past member of the Windsor Essex County Environment Committee, and I served on FCM's environmental committee as well.

I know of the need for more attention on environmental issues. I know of the need for more funding for public transit, just as I know of the need for more funding for public and subsidized housing and more money for public libraries.

I certainly know of the need for more jobs. Windsor–Tecumseh has lost too many manufacturing jobs in the past 10 years. To me, this points to the absolute need for a national jobs policy and national automotive policy. We need real jobs, not part-time, precarious, poverty jobs in the hospitality industry.

Windsor–Tecumseh is the home of the Rand formula, which protects workers' rights and should never be weakened or taken away. The Rand formula came about after a 99-day strike against the Ford Motor Co. in 1945; 11,000 workers were out for 99 days. Many more than that actually came out to the picket lines—maybe 20,000 all together—in support, from December 12 to September 19; 68 years ago today. In fact, today Drouillard Road in Windsor would have been blockaded. They were out fighting for the Rand formula 68 years ago today.

What did they achieve? They won the right—if you benefit from the union's bargaining and their bargaining strategy, you pay union dues. You can't opt out. It's as simple as that. If you're going to benefit from somebody's collective bargaining, you're going to have to contribute to all of that. We in Windsor–Tecumseh

cherish, and will fight to defend with our hearts and souls, the Rand formula. I know that other people in this chamber want to play around with that, and that will be a fight.

If I can switch gears for a moment, I want you to know that I have helped with community charities. For years, I've been an active fundraiser for the United Way, for the Hospice of Windsor and Essex County, for the Easter Seals Telethon, and many other local charities in Windsor–Tecumseh. My wife is a co-founder of the Do Good Divas, a group of women raising money for health care in Windsor–Tecumseh, for local hospitals and a cancer care centre. The Divas have been promoting the need for organ donation and organ transplants in order to save more lives.

Windsor–Tecumseh is a caring community, and one of our biggest assets is the generosity of the membership of our trade unions, including those that work for EllisDon.

I have to edit as I go, Speaker, because I didn't realize how much 20 minutes was, actually.

Instead of taking the time to talk about the EllisDon bill, what the government could be doing is trying to find a solution to other labour disputes in this province. The University of Windsor members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees have been on the picket line for nearly a month. The school year may soon be in jeopardy for thousands of students. That would be a valuable investment of time, as opposed to taking time away. Or involve yourself in the municipal strike in Bonfield, where municipal workers have been on strike since August 1, the date of the five by-elections, when I won the cherished right to be here today speaking in this great chamber.

On election day, I was going door to door trying to get the vote out—

Interjection: You were very successful.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I was successful, yes; thank you.

I knocked on one door at about a quarter after 6 on election night. I went up to this stranger, and I said, “If you haven't voted yet, I would like it very much if you would consider voting for me.” I didn't know this lady, but she said, “I want to lay something heavy on you. I voted Liberal in the past, but they've lost their credibility with me.” She was making reference to all the scandals that were part of the platform in the last campaign. She said, “They've lost their integrity. I'm putting this on your shoulders as something to remember. I've always considered you as a man of integrity. I will be supporting you because of that—don't let me down,” she said. “I want you to remember this: Don't change when you get to Queen's Park. Remember where you came from, and never, ever risk your integrity.” I have this, and I'm going to put this up in my office here and in my constituency office.

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I think what the government is doing with this bill is saying to the people of Ontario, “We haven't changed. We are still putting our integrity at risk by stripping away the bargaining rights of collective unions.”

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

Hon. John Gerretsen: On a point of order, Speaker: I know that we don't have questions and comments because we're in the middle of a motion, but I would just like to thank the member for an excellent speech, and I look forward to working with him, as we all do in this House, in the years to come.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): It's not a point of order, but thank you.

Further debate?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak and to add my voice to the discussion. We are discussing the programming motion, and I have a number of issues that I want to cover. One is the principle, generally speaking, of a programming motion. We've been referring to this motion, and particularly with respect to private member's Bill 74, and we've been using the language that it's "ramming through a bill." Some have complained that this is inconsistent, that when we wanted to put forward a certain bill, we were okay with a programming motion, and in this case, why are we not?

I want to raise some distinct differences, make some distinctions, if you will. I know the Attorney General will appreciate this, that I want to distinguish our case versus other cases, as we often do in law. There are certain bills that address an emergency circumstance; there is an exigent set of problems or there is something so pressing that we immediately need to act on it. Perhaps an example could be if there is a certain additive or chemical that we need to outlaw and ban outright because we have conclusive evidence that suggests that additive or that chemical needs to be banned. Perhaps, in those circumstances, we need to move quickly to make sure that we protect folks.

There might be other pressing circumstances that require us to move quickly. There are bills that have a clear benefit for the people of Ontario, broadly speaking, and in some circumstances, if there is a bill that will immediately impact the lives of people in a beneficial way, the citizens of Ontario, that might be something we need to move quickly on.

There is something quite important, particularly a bill or a motion that would move towards increasing accountability, that would actually put a check and balance on the government itself. That's something where we have a priority; that's a priority to move quickly so that we can actually put that accountability in place.

And then we have a bill that will benefit one company, that would seek to address the concerns of a singular company in the entire province of Ontario. Now, there's a clear distinction between the other circumstances that I have addressed and a bill that would address one company only. When we were speaking about the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario, that was a bill that would provide accountability for this province. That's an important bill. That's something that would actually provide some accountability, that would provide us with

an ability to put a check and balance on the government—an independent organization that would have the mandate to ensure that whatever the government was promising, whatever the government was estimating, was in fact correct. That is something that is certainly a priority, and putting that bill forward in a manner that is quick and efficient is completely different from having a bill that benefits one company.

The principle in democracy is that we need to encourage debate. We need to ensure that everyone has their voice, that the people elected to represent their communities, that are representatives of their communities, can actually have a voice, can actually talk about the concerns of their constituents; they can raise those concerns in debate. When we put a limitation on that, we're limiting that member's ability to represent their community. That's why, as a principle, we don't support programming motions, because they limit debate and they limit democracy—unless there's some exigent, some emergency, some pressing circumstances.

As a principle, we need to ensure that we uphold the principles of democracy. I've said this time and time again: One of the most important principles of democracy is dissent, is the right to express your dissatisfaction, your disagreement, with any particular law, with any particular principle. If that principle is one of the most cherished principles of democracy, then silencing or ending debate is contrary to that.

It's ironic because we're here in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario; this is an institute of democracy. This is the home of democracy in the province of Ontario. If it's in a place like this that we're silencing debate, we, who are democratically elected, are working contrary to democratic principles. It's for that reason we say that the government is ramming through a bill because they are silencing and ending debate on a bill that's not pressing. There are no exigent circumstances; there are no emergency circumstances here. This is not a bill that needs to be programmed, and that's why we oppose the programming motion broadly.

Why we oppose this bill specifically is one of the other principles that we stand for, and we should stand for: In the country that we live in, there is the supreme law, which is the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms basically enshrines some of the most important beliefs that we have, and it protects those beliefs. So no matter what laws are passed in any particular province, no matter what laws are passed in any particular city, there is a supreme law which protects certain fundamental rights that we believe in.

One of the fundamental rights that we have—and it's more than just a fundamental right, I would argue; I would assert that it's a human right—is a right to collectively bargain, a right to organize. A right to organize and collectively bargain are just principles that we have as something that we've worked on and developed over years and years and fought for so that people could get together and organize themselves. They should be able to organize themselves in any manner. That's why we have

the right to have political organizations; we have the right to have community organizations. People can get together and organize themselves to work for the benefit of their communities. They can work for the benefit of their own organization in their own areas. That's a fundamental value that we support. It's enshrined in the charter for a reason; it's something that we value.

