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of Ontario

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**Official Report  
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(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Monday 4 November 2013**

**Lundi 4 novembre 2013**

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO**

Monday 4 November 2013

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO**

Lundi 4 novembre 2013

*The House met at 1030.*

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

*Prayers.*

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS**

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I would like to introduce today as guests, in the members' gallery, Arijana Tomicic and Dave Jones of Family and Children's Services of Renfrew County, who are having a day with MPPs here at Queen's Park today.

**Mr. Rick Bartolucci:** I too wanted to welcome very, very special people today. Colette Prévost is the executive director of the Children's Aid Society of the Districts of Sudbury and Manitoulin, and she is joined by two board members, René Quesnelle and Vincent Lacroix. We'd like to welcome them and thank them for everything that they do.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I'm proud to welcome my wife, Kate Bartz, to the Legislature, and our 12-year-old—12-week-old baby, Annie-Grace Bartz McNaughton.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The jokes write themselves, so I'll leave it alone.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Today we have the family of page captain Tristan Winfield-Hicks. We have Andrea Hicks, mother; Claudia Winfield-Hicks, sister; Natalie Winfield-Hicks, sister; Françoise Bélanger; Christian Roux; and Edythe Winfield. Welcome.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I want to welcome the executive director of the Children's Aid Society of Ottawa, present in Queen's Park today, Barbara MacKinnon. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I'd like to welcome Mary Ballantyne, executive director of the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies; Marilyn Dumaresq, the board president; and local representatives: Phyllis Lovell, the executive director; David Wyles, board member; and Gary Harron, chairperson, from the great riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Joining us in the members' gallery is Mr. Robert Richardson, the hard-working and dedicated executive director of the Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay. Welcome, Rob.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I'd like to introduce two special guests to me. My wife, Jenn, and my daughter Maggie are here for a visit.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce my new legislative assistant, who I've hired

from Thunder Bay. Denny Timm is joining me, my first staff person at Queen's Park. Welcome.

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** Mr. Speaker, being of Grenadian heritage, it gives me extreme pleasure to welcome the Consul General of the beautiful country of Grenada; Mrs. Jenny Gumbs is here today at the Legislature.

Also, from the beautiful riding of Don Valley East, I'd like to welcome the students of Cassandra Public School, the first school, I believe, in the city of Toronto to reach its platinum ecoschool status.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I'd like to introduce in the west members' gallery Jennifer Wilson, the executive director of Kawartha-Haliburton Children's Aid Society—thank you for standing—and Lisa Major-Gage, supervisor at Kawartha-Haliburton Children's Aid Society. Thank you very much for coming and welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Speaker, would you please help me welcome Mary-Stewart Ross, who's the chair of the Family and Children's Services of Frontenac, Lennox and Addington, a county in my area, as well as Steve Woodman, the executive director.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'd like to welcome Simcoe county children's aid society executive director Susan Carmichael; a board member and foster parent, Dave MacPherson; and Jessica Morgan to the Legislature today.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I would like to introduce the executive director of the Ontario Association of Veterinary Technicians, Mr. Ron Southwell, and Rory Demetrioff. With them are Jody Carrick, Elise Wickett, Stacey Huneke, Brenda Duff, Kerri Vivian and Sandra Lean-Leighton. I invite everyone to join them for a reception tonight in the dining room from 5:30 on.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I want to welcome representatives of the York Region Children's Aid Society this morning: Mr. Patrick Lake, executive director; Jennifer Grant, director of communication; and board member Darryl Wolk.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I would like to welcome the children and teachers of Parkside public school, who, if they're not here yet, will be here soon.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I want to introduce Dylan Atack. He's here with his mother, Kerry Atack, and his aunt Kathy MacDonald. Dylan recently won the first ever Michael V. Young "What Ya Gotta Do" Award from the Hamilton Tiger-Cats. The award is given to someone within the regional football community who inspires others with their actions and their attitude. Thank you, Dylan, for all your hard work, and welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Speaker, we have a South Cayuga family in the members' gallery: May Lynne and Brian Ricker; their children Silken and Theo. They're all related to our page, Owen Ricker. Owen's the third page in his family, preceded by Gemma and Bethany.

**Hon. Teresa Piruzza:** Speaker, as you've heard through some individual introductions, today we're joined by a number of representatives from across the province from CASSs. I'd like to welcome everyone to the House, and I'd like to thank them for the important work that they do every day, and to invite everyone to join us at the reception directly after question period.

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I'd like to welcome Abram Benedict from the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne from my riding. Welcome to the Legislature.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** From the Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex, I'd like to welcome Jane Fitzgerald and Walter LeGrow. Welcome.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** I'd like to welcome the chair of the Highland Shores Children's Aid society, Mark Kartusch, and the chair, Darcey French, joining us as well.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I'd like to welcome to the Legislature today Stephen Adler, who's the associate director, Ontario government relations, Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs. And from the Jewish Family and Child service, we have Richard Cummings, the executive director; the chair of the board, Alan Levine; Talyah Breslin, the director of client services; and we also have Sarina Rehal, assistant director, community relations and outreach of CIJA. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I want to extend a special welcome to grade 5 students from St. Nicholas Catholic Elementary School in Newmarket. They are visiting the House today and are accompanied by their teacher, Catherine Barrett.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I, too, would like to welcome representatives from Family and Children's Services of Guelph and Wellington County who are here today: Erin Harvey and Jan Lord.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I, too, would like to welcome our local children's aid society—Gisele Hebert and Rick Vanderlee—to the gallery.

1040

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** On behalf of the member from Essex, visiting Benjamin Diab is his mother, Nancy Diab, who is here in the public gallery as well.

We welcome all of our guests.

Just before we get started, I wanted to point out that although we have five minutes set aside for introductions, usually on special days there are a lot of people who we need to introduce. I've made it my commitment to try to have everyone introduce all of their guests, as long as everyone stays to the script of doing the introduction and avoids long dissertations. I appreciate your co-operation on that. We will get everyone introduced because it's a special moment for everyone to visit.

It is now time for question period.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Good morning, Premier. My question is for you. Don Drummond outlined some big-ticket reforms that he said will be "an important turning point in the province's history." Don Drummond called for a "sharp degree of fiscal restraint." He said you must act "swiftly and boldly." To balance the budget will require "tough decisions." He said the treatment will be "difficult" and "most of the burden ... must fall on spending." He called for "a wrenching reduction from the path that spending is now on."

Premier, does any of this sound even remotely familiar? Can you name even one bold, sweeping move that you've made to balance the budget by 2017-18?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know the member opposite knows that we have implemented over 60% of what Don Drummond recommended, and that has meant that our annual rate of less than 1% on average in program spending has been in place. So we have in fact taken very serious measures to make sure that we constrain spending.

I would suggest that if he was looking for dramatic improvement, he had only to look at the compensation discussions that we had last year with the broader public service to see that there was dramatic action taken, which is why we are overachieving on all of those deficit reduction targets.

What we will not do is cancel full-day kindergarten and fire 10,000 education workers, fire hospital workers. That's not what we're going to do.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Premier, I'll let the 40 nurses in North Bay who you just fired hear your comment.

There are two parts to any formula to get us out of this massive deficit hole that you've dug: increased revenues and reduced spending. The Bank of Canada told us that this year and next year will not see the growth that you've forecasted. So unless you're planning another secret tax hike, that side of the formula is not moving. That leaves us to reducing spending.

I'll give you another Drummond quote. He said, "The government must take daring fiscal action early." Premier, that was 20 months ago. We've not seen one of Drummond's bold, daring, big, sweeping moves that he has asked for. So I'll ask you again: Can you name even one single bold spending reduction that you've made to balance the budget by 2017-18?

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, it's very interesting. My colleagues are calling out the changes that we have made, whether it's physiotherapy, whether it's transforming the health care system.

The reality the member opposite doesn't understand is that when you do transform a system, there are changes that are painful. So taking services out of hospitals and

putting them into the community—that creates a challenge for some people.

He's going to have to pick a lane. He's going to have to decide whether transformation is what they support or whether the status quo is actually what they support, because when he talks about not creating any turmoil, not creating any real change, which is what transformation does, then he does not understand that if we don't do that, we cannot have a sustainable health care system, a sustainable government over the long term.

We have taken those actions. We've implemented over 60% of what Don Drummond recommended, but we're not going to fire 10,000 education workers, which is what he's advocating.

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

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Premier, with your government's fall economic statement due out this week, your record is already shaky. You've already told us you're going to miss your economic growth forecast. That means you're going to miss your revenue targets, too.

Now, we've seen this Liberal movie before. In 2011, revenues were down \$500 million, so you drew from the contingency fund by nearly the same amount so the deficit would not appear to increase.

Premier, I have a simple question for you. Will you be drawing from the contingency fund again this year to make up for your missed revenue targets?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, spending was down for the first time last year since 1996. We have constrained spending and we have done that at least in part by implementing the recommendations of the Drummond report. My expectation would have been that they would have been supportive of that, that the opposition would have thought that that was a very good idea.

We did that while maintaining services, and that is the crux; that's the crux of the difference between our approach and their approach. They are not advocating maintaining services; they're advocating cutting services. That is how they have behaved in the past; that is what the PCs would do in the future. They would cut services; they would cut people from those services; they would cut people who deliver those services. We're not going to do that.

We believe that maintaining those services and making sure that our education system and our health care system are excellent is exactly what the people of Ontario need while we constrain spending. That's what we've been doing.

#### GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Again, I will remind those 40 nurses in North Bay whom you cut of your statement.

Premier, last week you announced a new bond issue to add to our debt. You've already added \$20 billion to our debt this year alone. When your government took office, our debt in Ontario was \$139 billion. It took 137 years to

get there. In the last 10 years, you've doubled it to \$273 billion.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Yes, they did overachieve.

So instead of eliminating scandalous and wasteful spending, you've simply answered, "More debt."

My question this time will be a very simple one. Premier, just how much debt are you planning to add with this new bond issue?

*Interjections.*

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

Premier?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** There is a stark difference between the way the party opposite approaches the delivery of service and governing in this province and what we believe, Mr. Speaker. That is just the reality. We have said that we believe that the people of Ontario need to have the services that are delivered by our education system, by our health care system, the social services that lift people up and allow them to get into the workforce, the infrastructure that is necessary for communities to be able to draw business to their regions so that they can thrive. We believe that those investments in people, those investments in infrastructure and the support of a dynamic business environment is what the people of Ontario expect from us. They do not expect across-the-board cuts that are going to reduce those services to people in North Bay and across the province. They do not expect that's what their government will undertake, and that's not what we're going to do. We'll constrain spending and we'll deliver services.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Premier, these non-answers are not exactly breeding confidence among the investment community. You haven't been able to answer even the simplest question here today. Your forecast shows revenue up, yet the Bank of Canada says revenue will not be growing where you hoped. Your lack of a jobs plan can be blamed on that. Your forecast shows spending flattening, yet you've increased wages in eight out of 10 contracts that you've negotiated.

Premier, none of this is adding up. I ask you, please, one time, please tell us: How are you going to balance the budget when you've failed miserably on both sides of the formula? It's a simple question, Premier.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Our deficit has continually come down. This is the fourth year in a row that we are achieving above our target, that we are outstripping our target, so I'm not exactly sure what the member opposite is referring to when says that we're not on target; we are. We're ahead of our target, and we are going to continue to behave in that prudent and constrained way.

At the same time, we believe that in order for the economy to thrive, we have to deal with the investments that are needed in order to support people, including, for example, the youth employment strategy that I think already has more than 2,400 young people who have

been placed in positions. That's the kind of investment and support that people need in order to be able to thrive.

**1050**

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Renfrew, come to order.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We will continue to make those investments. The member opposite is part of a party that doesn't believe in investment, including investment in infrastructure and transit. They would cut that.

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

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I'm very disturbed at the lack of answers today, particularly when this party has added \$20 billion to our debt this year alone. We're seeing more spin and absolutely no answers.

So, Speaker, let's review: You can't tell the markets how much debt you plan to issue this year. Revenues will not meet your forecast this year. You haven't implemented the "fundamental spending reforms" that Don Drummond has called for.

How can anyone take this party seriously? How can anyone have any confidence in your plan or your numbers? So let's try for the sixth time. Tell us, how do you plan on balancing the budget by 2017-18, or are you going to make that up, too?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know that the member opposite is looking forward to the fall economic statement on Thursday, and we look forward to sharing that information with him.

Let's review, as he has said: We have an economic plan to drive jobs and growth. Our deficit has continually come down. This is the fourth year in a row that we're projecting to be ahead of the target. We're ahead of the targets that we set. We're the only government in Canada to achieve this. Last year, we had an improvement of \$5 billion over our target. We're taking a balanced approach—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Renfrew will come to order: second time.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:**—and we have implemented 60% of what Don Drummond put in place, what he recommended to us, which is why our spending has been constrained, which is why we have been able to over-achieve on our targets.

We will continue in that manner. We will be prudent and we will continue to make those investments that are necessary in order for this economy to thrive.

## PENSION PLANS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Premier. As the Premier knows, a lot of Ontarians don't know how they'll make ends meet when it comes to the time to retire. This is a challenge that has been building for some time. Three years ago, I put a motion before the House calling on the government to get moving on a

plan, and every single Liberal MPP in the House voted against it.

Can the Premier explain what the government plans to do now that they didn't manage to do over the last decade in office?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Three years ago, on this side of the House, we were advocating for an enhancement to the CPP. Our Minister of Finance was leading that charge across the country. We continue to do that.

We're not going to take lessons from the NDP on how to put that argument forward. We have been putting that argument forward. We continue to do that. I have said that in the absence of that progress, in the absence of a consensus across the country, we will develop a plan and know the ramifications of having an Ontario plan.

But our first choice is to have the federal government step up to its responsibility and work with the provinces and enhance the CPP so that people in this country will know what their retirement will be and they will have some security in that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I think people may be looking pretty cynically at the government's latest promises, since they consist of a lot of talk, while people have been waiting years for some action. Over the last week, the government, in one way or another, has said they're ready to get behind a private sector solution, a federal government solution or an Ontario solution. But every time, the details are sketchy.

Can the Premier give us any insights into how much she thinks people should be putting aside, what an adequate retirement income would look like and whether she prefers expanded public or private plans?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** First of all, I want to give credit to the finance ministers from across the country who met, under the leadership of Charles Sousa, our finance minister, to come to some agreement that we do need to make this argument to the federal government. I'm very pleased that the leader of the NDP, who has not mentioned this issue for a very long time—certainly, in none of the meetings that I had with her did she raise this as an issue. This has been a concern of mine from the time I came into this office. I raised it at the Council of the Federation. It's something that I think is extremely important, and we have been advocating for enhancement of the CPP for years. We will continue to do that. Our Minister of Finance is having some success across the country with the ministers of finance. We look forward to the leader of the NDP's support on this file.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** People are getting more and more cynical about a government that's scrambling to hold onto power with a lot of promises, a lot of panels and a lot of conversation while the problems they've ignored for 10 years still are not getting resolved. They don't need endless conversations and empty Liberal promises. We know the Premier knows how to strike a panel, but when will things actually change for people?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'm not sure exactly how the leader of the third party would suggest we get consensus on enhancement of the CPP across the country unless we talk about it with the other provinces, and that's exactly what's happening. We are having that discussion, and there is some traction that has been achieved. The ministers of finance met last week, and I believe that there is more consensus than there was before.

So that's a very good thing. We've been advocating for this. This is our first choice: that the federal government work with the provinces and that we have an enhanced CPP across the country. I look forward to the leader of the third party working with us and working with her federal counterpart to make sure the opposition in Ottawa is singing from the same song book as she is.

#### AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is also for the Premier. For people facing real challenges, the Liberal government offers a lot of talk but very little by way of results. A growing number of drivers are concerned that the Liberals are backtracking on commitments to bring down auto insurance rates.

Ellie from Windsor wrote, "[I] just got my insurance renewal. It went up \$20. Note on first page about a new 2% charge for people on a payment plan." If the government is saying rates are coming down, why are people still seeing increases and new charges on their bills?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We're not backing off on our commitment. We've been very clear that we are moving ahead. We're working with the industry and we are making changes that in fact are bearing results. We know that the fraud within the system—the recommendations of the fraud task force need to be implemented. That's what we're doing.

As I have said to the leader of the third party many times, this is not a change that happens overnight. We have set a target of an 8% reduction in the first year, and we are working towards that. But it would be very helpful if the leader of the third party could make sure that she understands that it is across the province that this has to happen and it is the industry that has to take part. We are working with them, and we will see that change.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Families across Ontario are wondering if Liberal talk will actually apply to them and they're wondering if they will actually see the savings that they were promised.

Robert from London wrote, "In September of this year (2013) they raised my car insurance by about 16% to 17%.... If there is a 15% reduction in car insurance rates anytime soon then it will be a [moot] point because they already raised it to cover the extra expenses."

People are wondering if the Liberal government will keep its word. Can the Premier tell us whether rates for drivers like Robert will start coming down?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Again, I know that the leader of the third party understands that this is an across-

the-board initiative. It means that, across the board, a 15% average deduction is what we are targeting. So I think it would be very helpful if the leader of the third party helped the people who call her to understand that and to understand exactly how it works, because I think oversimplifying the issue does not help individuals.

We have set a target of an 8% reduction in the first year. Already, FSCO reports that there has been a 0.7% reduction in the third quarter of 2013. The rates, on average, are going in the right direction. But as I say, oversimplifying the time that it takes to make a change like this and what the implications are for individual drivers is not helpful. We are on it; we are working; we will make that reduction across the board.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I could tell the Premier that endlessly talking about a problem and never solving it just doesn't cut it with the people either.

Peter in Mississauga says this: "[W]hen I got my auto insurance quote in August this year, I was really astonished when I saw my premium was increased almost 15%, not decreased! Up to date I haven't got any ticket[s] or any car accidents for years."

People like Peter and Robert and Ellie are watching their bills go up instead of going down. We've heard a lot of excuses from the Liberal government. When are people actually going to start seeing some results?

1100

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** As I have said, according to FSCO, auto insurance rates decreased by 0.7% in the third quarter of 2013. Overall, the direction is the right one. The anti-fraud task force is creating new licences for clinics and exploring further options. That rooting out of the fraud and making the changes that are going to bring those rates down takes time. It's very important that we do it in such a way that we actually get the causes for the increases out of the system. That's why we have set an 8% target for reduction in the first year.

I look forward to working with the leader of the third party. We both know this is an important issue. People need to see those reductions but they will be average reductions, so that means they will be reductions across the whole system.

#### CANCER TREATMENT

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** My question is to the Minister of Health. Minister, five days ago you joined this assembly in a standing ovation for Kimm Fletcher, a mother of two with brain cancer. Later, in a private meeting, you promised to review her file to investigate why she's being denied OHIP coverage for the drug Avastin, a drug she so desperately needs.

Minister, it is now five days since you made that promise to Kimm. To put things in perspective, five days comes out to about 10% of her medically predicted life expectancy. On Kimm's behalf, I ask if the minister has in fact reviewed the file.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I can confirm that the Committee to Evaluate Drugs has twice done a formal and thorough review. In addition, in 2013, in response to another application, they did look again. They did determine that there is no new evidence.

I think it's very important that everyone in this House acknowledges that we do have a protocol in place, a protocol that removes political interference from decisions around what drugs are funded and for whom.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order, please.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm sure the member opposite actually wants to hear the answer to this.

I would note that Health Canada—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The heckling is unfortunate, I must say, Speaker. This is a very serious case.

It should be noted that Avastin for GBM currently has only a conditional notice of compliance from Health Canada because there are no data demonstrating an improvement in disease-related symptoms or increased survival with Avastin in the treatment of GBM.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Minister, Ontario is the only province in Canada with that system in place. This drug is in British Columbia, it's in Alberta, it's in Manitoba for this purpose.

Kimm doesn't have the luxury of time. Time is slipping away from her. Her husband and her two children stand by helplessly, frustrated that a government which intervenes with over \$1 billion for gas plants when it is politically expedient for its own survival refuses to intervene to assist Kimm in her survival.

Minister, I'll be speaking with Kimm later today to give her an update on her file. Please tell me what I can tell her with respect to your efforts as Minister of Health for this province and what you can do on her behalf.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** As I have said, we have taken the politics out of determining what drugs are covered for what condition. I cannot interfere in a decision made by a panel of experts, both at the Health Canada level and at the Ontario Committee to Evaluate Drugs. It's a transparent process. People can go online and determine where in the process the approval is at the Committee to Evaluate Drugs, and when a decision is made, it is online, publicly available—the rationale behind what decisions are made.

I would invite the member opposite to review the data on this, to review the research. I know that that is not what the member opposite wants to hear but we must, as stewards of the system, rely on experts to make determinations about what drugs will benefit what patients.

#### TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** My question today is to the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation. Good morning, Minister.

Last Friday, you announced you'd heard enough and were ordering the deficient girders removed from the Herb Gray Parkway. First let me say, on behalf of the residents in that area, thank you. It was the right thing to do.

However, there are other issues that need to be addressed. Mistakes were made; standards were not met; rules were ignored. As the member from Essex has already pointed out, this was a complete failure of oversight and quality control by this government.

Can the minister assure the public today that cost overruns will not have the people of Ontario footing the bill because of this unmitigated fiasco?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Good morning to the member from Windsor–Tecumseh. I thank him for the civility that he's bringing to this House.

Mr. Speaker, this wasn't a disaster at all. Let's just review the important facts of this.

One, all of the girders are coming out, as a result of independent testing. That is going to cost the taxpayers absolutely nothing—zero.

I know that members opposite—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order. The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound will come to order.

*Laughter.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Well, it may be funny, but you'll be laughing somewhere else.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** The way the government designed the contract assigned all risk allocation.

The Premier has asked me and other ministers to get on top of files. If we're cancelling projects, it should be done early. If we're making adjustments, we should be the aggressive watchdogs of capital projects. This is a government that learns from its mistakes, and this is an example of that learning.

Minor delays—as a matter of fact, we will be advancing the local road projects to reconnect communities even ahead of schedule. It will come in on budget. It will be entirely safe and meet engineering standards, and the risk and costs go to Project Co, not the people of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** The minister can talk about aggressive watchdogs. The facts are that we learned of this massive screw-up because of a whistle-blower. The government was forced to take action because of the public outcry.

There are a number of other P3 projects under way in this province, and the frightening thing is, the system of oversight is the same on those projects as on the Herb Gray Parkway, meaning there is none.

Will the minister—will this government—admit that contracting out billion-dollar privatized projects to foreign construction firms without oversight just doesn't work, and saying that taxpayers won't be on the hook for these overruns won't work without government oversight either?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** There was, sadly, when this was going on, no public outcry; that was the point. It was



actually my colleague the member from Windsor West, the Minister of Children and Youth Services, who approached me early on after I was appointed and advised me that there were concerns she was hearing about, and I held meetings with key people in the Windsor area.

What is surprising, Mr. Speaker, is that even his party and the opposition never raised this issue in the last 18 months. If this was a known problem, then how could a party with so many seats in that area not be raising those questions?

I've given credit to the member from Windsor—Tecumseh because it was only since he was elected—and my colleague from Windsor West actually raised this issue. As soon as we became aware of it, we acted aggressively to resolve it, to resolve the safety standards, to ensure that this project—and we have successfully advocated for the bridge to be built, which will now be attached. This is one of the best things to happen in Windsor in many years.

#### CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The first co-operative housing building in the city of Toronto was established in my riding of York South—Weston, a residence called Beech Hall. It was a real innovative model at that time, and the residents of what is known today as the Beech Hall Housing Co-operative successfully fought off a city bid to turn the residence into a high-rise. There's even a great documentary that can be watched on this. It's called *The Battle of Beech Hall*, and it depicts the struggle of the residents.

Since then, many more co-op homes have been built in my riding and across the province. These homes play an important role in affordable housing, and there are certain ridings, such as mine, where they are important to a great number of people. But for years co-ops were treated differently from rental housing, forcing co-ops to go through a complex and expensive dispute resolution process.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Our government has reduced the cost of this process across the province. Could the minister explain what changes have taken place?

1110

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** I want to thank my colleague for this timely question and for her continued advocacy, obviously, for the people of Beech Hall and the residents of co-operative housing in general.

As we all know, co-op housing plays an important and very necessary role in providing affordable housing to Ontarians. That's why our government worked recently with our co-operative housing partners to come up with a streamlined, less costly, less time-consuming process for dispute resolution. As you'll recall, our changes to Bill 14 helped co-operatives across the province, from Beech Hall in York South—Weston to Falls Place, a co-op in Niagara Falls, which no longer have to go through a six-

month process that can cost upwards of \$5,000, preventing co-ops from investing in necessary maintenance or upgrades such as playgrounds. It also ensures that co-ops and their members are able to access the same protections and benefits that have been available to landlords and tenants, such as mediation.

Our government will continue to invest in safe and affordable housing for all Ontarians so that they can put their skills to work and continue to build in the growth of our economy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** Thank you to the minister for that answer. However, Beech Hall and other co-ops today are experiencing a crisis, in Beech Hall's case, a crisis they haven't seen the likes of since the 1970s, when the Toronto borough of York decided to phase out this complex in favour of a new development.

The federal government has provided assistance to co-ops and other housing providers through programs started in the 1970s and the 1980s. Unfortunately, these agreements are expiring and we are quickly approaching the day when most of these contracts will end. And though our government has committed \$3 billion in affordable housing funding, communities across Ontario need predictable funding for affordable housing from all three levels of government.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Could she please explain to the House what our government is doing to ensure that we have a strong long-term partner in the federal government so that Ontario's co-ops can have the predictable funding that they need?

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** Thank you to the member for the question. Investing in affordable housing, such as co-ops, we all know pays dividends long down the road in creating jobs for Ontarians while continuing to provide housing for Ontario's most vulnerable for decades to come.

But protecting our societal responsibility for the vulnerable takes all three levels of government to make it work. We need to work co-operatively. A few months ago I listened very intently to what the federal government said in their throne speech to hear about their future plans for affordable housing across Canada. The federal government announced its intention to work on a renewed homeless partnering strategy. That's good news and I was pleased to hear that, but I remain worried in their commitment over the long term. It looks like their commitment to affordable housing will evaporate over the next 20 years. That's why I urge our federal partners to come back to the table to ensure that Ontario and all provinces across Canada have long-term, sustainable funding so that we can make the necessary investments that Canadians and Ontarians expect.

#### AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** My question is to the Minister of Agriculture and Food. Premier, because your government has spent Ontario into a fiscal mess, you said you needed to put a cap on our Risk Management Program,

the insurance program that our farmers depend on. This year farmers in need are seeing the negative impact. How do you explain to these farmers that there's no more money to help them, but you were able to find enough money to increase salaries and benefits at OMAFRA by more than 4%?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I have worked very closely with representatives from the agriculture industry, with individual farmers, and we have really made huge advancements in terms of the risk management programs that are in place. I would look at the corn-fed-beef ledger that my predecessor worked on with the sector. Producers are very, very pleased with the opportunity to have that kind of security in the system.

They're also very pleased—and I know that the member opposite is aware of the Open for Business table that we've got in place. They're very pleased at the movement on regulations and the changes that we've put in place to allow the agri-food business to flourish. So I think we're seeing a lot of successes, both in the stability of the risk management programs and in the opening up of the regulatory process so that businesses can thrive.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Premier, we need to get Ontario's finances back on track so that we can afford to provide the services Ontarians rely on, like health care, education and, for our farmers, insurance programs.

The Minister of Finance said, "We can't manage the deficit without addressing what is the single biggest line in our budget—public sector compensation." You claim you have a wage freeze, but the ministry under your direct control is increasing wages and benefits by more than \$3.6 million. To me, a wage freeze doesn't mean a 4% increase in salaries.

Premier, on November 7, will you commit to tabling a real plan to address Ontario's financing, including a real wage freeze, or do you think it's okay for farmers to continue to suffer because of your government's fiscal mismanagement?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure exactly whether the member opposite is really concerned about the well-being of farmers in the province or whether he's just taking a political shot. The fact is, we have worked with the sector. Ontario and Quebec are the only provinces to establish a provincial program to supplement what is available to farmers through the federal Business Risk Management Program. We have worked to put in place programs in this province that supplement what they get from the federal government, and in fact we've done that in collaboration with the sector. So I hope that the member opposite will sit down with us.

If he'd like a review of all of the programs that we've put in place, that we have negotiated and collaborated with the sector on, I'm happy to give him that.

On February 20, I met with some of the community leaders. I heard from them the overwhelming support for the process that we put in place to put these programs in place. So I look forward to working—

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

#### PAN AM GAMES

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the minister responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games. The scope and responsibility for security for the Pan/Parapan American Games has been less than clear. The minister has refused to answer even the most basic questions, either demonstrating an enormous lack of knowledge or a frightening focus on secrecy.

Speaker, will the minister agree to provide MPPs with all records and set out the security structure and costs, as well as the plan by which offices and officials will decide how security is carried out before, during and after the TO2015 Pan/Parapan American Games?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** I'm pleased to answer the question from the member opposite. Speaker, the Pan and Parapan American Games is a huge undertaking by the province, and, come 2015, 41 countries and their competitors will be in Ontario. The Pan Am Games has also a large footprint involving 14 municipalities.

Of course, we're committed to making sure that people visiting this country will be safe and, domestically, our people are also safe. The safety of athletes, coaches, officials, visitors and the general public is a critical element in the planning of the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games. We are prepared to take any measures necessary to ensure the safety of our citizens. We will not take risks with people's safety.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I'm not quite sure I got an answer there.

As MPPs in Ontario, we want to assure our constituents that the problems that occurred during the G20 don't happen again. We need to know the law enforcement organizations involved, who is leading the process and how any security problems will be handled, so that there is proper treatment of citizens, Pan Am participants and law enforcement personnel.

Speaker, will this minister share the basic security information so that transparency is preserved and problems are prevented?

**Hon. Michael Chan:** Thank you again for the question. Security planning for the Pan and Parapan American Games began in October 2010. It is crucial to the success of the games.

The process is being led by the integrated security unit under the management of the Ontario Provincial Police. The ISU is comprised of a team of law enforcement and security experts from each municipality hosting a games venue.

The ISU is working in coordination with federal security departments to promote the safety and security of these games. The ISU and Toronto 2015 continue to work together on games delivery plans with a view to managing security costs and risk.

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## RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** My question is for the Minister of Research and Innovation. Ontario is recognized for its well-regarded academic and research institutions and their ability to collaborate with industry. Fostering collaboration is important to our competitive advantage in the global economy. We need to continue to create the right conditions that will lead to innovative breakthroughs that attract investment and create jobs for Ontarians.

To help translate Ontario's research strengths into strong innovation and commercialization activity, businesses must be able to access the valuable knowledge and expertise available in Ontario's research institutions.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the Minister of Research and Innovation, what steps has the government taken to facilitate knowledge mobilization between industry and academic institutions?