When we limit the ability of any group to collectively bargain, essentially what we're doing is, with the stroke of a pen, we're abrogating a fundamental right. We're abrogating that ability to collectively bargain, to organize. There's a distinct connection between the ability to collectively bargain and to organize. So that's why it's a violation of a human right.

The Canadian Civil Liberties Association has also spoken out on the principle that was behind Bill 115, that the idea of Bill 115 was that it was a bill that fundamentally violated our human right to organize, to collectively bargain. On that same level, on that same tone, that's what this Bill 74 seeks to do. It's for that reason—on a human right level, a right that we all enjoy as humans—that we oppose that.

When we look at the priorities of this government, the government is putting forward this programming motion and putting forward this bill—it's a private member's bill that the government has signed on to and now is working in tandem with the Conservatives to pass. It's entitled the Fairness and Competitiveness in Ontario's Construction Industry Act. Now, at a time in this province when we have so many pressing concerns, so many pressing issues, three top-of-mind issues that I can think of and that I'm sure many of the folks here—their constituents themselves are probably calling them regularly, or if not, when they go to community events, I'm sure you get this feedback. People are concerned about the lack of jobs; they're concerned about the cost of living in our societies, given the fact that people don't have jobs and they don't have the ability to earn a living and the cost of living is increasing every year, year by year; and they're also concerned about health care. These are three priorities in this province.

In terms of the government, the government should address these concerns, these priorities. They should make these issues a priority. While we're moving so quickly to put through this bill that would benefit one company, EllisDon, we're seeing the government move so slowly to implement changes to benefit the drivers of Ontario. We see the government—again, look at the priorities: big business, corporations like EllisDon, the insurance industry. They move so quickly to assist them; they move so quickly to address their concerns; they move so quickly to benefit them. But when it comes to the people of Ontario, the people that we are supposed to represent, they move so slowly.

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I'll give you a concrete example. In 2010, the finance minister enacted a series of amendments that slashed the benefits that the people of Ontario received—slashed those benefits with the stroke of a pen, did it in regula-

tion, put it through immediately, and that resulted in an immediate benefit to the insurance industry. They saved \$2 billion a year because of that change. That happened in 2010. From 2010 to 2011, from 2011 to 2012, and now we're nearing the end of 2013—for three years, the insurance industry has benefited from one of the most historically significant cuts in terms of their costs. They have seen such a significant cost reduction that their profits have increased at an astronomical level for three years. That's what the government is willing to do for insurance companies, for big business, for corporations.

Contrast that with the people of Ontario: The people of Ontario saw a premium increase of 5% from 2010 to 2011, and from 2011 to present, not even a 1% reduction in premiums—less than a 1% reduction. In total, from 2010 to present, the insurance rates in the province of Ontario have increased by 4%. That's an average of 4% that they have increased, at a time when the insurance industry has seen a cut, in terms of their Statutory Accident Benefits payouts, of 50%. They have seen a 50% decrease in their costs, but the premiums have increased by 5%. If there's nothing else that that makes clear, it makes clear this government's priorities. This government's priorities are big corporations and the insurance industry.

When it comes to looking at the priorities of this government, I urge the government to take steps to benefit the people of Ontario as opposed to the insurance industry. For that reason, we are opposed to the programming motion.

I am just going to thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I want to thank my team for the quick heads-up, Speaker.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Tell the staff what you need them to do.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: My friend from Trinity-Spadina—I think we not only share geography but often a heart. I enjoy his humour and his insights. If I ever leave this place, not in a box, I will have fond memories of him.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Call the whip.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Exactly. Thank you again.

I think this is making some progress, going forward. I think in a minority—I'm sorry; I haven't slept much lately. It has been a long few weeks.

This is, I think, one of the ways we're trying to manage together in this House through a minority government. It's interesting, the foils and ups and downs of trying to manage legislation through. A lot of good legislation has been presented in this House over the last year. There are a lot of rather remarkable private members' bills that have come out of all parties and members of all parties, and, as I have said many times in this House, my favourite part of the week here is Thursday afternoon, when we get to do private members' business.

The official opposition presented the opportunity, I think, responding in some of the discussion that the Premier had with the leader of the official opposition and the leader of the third party, to try and construct some pathways forward where we could get some broad agreement to move a number of pieces of legislation that have been somewhat stalled in this House forward, and I think that's a very positive thing.

I'm kind of proud to be a Canadian, and I say that because there is a level of reasonableness to our politics that seems to be absent in so many parts of the world. I think most of us are struck these days by turning on the news and watching the deadlock in Washington: an entire government shut down.

Interjection.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Yes. I appreciate that; thanks.

I can't imagine that we in this House would ever put politics so far ahead of the people at any point that we would be teetering on the closure of our national or provincial government. I think many of us are struck by the hyperpartisanship of the government in the United States, where legislation is almost never resolved, where what was supposed to have been decided in an election continues to be a debate, where they're trying to overturn their recently national health care system and where people can't get services and won't be able to get access to offices. Here, as Canadians, we try to be all about order and good government and about being somewhat polite.

I have often said that I have always found the partisan nature of this House most disappointing, and as new members come forward, I'm always impressed when they can maintain that sense of humour and non-partisanship. I think we all get caught up in it.

I would like to say a few positive things about our friends across the aisle. I think that there has been some maturity and some leadership around the programming motion, some reasonableness, while we didn't agree with everything, and there are some things that we would like in the bill. I'm sure there are some things they would like in the bill. But I think there was a sincere effort here to try to make this a more collaborative place and move things forward. This is a positive thing.

Also, it is not lost on me that for much of the last two years, the third party, the New Democratic Party, has been a very reasonable partner in this. They have not only brought forward some very good legislation—I think we have collaborated on some bills and shared many things, whether it's auto insurance or many other things—but there has been a spirit of co-operation there that I think has made this House work.

Ms. Cindy Forster: You messed up this time.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: You know, as my friend from Welland said, we can all point to moments where we're in disagreement with what another party did. God knows, I don't know whether any one party is so virtuous that some of us who are members of it from time to time don't disagree with our own parties and our own government. We're all individuals and hopefully will never

become robots and automatons, that we drink the Kool-Aid so much that we believe in it, but there were a lot of good and progressive things that have happened.

I think you have to go back to the Bill Davis years or the Bill Davis minorities to find a time when we actually had a minority that started to work. I think there is a healthy skepticism out there in the public about politicians and politics—I think that's probably an overstated or maybe an over-made remark—but I represent a very politically and culturally diverse community; we're in it, and I get a lot of positive feedback from people who are staunch Liberals, staunch Conservatives, staunch New Democrats, staunch skeptics, or none of the above. My mother reminds me, because she watches question period every day, and she often says, "This is really a remarkable thing." She comments on people. My mother heard a speech the member for Parkdale–High Park made one day about human rights. My mother is quite a religious person and was quite impressed by that. It's always nice when you see people who watch this from a non-partisan perspective, who can pick this up.

Interjection.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: As you may have noticed, my friend from Simcoe–Grey, some of us are up here trying to talk out the clock, but I'm not saying anything that I don't mean and feel quite heartfelt about.

It is interesting, because I think there are some opportunities for members in a minority Legislature, whether it's a programming motion, and I think it's important that we don't see this as jamming something through. It's my view that each of these pieces of legislation certainly needs more debate. I think that members on both sides of the House will be critical to different degrees of the content of some of them—the need for amendments or outright disagreement—and I think it's very important that we all remember that before anything else, we're MPPs first and we have a responsibility to make sure that each of us is heard and each of us gets a fair hearing. I know that there have been concerns raised, but I think that is a shared view.

1700

It is a bit of a rush in the sense that so much of this legislation was not moving for such a long period of time. We were sort of, "Hurry up and wait; hurry up and wait," and now we're moving a great deal through, and I think we have to be cautious and wise and adjudicating in that.

Interjection.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Keep going? Oh, you have someone else? Just tell me when you get so sick of hearing my voice that you want to throw something at me. Sorry, Madam Speaker.

Keep going? Thank you very much.

Mr. Steve Clark: You're an idea man.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: It's so funny. One of my friends opposite refers to me as an idea man and usually calls me—what is it? I'm the transportation planner from Winnipeg. Is that the latest joke?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Transportation expert.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Yes, well, I just want to put on the record here that in my mayoralty days, we actually cut our mill rate by 11%, cut the size of government by about 29%, and saw our credit rating go from AA- to AA+. I live in a city where the idea of a tax break is far away, so I don't mind the criticism. Check out the record, though. I have spent about 30 years of my life in urban development, regional development and planning at U of T with the Canadian Urban Institute—and we are stretching the pointer. I think the Speaker is going to tell me to get back on track.

Interjection.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I can sit down. I just want to formally apologize to all my colleagues for almost remotely carrying on the conversation to sustain this debate so important to our democracy, Madam Speaker. Thank you for your humour, and thank you to my colleagues for their patience with me for my much unexpected, to me, and impromptu presentation.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: It's really a surprise and a privilege, of course, to have the opportunity to reply to the minister, but also, more importantly, to the government programming motion here today.

I think it's important to put on the record that the NDP have had quite a job of trying to filibuster this portion of the debate where all the House leaders get together and try to put some semblance of order to all the bills that are on the order paper. They weren't able to carry out the filibuster without the help of the late Peter Kormos, and I say that with all due respect. I think that Peter Kormos was a scholar in terms of knowing the rules of the House and how to use them effectively to the advantage of his party. A former friend of his, Cindy, is certainly aware of what I'm talking about.

Today the discussion from the NDP was quite enjoyable, and I think the member from Windsor—Tecumseh did an excellent job of revealing his history—an impressive history, I might comment, not just with the CBC but your role in chairing various things, whether it's AMO or the Federation of Canadian Municipalities or the union that you belonged to when you were in the broadcast business. It's a very impressive resumé that you brought to the debate.

Also, I listened because a very good friend of my family was the Conservative candidate down there—he's a young fellow, Robert de Verteuil. Robert has really no political affiliations to speak of. He did run for us. I knew him. He knew it was quite a risky occurrence. I think that when my wife was a teacher, he was a gifted child in the school who went on to become an engineer. I think he has a master's degree and he's kind of a consulting engineer for the auto industry, for Tata Motors and others. He went to school with my son. My son always thought that he was quite clever, but Robert was actually quite a bit more clever than he was at the time.

When I look at the work that's been done by our leader, Tim Hudak, to try and clear the deck, this is really

what this is about. Our House leader, Mr. Wilson, as well as Mr. Smith, our other House leader, has been working hard to make sure that we look after the people of Ontario, the jobs and the economy. I would say that they ended up with sort of a programming motion here that put together a number of bills, and those bills are what we're really talking about. In there, there's always some controversy. A lot of bills will go to committees and a lot of discussions within committees may clear up some of those roadblocks.

But I think if you look at it, the work done by Christine Elliott and France Gélinas on Bill 30, the skin cancer prevention, the tanning beds legislation—there's no one in this House that wants to put our young people at risk. I think Bill 70, the Regulated Health Professions Act, is another example of professions that need clarity in regulation with respect to health professions. I would say that in that bill, if it was in committee, I have some things that I would like to add to the regulated health professions, and that's the entitlement that doctors and dentists have today to have members of the family be a member of a non-capital corporation for the investments that these professionals make. That's a small amendment that's needed in that bill. It's not going to hurt anyone, but I think it would make doing business as a regulated health professional in Ontario easier for other than—doctors have it today and dentists have it. All the other regulated health—nurse practitioners don't have that tax privilege of non-voting members.

Bill 55, Stronger Protection for Ontario Consumers: Once again, our leader Tim Hudak and our critic have been very open and clear that we want to have better protection for consumers. This dealt primarily, as I recall, with the real estate brokers act—there was a change there—but also the door-to-door salespeople. I think there will be some amendments moved in committee on that bill, as well.

The Local Food Act, Bill 36, that bill there, for instance—our member from Sarnia—Lambton, Bob Bailey, has done work on that and I think there could be a chance and I think a hope—and I hope the government House leader is listening on that side—to take some time and listen to Mr. Bailey's bill on providing farmers with a tax credit for food that's given to food banks and others. I think it's a wonderful, generous idea to respect farmers and to respect food. Food quality and food safety are very important.

Mr. Steve Clark: Respecting rural Ontario.

Mr. John O'Toole: Exactly, respecting rural Ontario, as my colleague Steve Clark said. I called him Smith earlier, but he's a very good friend of mine. The deputy House leader on our side, of course, is Steve Clark and he's done a lot of work. In fact, he's a very strong member on this side of the House. Mr. Clark is a person that I think had a serious hand in putting some of these bills, perhaps even Bill 74, in this legislation; I don't know. But I know he's strong about jobs and the economy. Every time he speaks in caucus, and indeed in this House, his first thought is for the young people in

Ontario that have no jobs. They have gone to college; they have the diploma. They've gone to university; they have the degree. They have no job. But they have a lot of debt because we have the highest tuition, in Ontario, of any province. Unbelievable.

You talk about job creation plans, and in this past budget, which has been passed, there was a fund, I think it was \$150 million or \$300 million, for youth unemployment. At least they acknowledged the problem, but I don't think they've done anything about it. I hate to get off topic, but they throw money at it. They set up a bureaucracy. There's probably somebody on an expense account travelling with their dog to BC to see how they're doing it. And imagine expensing a bus—oh, that's for the Pan Am Games. Don't get me started. That is scandalous. It's the third scandal. It's the triactor of scandals. We've got the Ornge helicopter and we've got the gas plants and now we've the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games.

Look, there's so much more work to be done to strengthen the economy in Ontario, especially for our young people. I think sending the right signal, our leader Tim Hudak put 14, I believe it is, white papers out there. All of them can be tracked back to getting started. This motion here itself is so it clears the deck, and once the deck is cleared, we can get on with working towards strengthening the fundamentals of the economy.

Now, what are the fundamentals of the economy? To Premier Wynne, here's what I say to her personally: It's about the economy. I won't say the last thing because it's rude and crude. But if you really want to know how it all works, a very overly simplified explanation would be this: Ask yourself which came first, the quality of life that we enjoy, or used to enjoy, in Ontario, the standard of living that families expect or should expect, the health care, the education—which came first, the quality of living, the quality of life, or the economy?

1710

Well, look around the world. Economies that are suffering, like Greece and Italy and Spain and now as close as Michigan: Their economies are falling apart—the manufacturing sector, the resource sector, the price of electricity. Guess what? If you haven't got the economy working, there's a very high risk to the quality of life.

We see the early signs here in Ontario. This bill here, this motion, our leader, Tim Hudak, has made it very clear that he is willing to work together. In fact, in question period, our leader, Tim Hudak, said to the Premier the other day, "Take the plans." He offered the booklet. Take the plans. Plagiarize them. Help. He was sort of standing on the deck of the Titanic, almost, in Ontario, handing them the rescue manual, and they don't want a copy of it.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Life jacket.

Mr. John O'Toole: Handing them a life jacket.