**Hon. Reza Moridi:** I would like to thank the member from Oak Ridges–Markham for that very important question. Our government recognizes the importance of strong relationships between our academic and research institutions and industry. That's why our government has created the Collaboration Voucher program. This program provides redeemable credits to small and medium-sized enterprises for services and resources from universities, colleges and research hospitals.

Just last week, I announced the latest initiative between the Ontario Centres of Excellence, which runs the voucher program, and the Quebec Consortium for Drug Discovery. The \$3-million interprovincial research and development challenge will provide an opportunity for Ontario organizations to work with industry organizations in Quebec to promote research and innovation in new methods and discoveries.

We are proud of our government's initiative for fostering research and innovation, collaboration and also mobilization of knowledge in Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Minister. I'm happy to hear of the initiatives our government is undertaking to create stronger collaboration between innovative businesses, industry and academic institutions.

In York region, regional innovation centres like ventureLAB have played a vital role in providing services that connect and mentor entrepreneurs who want to start or grow their global enterprises. International research collaboration is a core component of research activity, as collaboration provides opportunities to move further and faster by working with other leading people in their field.

Although Ontario's research community is the strongest in Canada and one of the largest in North America, it faces fierce competition from developing economies that are ramping up their research investments.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the Minister of Research and Innovation, can you please let us know what international partnerships and collaborations our government has undertaken to promote research?

**Hon. Reza Moridi:** I want to thank, again, the member from Oak Ridges–Markham for that question. Our government understands the importance of international collaboration to build bridges with our international partners in order for Ontario to remain competitive on the world stage. Ontario has several active memoranda of understanding that focus on promoting research and innovation and collaboration with other jurisdictions.

We have a strong working relationship with many developed and developing countries around the world, including India, China, Israel and Singapore, among many others. International agreements will help our research institutions to collaborate with scientists and researchers in other countries in order to benefit our researchers in Ontario as well and help us to grow our economy. Our government is strengthening its relationships with international partners to create innovative research solutions to common research interests and concerns.

## ACCESS TO INFORMATION

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** My question this morning is to the Premier. Premier, last week I spoke to you about passing Bill 69, prompt payment legislation, an important bill. This morning, I'd like to speak with you about another important reform in the labour file and something that the majority of Ontario residents are asking for: transparency and accountability.

Last week, through Quebec's Charbonneau Commission, we learned of union dues being used to rebuild a biker strip club, false expense claims totalling more than \$4,000 for a single union executive member and, of course, plenty of connections between union bosses and organized crime.

Premier, what are you doing to ensure Ontario union dues are being used in a transparent and accountable manner and not being misspent and misappropriated?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I appreciate the member opposite asking the question. He's obviously talking about facts that are being discussed in Quebec and in other provinces. There is no such evidence of any such activity in our province.

But I think what's hidden behind the question that the member opposite has proposed going forward is their constant attack on organized trade unions in our province, their ongoing effort to bring everybody in Ontario down to make sure that the wages of hard-working Ontarians get lower and lower as opposed to making sure that we're all reaching for the top and ensuring that everybody's working together and our workplaces have health and safety for every single worker, unionized and non-unionized.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Back to the Premier: Here in Ontario, we have seen our share of interesting union causes as well. We have seen public sector unions using hard-earned dues to pay for anti-bottled-water campaigns, to fund student protests in Quebec, to support anti-Israel campaigns and to fund G20 protestors here in Toronto. This explains why public sector union bosses have fought so hard against any disclosure law that their own membership supports in droves.

In a recent survey done by Leger Marketing, 83% of Canadians agreed that unions should be required to disclose detailed financial information on a regular basis.

Premier, we know that you take your counsel from one union boss in the province of Ontario: That's Pat Dillon and the Working Families coalition. Are you willing to side with ordinary Ontario residents and move forward by requiring public sector unions to be open and transparent as to where and how they're spending their own members' dues?

*Interjections.*

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

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** No. Stop. I didn't ask you to be seated to get quiet only to start heckling again. Stop, please.

Minister.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I'm really having a hard time believing that in 2013 we're getting a question like that from the opposition party, Speaker.

On this side of the House, we absolutely reject any notion about right to work for less. I know this is unfortunately the position of the official opposition. We believe that unions have an important role to play in our economy. They work hard towards ensuring that the wages of all workers go up.

We have seen the result of right-to-work-for-less types of policies in the United States. They create huge inequalities when it comes to lowering wages and benefits for both unionized and non-unionized workers. On top of this, the kind of policy the member opposite is proposing is going to result in more economic uncertainty in our province, and less investors will be interested in investing in the economy. We reject that.

#### HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Premier. This past weekend, the Premier's spokesperson not only insisted that the Fort Erie Race Track didn't have a future, but also tried to rewrite its past. "For the vast majority of the Fort Erie Race Track's existence, it ran as a festival meet," he said.

Now, this government's attitude is a slap in the face to all those horsemen and women, like the families who joined me here last week, who for decades have made that track what it is today.

Why is this government destroying the horse racing industry in Fort Erie while favouring the interests of big, for-profit racetracks at Woodbine?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I guess I would ask the leader of the third party why she's advancing a notion of bad public policy that was unaccountable, was not transparent and was not working, in terms of good expenditure of public dollars. I would ask her what her plan would be to put in place a transparent, accountable plan.

We have one, Mr. Speaker. We worked with Elmer Buchanan and with John Snobelen and with John Wilkinson. They put recommendations forward. We're investing \$400 million over five years to put a sustainable horse racing industry in place, and that can include Fort Erie. Fort Erie will need to work with the Ontario Racing Commission to determine what its future will be.

My hope is that the leader of the third party, and all of her members who are so concerned about this, will be giving advice to the folks at Fort Erie that they would work with the Ontario Racing Commission. That's certainly what we're saying to the folks at Fort Erie.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

1130

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** What we don't understand over here is why the Liberal government would throw out the baby with the bathwater and favour private sector solutions, throwing tens of thousands of people in rural Ontario out of work in their closing of the Slots at Race-tracks Program.

The Premier talks about there being a future for Fort Erie, but then she turns around and undermines that very future—what the entire community has worked for in terms of a future—while at the same time rolling out the red carpet for private casinos in communities that don't even want them and, at the same time, sending Fort Erie's race days over to Woodbine, a for-profit track.

The government has already admitted that the OLG privatization was a mistake. Why is the Premier favouring for-profit racetracks at the expense of an entire horse racing industry in Fort Erie?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Again, I will say that I understand the politics of what the leader of the third party is doing. I understand the politics that overlay her questions about Fort Erie, but what we have done is we have taken advice from knowledgeable people who worked across the system, across the province. We talked to thousands of people in the horse racing industry. We're putting a plan in place.

The politics notwithstanding, we believe that having good policy in place is important. That includes Fort Erie. It includes the opportunity for Fort Erie to work with the Ontario Racing Commission and put in place a plan that will make it sustainable into the future.

What our plan does is link the future of horse racing to a renewed focus on the customers, not total dependence on the slots. I've said, at the same time, that integrating horse racing with gaming across the province is the way to sustainability.

That's what we're doing. Politics notwithstanding, Fort Erie can work with the Ontario Racing Commission, and my hope is that they will have a future.

#### AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

**Mr. John Fraser:** Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier in her role as the Minister of Agriculture and Food: I know that in the past Open for Business has been a forum for food businesses to discuss such regulations as meat regulations with government. Across Ottawa and eastern Ontario, we have businesses that have been affected by the government's rules around meat handling, and I know that this issue is important to the sector.

I understand that it has been brought to the table for discussion at previous Open for Business meetings and that you had another meeting just last week. Can the minister update the House on the progress made on this issue at your most recent Open for Business meeting?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I want to thank the member from Ottawa South for his question. I was really pleased at last week's Open for Business meeting to be able to hear from the sector how positive they are about the changes that are being made, particularly to the meat inspection regulations. The changes we've made will create a more flexible and outcome-based approach to compliance. They'll clarify regulatory requirements and promote competitiveness and innovation for the industry, without compromising food safety or cutting regulation arbitrarily.

That's really important, that people understand that this isn't just about making a political decision to cut regulation. This is about looking at what is really going to work to allow the industry to function and to keep food safety in place. These changes come into effect on January 1.

Another area we've discussed at the table is regulations for biodigesters. This has come up. We are going to work to make changes to improve the economics of operating anaerobic digestive systems. Those are the kinds of partnerships that we want to support going forward.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Mr. John Fraser:** It's great to hear that progress is being made by working together with the agri-food sector.

As a follow-up to the Minister of Agriculture and Food: My constituents consistently tell me that access to locally produced and processed food is a priority for them. In fact, like many urban MPPs, many of the Ottawa caucus's constituents work in the agri-food sector, like in the food processing, retail and wholesale sectors, and I know it is important for them that the industry continues to grow and thrive.

Could the minister please tell this House: How does the Open for Business forum benefit the agri-food sector?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I want to just say that recently I challenged the agri-food industry to double its growth rate and to create more than 120,000 new jobs by

2020. The only way that can happen is if government and the industry work in partnership.

If I go back to the previous question, about the comments I was making on anaerobic digesters, for example, the kinds of regulations that increase approval time and costs are the kinds of things we need to look at, because if the industry is going to be able to expand, we need to make sure that we are being as efficient as possible while, as I say, keeping food safety processes in place.

That's the kind of partnership that the Open for Business table has created. We are making progress; people were very positive. We've brought together the whole sector, food processors and producers, which means that we're getting all sides of the story as we make these decisions. It's a very good process, and I want to continue to work in partnership with the industry.

#### ELGIN-MIDDLESEX DETENTION CENTRE

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Minister, on Friday morning the correctional officers at the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre found an inmate dead in the showers. The 29-year-old from Sarnia was beaten beyond recognition. He was only there to serve 163 days for a non-violent crime. The latest death is one more indication of the problems at EMDC. These problems are systemic and I've been warning you to take action for two years now. Minister, in light of this recent death, what are you doing to ensure the safety of inmates, correctional officers and other front-line workers at EMDC?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** First of all, I want to send my condolences to the family and friends of the individual. The incident of course is under investigation by the police, the coroner's office and also my ministry.

The health and safety of the inmates in our correctional facilities is my number one priority. That's why we introduced a 12-point plan last year to address the concerns at EMDC. I'm committed to continue to work with the management and the union at EMDC to improve the situation.

Let me tell you of the substantive progress we have made since. We have installed 350 security cameras, we have a new control model, we have six metal detectors and we have an X-ray machine for baggage. In the supplementary, I will continue to tell you what we have done.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Minister, if your solutions had worked, that inmate would still be alive today. You should also include in your number one priority the correctional officers and also the front-line workers working at that jail.

Minister, since you've taken over this file, you've let the conditions at EMDC get progressively worse. Your inaction threatens the safety of correctional officers, inmates and front-line workers. I know the ministers across the floor enjoy the part of their job where they get to be

nice and have great photo ops. However, the true test of leadership, Minister, is how you deal with and manage problems.

The problems at EMDC are systemic and I have drawn attention to them time and time again in this chamber. Following the last inquest, into a death that occurred in 2009, the ministry didn't act until I was elected and put pressure on you to do so. It makes me think your ministry does not act unless I tell you to do so. Minister, do I constantly have to hold your hand in order for you to do your job?

*Interjection.*

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

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** What we have done also: We have hired 11 additional full-time correctional officers, we have three new sergeants, we have one additional mental health nurse and we now have 24-hour nursing.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to take advice from that party that made a mess of the correctional services when they were in power. They closed jails like you wouldn't believe. We have now no room for programs, and rehabilitation was not their number one priority. We know that their cousins at the federal level are the same: "We put more people in jail longer. We leave them there longer and no rehabilitation." It's not what we're going to do. I'm going to transform that sector of my responsibility. Thank you very much.

#### ELGIN-MIDDLESEX DETENTION CENTRE

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** My question is also to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. I'm going to try this again: Adam Harvey Kargus is the fourth inmate to die in four years at Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre, a facility that has been plagued with design flaws, overcrowding and understaffing. Can the minister assure us that there were enough correctional officers on duty the night of this tragic fatality?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Mr. Speaker, as I said, the safety of our inmates and our correctional officers is my number one priority. I've been working with management and with the union to make sure that we will improve this situation. The day of the incident, the EMDC capacity was 410, and there were 389 inmates in the facility.

As I said, our responsibilities are safety and security. I'm going to repeat what we have done: We have hired more staff. We now have 24-hour nursing there and we have one mental health nurse who was not there before. We have 11 additional full-time correctional officers.

I'll continue to work with both the union and management to make sure that we have a safe correctional facility in London-Middlesex.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** It has been months since we've been raising these issues, and the situation really has yet to improve. Inquests have called for increased staffing

levels, yet the ministry has done nothing. The ministry committed to set up an EMDC advisory board last year, and we're still waiting for that to happen. The upgrades that have been made to EMDC do not take into account the structural layout of the facility and the need for more direct supervision of inmates. What will it take for the ministry to do its duty and improve the standards at EMDC?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I'm going to repeat again: We now have 350 security cameras that were installed. We have a new control module. We have six metal detectors. We have a baggage X-ray machine. We have more correctional officers. We will continue to improve the situation in the Elgin-Middlesex correctional facility, and this will be done.

Despite the best efforts, violence is a reality for correctional facilities everywhere, but with all of these improvements we hope that the situation will continue to improve.

## DEFERRED VOTES

### SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESSES ACT, 2013

### LOI DE 2013 VISANT À SOUTENIR LES PETITES ENTREPRISES

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

Bill 105, An Act to amend the Employer Health Tax Act / Projet de loi 105, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'impôt-santé des employeurs.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1142 to 1147.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** On October 2, 2013, Mr. Leal moved second reading of Bill 105.

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

#### Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Hatfield, Percy	Munro, Julia
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Holyday, Douglas C.	Murray, Glen R.
Arnott, Ted	Horwath, Andrea	Naqvi, Yasir
Bailey, Robert	Hoskins, Eric	Natyshak, Taras
Barrett, Toby	Hunter, Mitzie	Nicholls, Rick
Bartolucci, Rick	Jackson, Rod	O'Toole, John
Bradley, James J.	Jaczek, Helena	Oraziotti, David
Cansfield, Donna H.	Jeffrey, Linda	Piruzza, Teresa
Chan, Michael	Jones, Sylvia	Prue, Michael
Chiarelli, Bob	Klees, Frank	Sandals, Liz
Chudleigh, Ted	Kwinter, Monte	Sattler, Peggy
Colle, Mike	Leal, Jeff	Schein, Jonah
Coteau, Michael	MacCharles, Tracy	Scott, Laurie
Crack, Grant	MacLaren, Jack	Sergio, Mario
Damerla, Dipika	MacLeod, Lisa	Shurman, Peter
Delaney, Bob	Mangat, Amrit	Singh, Jagmeet
Dhillon, Vic	Mantha, Michael	Smith, Todd
Duguid, Brad	Marchese, Rosario	Tabuns, Peter
Dunlop, Garfield	Matthews, Deborah	Taylor, Monique
Elliott, Christine	McDonell, Jim	Thompson, Lisa M.
Fedeli, Victor	McMeekin, Ted	Vanthof, John
Fife, Catherine	McNaughton, Monte	Walker, Bill

Forster, Cindy	McNeely, Phil	Wilson, Jim
Fraser, John	Meilleur, Madeleine	Wong, Soo
Gerretsen, John	Miller, Norm	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Gélinas, France	Miller, Paul	Yakabuski, John
Gravelle, Michael	Milligan, Rob E.	Yurek, Jeff
Hardeman, Ernie	Milloy, John	Zimmer, David
Harris, Michael	Moridi, Reza	

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

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 86; the nays are 0.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** So ordered.

#### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Durham on a point of order.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'd like to introduce two guests to the members of the Legislature: David Smith and Bob Simpson. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Kitchener–Waterloo on a point of order.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to welcome my good friend Kim Beggs to the House today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** There are no further deferred votes. This House stands adjourned until 1 p.m.

*The House recessed from 1151 to 1300.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I'd like to introduce members of the Ontario Lung Association, who are joining us in the gallery today: Andrea Stevens Lavigne, Peter Glazier, Sherry Zarins, Lindsey Robins, Kait Wallace, Alexandra Jackson and John Chenery. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Welcome.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'd also like to recognize members of the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, specifically from the Durham branch: Wanda Secord and Lisa Sarsfield. Welcome to Queen's Park.

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### LUNG HEALTH

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** The month of November marks lung health month.

The Ontario Lung Association is a leader in the prevention and control of chronic lung disease and asthma,

and promotes tobacco cessation and prevention, as well as air quality and its overall effect on lung health. The association also works to educate and support people with lung disease in Ontario.

Through generous donations, the Ontario Lung Association has been able to invest over \$27 million into lung health research.

It's estimated that 2.4 million Ontarians currently live with a serious lung disease, and studies show that that number will rise to 3.6 million people in the next 30 years.

The association has put forward a series of initiatives that create a comprehensive Ontario lung health action plan. The ideas include:

—issues around smoking cessation;

—a comprehensive primary care model which will involve managing asthma and COPD with care and education;

—accurate diagnosis through spirometry for early screening for COPD; and

—pulmonary rehabilitation, improving quality of life after a COPD diagnosis.

The Lung Association has asked the government for \$112 million to write a lung health action plan as well as \$21 million to implement their plan.

These are all very sensible solutions, Mr. Speaker. I would urge the government to work to enact such a plan, which is going to help prevent lung disease, improve patient outcomes and make effective use of our health care dollars.

Thank you to the members of the association for being here today.

#### CITY OF TORONTO

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** Over recent days, I've heard from many constituents in Davenport about their profound disappointment and frustration with the news coming from Toronto city hall. Recent events at city hall threaten to divide our city. They distract us from the real challenges that we face. They obscure the values that we share in common and our potential to face these challenges when we work together.

We're lucky, in Davenport, to have real city builders like Alejandra Bravo and Dave Meslin, who are dedicated to deepening civic engagement in our community and across the city. For years, these two have worked to support Torontonians from diverse backgrounds to get involved in politics, to vote, to work on campaigns, to run for political office and to meet the challenge of building a great city.

Recently, Alejandra has championed the I Vote Toronto campaign to give permanent residents the vote in municipal elections. This campaign enfranchises newcomers to Canada and encourages them to get involved in our local communities and to have a say in our city. This reform would increase voter participation and strengthen our democracy.

Dave continues to champion the ranked-ballot initiative. It's a campaign for Toronto that would allow our city to use a ranked ballot for municipal elections. Dave argues that a ranked ballot would discourage negative campaigning, would encourage more candidates to come forward and get involved, would provide more choices for voters and ensure majority support for elected councillors and mayors.

Both of these initiatives speak to more positive and inclusive politics that encourages more people to get involved in building our city together.

I want to celebrate these two residents of Davenport and thank them for their leadership.

I encourage everyone in Toronto to keep the faith, to support these important campaigns and recommit to making this a better city.

### DIWALI

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** This past weekend, I had the opportunity to attend many Diwali celebrations; in particular, two with our Premier, the Honourable Kathleen Wynne, hosted by the Canadian Museum of Hindu Civilization and by the Malton gurdwara, and in my riding of Mississauga–Brampton South, at the Dixie gurdwara and the Ram Mandir.

Diwali, the festival of lights, is a time to express our gratitude for what we have achieved in the past year and to rekindle the spirit of hope—hope for a better and brighter future.

Diwali is celebrated all over the world by different communities for different reasons. Diwali personifies friendship, future prosperity and hope.

Mr. Speaker, Diwali is also a reminder of how fortunate we are with so much diversity in our province. It not only enriches us socially, culturally and economically; it also connects us globally. Diversity, indeed, is a source of great strength and pride, in which our government firmly believes.

### HAYTER GROUP

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** It's a pleasure to rise today to recognize the Hayter Group on recently being awarded the Better Business Bureau of Western Ontario's Integrity Award. For 16 years, these awards have recognized businesses throughout southwestern Ontario that have received significant praise by customers, employees and within the community.

Founded in Alvinston in 1952, and now with branches in Chatham and Cambridge, the Hayter Group is a family business that has offered reliable plumbing, heating, geothermal and solar panel service to rural markets in our communities. The Hayter Group was one of the first geothermal installers in Ontario and has now installed over 1,500 kilometres of geothermal piping across our region.

I would like to offer congratulations to the Hayter Group for their great service to our community and on

being awarded the Integrity Award from the Better Business Bureau of Western Ontario. Thank you to them for all they do in giving back to our communities, and, once again, congratulations.

### ANNIVERSARY OF SIKH MASSACRE

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** I rise to extend my sympathies on the 29th anniversary of the November 1984 Sikh genocide that targeted Sikh men, women and children across India—and many other parts of the capital city and the region.

What makes the November 1984 Sikh genocide so fundamentally heinous was that, under the guise of a communal Hindu-Sikh conflict, it was actually democratically elected officials from the Congress Party of India who facilitated these attacks.

These attempts to create disharmony are simply unacceptable. That is why we must remember and thank members of the Hindu, Muslim, Christian and other communities who, at grave risk to themselves, provided protection and refuge to their Sikh brothers and sisters.

The former Chief Justice of the Indian Supreme Court and author of the Nanavati Commission report stated that the killings of Sikhs were planned and organized. Human rights organizations have also reported that voter lists were used to identify and target Sikh businesses and homes, and that children were found beheaded in the aftermath of those horrendous days.

As we reflect on and remember these atrocities, let us categorically denounce a world where democratic tools are so severely undermined that voter lists become tools for genocide.

On the path to reconciliation, we must continue to pursue truth and justice. And we must prioritize the victims as they heal from these traumatic events. These are the obligations of a democratic state—to stand for the universal human rights of all people. Lest we forget.

### CHILDREN AT RISK

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** October was Autism Awareness Month. I'm pleased to rise again in recognition of the Ottawa organization Children at Risk and their efforts to raise funds and awareness for autistic children.

The October 26 weekend marked another successful Annual Celebrity Carved Pumpkin Auction fundraiser. Each year, over 100 pumpkins are transformed into jack-o'-lanterns and are presented throughout the city of Ottawa at local malls. For this contest, various news, radio, TV, athletic, business and political personalities participate in crafting a pumpkin and donating a prize to be bid on.

To date, the event has raised over \$93,000. This year's total was an impressive \$11,270.

I was pleased to participate with my own submission, made by my crafty assistant, Nathalie Montpetit. I want to also congratulate other MPPs who took part in the "carving for the cause": the Honourable Yasir Naqvi, the



Honourable Bob Chiarelli and Nepean–Carleton MPP Lisa MacLeod.

All proceeds go to community-based projects such as summer camps, family support groups, information seminars and educational workshops.

Without organizations like Children at Risk, many autistic children would not receive the special care they need to reach their full potential. For 34 years, Children at Risk has been helping autistic children and their families in the Ottawa region, and I applaud their ongoing work.

Congratulations to president Paul Lacroix and his team for another successfully run carved pumpkin contest.

1310

#### MURRAY CARDIFF

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Today, I'd like to follow up on the announcement I shared with the assembly on Thursday afternoon regarding the passing of Murray Cardiff, a farmer, a gentleman, a guy who was proud to call Brussels in the riding of Huron–Bruce home, as well as a respected former federal member of the PC Party of Canada.

Mr. Cardiff was a family friend and a mentor, and I'm honoured to stand here on behalf of the PC Party to honour his memory today.

Murray Cardiff passed away on Thursday, October 31 at Listowel Memorial Hospital in his 80th year.

Murray was born on June 10, 1934, on his family farm in Grey township. Mr. Cardiff was a farmer by chosen career and, as such, he understood the concerns of his Huron–Bruce constituents very well.

Murray was the beloved husband of Betty for 55 years, and he was the loving father of Jeff and Cathy, Joan, Scott and Kendra and the proud grandpa of Emily, Matthew, Blake and Tanner.

Murray Cardiff was first elected to the House of Commons in 1980, and he served his riding so amazingly well from 1980 to 1993. He was a tireless advocate for Ontario's agri-food sector.

On behalf of the PC Party, I want to offer my sincere condolences. We will miss Murray, his sage advice, his keen sense of conservative fiscal responsibility and his ability to rally the troops. I take comfort in believing, and I hope his family does as well, that Murray has been warmly welcomed by his colleagues and members of the affiliated Huron–Bruce provincial riding association, which can be found beyond the sunset. All is well.

#### RENÉ LALONDE

**M. John Fraser:** C'est un honneur et un privilège d'avoir la chance de prendre la parole aujourd'hui et de dire quelques mots au sujet de mon très bon ami, René Lalonde.

René Lalonde was born in Curran, Ontario, on September 11, 1923, and was one of 14 children. In February 1943, he enlisted in the army and became a tank

driver. On Friday, October 13, 1944, while serving in Rimini, Italy, he stepped on a mine and lost his leg.

René and his wife, Marianne, were married in 1951 and had three children: Micheline, Louis Philippe and Isabelle. René and Marianne celebrate their 62nd anniversary this year. René has been a businessman, a high school teacher and a school board trustee. As a member of the Royal Canadian Legion, he also played an important role in the naming of Highway 416 as Veterans Memorial Highway.

Most importantly, René has been a very good friend to many. I met René on a campaign almost 25 years ago, and he has taught me many things. I have never heard him utter an unkind word or complain about anything. He is the embodiment of the meaning of hard work and fortitude.

René, I would like to thank you for everything you have done for your friends and family, for our cause and for your service to Canada. René, j'aimerais te remercier pour tout ce que tu as fait pour ta famille et tes amis, pour notre cause, et pour ton service pour le Canada.

#### SNOWCREST RIDERS SNOWMOBILE CLUB

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to rise in the House today to recognize the accomplishments of a truly remarkable organization in my riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka. Based in Gravenhurst, the Snowcrest Riders Snowmobile Club has made 2013 a year to remember by being the recipient of three major awards, including the Canadian Council of Snowmobile Organizations' club of the year, the International Snowmobile Club of the Year and being inducted into the International Snowmobile Hall of Fame. Last year, in 2012, they were the OFSC club of the year.

Recently, I was able to attend an event to recognize their awards with Bob Clarke, the current president of the Snowcrest Riders.

This organization has been particularly proactive in increasing snowmobile opportunities in the Muskoka area, with their efforts leading to completed projects such as snowmobile bridges over Highway 11 and Beaver Creek.

They also support the non-profit Prostate Extreme Team, whose efforts help to raise funds and awareness on prostate-related ailments. I look forward to attending their event at the Marriot Residence Inn, which will take place over this winter's Family Day long weekend, at Muskoka Bay in Gravenhurst.

I would also like to recognize and thank the countless volunteers, landowners and sponsors who provide the community support that has all helped make the Snowcrest Riders Snowmobile Club so successful throughout the years. I would also like to sincerely congratulate the riders, and wish them the best on what I'm sure will be another excellent winter riding season.

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

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### FISCAL TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY AMENDMENT ACT (PRE-ELECTION REPORTS), 2013

### LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA TRANSPARENCE ET LA RESPONSABILITÉ FINANCIÈRES (RAPPORTS PRÉÉLECTORAUX)

Ms. Scott moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 126, An Act to amend the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act, 2004 / Projet de loi 126, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2004 sur la transparence et la responsabilité financières.

**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.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Currently, the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act, 2004, requires the Minister of Finance to release a pre-election report about Ontario's finances in such circumstances and by such deadline as provided for in the regulations. Unfortunately, there is no regulation for the next fixed election date in 2015 and nothing to address an election if it happens prior to the fixed election date in 2015.

This bill brings into legislation or law that the Minister of Finance, in a year there is a fixed date for a general election, is required to release a pre-election report no later than 30 days after the minister moves the budget motion, and requires the Auditor General to promptly review and release a statement describing the results of the review.

A new subsection applies to a pre-election report that is released in connection with a non-fixed-date general election. It requires the Auditor General to promptly review the report and to release a statement describing the results of the review, either before the election, if possible, or within a reasonable time after the election.

### HUMAN RIGHTS CODE AMENDMENT ACT (GENETIC CHARACTERISTICS), 2013 LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT LE CODE DES DROITS DE LA PERSONNE (CARACTÉRISTIQUES GÉNÉTIQUES)

Mr. Colle moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 127, An Act to amend the Human Rights Code with respect to genetic characteristics / Projet de loi 127, Loi modifiant le Code des droits de la personne en ce qui a trait aux caractéristiques génétiques.

**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. Mike Colle:** If passed, this bill would amend Ontario's Human Rights Code to include genetic characteristics as a prohibited ground of discrimination. Every person would have a right to equal treatment without discrimination because of genetic characteristics. This includes the right to equal treatment if a person refuses to undergo or disclose the results of a genetic test.

In essence, this bill would prevent employers and insurance companies from discriminating against Ontarians on the basis of genetic testing.

## PETITIONS

### ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario College of Trades introduced new membership fees on April 1, 2013, which hit hard-working tradespeople to the tune of about \$84 million a year;

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

"That the Liberal government stop this job-killing trades tax and shut down the Ontario College of Trades immediately."

It's signed by many people within my riding.

1320

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### LOCAL FOOD ACT, 2013 LOI DE 2013 SUR LES ALIMENTS LOCAUX

Mr. McMeekin, on behalf of Ms. Wynne, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 36, An Act to enact the Local Food Act, 2013 and to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to provide for a tax credit to farmers for donating certain agricultural products that they have produced / Projet de loi 36, Loi édictant la Loi de 2013 sur les aliments locaux et modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts pour prévoir un crédit d'impôt pour les agriculteurs qui font don de certains produits agricoles qu'ils ont produits.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further debate?

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** I'm pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 36—kind of in an unorthodox order. I want to start by thanking the many local food organizations, agriculture groups and individuals who worked to make this act better.

As you know, when the government first introduced this bill just over a year ago, I was disappointed, as were

many stakeholders. We were hoping for a real food act, one that would have an impact on Ontario's food system.

Just a few days after it was introduced, Dalton McGuinty prorogued the Legislature, and the Local Food Act died on the order paper.

During the leadership campaign, Premier Wynne promised a strengthened Local Food Act, but when it was reintroduced it was virtually the same bill. In fact, during hearings, Darcy Higgins, from Food Forward, reminded the committee of the Premier's commitment and said, "The language of the act, we believe, should improve to meet this commitment."

I want to recognize a member of this Legislature who made one of the biggest contributions to improving the Local Food Act: Bob Bailey, the member from Sarnia-Lambton. In 2012, he introduced a bill to create a tax credit for farmers who donate agricultural products to an Ontario food bank. Bob is here this afternoon to be part of the debate.

Every year, 25 million pounds of fresh food are plowed under in Ontario fields, often because it isn't chosen for sale because of appearance. The tax credit will assist farmers with the cost of harvesting and transporting that food to the local food bank.

The bill died on the order paper when the Legislature was prorogued, but in May 2013 the member from Sarnia-Lambton reintroduced it. I want to commend him for his commitment and for putting it forward as an amendment to the Local Food Act.

In our amendment, we expand the tax credit to include not just traditional food banks but registered charities that are providing food free of charge, such as school nutrition programs, homeless shelters and seniors' programs.