I know I'm perhaps a little bit off the script of this programming motion, but I again want to say this: the three or four players in this—I do have to say that if Peter Kormos was here, I'm sure it would be a done deal after

the debate this afternoon, because he had a certain knack for working together collegially and co-operatively with the House leaders. I know that our House leader, Jim Wilson, says it all the time: "If we could only get Mr. Milloy to listen."

Interjection: And where is he now?

Mr. John O'Toole: Where is he? Well—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I'd ask you to stay with the matter being debated.

Mr. John O'Toole: The member from London is here now. I just want him to hear that he could solve this riddle. This riddle that is before us all here this afternoon: It could be solved. The House leaders—I'm pretty sure two or three of them are working together. We can get this done. It's my understanding that until it's 20 to 6, that can't get done.

I'm just going to go on here. There's another bill I'm quite interested in; it's the Hawkins Gignac Act. There's a private member's bill that could save lives. Our member from Oxford, Ernie Hardeman, has brought this in; it has been supported. I can assure you now, all members want to save lives, or potentially. The family in his riding, where the inquest recommended that this become a mandatory piece of safety equipment in the home—the carbon monoxide detector. We have one in our home; I'd encourage all people to do so. Ernie Hardeman's reputation hangs on this debate of Bill 77.

The Registered Human Resources Professionals Act—that's Bill 32. I don't think I had the privilege of speaking to that bill, although I should have. It would be a shame if I didn't get the time, so I'll take it right now.

Here's the issue: I have a degree from the University of Toronto, and a specialist diploma as well in HR. I worked at it. I almost learned how to do the job while I was doing it. But I have the greatest respect for HR professionals today. The more important part of it is, the nature of work itself is changing.

This is mostly for the young people. When I grew up, in my generation—I'm 70, so it's past mine, I guess. In my generation, you had a job for life. It was like 30 years—you had a degree and all that kind of stuff; training, a skilled trade, that kind of thing. You were employed at Ford, General Motors, Chrysler, General Electric or IBM. What about our successful recent companies? The most recent one would be Research In Motion, BlackBerry. There's a company that's high tech; traded at \$100. Where is it now? Companies themselves will not last 30 years. There's no company today—GE is made up of several divisions, all of which are profit centres, and they just cut them off if they don't maintain profitability.

Who owns these companies? Shareholders do. Who are the main shareholders? They're pension funds. Why are all the pension funds bankrupt? Because all the companies are bankrupt.

That's where it comes back to Bill 74. If we don't start bringing some rules in that are friendly to investors, we'll have no investors. It does affect all of us. I think the human resource professionals know this. I think they

should be teaching our children in schools how to budget and how to look at what makes the world go round, what makes the wheel go round. Most of you children, the pages I'm talking to today, will have five jobs. And most of them won't be anywhere except working at your terminal at home. We're building infrastructure now for a world where everybody had to go to a bank to do banking, or law. That's all finished. As far as I'm concerned, it's global. You could be doing 90% of this stuff—you don't really need as much infrastructure and transit, I'm convinced.

I digress, but I am filling up the time quite nicely.

Interjections.

Mr. John O'Toole: No, but there are crib notes here. I am using crib notes here that have been supplied.

Here's the other issue. There's one here, the Select Committee on Developmental Services. Now, there's an example of good governance. This part here, quite frankly—listen very carefully. I'll tell you why. When we talk in almost any forum on social concerns today, it's about young people. Bullying has been mentioned, suicide has been mentioned, and children at risk of their environment itself—the school learning conditions, the home conditions with strife in families. This is an essential bill. We talk about children's mental health today. This committee was, I believe, struck in agreement with Christine Elliott and I believe France Gélinas, who is the critic for health for the NDP. And I believe in good conscience that the Liberal government as well—I would suspect that Kevin Flynn or somebody else over there, Jeff Leal or someone, would see how important this committee was. Now, the committee would be a select committee. This committee and its terms would allow them to look at best practices in other jurisdictions, whether it's potentially in Europe—I'd like to be on the committee—

Interjections.

Mr. John O'Toole: No, hang on. No, you can't take your dog on the plane with you, Steve. You can't take the dog on the plane, okay?

I am saying, though, in all seriousness, that they should talk to the—young children today should be a very large part of the voice. I meet with our local children's aid. They're short of money. It's the way that we deliver programs today that aren't geared to the individual's needs. They send out this massive amount of money, and they have large program deliveries which I don't think suit the particular needs of children in the north or in urban areas or from new cultures. All of these stressful conditions are all titled as one thing. Change is the greatest stressor in anyone's life—older people wondering where all these changes are coming so quickly. But I'd say that committee, to me, is kind of the fulcrum of the whole thing. If we don't get the social interaction in our society for the young—and even to that extent the very old. The aging population is another absolutely challenging condition for whomever forms government, and I'm sure it will be Tim Hudak shortly. All I'm saying is that whoever is going to be in government is still going to have the same challenges.

The evidence here of these House leaders working together—and their leaders, whether it's Ms. Horwath, the Premier or Tim Hudak. I believe the leadership that's needed here is to have the courage to first clean the deck of some of these administrative bills and get on with jobs and the economy. For heaven's sake, we have proven, Madam Speaker, in the discussion I've had here this afternoon—with myself, actually—that if you get the economy right, you get the society right. If you get the economy wrong, you get the economy wrong and the quality of life for people just falls down. Think of the families in Michigan and Detroit that don't know what to do. Barack Obama has got the United States shut down now because they can't agree on things.

Our leader has put it all on the table. Let's get on. We've got 14 discussion papers that have been put out there. Yes, there's controversial stuff, but look, our real job here collectively—and individually, I should say—is this. I listened to our friend earlier, the Minister of Transportation. I had the privilege of interrupting him for a while today and talking to him on 407. But our real, fundamental issue here is about making difficult decisions. If it just came down to cutting ribbons and giving out cheques, I believe we should be here for a month a year.

Interjections.

1720

Mr. John O'Toole: Well, look, I've learned from my mistakes—

Hon. Jeff Leal: In many respects.

Mr. John O'Toole: —in many respects, but I'll just leave it at this: We're here to make the difficult decisions. I've learned after 18 years here and about 12 years municipally that there really is no perfect answer. It's that clear.

So let's find the best solutions to the complex problems, and the rest will come easy. I think the most important thing is investing in our youth; some of that is education. We have an education bill put up by Lisa MacLeod that I think is fundamental. It puts seniority ahead of quality. You're going to hire a teacher. Do you want to hire by seniority or quality?

Mr. John Yakabuski: That's the opposite. Job quality: They're putting quality—

Mr. John O'Toole: No, no, she is. Her bill is putting quality ahead of seniority. The government is the one; that's what I'm saying.

To the audience here, I was talking about how the Liberals made a deal with the teacher unions, and in it they said—they agreed with the unions. Okay, let's put it where it is. What that said is, you don't have to hire a quality teacher, you have to hire the senior teacher. That's ridiculous. In education, innovation, research—Glen Murray would probably be a decent teacher. He's full of new ideas.

I'm not sure exactly how I have to keep it going, but I've enjoyed the opportunity to address this programming motion that was put forward by our House leader, Jim Wilson, and his assistant Steve Clark.

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm his assistant.

Mr. John O'Toole: Well, he's the deputy. They work as a team—let's put it that way—and I'd say a very strong team. A member of the team on the other side would be Mr. Milloy, who's their House leader, and the NDP's is Mr. Bisson.

They have a problem with one little piece. Look, nothing is perfect. You've got 90% of the stake, so let's cut to the chase here. The House leader of the Liberals is going to call the question of the vote, I hope, or somebody is, certainly. If we could move on—

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

Hon. John Milloy: It's a pleasure to stand here this afternoon and speak to the debate that's happening right now on the subamendment to this programming motion. I really want to put a few items on the record as to what this is and to explain the reason why you haven't seen a lot of government members stand up and speak about this motion. That's because, as the name would suggest, it's programming; it's a scheduling motion. Contained within it are—

Hon. Jeff Leal: Pretty straightforward.

Hon. John Milloy: As my friend the Minister of Rural Affairs says, it's pretty straightforward.

Contained within it are eight bills, as well as the terms of establishing a very important committee of this Legislature for developmental services. What it does—and I've had to explain this to some members of the media. It doesn't, in fact, pass judgement on any of these bills or on this committee. It doesn't commit the House to anything except to consider them in a reasonable amount of time. I want to stress the word "consider" within here, and I think this is an important point to make, because we've heard from some of the opposition; the New Democrats have talked about ramming through legislation. Nothing is being rammed through here. We are taking a number of pieces of legislation and the terms of reference for a committee and we are asking the Legislature to consider it in a reasonable amount of time, to hold votes where appropriate, to hold committee hearings where it fits into the plan that has been outlined in terms of the progress of the bill, to look at things like amendments, to call witnesses, again, if appropriate, and to report back to the House for further debate and votes.

Why do we need such a scheduling motion? It's because this minority Parliament—I'll be very candid here—has not been working as smoothly as it could. We have seen instances of bills that, ironically, all parties have agreed on that have gone for many, many hours of debate.

The other week, we had a first reading vote on a private member's bill, something which to someone outside Parliament may appear a bit arcane, but it goes against the tradition of Parliament, which says that if a member wants to bring forward a bill, the Legislature or the Parliament will consider it at first reading and then debate, discussion and votes will happen at second reading and beyond.

What this does, from a government's point of view, is it gives us a bit of an insurance policy which says that these items which are important items for this Legislature will be dealt with in a timely fashion, they will be dealt with in an appropriate fashion and they will be able to be considered and voted upon, and not be subject to some of the game-playing that perhaps we've seen in the past.

Madam Speaker, as I said, there are eight bills that are before us. There's also the outline of a very important committee of this Legislature to deal with developmental services—and just a minute or two on that. A number of years ago, I think members may be aware there was a very, very successful formation of a committee here in the Legislature which looked at the issue of mental health. Members from all sides of the House came together, put partisan differences aside and came back with some very valuable advice, and we look for the same in developmental services. That's the one piece that's outside of the bills; the other are eight bills that we look for timely consideration.

As I say, there's not a lot to discuss. That's why you haven't seen Liberals up. This is an administrative or a programming motion. That's why it has been brought forward today.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I am required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there has been more than six and a half hours of debate on this motion. This debate will, therefore, be deemed adjourned, unless the government House leader specifies otherwise.

Hon. John Milloy: Just to confirm, Madam Speaker: No further debate.

Debate deemed adjourned.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mr. Hardeman assumes ballot item number 53 and Ms. Scott assumes ballot item number 58.

WASTE REDUCTION ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LA RÉDUCTION DES DÉCHETS

Resuming the debate adjourned on September 24, 2013, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 91, An Act to establish a new regime for the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste and to repeal the Waste Diversion Act, 2002 / *Projet de loi 91, Loi créant un nouveau cadre pour la réduction, la réutilisation et le recyclage des déchets et abrogeant la Loi de 2002 sur le réacheminement des déchets.*

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

Mr. Michael Harris: I'm pleased to resume my remarks from September 24 on Bill 91, the Waste Reduction Act. I'm pleased that the Minister of the Environment is here to take this in, as I did his remarks. I know he'll be interested to hear my 38 minutes that I have remaining—37 minutes on the bill.

I want to pick up where I left off talking really about the Liberals' abysmal record on waste reduction in the province—in fact, a record that has left our waste diversion rate parked at just 23% for 10 long years, a record that has let recycling in the institutional, industrial and commercial sectors decline from 19% to 12% since the Liberals took office, and a record that has seen Ontario consumers footing the bill for hundreds of millions of dollars in eco taxes for little to no results. This is a record that is unacceptable and a record that only a Liberal government could achieve.

It's not hard to see how this sorry state of affairs happened. While other provinces were working on developing effective environmental policy, the Liberals were busy spending all of their time constructing eco tax schemes with their corporate buddies. In 2008, we got eco taxes on paint, batteries, oil filters, antifreeze and containers under the Liberals' Orange Drop program. In 2009, we got eco taxes on car, truck and off-the-road tires under the Liberals' Used Tires Program. In 2009, we also got eco taxes on iPods, TVs, computers, cellphones and every other electronic device imaginable under the Liberals' E-waste program. What has the result been? I'll tell you, Speaker. It's been hundreds of millions of dollars in costs to Ontario consumers every year. In fact, in 2012 the Orange Drop program cost Ontarians nearly \$60 million, the Used Tires Program cost about \$70 million, and the E-waste program cost roughly \$85 million. Speaker, I just want to make sure that everyone is listening, because that's a grand total of \$215 million in eco taxes every year. I hope we can all agree that forcing Ontario consumers to spend nearly a quarter of a billion dollars for little to no results is totally unacceptable.

1730

I know what almost every Liberal colleague of mine will say. They'll claim that a \$40 tax on a TV here or a \$15 tax on a tire there really isn't that much. Well, what my honourable colleagues don't seem to understand is that this tax-and-spend mentality shows just how out of touch they are with the needs of middle-class and lower-income families here in Ontario. Maybe that extra few dollars in taxes on a can of paint or on a new tablet is not a big deal to you, but it is to families struggling to make ends meet, families feeling the effect of rising costs for hydro and groceries, in addition to their growing tax burden, which includes income tax, the health tax, the fuel tax, the HST, as well as various other taxes on hydro and, of course, eco taxes.

You would think that the Liberal government would be willing to give Ontarians a break or that they would at least tire from devising so many new tax schemes, but after 10 years of reckless overspending and wasteful mismanagement of tax dollars, the Liberal government

still seems all too eager to grab an opportunity to raise taxes, and eco taxes are a case in point.

In the first part of my speech, I outlined that the environment minister's claims that his government doesn't get a cent of eco tax revenue are patently false. The Liberals have received more than \$100 million in hidden taxes embedded into eco taxes. The way it works is, the Liberals include a 13% HST charge into an eco tax, which they then again tax with HST. In other words, the Liberals have been forcing Ontarians to pay a tax on a tax that includes a hidden tax. Clearly, the Liberals' eco tax schemes were never about the environment; they were always about the money.

I had hoped that the Liberals would have moved to solve this problem, but instead they have tabled Bill 91, which does nothing at all to address double HST taxation. This oversight or omission will simply continue the Liberal record of failure on this file. What's more disappointing about the Liberal record, though, is that they have expended all of their time and energy on their eco tax schemes while ignoring the rest of the waste stream.

I would like to ask the members opposite if they know how much of the waste stream the Liberals' eco tax programs actually cover. Are there any guesses here? I know the minister will want to jump up and answer, and I know he may not actually believe this answer. It's actually just 3%. That's right, Speaker; 3%. The Liberals have spent five years ignoring the big picture and forcing Ontario consumers to hand over hundreds of millions of dollars just for 3% of the waste stream. Talk about a missed opportunity. We could have been taking action to divert more waste from the ICI sector, which accounts for 60% of the waste stream, or we could have been doing more to divert construction and demolition waste, which accounts for roughly a million tonnes every year, or we could have been developing a strong program to deal with organics, which account for 30% of the waste stream. But no; the Liberals chose to neglect all three of these areas and instead waste five years nickel-and-diming Ontarians for 3% of the waste stream.