The PC caucus has worked hard to try to make the Local Food Act something that would actually benefit our local food system and our farmers. The PC caucus believes that we need a food act—in fact, we proposed an Ontario food act in our white paper—but we think it needs to be more than a bill with just a great name. That's why we held local food round tables in Woodstock, Stratford, Cobourg, London, Windsor, Kingston and Ottawa to talk about ways to strengthen this bill. We brought together local food groups, restaurants, farmers, economic development officers and food processors to talk about the opportunities and challenges. In all of the round tables, the number one issue that emerged was the need for more food education.

That's why we put forward an amendment that would require food education in the curriculum in every grade. Of course, I was disappointed that the government members on the committee chose to block that amendment.

In a letter to the Premier, the Ontario Home Economics Association wrote:

"Despite the Ontario Foodland banner promoting the abundant high-quality fresh fruits and vegetables produced in this province, the CCHS of 2007 revealed that Ontarians are in the bottom percentiles of fruit and vegetable consumption.

"The Ontario Ministry of Health published this sad fact by Ontario region, and in turn identified school nutrition programs as a strong determinant of a healthy diet."

Requiring food education in the curriculum in every grade would have been a concrete step to actually increase food literacy for students.

As a member of the association wrote, "How terribly disappointing that our government does not value mandatory food preparation and nutrition education in Ontario, despite increased rates of many nutrition-related health issues such as diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity and heart disease."

One of the other things we heard repeatedly during our round tables and hearings was the need to establish real targets. We put forward an amendment that would require targets to be set within 12 months and that they would be real targets, not just aspirational ones. While the government members voted our amendment down, at least a 12-month time frame has now been included in the bill.

I'm also very pleased to report that we saved Ontario Agriculture Week. Through a PC amendment, we created Local Food Week, beginning the first Monday in June. This will kick off the summer local food season and, because it is during the school year, it will support more food education. It will also ensure that we have a separate week to celebrate all the contributions of our farmers.

I also want to mention that at the request of a number of groups, we put forward an amendment that expanded the definition of local foods. As Ontario Nature said in their thank-you email, "The inclusion of forest and freshwater foods in the definition of local foods made the act much more representative of northern food sources."

As members of the opposition, we have done what we can to make this a real food act, but there are many problems facing our food system and our farmers that still need to be addressed. It's clear that this government does not have a clear plan for how to increase local food or strengthen agriculture and agri-food in Ontario.

Last year, we released a white paper that put forward a number of ideas that would strengthen the agriculture sectors, from our small market gardens to our larger producers. One of the challenges to increasing local food procurement is the need to aggregate supply. In our white paper, we recommend creating a second food terminal. It would be a regional food terminal and would increase access to local food, reduce our carbon footprint and create jobs.

We also outlined the need to cut red tape. Farmers are currently spending the equivalent of almost four 40-hour workweeks just dealing with government red tape. The government likes to boast about their red tape program, but in our survey over 77% of farmers said that red tape is actually increasing.

As we consulted on the Local Food Act, we heard about the red tape problems in letters, round tables and at the hearings. In fact, a study of the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation released just a few weeks ago found that red tape is still a major barrier to farmers trying to grow

their farms. It cited too many layers of regulations and inconsistencies in how regulations were interpreted. In our white paper, we proposed cutting regulations by one third.

We also pointed out the need to address the spiralling cost of hydro. In our survey, 97% of farmers said they had been impacted by increasing hydro rates, and over 60% of farmers said that the increase had been significant.

On Friday, the Bruce County Federation of Agriculture president tweeted: “The cost to produce food on Ont farms went up \$32mil today thanks to the increase on our hydro bills.”

In the report released by the association of Ontario food processors, they have identified “steep increases in utility costs” as one of the challenges they are facing.

We can’t have local food without our farmers, but this government’s policies are making it more and more difficult for them to operate.

In my question this morning, I asked the Premier why she would put money into salaries and benefits instead of investing into the insurance programs that our farmers need.

Ontario agriculture needs real leadership. The Premier has now been the Minister of Agriculture and Food for about eight months. There are those who would argue that this is an opportunity for our agriculture industry, but, like the Local Food Act, it is one that can easily be missed.

So far, the Premier has not created a legacy. She has not taken bold action to improve the agriculture industry or the agri-food sector. The fact that the Local Food Act is stronger than the one she introduced is not her legacy; it’s the legacy and the hard work of people like Bob Bailey, Darcy Higgins from Food Forward and Carolyn Young of Sustain Ontario. It was through the hard work of the Canadian Environmental Law Association, the Ontario Home Economics Association, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario, Ontario Nature and many other organizations. It was through the hard work of those people who took the time to meet with us at the round tables, or call or email with their suggestions. I want to thank them all for making this act better and for the work they’ve done to strengthen Ontario’s food system.

1330

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I am very, very pleased to be able to speak to third reading of Bill 36, the Local Food Act. I will just say, in response to my critic: Thank you very much for your comments. I want to say thank you very much to the member for Sarnia–Lambton as well, that he was able to work with us. As the member opposite, the member for Oxford, said, we have been able to improve the Local Food Act by listening to all of the people who gave us feedback.

That’s how I believe the Legislature is meant to work: When a government brings in a bill and is then able to

work with opposition and work with all of those folks in the field, so to speak, who understand the issues, we are then able to improve legislation. I think it is precisely that kind of collaboration that is the legacy of this particular process.

I’m pleased to speak to third reading of the Local Food Act. This legislation will help us celebrate and promote all of the good things that are grown, harvested and made right here in Ontario. That is extremely important.

In fact, it’s one of the first things that I heard when I was first elected to this Legislature. My colleague John Wilkinson, who was the member for Perth–Wellington, and I started a process called “Ag 101.” We would bring urban MPPs to farms on a regular basis each year. We would have a full day where urban MPPs would go into rural communities, into the agricultural community—and vice versa; we did the reverse as well. We brought farmers and folks from rural communities into the city as well.

One of the first things that I heard on that first trip, which must have been in 2004, was farmers saying to me and saying to us that they wanted the government to promote what they grew. They wanted the government to promote local food and the consumption of local food and food that was processed here. So we have been doing that, and this Local Food Act really accelerates and enhances that process.

When we choose local food, we keep the agri-food industry—which is one of the province’s largest economic engines—running strong. That’s really what this is about; it’s about healthy eating and it’s about great food, but it’s also about our economy. We feed local economies, we support great jobs and we help our communities to grow and thrive. There’s a virtuous circle there.

If passed, this bill will also complement our broader local food strategy—not everything in our strategy is in the bill itself—and that will, all together, encourage market growth and development for Ontario foods. That strategy includes up to \$30 million in investment over the next three years towards supporting innovative local food projects—projects like the ones that FoodShare Toronto runs, for example, which gets sustainable, healthy local food from the farm to the fork and, quite frankly, into our schools as well.

Over the last few years, we’ve worked with them to get more local food into student nutrition programs here in Toronto. I know that anyone who has spent time in schools understands how important it is that we have those nutrition programs for students, because if kids don’t have enough to eat, it’s very hard for them to learn and to study. Working with FoodShare Toronto and organizations like it across the province—we want to have more of those programs. I want to see more initiatives like that one in every part of Ontario.

That’s what our strategy is really all about: It’s about supporting projects that market and promote local food, to get even more of the good things that grow in Ontario on people’s plates—and the good things that are made in

Ontario, because the food processing aspect of this is extremely important.

I want to help our partners to strengthen the local food networks by sharing ideas and being able to learn from each other's success, because there are good things happening in pockets in the province, and we want to connect those and make sure that everyone knows what the possibilities are.

Today, we have the opportunity, I believe, to move the yardstick farther. If the bill is passed, Ontario will be the first province in Canada to have such legislation in place. We have the opportunity, in this Legislature, to make history. By increasing awareness of food grown, made and harvested in Ontario, the Local Food Act will increase sales of Ontario food, and that is our objective.

This legislation will also allow us to set local food goals and targets in partnership with stakeholders. One of the concerns that we heard when this act was first introduced was that there was a concern about the prescriptive nature of the setting of targets. What we have said is, let's work with our partners to make sure that the targets that are set are realistic. We want that creative tension, we want to be able to push each other, but we don't want to be so prescriptive that it becomes burdensome for our partners—municipalities, for example. But I do believe that we need to, as I say, push each other to do the best that we can do.

It would also enable us to work with public sector organizations towards those goals, the setting of targets, and then to share information on their progress and results. I'm a great believer in shining a light on a subject, shining a light on an issue, beginning to measure something, and that by virtue of doing that, we see improvement. I think that's a very important part of this legislation.

The act also includes a requirement for government to produce a local food report on the activities it has undertaken to support this initiative. So we're forcing ourselves to practise what we preach and make sure that as we talk about local food, we are actually taking those actions within government to make sure that we're increasing our consumption and our procurement of local foods.

The feedback that we've received on the bill from the public, from agri-food stakeholders, and from all three parties has been invaluable, as I've said, and I want to again commend everyone who has engaged with us. Thank you very much for doing that, because, as I say, that's the way we strengthen legislation. We welcomed your comments because we want to ensure that this legislation is the best it can possibly be for the people of Ontario.

From that collaborative process, we have proposed a number of amendments to the bill. One of these amendments would require the minister to set goals and targets in several critical areas identified by stakeholders as being key to supporting and strengthening local food. These include improving people's understanding of local food, encouraging increased use of local food by public

sector organizations and increasing access to local food within one year after the requirement to do so has come into force.

We've also supported changes proposed by our opposition colleagues to strengthen the bill. This is where the member for Sarnia—Lambton has put forward an idea. He and I talked about it in Sarnia months ago, and I said that I thought that it was something that we should look at. We have done that. In fact, through an amendment to the Taxation Act, the bill would now provide a non-refundable 25% tax credit for farmers who donate their agricultural products to eligible community food programs such as food banks and soup kitchens.

We amended the definition of local—

*Applause.*

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** It's a very good thing; that's right. Oui, c'est très bien.

We amended the definition of local food to include food produced or harvested anywhere in Ontario, including forest or freshwater food, and we would celebrate Local Food Week beginning the first Monday in June of each year. The minister would also be required to prepare an annual local food report.

So each of these amendments has been put in place to strengthen the bill and to help recognize and support the tremendous work of Ontario farmers, food processors, retailers and restaurant and foodservice operators.

I've always believed in the enormous potential of our agri-food sector—je crois que nous avons un bon avenir—and that's why I took on the role of Minister of Agriculture and Food earlier this year. I've travelled across the province to meet with farmers, with producers, with food processors and retailers to better understand the challenges and the opportunities ahead.

Last July, I had the chance to visit the Ontario Food Terminal in Etobicoke. It is an amazing place. It's the largest wholesale fruit and produce distribution centre in Canada and the third-largest in all of North America, after centres in Los Angeles and Chicago. It distributes products to every corner of Ontario and along our trade corridors that connect us to neighbouring provinces and into the United States.

**1340**

The hard work of the people who bring their produce into the food terminal is quite remarkable. There are people driving along the highway to get into the food terminal, leaving at 2 or 3 in the morning in order to get to the food terminal; throughout the season, it's a very, very demanding lifestyle.

So it's important that we recognize that it's not just the growing of the food; it's also the transporting it, the getting it to market, that's so important.

That terminal is a critical asset for our agri-food sector and the economy, and it really helped me to appreciate how important it is to have those strong connections between regions and industries in the province.

I've been reminded of this many times since I became minister, meeting with people about local food in communities across the province—in Bradford, Elmira, New

Dundee, Halton and Ottawa—or at community gardens, like the one Megan O’Neil, founder of the One Tomato Project, grew in Sarnia. I really want to know how my tomato plant is going, I say to the member. I need an update on that, how my tomato plant did, because I got to plant one. It was great to see so many children excited about planting in the garden.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I heard it was doing very well, I say to the member for Huron–Bruce, so I am looking forward to that.

It was great to see kids so engaged in planting the garden. I know that all of the members in the House who have community gardens where schools are involved, with community, in planting—it’s a wonderful way for kids to learn about where their food comes from.

I had the opportunity of opening the Royal Winter Fair just last week. One of the displays that is at the Royal Winter Fair is designed to help young kids understand that food doesn’t just come from the grocery store, that there’s a time before that, that it comes from the farm. When kids grow up in an urban centre, they don’t necessarily have that information.

I have the greatest of respect for the young kids who are growing up on farms, the kids who are involved in the 4-H club—they have a deep understanding of responsibility, not just to the land but to animals and their responsibility in all of that. I think that where young kids are involved and engaged in planting and understanding where food comes from, particularly local food, it’s a terrific thing. I think that, as an education system and as a government, we can learn from some of those programs that have already been in place for many years in the agricultural community.

It’s really inspiring to see communities working toward that goal of enhancing local food, making sure that it’s available to everyone and showcasing their local food. After meeting with so many hard-working farmers, food processors and retailers, I think differently about the food that we produce and process across the province. As much as possible, I want to ensure that the food on our table was harvested or produced in Ontario.

We all come from different backgrounds. Some of us live in cities; others outside of cities, in our suburbs and in our rural communities. Even across the agri-food value chain, we have many different players, from the farmer all the way to the grocer. Supporting local food supports every single one of us along that chain. It’s part of our economic plan to invest in people, invest in infrastructure and create that dynamic business environment that will allow businesses to thrive and continue to succeed.

It’s why I have challenged the agri-food sector to increase its output and create 120,000 more jobs by 2020, because I believe that they can. I believe that, working together, we can do that, and we can grow this sector. It’s already a \$34-billion contributor to the GDP, but I believe that there’s more that we can do. There’s so much potential.

Local food is good for families, it’s good for communities and it’s good for the economy. I believe that we all have a role to play in supporting that success. I encourage the people of Ontario to choose local food, and I’m going to continue to support our farmers, our food processors and other agri-food businesses in the hard work that they do each day to get that fresh and delicious food on our plates.

As I said, this is about the industry. It’s about the farmers and the food processors, but, quite frankly, it’s about all of us, as a province, making sure that we do the very best we can in terms of that healthy food but also in terms of the economic growth that is possible. We have great potential in Ontario, and I want to thank everyone for working with us on this.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** It’s a privilege and an honour to speak here today in support of Bill 36, also known as An Act to enact the Local Food Act, 2013 and to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to provide for a tax credit to farmers for donating certain agricultural products that they have produced.

I will focus my comments on one particular area of the bill, Mr. Speaker. Last week, thanks to the work of the Standing Committee on Social Policy, Bill 36 was amended to include an initiative that’s very important to me and the people of Sarnia–Lambton. That initiative was first outlined in this Legislature on May 19, 2010, when I introduced the Food Bank Donation Tax Credit for Farmers, 2010, also known as the Fighting Hunger with Local Food Act. That bill, like the amendment to the Local Food Act that was adopted last week, created a non-refundable tax credit worth 25% of the current market value of agricultural products donated by farmers to food banks and soup kitchens.

This idea to try to increase donations to food banks was born after I volunteered to serve hot meals at the Inn of the Good Shepherd in Sarnia. Myles Vanni, who is the director of the Good Shepherd’s Lodge, invited me down, and I saw with my own eyes the need in my community for food banks, soup kitchens and the like. Myles was a real inspiration to me, and as we talked about what we could do, the idea of a tax credit for farmers came up.

That’s why, back in 2010 and during the two subsequent sessions of Parliament, I introduced and reintroduced the Fighting Hunger with Local Food Act. In each instance, the bill and its main intent—increasing donations to food banks through a tax credit to farmers who donate unused agricultural products—received support at all times from all parties in the House.

The Fighting Hunger with Local Food Act was even highlighted in the 2012 Environmental Commissioner’s report, as an idea to address the glaring need for food for the hungry in Ontario and the horrendous waste of food in our modern society and its disposal in landfills.

Unfortunately, the previous two attempts to move this initiative through the legislative process were cut short; one because of an election in 2011 and the other when

Queen's Park was prorogued by former Premier McGuinty.

However, on Tuesday, with the support of the members of this House, we will finally have an opportunity to cast a final vote in favour of the initiative originally laid out by the Fighting Hunger with Local Food Act, now adopted as an amendment to the Local Food Act, 2013.

The PC amendment to the Local Food Act creates a simple change to the tax system that will go a long way to relieve hunger and eliminate waste in our province. Inspired by similar programs in 10 US states, the Local Food Act will now create a non-refundable tax credit for farmers—worth 25% of the current market value of the donated agricultural product—who donate to a community food program or a food bank. In order to be eligible, the program must be run by a registered charity and must provide that food to the community free of charge. While it will not solve the entire problem of hunger in our province, Mr. Speaker, I think it's a common-sense solution to a clear need in my community and many other communities across Ontario.

The Ontario Association of Food Banks reports that food bank usage in Ontario increased by 10% between 2008 and 2012.

Last year alone, more than 413,000 people in Ontario, and in that number, 160,000 of them children, turned to food banks each month. This is an all-time high for the province, and it is straining these food banks and these volunteer organizations to their limit.

Even well-stocked food banks struggle to provide fresh, healthy food. In fact, the Ontario Association of Food Banks believes that over 70% of Ontarians who use food banks do not have access to the recommended servings of fruit and vegetables every week.

As we all know, proper nutrition is essential to our well-being, but more importantly, it is essential to the good health of these young people and children who are our responsibility at the end of the day.

Mr. Speaker, for many food banks, significant need occurs from June to August, but rarely do we ever think of our local food banks during the summer and autumn harvests. Ironically, while food banks struggle to provide for those in need, Ontario farmers must dispose of or plow back into their fields more than 25 million pounds of fresh, nutritious food every harvest. That's an amazing number, and I could hardly believe it when I first started researching this. So 25 million pounds of food which is perfectly good is surplus to their production quotas—or it could be what we would call seconds. The stores won't take it, but there's nothing wrong with it. People eat it. Why is this? In many instances, the food left behind is considered seconds. While perfectly healthy, tasty and fresh, the produce is not chosen for sale in the market because of cosmetic reasons, such as size, shape or colour.

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You may wonder, then: Why don't farmers just donate this food? Many do, but in many cases, farmers often cannot afford the cost to harvest, process and deliver

their unsold produce and foodstuffs to the local food banks despite a clear and overwhelming desire in the industry to do so. Simply put: We have the food; we just can't get it to those in need.

I might add that I talked to one farmer who produces tomatoes, and he said, "I can't even plow these surplus tomatoes back into the ground because they make my soil too acidic." He has to pay to harvest them to take them to be disposed of in a landfill. So this would certainly go a long way to help that individual.

This proposed tax credit will reduce the producers' tax burden, provide a strong incentive to make a donation and provide a high return on investment for the Ontario government. It will cost the province very little in lost revenue, forgoing approximately \$750,000 for an increase of over five million pounds of food. These figures suggest that this simple tax credit could provide a rate of return of almost \$7 for every \$1 that is donated.

I believe that this amendment presents a concrete solution which will not only assist local food banks and community food programs but also local farmers and struggling Ontarians. It will fight two problems: hunger and waste.

I encourage all members of this Legislature to support the Local Food Act in order to pass this important initiative and amendment into law. It is the right thing to do.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many people who have been involved in getting this important idea to this stage: thousands of people who signed petitions in support of the Local Food Act. Countless letters of support, newspaper columns, magazine articles and online posts have been written in favour of this important initiative to support Ontario's hungry. In addition, many stakeholders representing agricultural groups, food bank and community food programs as well as social agencies from across the province have come to Queen's Park to show their support. To all those people, I want to say thank you.

I'd also like to thank the PC critic for agriculture, Ernie Hardeman, and his executive assistant, Tara Barry, for their efforts to see this amendment to the Local Food Act through its final stages of development before being presented to committee last week.

I'd also like to say a special thank you to my staff, Anthony Rizzetto and David Donovan. Between the two of them, they were involved from start to finish with this initiative and key contributors to the effort to increase the availability of good, nutritious food for the people of Ontario.

I'd also like to thank Bill Laidlaw of the Ontario Association of Food Banks and Myles Vanni of the Inn of the Good Shepherd in Sarnia. Mr. Laidlaw and his organization have always been available to support this initiative and provide answers for many of the technical questions that have come up over the years. Myles Vanni probably deserves the most credit. He invited me and my staff to help serve meals at the Inn of the Good Shepherd way back in 2010. He used that opportunity to present to

me the idea that would eventually become the Fighting Hunger with Local Food Act and then the PC amendment to the Local Food Act. Mr. Vanni goes above and beyond in his efforts to support those in need in Sarnia–Lambton.

By supporting the Local Food Act, 2013, the members of this House can do their part to support Mr. Vanni and the countless individuals across this province who have done similar work.

I'd also like to thank the Premier, in her role as the Minister of Agriculture, for considering this amendment. I think it makes her bill, Bill 36, that much better. At the end of the day, that's what we're all about: making this province a better place.

I look forward to the rest of the debate and tomorrow's final vote.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It truly is an honour, as a farmer, to be able to participate in the third reading debate of Bill 36, An Act to enact the Local Food Act, 2013 and to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to provide for a tax credit to farmers for donating certain agricultural products that they have produced.

The title got a lot longer since we debated this last time, and that's a good thing—because I'd like to commend Mr. Bailey for all his work on this. It's a good addition to this bill. I'd like to spend a few minutes on that part and then revert back to the Local Food Act proper.

The one thing that's missing in the tax credit bill is a provision for processors. I think we could look at this further in the future. I know that processors can get tax credits already, but there is a place, specifically when you have—I'll give the example of the Dairy Farmers of Ontario. Dairy Farmers have had this program for years—I believe the pork producers have the equivalent and there might be other programs like that, and they're good programs. Just briefly: The dairy farmer signs a contract to supply so much milk a month to the food banks, and the processor donates the processing. It's a partnership agreement. The same thing would work with other agricultural products.

I'm not trying to detract from the bill as it currently is; I very much support it. I'm not trying to detract from it. I'm just hoping that if we could put some more effort and some more thought into it and bring the processors into the fold, then it would have a much bigger impact on the food bank system. Food banks—kudos to them—are performing a job that we wish they wouldn't have to perform, but the need is out there, and they're fulfilling that need. But it would be much easier for them and for my local food banks at home, in Cobalt and Haileybury, to deal with processed food.

Tomatoes are a good example. If you have a lot of tomatoes at the end of the season—you can have a lot of tomatoes in Leamington, but there won't be a lot in Cobalt, and it's going to be impossible to get them from Leamington to Cobalt.

If, in the future, we could somehow try to include the processors, I think that would make a very good part of this bill that much better. But I would like to congratulate the member for having the tenacity to bring this forward and to get it through.

I'd like to go back. It's really a good thing that we were able to talk about food and all the aspects of it. I was talking about processing as it relates to food banks, but I think what we all learned—and we've had a lot of discussion about food in this House because of the Local Food Act—is that food isn't just about producing it and isn't just about eating it. It's getting it from the producer to the consumer. That's very important, and that's something we've learned here.

As we talk about local food, I'm going to diverge again for a minute. In the last month or so, there was an announcement federally that is actually going to hurt local food. As we talk about strengthening local food, we've had an announcement that, with the free trade agreement with the Europeans, one thing that's potentially going to be hit is cheese, and that will be local cheese. I can't name all the cheese factories in all the ridings, but I certainly can name the cheese factory in my riding. That's Thornloe. I'm very proud of it. They don't know yet—nobody knows yet—but it's different for the cheese manufacturer than it is for the dairy farmer. I'll just take a second, because it's really important to understand.

Dairy is a big part of local food. The way the dairy supply management system is set up, if there is an agreement signed or a breach of tariff barriers, every dairy farmer across the country takes the same hit. If the overall market goes down by 2% because of this CETA agreement—it's a little bit more complicated than this, but every dairy farmer will take a roughly 2% hit.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** It's a lot of money.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** It's a lot of money, but it's not a death blow. That 2% is a big hit, but the way the system is designed, everyone shares the gains and everyone shares the losses. It's one of the great strengths of supply management.

But that doesn't extend to the cheese manufacturer. Under this agreement, the way it works, when an importer imports five tonnes of—my favourite example—Asiago, a great cheese, they don't put one extra block of Asiago on every cheese counter across the country. They pick a market where they think they can sell it, and in it goes. If that happens to be Thornloe's market, it will be a huge hit for them, and no one is going to put up their hand and say, "We'll take 2%."

*Interjection.*

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**Mr. John Vanthof:** And Thornloe makes great cheese. But that's something we have to understand: that the cheese makers are going to take a much bigger hit. Dairy farmers are taking a big hit, but they're all taking an equal hit. There are things that we can do. I think, as a province, there are things that we can do to make it—I think the dairy farmers have taken a trade-off in fine cheese, but there are things that we can do to help them



to regain maybe not that market but another market. I think that's something we have to work together in this House to do. It is part of local food. It's not specifically part of this act, but I'm taking this chance to bring it forward.

We've all had a lot of time to debate this and talk about this. We all spent a bit of time talking about our local manufacturers and our local farm markets. I'll just read this:

Je voudrais profiter de cette occasion pour reconnaître quelques personnes qui prennent part à la nourriture locale.

Ce samedi soir passé, aux prix d'excellence en affaires de Nipissing Ouest, accueillis par la Chambre de commerce de Nipissing Ouest, Field Good Farms a gagné le Prix du jeune entrepreneur de l'année. Ryan Spence et Isabelle Legault cultivent les terres agricoles qui ont été dans la famille d'Isabelle pour cinq générations. Ils se concentrent à fournir la région de Nipissing Ouest avec des légumes frais, des oeufs et de la volaille par un système d'association de consommateurs et de fermiers.

Leisure Farms a été nommée pour le prix de l'économie verte. Leisure Farms est une affaire de famille qui se spécialise dans la culture de petits fruits frais, de citrouilles et de maïs doux. Ils accueillent des activités de famille chaque week-end pendant la période de croissance.

Mes félicitations, tant aux pionnières et pionniers de la nourriture locale qu'à la chambre de commerce, pour une soirée formidable.

My first French in the Legislature.

*Applause.*

**Mr. John Vanthof:** Thank you, colleagues.

Now, I've got 10 minutes and I'd like to talk about the act. When it was first introduced—it has been introduced a few times. When it was first introduced it was very weak, we thought. It was introduced a few times more due to circumstances—I'm not going to go into the reasons why and why it wasn't. One of the only real action items in the act is creating Local Food Week. I believe that first Local Food Week was in May, then Local Food Week was on Agriculture Week and now, in this final draft, Local Food Week is in June. Hopefully the third try isn't a strike. The reason, for those who are farming out there, especially in my neck of the woods: June isn't the ideal week for Local Food Week, but it is a week that the kids are in school, and we can use that opportunity to focus on local food. I think that's one of the reasons why we decided as a group that June was probably the best week for it. Is it the first or second week of June?

**Interjection:** Second.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** The second week of June.

One amendment that's in the act, and it shows up a couple of times—it's a good thing that the word "may" has been changed to the word "shall." That's a huge difference. For me, in normal language, the difference between "may" and "shall" is the difference between "maybe" and "must." For the folks at home, that's a big,

big difference. That makes the act in itself quite a bit stronger. I'll flip through here and I'll read you a place:

"Goals and targets

"4(1) The minister shall, to further the purposes of the act, establish goals or targets...."

But then, there's a problem in this sentence. It's not a problem that's going to kill the act—nobody get worried; we're very much in support—but it is a problem. "The minister shall"—very strong words—"to further the purposes of the act, establish goals or targets to aspire to in the following areas...." Aspire—this is an aspirational piece of legislation. I'm trying to think of another aspirational piece of legislation, like—

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** A balanced budget.

**Mr. John Vanthof:** We put forward several amendments to try to make it a bit more quantitative, a bit less aspirational, but they weren't successful. While we're talking about the difference between aspirational and non-aspirational, I'd like to read some of the amendments we put forward that didn't make it, and I would like people at home and people in the Legislature to be the judge. Hopefully, now that these are in the record, we'll be able to look back, a year or two years from now, and see if the government has chosen that direction, because that's what we were worried about. We have an aspirational piece of legislation with no real direction. It's nice to do all the big words and all the talk, but there's no real direction.

Here's one that we moved to the same section:

"Goals and targets

"4(1) The minister shall, to further the purposes of this act, establish goals or targets to aspire to in respect of local food"—we left that word in, but we gave examples—"including goals or targets to":

"(a) improve food literacy in schools;

"(b) increase access to student nutrition programs across Ontario and increase their local food content;

"(c) increase local food content in school cafeterias;

"(d) increase experiential"—big words; I can read French better than I can read English—"learning opportunities for Ontario students by developing school garden programs and increasing the number and use of teaching kitchens in schools; and

"(e)"—very near and dear to me—"reduce or streamline regulatory requirements governing the production and processing of local foods with a view to encouraging increased availability of local food without significantly affecting food safety."

Now, this didn't pass, and the reason was that the government felt it was too prescriptive. But this wasn't the only thing they could look at. We were just trying to give them a direction to go, and these were based on the people who came to the committee hearings. We heard a wide view of people at the committee hearings.

Sadly, the committee hearings were restricted and the clause-by-clause was also restricted, because the Local Food Act was under a time allocation motion, so you could only talk about it for a certain length of time. In the committee hearing, that was a big problem, because

people on all sides saw benefit in each other's amendments. But because of the time allocation motion, there was an inability to make any—how would I describe it—on-the-spot adjustments? You dealt with what you had and that was it, and I think that was a fault of the time allocation motion. We could have made this bill better. We could have made it a lot better.

There are a lot of things in local food—and in food, period—that this bill doesn't touch. In this province, there are estimates that we lose 300 or more acres per day of agricultural land. Is the Local Food Act going to do anything about that? No, nothing. Ontario has, I believe, half of Canada's class-1 farmland, and we're losing it at a quick rate. Is there anything, even, in the Local Food Act to aspire to saving Ontario's farmland? No.

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So the food act itself—there's a direction where we could go to help local food. When I was talking to Ryan at the chamber of commerce dinner—I went up and shook his hand—we were talking about the Local Food Act, because this couple sells local food. They built their business on it. They're young and dynamic. He asked me about the Local Food Act, and I said, "Well, honestly, you're doing a good job now, and you've started this business. Honestly, the Local Food Act is not going to change your life, because the Local Food Act is kind of trying to get ahead of a parade that's already started."

The movement has started. The movement doesn't need to be pushed; the movement has started. It's kind of a case of people trying to take credit for what other people have already done. I think that's something we have to recognize.

I've heard the Premier, several times, saying that she's challenging the agriculture industry to create so many more jobs. Well, we've all come to realize the strength of the agri-food industry, because a lot of the other manufacturing faltered in this last economic recession. Agriculture has always kept going on—2% or 3% increases, always, kind of under the radar—and I think it has a lot of upswing.

There's a lot of room for increase in the agricultural sector, and they've got a lot of things that they can aspire to, but they're going to need a bit more help than the Local Food Act. If you really want to see the industry do what it can, and do more than it has—because it has done a lot; it has kept us fed, it has kept us happy and it has kept us in hundreds of thousands of jobs, really without us paying a lot of attention.