What has the result been?

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Harris: Glen, Statistics Canada released its most recent survey data this year, and I know you'll be interested. It found that Ontario's waste diversion rate still—let me repeat that: still—hasn't moved from 23%. So we can't afford to let this Liberal failure continue.

I'd like to remind members opposite that the lifespan for Ontario's 32 large landfills is likely just another two decades. If we continue to throw out three quarters of our waste, we can expect to have a crisis in the very near future. Then there's the additional problem of relying on landfills in the United States to take nearly one third, in fact, of Ontario's waste. Could you imagine if the Americans closed the border? We'd have garbage piling up on the streets within just a few weeks.

We clearly can't afford to sit on the sidelines. We must confront the challenges we face, and we must be good stewards of the environment. Unfortunately,

though, Bill 91 does not provide Ontario with a plan that can pull us out of the last 10 years of Liberal failure. It's simply not enough for the government to set a lofty goal of achieving 60% waste diversion and then hope everything works itself out, like the Liberals did in 2008. We all know that the Liberals' do-nothing strategy hasn't worked yet and won't work in the future.

We are seeing too much of the province's waste go to landfills. In fact, we produce 12.5 million tonnes of waste a year. We ship more than four million tonnes to the United States, and we put nearly six million tonnes of that waste in the ground right here in Ontario. Not only is this unsustainable for our environment, but it also is an enormous loss of economic opportunity to create and retain jobs here in Ontario.

Just think of all the valuable materials like glass, plastics and metals that are being thrown into the trash can and sent off to the dump. We should start to view these materials not as waste but as valuable resources that we should recover and recycle into new products. Doing so would create plenty of new good-paying jobs in our province, true green jobs. Consider that for every thousand tonnes of waste recycled, roughly seven new jobs are created. Do you know how many jobs are created landfilling that much waste? Less than one. Those figures should give any policy-maker all the incentive in the world to act, especially in a province where more than half a million men and women wake up each and every day without a job.

Clearly, we need bold reform, not more excuses and haphazard policies that perpetuate the Liberal record of failure. That's why, one year ago, the Ontario PC caucus announced our plan to make Ontario a leader on the environment once again. To do so, we would introduce reforms that would protect consumers, improve our environment, provide greater accountability and oversight, inject competition into the recycling marketplace, creating good-paying jobs and ultimately leading to higher rates of waste diversion.

We would start our reforms by scrapping each and every one of the Liberals' eco tax programs. That means the Orange Drop, E-waste and used tire programs would be all gone. We do not believe that the government should hand over monopoly control of an entire market to a private sector organization, and we do not believe that the government should impose taxes on Ontarians through a labyrinth of bureaucracy and then claim it had nothing to do with it. As the Ontario PC caucus has pointed out numerous times in this House, the environment minister and his sidekick, Waste Diversion Ontario, sign off on each and every eco tax that consumers are in fact forced to pay. So I think it's somewhat disappointing and insulting that the Liberals actually believe that if they make the bureaucracy complicated enough, they can always deny they had—they actually weren't a part of it.

Now, we obviously all want to keep electronics, tires, paint cans and batteries out of landfills. As we all know, those materials contain chemicals that harm our environment. But we in the Ontario PC caucus have a much

more intelligent way dealing with these materials which, in fact, I laid out last November. Rather than create complicated bureaucracy and massive new costs for consumers, we would simply create the right conditions for economic growth. Under our plan, that means the Ministry of the Environment would set measurable and achievable recycling targets for manufacturers and importers of electronics, tires and household hazardous materials. The ministry would then set environmental standards to ensure that these materials are actually recycled and are not sent overseas in a shipping container or dumped in a landfill. The ministry would then monitor outcomes to ensure that targets are being met. If anyone breaks any of these standards set by the government, it would then be the responsibility of the environment ministry to enforce the rules.

In short, we believe that government should set measurable, achievable targets, establish environmental standards, monitor those outcomes and enforce the rules—that is it.

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Under this framework, manufacturers and importers, which I refer to as producers, would no longer be hampered by Liberal regulations mandating that they must join and pay fees to Stewardship Ontario, Ontario Electronic Stewardship or Ontario Tire Stewardship. They would be free to determine how to achieve recycling targets either on their own or through a collaborative effort. Their operations would not be governed under prescriptive Liberal regulations; they would be governed under the same rules that the rest of the free market must adhere to: the Canadian Competition Act.

Our plan would also open up the marketplace for recycling companies by allowing producers to work with any waste hauler or processor that meets Ontario's environmental standards.

But, clearly, we need to do more. As I stated before, these materials only account for 3% of the waste stream. That's why we stated that we would work with businesses to set measurable and achievable targets for certain materials used in factories, apartment buildings and shopping malls. We know we need to move in this direction because the ICI sector is Ontario's largest source of waste.

One area we could tackle first is, in fact, the construction and demolition area. Scrap metals like aluminum, copper and steel are valuable materials that should be recovered and recycled into new products. Retrieving these materials creates jobs in collection, hauling, processing and manufacturing.

But to create these jobs, we need the right plan. That plan is one that we put forward as the Ontario PC caucus last fall. Our plan would create the economic growth our province needs by setting the right conditions for the free market to thrive and by putting government back into its proper role as a tough regulator. We don't need a useless agency to do the government's job. Our leader is a fan of Milton Friedman, who pointed out many, many years ago, "The existence of a free market does not of course

eliminate the need for government. On the contrary, government is essential both as a forum for determining the 'rule of the game' and as an umpire to interpret and enforce the rules decided on." We agree with that.

Hon. James J. Bradley: That's Ted Cruz.

Mr. Michael Harris: That's Milton Friedman, by the way.

That's why we have called on the government to eliminate Waste Diversion Ontario and bring back all regulatory authority into the Ministry of the Environment, where it truly belongs. Far too often we've seen the government slough off its responsibility to unaccountable arms-length bodies, like Ornge ambulance or eHealth, which mismanaged the taxpayers' money. Waste Diversion Ontario has proven to be among the same cast of characters, failing to fulfill its mandate on all fronts.

Instead of getting rid of WDO, the Liberals want to give it more powers and more money. Speaker, I know you can agree that when an employee has failed to do his job, you don't hand him a promotion or give him a raise; you hand him a pink slip and show him the door. I don't know if that's quite a quote that Jack Layton said, but it was close, and I liked that one, so I felt I needed to use that again.

Deep down I know, and I'm sure the minister knows, you should not promote someone who has failed on the job. I know he knows that. I'm pretty sure that's why he walks around telling people that he's getting rid of Waste Diversion Ontario. But, Speaker, let me assure you, nothing could be further from the truth.

I would like to read a few sections of Bill 91 to demonstrate my point. First, section 5 states, "Waste Diversion Ontario ... is continued ... under the name of Waste Reduction Authority." I would forgive you if you thought that changing this agency's name would make a difference. So let me continue to make my case.

Section 8(14), prescribes that the WDO board continues as members of the board of directors of the authority. Okay. So far, we have the same agency with the same board but with just a different name. But guess who else gets to stick around? The chair. Section 8(15) states: "The chair ... of Waste Diversion Ontario ... continues as chair of the board of directors of the authority."

I suppose one could attempt to make the argument that the same agency with the same board with the same chair, albeit with a new name, would at least be, in some sense, different. But then there's section 10(7), which states: "The operating agreement between the minister and Waste Diversion Ontario that is in force ... continues in force as the operating agreement between the minister and the authority." That means that the rules governing WDO are the same.