Hopefully when it's reviewed—because an amendment that we did put in that was accepted was that this has to be reviewed yearly, not once every three years—we can look and say, "Okay, what have you actually done?" One thing we mentioned was that, the way it was originally structured, you said the minister "may" set goals and targets and priorities and review them after three years. Well, what we have to do now is we have to set a starting point and review it annually. We are fully in favour of the Local Food Act, but it's just a start.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Grant Crack:** It's a pleasure for me to speak today on the local food bill on third reading. I'd like to thank all the members who have spoken previously.

The local food bill will, if passed, provide a framework for more collaboration among government, stakeholders and the broader public sector to develop common goals that we can all work towards. It would also allow for better information-sharing on innovative and successful initiatives in the broader public sector.

Ontario is a place with so much potential, and our agri-food industry has many advantages that make it a leader. From farm to fork, the industry is diverse. We have impressive food and beverage processing and retail sectors. They are home to the best prime agricultural land in the country. We have an abundance of clean water, a good growing climate, solid infrastructure and a skilled workforce.

We also have an international reputation for quality and safety in our food. We have a diverse population that gives us insight into international markets and represents opportunities for new markets right here at home. We can tap into consumers' changing tastes, seizing opportunities in organic, food for health, ethnic foods, artisan and specialty goods. Our government is going to help the agri-food sector by supporting that dynamic and innovative business climate. We need to invest in innovation that will modernize this sector.

And sometimes we need to know when to just get out of the way. That's something that we will work through, through the Open for Business agri-food stakeholder forum. It's one of the ways that we invite industry leaders to bring forward concerns over regulatory barriers so that we can work together to find solutions.

Those solutions also support local food. An example of this is our recent amendment to the meat regulation under the Food Safety and Quality Act. We worked together with the Ontario Independent Meat Processors and meat plant licensees to develop a suite of technical amendments that provide for a more flexible and outcome-based approach to compliance. The amendment helped to clarify regulatory requirements and promote competitiveness and innovation for the industry without compromising food safety.

Open for Business has been effective, and, as a result, the Premier recently announced that we are all expanding its mandate beyond regulations to all aspects of economic growth in the sector.

Our government will continue to encourage investment and innovation, because we know that in a highly competitive world, investment and innovation are important. We need to be leaders. That is why we committed to investing up to \$30 million for local food projects over the next three years. It is why we made sure innovation was the central plank of the new Growing Forward 2 suite of programs, with \$235 million to support innovative initiatives over the next five years.

It's why we continue to recognize leading agri-food innovators through the Premier's agri-food innovation excellence awards. Just a few weeks ago, Premier Wynne—the Minister of Agriculture and Food as well—presented the top five agri-food innovation awards for the province at our Agri-Food Summit. The Premier's Award went to Monforte Dairy, a rapidly growing company from Stratford that produces artisanal cheeses. In 2008, production nearly ground to a halt when their rental location became unavailable. In order to build a new facility, they came up with a financing model that had never been implemented by an Ontario food processor. They sold shares of their company to customers, redeemable in cheese. That had a great economic impact on the business and on the community. Since reopening, they have doubled their staff to 20, purchased a variety of milk from 20 local farmers for their artisanal cheese and have seen over \$2 million in sales.

Monforte is passionate about local food, and plans to share their expertise by using their award to open a cheese-making school.

Len and Marisa Crispino are also passionate about creating local products. They received the Minister's Award for Innovation for their Foreign Affair Winery. The idea for the Foreign Affair Winery started in Italy, where Len fell in love with the appassimento wines, a northern specialty made by drying the grapes before pressing them. The challenge was to find a way to apply the appassimento technique right here in Ontario, despite the differences in soil, growing seasons and grape varieties. They did this by re-engineering the air flow on their 40-acre vineyard.

Today, Len and Marisa Crispino are great examples of how persistence and passion for their work can result in success. Their wines are served in more than 100 preferred restaurants in Ontario. They were recognized by Niagara University in New York State as the business leader of the year for their innovation and pioneering in wine production. At least six other Niagara wineries now produce wine using this method. The winery has invested in new technology and anticipates a 60% increase in production levels, from 5,000 to 8,000 cases this year.

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During the awards ceremony, we also recognized three leaders in innovation. Among them was Geissberger Farmhouse Cider Inc. in Hampton. Gord and Garry Geissberger came up with a cider press on wheels that travels right to the source: the apple orchard. It doesn't get any more local than that. Innovations like these show us that local food is more than just fresh produce; it means locally processed and value-added products too. Using computerized pressing equipment and a special packaging method, the customized trailer can now process 500 litres of cider per hour, creating a product that stays fresh for an entire year. That means fewer costs for producers and tastier cider for customers.

The second Leaders in Innovation Award went to Thompson's Maple Products in Hilton Beach. Doug Thompson knew that monitoring the tap lines for a maple

sugar bush of 20,000 trees was a challenge, so he teamed up with a computer programmer to develop a wireless remote monitoring system to report the status of each line to his computer and smart phone every few minutes. Today, the innovative system helps boost production and reduces costs.

The third Leaders in Innovation Award went to YU Ranch in Tillsonburg. YU Ranch delivers its grass-fed beef to hungry customers using the first hybrid refrigerated delivery van on the continent. Owners Bryan and Cathy Gilvesy and their two children, Paula and Joe, call it the "Farmers' Market Express." This innovation puts refrigerated delivery within reach for all small producers, and its fuel efficiency exceeds every other model on the market.

We are grateful for the role that these innovative contributions play in the success of Ontario's agri-food sector. There are 45 more regional award recipients with similar success stories being recognized throughout the province.

I had the privilege, in my riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, as their MPP and also as the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Agriculture and Food, to attend the agri-food innovation awards in Alfred at Campus d'Alfred, which is a community in my riding. There were three awards that were given out, one to Castor River Farm, out of Metcalfe, and to Roots and Shoots Farm, out of Manotick. But why I was extremely proud to be there that Saturday afternoon was for a company called Cassel Brewery Co., right in my riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, and I'll tell you a little bit about the innovative product that they've created.

Mars est la saison du sucre d'érable, du sirop d'érable et de la bière à l'érable—oui, de la bière. Chaque printemps, depuis 2008, Cassel Brewery produit une cuvée limitée de leur bière Railroad Special Maple Rye. La sève d'érable remplace l'eau dans ce brassin spécial, alors que le seigle ajoute une touche de saveur de whisky. La touche finale est une dose de sirop d'érable, ajoutée durant la fermentation, qui augmente le degré d'alcool à 8 %. Malgré les ajouts sucrés, la saveur du produit final est douce plutôt que sucrée. Ce printemps, les amateurs ont rapidement mis la main sur les 1 600 litres de la Railroad Special et ont, sans aucun doute, levé leur verre aux maîtres brasseurs de cette microbrasserie innovatrice. Je veux dire félicitations à Mario Bourgeois, Benjamin Bercier et Michel Racine de la Cassel Brewery Company Ltée, right in my riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

So there are a lot of good-news stories across the province of many different businesses creating unique products and innovating in order to make Ontario's agri-food sector much stronger. These 45 regional award recipients demonstrate that the innovative spirit is thriving in Ontario's agri-food sector, and the government is proud to recognize and encourage them.

We support innovation, we support local food and we want to continue to support our agri-food sector with the proposed Local Food Act. We also want to bring more of the good things that grow in Ontario to people's tables,

whether those tables are in our kitchens, our schools, our daycares, our hospitals or our government buildings. That's why we've made investments to help increase the amount of fresh, healthy and delicious local foods in our broader public sector organizations.

We've done this by supporting the Greenbelt Fund and its Ontariofresh website, which connects buyers, including the public sector institutions, with local food processors and producers. The Greenbelt Fund's Ontariofresh website serves as an electronic marketplace for more than 1,900 Ontario food buyers and sellers.

Gordon Food Services is a great example of how our support for the Greenbelt Fund is getting more local food into our institutions. With support through this fund, they have created a special team to implement their local food strategy, and now they offer more than 800 fresh and affordable local food products to the broader public sector.

Gordon Food Services has also created an integrated regional food system with their sister organization, Fresh Start Foods. Fresh Start's three regional distribution hubs provide them with the ability to have regionally based local food lists in Ottawa, Milton and London. This integrated system enables all of Fresh Start Foods' customers access to Gordon Food's much larger Ontario list, and Gordon Food's customers the ability to source regionally specific foods.

Another example is Cohn Farms. They have increased their business by more than \$1 million per year by installing a co-packing line with greater processing capabilities. This new line now accommodates eight different farmers with 12 new vegetables. Cohn Farms also consolidated their shipping loads in order to move more products on fewer trucks and reduce their water consumption, which not only improved their costs but also their environmental footprint.

Broader public sector investment is helping municipalities too. Through our support to the Greenbelt Fund, Toronto city council adopted a local food procurement policy and reinforced their commitment to continue to support Ontario farmers by including more locally produced food in their facilities. As a result, 14 new recipes were created for breakfast, lunch and snacks, all of which incorporated at least 50% local ingredients.

Our work to get more food into the broader public sector includes foodservice operators as well. An example is Marek Hospitality, who were able to purchase software that gives them the ability to track sales and purchases, and trace the point of origin of the food on their menu. This has helped Marek identify the amount of Ontario-sourced products used in their 28 recipes featured in the frescoServe handbook. This funding has helped them to begin to assess where they are able to substitute more Ontario ingredients for non-Ontario ingredients, increasing the amount of Ontario food on offer.

Through the Greenbelt Fund, we are also working with universities and hospitals to get more food to students and patients. The University of Guelph has created

a local food processing room, which has enabled them to increase their local food procurement, and they've created student education programs to build awareness about the importance of agriculture.

The Greenbelt Fund has also helped the Meal Exchange, the food-buying group for St. Joseph's Health System GPO and one of the first health care group purchasing organizations in Canada to include Ontario food in their requests for proposals. By tendering five food contracts, they were able to increase Ontario food purchases by \$670,000, a significant 15% increase. They now look at each food category to identify local producers before tendering. Most recently, that up-front work helped VG Meats of Simcoe, Ontario, win the tender to supply protein.

Another example is the Hospital for Sick Children, which has built a network of local suppliers focused on sustainable production. They have been able to build these networks to ensure that their new menus include seasonally based recipes that are adequately serviced by their new suppliers, and they are training and educating foodservice staff about the new menu and the health benefits of eating locally sourced foods.

The Greenbelt Fund has also enabled organizations like Ecosource to work with the Peel District School Board and foodservice provider Compass Group Canada. As a result, they have incorporated local food language in their requests for proposals and contractual agreements for hospitality programs, and incorporated local food into the 2012 board-wide contract. By championing the local food movement with students, Ecosource and the board plan to implement a wide variety of local food options on all of their cafeteria menus. They will share the results of this program with school boards across the province. The Peel board has engaged more than 10,000 students through various cafeteria local food events.

#### 1430

Almost 200 students were educated on cooking with local and healthy foods, and 42 teams of students participated in the Cooking Up Action Culinary Challenge.

These are just a few examples of the good work that Ontario's financial support to the Greenbelt Fund is doing to help organizations achieve their local food goals.

Our total investments toward this broader sector programming have resulted in \$26 million in additional Ontario food in daycares, schools, universities and colleges, or a five-to-one return on investment for every public dollar spent. We remain committed to bringing local food into Ontario municipalities, long-term-care homes, hospitals and schools.

Ensuring success is about working together. It's about collaboration right across the value chain. It's about coming up with ways that will increase the demand and supply of Ontario food, from the farm gate to the dinner plate. It depends which side of the farm gate you look at. Everything has to go on to the farm through the gate; it comes back out through the gate and ends up on our dinner plate. I just wanted to clarify that.

The local food bill is also just one part of a local food strategy. Beyond this legislation, we're also proposing more education about the benefits of local food. For example, we are providing \$400,000 per year for three years to Ontario agri-food education to help get more information on agriculture and local food into the hands of teachers and students across Ontario.

We offer more support for communities and regions working on local food initiatives, and a commitment to consult with stakeholders on the best ways to promote local food.

We will also lead by example through an Ontario government policy requiring ministries such as citizenship and immigration to consider local food for procurements under \$25,000—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Grant Crack:** And also the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

We'll continue to promote the good things that grow here in Ontario through our Foodland Ontario program.

If passed, our proposed legislation would highlight the strong contribution that Ontario's agri-food sector makes to the province, to our way of life and to our economy. When we work together and when we choose foods that are grown and made here at home, it is good for our farmers, it's good for our families, it's good for our communities and it's good for our economy.

It's been a pleasure, Speaker, for me to speak today, but I would be remiss if I didn't speak about my home riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, where there are a lot of local food initiatives taking place.

I can speak about what happens every August at La Foire gourmande, which is in Lefavre, Ontario, in my riding. We partner up with Montebello on the Quebec side. There's a ferry that brings residents of Quebec to Ontario, to Lefavre, and vice versa. Everyone gets to sample all the great things that are being grown on both sides of the Ottawa River in le Réseau agroalimentaire de l'Est ontarien. Carole Lavigne is the lead in making sure that happens. It's a thrill for me to be able to attend every year and taste all the good things from our processors, producers and home-based businesses in the riding.

I also attended this year the Vankleek Hill Festival of Flavours. Phil Arber works tirelessly as the chief organizer. Vankleek Hill is a community not far from my hometown, as a matter of fact, Speaker—about 20 minutes. They close the main street for the Festival of Flavours. I can tell you that the main street is jam-packed for most of the day with people from all over the area, from both sides of the border, coming in, experiencing what is being grown, supporting our local food initiatives in the region. I look forward to, for many years to come, being able to continue to support two of many different initiatives in my riding.

Thank you very much, Speaker. We hope that by tomorrow, after third reading, this bill will pass and—

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** You didn't talk about the Fromagerie St-Albert.

**Mr. Grant Crack:** Well, of course, Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, since I've got a few more minutes: Fromagerie St-Albert is a very important business, une petite industrie vraiment importante dans notre région. Ils ont eu un feu l'année passée dans le mois de février, et maintenant ils ont commencé de reconstruire l'édifice.

Fromagerie St-Albert is rebuilding. This is a wonderful employer, and I know that all members on this side of the House certainly love St-Albert's cheese. They are—what's the right word?

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Grant Crack:** —an institution in Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, and how they operate is, they have partnerships with various farmers in the region. It's probably the most successful co-op, if not the only one in Ontario that is working so well. We look forward to having St-Albert's cheese rebuilt and providing more employment and more opportunities to expand their markets. They can certainly count on my support as well, and of course that of the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, M<sup>me</sup> Meilleur. We will continue to work together to ensure that St-Albert's cheese moves forward, completes their construction, and allows us to enjoy the good cheese that they've made for over 100 years.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I'm very pleased to stand in this House and discuss the changes to the recent Local Food Act.

I don't know where to begin, but first things first: As someone who grew up on a farm and lives on a farm now with my husband, the issues of agriculture and food education are very near to my heart. But I will come back to that in a moment or two.

Firstly, I'd like to commend both Ernie Hardeman and Bob Bailey for their hard work to strengthen the Local Food Act. I really appreciate the fact, Speaker, that the Premier and Minister of Agriculture and Food chose to listen to the PC Party and embrace the suggestions that were really necessary to put a bit more meat on the bones, if you will, because prior to that it was sorely lacking.

As was mentioned before, the PC caucus submitted amendments to save Ontario Agriculture Week. The week leading into Thanksgiving has traditionally been about recognizing the people who put the food on our table, and it was going to be a disservice to take that week away and water it down by adding another component under the design of the current Liberal government. So I'm really, really heartened to realize that now there are going to be two times in the calendar year that we can stand up and celebrate the people who produce the food, as well as the good food grown in Ontario. That's good news when we do that and start up in June.