Let's recap. It is the same agency with the same board, with the same chair, with the same rules, but a different name. Clearly, Bill 91 itself establishes the case that there is not a new agency, as the Liberals claim. There is the same agency with some changes. To make a claim to the contrary is not only disingenuous, but also insulting to

the intelligence of the hard-working men and women of this province of Ontario.

The really detrimental changes the Liberals have made are by handing over massive new regulatory taxation and enforcement powers to WDO, which I will call the "authority" after establishing my former case. I would now like to walk through all the areas of concern we have with the authority, starting with the massive new regulatory powers the Liberals want to give it.

First, section 27 calls for the appointment of a registrar, or what I like to call a "waste czar." Under section 28, this waste czar would then have the power to appoint deputies to help with registering all producers in the province. The information collected would then be entered into a government database or a registry and stored with the authority.

Forgive me for digressing for one moment, but I think this point is crucial: Bill 91 doesn't even define what a "producer" is. That definition, of course, like every other important decision, is left for regulation. So many businesses are not sure if they'll have the waste czar or his deputies come knocking on their door. We just don't know, and of course the Liberals won't tell us.

But what they have told us is that the authority will have taxation powers. It seems as though the first detail a Liberal always figures out is how to get more money. Never mind basic definitions; they say, "We're trying to create a new taxation scheme over here."

Speaker, if you can believe it, under section 22, the authority, just like the College of Trades, will be able to impose a new—let me stress, a new—tax on business. This tax, of course, would then be passed on to you and me and all the rest of the consumers because, as with every other Liberal program, Ontarians, of course, are always left to foot the bill.

This short-sighted proposal is unacceptable to the Ontario PC caucus. Our party has been calling on the Liberals for years to scrap eco taxes here in Ontario, but instead of working with our party, the Liberals chose to table a bill that not only keeps every single eco tax program they've ever created, but actually creates new tax. This violates a key demand of our party and is a pivotal reason why we cannot support Bill 91.

Hon. James J. Bradley: There it is: You're just being negative.

Mr. Michael Harris: Come on, now.

Another reason for our opposition—and I'll outline this; I'm hoping he's continuing to listen here—is the Liberals' insistence on creating more senseless bureaucracy, like the enforcement branch of the authority. To make sure all producers are paying taxes, section 29 of Bill 91 allows the waste czar to appoint inspectors, or what I like to call "waste cops." These waste cops will be tasked with fanning out across the province to snoop through garbage, looking for violators and finding any business not paying the new Liberal tax.

I have two major problems with this new enforcement branch. First, it unnecessarily duplicates an existing government department. The Ministry of the Environment

already has enforcement officers, and they would be more than able to enforce any regulation that the government creates. Clearly, we do not need to reinvent the wheel, especially when the Liberals need to raise millions in new taxes to do so.

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Second, this excessive enforcement branch is disrespectful to the hard-working businessmen and women who want to do the right thing and protect our environment. We should be working with these professionals as partners; we shouldn't be treating them like an unruly mob. But that's exactly what the Liberals are doing in this area with the establishment of the authority's waste tribunal or, more appropriately, a kangaroo court. Of course, this tribunal, just like the waste czar's administration and enforcement branch, comes with no price tag attached to it. Ontario consumers are just being asked to pick up the tab without being given an indication of the costs. Well, that's not good enough. They deserve to know, especially when the system the government is creating will rack up millions of dollars in new costs as all the parties endlessly fight legal battles with one another.

Here's where we get to the heart of the matter: the blue box. Right now, under the Waste Diversion Act, municipalities and producers split the cost of the blue box program 50-50. After tabling Bill 91, the Liberals claimed that they would like to transition the blue box into individual producer responsibility, but again, the talking point doesn't match the actual content of their bill. If producers were truly moving to IPR, they would not only assume all of the costs, they would also get to manage the materials.

But the Liberals have done the complete opposite. Even though the minister claimed last week that his plan doesn't involve producers signing a blank cheque, that's exactly what Bill 91 does in its current form. Under section 7(c)—

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Harris: Listen—the authority has the power “to establish a compensation formula for every designated waste” that a municipality has registered for. That means if a municipality wants to be compensated for blue box materials or any other material, for that matter, the authority can force a funding formula on both producers and municipalities.

This specific provision is dealt with in section 44(5), which states if there is no financial agreement between producers and municipalities, “the amount shall be determined in accordance with the compensation formula established by the authority....” This is really the most disappointing feature of this poorly drafted bill. It focuses more on perpetrating a fight between municipalities and businesses over money than setting priorities and reducing the amount of waste that's going into our landfills.

We shouldn't be drawing lines in the sand, ready to fight one another over every last dollar. We should be working together to clean up our environment and build

on the success of the blue box program. But to do that, we need to keep costs under control. In just six years, costs for the blue box program have jumped to \$315 million a year, up from \$252 million annually. We all know we can't sustain this forever, so we need to find some common ground between producers and municipalities. But to get there, we'll have to give and take a little.

That starts with respecting the role of municipalities in providing collection services to their residents, and it also means respecting the view of producers who are being asked to carry the full financial burden. It's only fair that if they are paying the full cost, they should own the materials from that transaction. So if any type of reform moves forward, I think it's quite clear that we will need to revisit regulation 101.

But let me stress, this reform cannot happen under Bill 91. The way the Liberals have set up the system, it is doomed to failure and cannot and will not be supported by the Ontario PC caucus.

Like I said earlier, the only regulatory approach we support is the one that we outlined last year. That means there should be no Waste Reduction Authority; there should be just the ministry. The ministry should set targets, establish standards, monitor those outcomes and enforce the rules. These powers should not be left to an unaccountable government agency.

The authority, as laid out in the bill, is disconnected from Parliament, not subject to the freedom-of-information act, and can only be reviewed by the Auditor General if the minister feels it's necessary.

We all know that the overlap and duplication between WDO and the ministry has gotten so bad over the years that the Liberal government itself has even admitted in its own report that it's impossible to “effectively” maintain accountability. Speaker, we all agree. That's why we want to see all sections dealing with the authority removed from the act. There are plenty of people who agree with our position, including the Canadian Environmental Law Association.

I would briefly like to share what CELA lawyer Richard Lindgren had to say on the matter. He said that CELA wants to ensure that enforcement and compliance of the industry remain in the ministry's hands because “enforcement of environmental standards is a core government function.” We agree with that too.

Let me tell you what isn't a core government function: interference in the marketplace. Our party was very clear that under our plan we would set recycling targets and then give producers the freedom to meet those targets either on their own or in a collaborative effort with other businesses. The only stipulation would be that they would have to meet the province's environmental standards and follow federal competition laws. Interestingly, this same position was supported by the majority of stakeholders at the Environmental Commissioner's round-table event even after I announced the PC plan for reform last November.

Instead of listening to our sound proposal, the Liberals have created yet another maze of bureaucracy that has

confused the entire business community. Rather than allowing businesses to work together in partnership, like they do everywhere else in the marketplace, the Liberals have created a convoluted registration process for intermediaries. An intermediary, under section 40 of the bill, is essentially an industry funding organization, or IFO, under the Waste Diversion Act. Similar to IFOs, an intermediary would be responsible for adhering to the regulations established under the proposed act.

We have uncovered yet another inconsistency in what the Liberals claim and what the actual contents of the bill say. I know the environment minister enjoys telling people that his bill is based on individual producer responsibility, but the facts are, he has created a system that does not hold the individual producer responsible. It holds collectives responsible. One really needs to question the minister's reasons for adding this provision to the bill. Is it because he has no faith in the free market, or is he just trying to continue the very same monopoly organizations the Liberal government created, including OES and OTS, along with the Liberal eco tax empire?

Let's take a look at the facts. Bill 91 continues every single eco tax program ever created by this Liberal government. I will grant the Liberals this: They did put a provision in the bill to give the minister the option of winding down these programs, but, of course, that's also left to regulation. All we're left with, again, is another Liberal claim that maybe one day five years from now the Liberal government might want to wind down eco taxes. But I want you all to ask yourselves: When has a Liberal ever made a promise to abolish a tax and actually followed through with it? I think you would be safe to say, "Never."

Still, even though Bill 91 does not get rid of eco taxes, that fact didn't stop the Liberals from claiming it did. In fact, the day the minister announced the bill, he huffed and puffed in front of the media that he was getting rid of eco taxes. Too bad for him that the entire Queen's Park press gallery does not believe what he has to say anymore. They immediately called him out—his false statements—and his entire press conference went sideways.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I ask the member to withdraw.

Mr. Michael Harris: Withdrawn.

1800

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Seeing the time, pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

TOURISM

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Kenora–Rainy River has given notice of dissatisfaction with an answer to a question given on

September 24 by the Minister of Natural Resources. I'll wait for a moment to allow people to leave the chamber. I've done this before.

The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

The member for Kenora–Rainy River.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Thank you, Speaker. Before I begin, I would like to take a moment to say thank you to a fellow member. As you are aware, last week the member from Niagara Falls, Mr. Kim Craitor, announced his resignation. Despite being on the other side of the House, Mr. Craitor openly questioned this government's policy when it came to tourism. Rather than defend poor policy, Mr. Craitor stood up for what's right, and I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank him for his efforts. After all, it is this government's collective failed policies pertaining to northwestern Ontario that bring us here this evening.

Last week, I asked the Minister of Natural Resources to explain why his government ignored the northwest when it issued its joint fall-colours, parks and tourism promotion. At that time, I did not receive a satisfactory answer.

Speaker, this promotion encourages individuals to travel to Ontario's parks, to take scenic drives and enjoy nature in this province, but it comes at a time when most of the parks in my region have closed. Of the 10 scenic drives proposed by this campaign, zero are in the northwest, and the travel information centres people are encouraged to visit have been shut down by this government, as have many of the parks we once enjoyed for recreation, camping and to attract tourists.

Rather than explain his decision, last week the minister stated that the parks weren't shut down, they just haven't reopened, while his ministry staff takes the position that even though the parks are boarded up with "Closed" signs hanging from the chains blocking their driveways, people are still free to visit them. How many people do you know who would park on a narrow shoulder along a busy highway to make their way around chained gates and assume that they are welcome? My guess is few, if any.

It is this type of language that the minister and his staff use that has people across the northwest feeling ignored and cynical. It is just too ridiculous to be taken seriously. "Closed" is not "Open" and chains do not mean that you are welcome. I suppose next, you'll probably try to tell us that no northwest content in the Ministry of Tourism's travel app means we're a blank canvas to explore. "Ontario: Yours to discover"—provided you can squeeze through the fence posts or scale a 10-foot chain-link fence.

This promotion comes at a time when we in the northwest have disproportionately borne the brunt of cuts by this government. Rather than being treated as equal partners, we're being dictated to like a colonial province. This government could be forgiven if it was a one-off exclusion, but it is not. Whether it is the MNR's closure

of the parks, or the Ministry of Tourism's closure of our travel information centres, or the MTO's decision to allow Travel Manitoba billboards to be erected along our own highways while our own industry struggles, this Liberal government has shown nothing but contempt and indignation for the hard-working families across the northwest.

Families that rely on tourism, rely on our natural resources and rely on the MNR for jobs, resource management and safety from wild animals are seeing these jobs disappear, our industries gutted and our programs decimated only to be told "Trust us" by a government that has done absolutely nothing to earn it.

Speaker, we are not a colony. We have not been vanquished or defeated, despite this government's best efforts. We in the northwest even have two members who sit around the Liberal caucus table. Where are their voices?

I ask again: When this campaign was created, were people living in the northwest even considered? Can this government point to a single strategy for our tourism industry that was a success?

I look forward to the parliamentary assistant's response.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Ottawa South.

Mr. John Fraser: Thank you to the member from Kenora–Rainy River. It's my first late show, and I'm pleased to be able to respond to your question.

Firstly, I wanted to speak to the fall-colours campaign which you referenced in your remarks. It's important to note that two of the five parks mentioned in the release are in the north. One is Pigeon River at Finger Point and the other is the lookout at Edmund Fitzgerald Trail and the campground or beach at Pancake Bay.

As well, the release gives a link to the full fall-colours report, which has many northern parks listed, including French River, Lake Superior, Pancake Bay, Pigeon River, Quetico, Wabakimi and Woodland Caribou.

Last fall, there were changes to the operating status of 10 parks as part of the Ministry of Natural Resources' transformation plan. These changes focused on achieving financial sustainability, making the ministry more modern and efficient, and contributing to the government's commitment to balance the provincial budget.

Subsequent to that announcement, the ministry was able to work collaboratively with the town of Hearst, the township of Moonbeam and the city of Timmins to reach a two-year pilot agreement to operate Fushimi Lake, René Brunelle and Ivanhoe Lake Provincial Parks. These unique two-year pilots allow the parks to operate while still achieving the savings we committed to in the ministry's transformation plan, and helping to reduce the government's deficit.

We were also able to work with the city of Elliot Lake and local First Nations to develop a pilot that will see the city operate Mississagi Provincial Park, with the goal of increasing revenue and visitation rates.

As the minister referred to in his earlier answer, the ministry continues to be open to partnership options with interested parties, where a solid business case can support having these kinds of pilots.

Ontario has one of the biggest and best park systems in the world. There are more than 330 provincial parks with more than 100 visitor facilities. Ontario Parks also employs 1,600 students each summer and manages one of the most diverse portfolios in all of North America.

In terms of a partnership between the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ministry of Tourism has identified 13 tourism regions, the north being one of them. Since 2003, we have made significant investments in the north: over \$20 million since 2010 to the regional tourism organization in region 13; approximately \$5 million annually since 2003 for the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corp.'s northern Ontario budget; and over \$7 million since 2007 to support 160 festivals and events in northern Ontario through Celebrate Ontario.

These investments have helped northern Ontario develop a unique tourism product. We expect, under the new regional structure, that northern Ontario will continue to work collaboratively to build and promote their tourism experiences.

Madam Speaker, our government continues to support tourism in the north, and I would like to thank the member from Kenora–Rainy River for her question and the opportunity to respond to it.

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

This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1808.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
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Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
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Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
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Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Holyday, Douglas C. (PC)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment / Ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et de l'Emploi
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Rural Affairs / Ministre des Affaires rurales
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Milligan, Rob E. (PC)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Piruzza, Hon. / L'hon. Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Agriculture and Food / Ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Vacant	Niagara Falls	

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Michael Harris, Rob Leone
Amrit Mangat, Taras Natyshak
Rick Nicholls, Michael Prue
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Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Soo Wong
Steven Del Duca, Victor Fedeli
Catherine Fife, Kevin Daniel Flynn
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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
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Grant Crack, Vic Dhillon
Garfield Dunlop, Cindy Forster
Lisa MacLeod, Amrit Mangat
Michael Mantha
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

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France Gélinas, Helena Jaczek
Bill Mauro, Phil McNeely
Norm Miller, Jerry J. Ouellette
Jagmeet Singh
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: John Vanthof
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John Fraser, Randy Hillier
Rod Jackson, Monte Kwinter
Peter Tabuns, John Vanthof
Bill Walker
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Cheri DiNovo, Ernie Hardeman
Helena Jaczek, Jane McKenna
Paul Miller
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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