The other amendment that was put forward, and I think it's incredibly insightful, was the work by Bob Bailey to create a 25% non-refundable tax credit for

farmers who donate agricultural products to an Ontario food bank and community food programs. I commend that, because he outlined his rationale very well earlier today in debate, but I must say, as someone who was the general manager for a dairy co-operative, when we're looking at the development of new products and you're trying to secure that market and that shelf space, you don't always have a place for all of the production to go. So it would be nice to have that room to take that to food banks as well and get a tax credit for it.

I think this is really good news. The Local Food Act now, with the strengthened amendments, is something that we all need to be feeling good about. I just wish there were so many more people that could be here in this House to hear and understand it and see where we're going to go here.

The fact of the matter is, the tax credit that was introduced by Bob Bailey will encourage farmers to donate more food and to be more mindful of our larger picture across Ontario in terms of charitable donations. We can't do enough in terms of goodwill, and this is fantastic.

The amendments to the Local Food Act will benefit farmers, because it ensures that more people can access fresh local food and promotes valuable work at the same time, the valuable work of our farmers. I think this is very, very important because not everyone understands the work that goes into producing food in this province, or across this country, for that matter, and it's nice to tie that tax credit and the recognition in June together in that regard.

**1440**

I want to use my time today, though, to talk about amendments that did not pass at committee, because this is where I feel the government of the day shows a total disconnect from the overall agri-food industry, and shows how shallow and superficial some things can be from a Liberal perspective.

There was one amendment that came forward, which was voted down, that would have required the government to set real targets for local food instead of aspirational ones. Farmers across Ontario have to pencil everything out. When they are accountable to their bankers and to their family's bottom line, they have to be very real. If we're going to grow local consumption, we have to make sure that the markets are there and the realities are very much that: a reality. It's disappointing to hear that this Liberal government continues to aspire and have conversations as opposed to getting down to the nitty-gritty and establishing targets.

Then the other thing I was very disappointed about was that, for whatever reason, both the NDP and the Liberals chose not to support an amendment to make food education mandatory in all grades, to increase the knowledge of nutrition, where food comes from and cooking skills. We could go on and on about that, in many various facets, and I'm going to do that, because we've missed the boat here in a very serious manner. I'm reflecting back on some of the debate that happened already. The Minister of Agriculture stood up and asked

across the floor to the member from Sarnia-Lambton—she wondered how his tomato plant was doing right now. Well, it's November 4, Speaker, so I double-checked with the member from Sarnia-Lambton: Was the plant in a garden or in a greenhouse? He said, "A garden."

I wasn't trying to be cheeky when I said it's gone. That tomato plant is now good organic matter in the soil. People need to understand the whole cycle of plant growth. That's just one example, to name, I'm afraid, many more that have to be taken into consideration, and why agricultural education is so important.

I would love to have been able to be in a position to ask the Minister of Agriculture if the names Marjorie McDonald McIntyre, Joyce Canning and Lorraine Holding mean anything to her, as Minister of Agriculture, or to the entire Liberal caucus. Those three ladies championed and developed an amazing program called Agriculture in the Classroom when it was an OMAF program.

Astutely enough, in the 1990s, when we realized the seriousness of our cash flow in this province, there were some changes made, and Agriculture in the Classroom evolved away from OMAFRA and became a stand-on-its-own, not-for-profit organization, with tremendous support from food and commodity organizations across this province. It exists today.

Prior to October 6, 2011, I was proud to be vice-chair of Ontario Agri-Food Education. And sadly, with the NDP and the Liberals voting against an amendment to make Agriculture in the Classroom, food awareness, nutritional awareness and food preparation mandatory from grades 1 to 12, we are not completing the cycle here, and the fact of the matter is we can do much better. Our white papers—again, Speaker, we encourage all parties to take a look at our white papers, because within our respect for rural Ontario, we talk about food literacy—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Order.

I recognize the member for Huron-Bruce.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Food literacy is so important. It's very disappointing to hear that this government doesn't hold credence. Again, in terms of superficial approaches—the realities are that it's nice to stand up and have fluffy, cushy slogans, but if people don't understand how to buy in season, how to prepare in-season foods, how to preserve in-season foods, what's it all about? We've missed a big chunk of our overall ag-awareness, food-literacy, appreciation-for-fresh-food perspective in Ontario, and so there is room for improvement.

Another thing I'd like to share with you: Just moments ago, we heard the Premier, the Minister of Agriculture, tout the fact that the agri-food industry contributes \$34 billion to Ontario's GDP. That fact is true, but sorely—again, showing the gaps in the understanding of Ontario's agri-food picture—this minister fails to understand that right now we're facing a crisis in the agri-food industry. We need, over the next few years, approximately 50,000 jobs, and that number is substantiated by Lorie Jocius, the current chair of Ontario Agri-Food Education. Lorie's

husband, Ginty, founded Canada's Outdoor Farm Show. Lorie has spoken about this concern for years. We're going to have a gap. Not enough people are attracted, in terms of careers, to Ontario's agri-food industry. So again, it shows an absolute miss on the Liberal government's part for not looking at the whole picture. People just don't get it.

That's why the PC Party of Ontario is the only party prepared to go forward, with Ernie Hardeman and our leader, Tim Hudak, under the Respect for Rural Ontario white paper, and really understand how we need to move this agri-food industry forward.

Let's talk about this a little bit more. Cycling back around to OAFE just last week, how many people in this room know that OAFE launched a brand new career site? For all of you watching—which I think there will be some staff told to look for it now—it's [growingcareers.ca](http://growingcareers.ca). Last Wednesday, OAFE, under the ED leadership of Colleen Smith, launched a specific website to attract people to Ontario's agri-food careers.

But again, I come back to the absolute nonsense that—the NDP and Liberals voted against food literacy from grades 1 to 12 because included in some of that curriculum could have been careers in the agri-food system. It's not enough. We have some wonderful programs—in Chesley high school, in Clinton, in St. Anne's—in terms of the agricultural cohorts that people can participate in. But the fact of the matter is, how are kids today going to know about their opportunities in the agri-food industry if they don't learn about it in the classroom?

This is just, I think, a real eye-opener to Ontario's commodity organizations and farm groups, to re-emphasize the fact that while this government may be taking a couple of good steps in the right direction, they truly don't get the meat and bones of Ontario's agri-food industry. It's just not enough to have partnerships and to be collaborative. You need to actually get to the crux of it all. For Ontario's agri-food industry to go further, not only do we need to grow the Local Food Act, but we need to support food literacy, and we need to encourage young people to get engaged with the agri-food industry so that they can see the promising careers this industry holds in the province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** It is my pleasure to stand up—

*Applause.*

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** Thank you. It is my pleasure to stand up and speak today to Bill 36, An Act to enact the Local Food Act, 2013 and to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to provide for a tax credit to farmers for donating certain agricultural products that they have produced. Bill 36 has gone to committee now; it has come back for third reading. We're here today. It will be voted on soon before it becomes a law in this province of Ontario.

People in this province have been waiting a long time for this government to take action on food and on local food, so I'm obviously happy to lend my support to this bill, and I hope that it does pass.

In the time that I have today, I'd like to share a few of my thoughts on the content of Bill 36 and the circumstances that have led it through this parliamentary process.

First, to speak to the content of the bill, it's clear to me that local food is a matter of great importance to the people of the province of Ontario. At committee, we heard directly from people representing farmers, from health care professionals, community organizations and processors. People wrote in to provide their written submissions, as well, from across the province.

I'm not surprised at the level of interest in this bill. Whenever I've had the chance to travel across Ontario to meet with people, people do want to talk about food. Food is on the minds of people in this province. Food remains on the minds of busy parents who are thinking about what they're going to feed their kids at the end of the day when they get home after a long day's work. It's on the minds of families who have arrived recently to this province, who are forced to depend on the food bank system here in Ontario as they try to get their feet under them in this new country. Food is also on the minds of our doctors and nurses, who have watched as a generation of children is raised on processed, sugary and salty foods.

**1450**

We've also heard quite clearly that food is on the minds of our educators and our teachers, who see too many of their students arrive at school in the morning struggling to concentrate because they didn't have a proper breakfast. It's on the minds of our hospital workers as they tend to our loved ones at a very vulnerable point in their lives.

Of course, food is always on the minds of our farmers, our growers and our processors, who feed this province and need the support of our government to make sure that they can bring food to the tables of people in Ontario.

Bill 36 has provided us with an opportunity to talk about food in this province, and it's a first step—an important step—toward supporting a local food economy in Ontario. It shows that the government has finally gotten the message that local food matters and that it must be made a provincial priority. But the real level of commitment in this House to issues of food security, food justice and a sustainable food economy remains to be seen, truthfully.

Bill 36 could have been a lot of things. It could have set out an ambitious agenda to support local farmers and growers, to foster food literacy in Ontario schools and to increase access to healthy food for families across this province, but unfortunately Bill 36 did not do that. Bill 36 is what's called enabling legislation, and, while it has been strengthened somewhat through the committee process, it does little to guarantee real government action. It does little to begin the transformation of our current food system.

The enabling legislation kicks the can down the road and allows some folks in a backroom at some point to make some decisions, possibly to set some sort of targets

that are unspecified at this time for the most part. Is Bill 36 stronger? Yes, to some extent. But I'd like to be clear that Bill 36 was an opportunity to do far more to support local food in Ontario. It's unfortunate that this government has missed that opportunity.

Even in committee, it was Liberal MPPs who voted against amendments that were based on recommendations that we heard from food stakeholders and that would have made this bill stronger. I think it's important for people to know that when they think about this bill.

That isn't to say that this conversation around food is over. I think that it's just beginning, and I'm glad that people came through the doors into this Parliament building to make those presentations. We need to continue to hear those voices and make sure that those voices are represented in this Parliament.

As I said, Bill 36 is enabling legislation. It requires the government to do little, but allows the possibility for more positive outcomes in the future. This means that we will have to continue to pressure this government to deliver.

Sitting on the committee that dealt with Bill 36, it was good to see the growing number of people in the food movement in Ontario come to the table and push for better legislation and stronger government action when it comes to food in Ontario. I'd like to take a moment to thank all those people who took the time to come out, sometimes on very short notice—people who made oral presentations and those who shared their written submissions with us—and to also recognize that there were people who did not get a chance to come down and make submissions; that the process was indeed rushed, and not as open as it could have been.

Getting these things on the agenda, I would say, is an important victory in itself. It's very clear that the public is well ahead of the politicians and policy-makers when it comes to these issues. The public is leading the way, and we need to thank them for pushing this government into action.

At committee, we heard loud and clear that the bill needed to be strengthened. We heard that the minister should be required to set goals or targets in respect of local food rather than leaving these optional. We heard that progress reports should be done more frequently than just every three years. We heard that regulations on small food businesses should be reduced to help local abattoirs and processors compete with the big players. We heard that the government should find ways to increase local procurement by public institutions. We heard that tax deductions should be provided for farmers and processors who donate to food banks and to community food organizations.

There was an overwhelming consensus from stakeholders on all of these suggestions, and there was also overwhelming support for increased food education and food literacy. All of these are issues that we raised and that we support.

I want to read some of the suggestions that were raised at committee. They have been summarized here by our

researcher. Thank you, Jeff Parker, for putting those together. These relate specifically to how we should set targets relating to food literacy. I'll quote here: "The minister should consider goals or targets related to food literacy and the use of school food gardens in the furtherance of the purposes of this act." This is a suggestion that was supported by groups like the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance, Sustain Ontario and the Ontario fruit and vegetable growers.

Another suggestion we heard, Speaker, was that "The minister should consider goals or targets related to food literacy and its integration into the curriculum." This was a suggestion that was made by groups like CELA, the Dietitians of Canada and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture.

The Stop Community Food Centre and Sustain Ontario spoke about how Bill 36 should "support food education and preparation programs, including those outside of schools." And The Stop mentioned that the bill "should provide support to student nutrition programs." This is of critical importance to people across the province.

Green Thumbs Growing Kids and the Ontario Collaborative Group on Healthy Eating and Physical Activity both raised the important point that, "The costs of implementing food literacy programs, such as school gardens and farm trips, would be offset by the health care savings from healthier citizens." To that quote, I would say, "Obviously." That's good advice that should be heard loud and clear within these walls: that we need a health promotion strategy and that we need to be investing in the wellness of our communities. Unfortunately, that's a logic that I think too many folks in here have denied for too long.

Speaker, I think members who sat at the committee may have been a little bit surprised at the level of interest in food literacy that was demonstrated by all presenters. It was with these suggestions in mind that my colleague the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane and I worked with our NDP team to draft strong amendments to the bill. From the beginning, we said that the goals and the targets of the local food bill should be clear and that they should be defined before the bill passes. Otherwise, what's the point of voting for them? We wanted to know, if we were not to do that, what direction we'd actually be providing this province as a legislative body.

New Democrats believe that we need strong goals and targets, that we need to start to truly transform our food system, and that setting strong goals and targets sends a clear message to people that we're putting food first and that we are prioritizing local food for the people of this province. That's why we introduced amendments that would have required public sector organizations to buy local food. This would have been a significant step forward in bringing local food to market in Ontario. Unfortunately, the Liberal government and the Conservative opposition worked together to defeat this amendment in favour of public sector procurement.

We also introduced an amendment that would have required the minister to set goals and targets not limited



to but including targets and goals to: improve food literacy in schools; increase access to student nutrition programs across Ontario and increase their local food content and increase local food content in school cafeterias; increase experiential learning opportunities through school garden programs and the use of teaching kitchens in schools; and reduce regulations to encourage availability of local food without affecting food safety.

Speaker, as you can tell, the goals and targets that we brought forward directly reflect the suggestions that were made by stakeholders at committee, and so I was encouraged to see the Conservatives support these ideas for goals and targets. But it was disappointing that the government used their power on committee to defeat these positive amendments. The Liberal members that voted against it said that they did so because they were “too prescriptive.” I find it disappointing that after inviting people from across the province to come in, inviting specialists to come into our Parliament to give their time and to share their thoughts with us to strengthen this legislation at committee, the government voted against the amendments that were in fact widely supported by the wider community. When these stakeholders outlined clearly for us how we can improve legislation and how we can support local food in Ontario, the government said, “Sorry; that’s too prescriptive. We’ll listen to you, but we’d rather just act on the bare minimum, at this time, of what you’ve asked, and we’ll figure out the rest later. Wink, wink, nudge, nudge; trust us.”

Instead, the government introduced their own amended goals and targets, and they put in the term “food literacy” in the end. Of course we supported it, because otherwise there would be no mention of food literacy or public procurement in the legislation.

**1500**

But unfortunately, the goal of food literacy does not even mention schools. It simply says, “Improving food literacy in respect of local food.” It doesn’t mention whether this would actually happen in schools. It doesn’t mention whether this means actually teaching people about our local food systems, how to recognize food, how to grow your food or how to cook your food. It doesn’t mention the importance of hands-on experiences for students through growing food in school gardens or cooking or eating food together in school kitchens. All of these elements were recommendations that were offered constructively by food stakeholders across the province.

By voting against our amendments, this government really missed an opportunity to set a clear path forward for increasing food literacy.

Unfortunately, the government’s goals and targets make no mention, either, of supporting small, local food processors.

I regret that the government failed to support these amendments; we missed an opportunity because of that to strengthen this bill.

But the final amendments have strengthened this bill somewhat, due largely to the strong presentations made by stakeholders and their emphasis on the importance of

food literacy, public procurement and access to local food. I want to thank those folks, again, who shared their ideas with us.

The NDP was happy to put forward an amendment to require reporting every year rather than every three years. This makes good sense to folks. In fact, it was supported by folks like CELA and the Small Flock Poultry Farmers of Canada. More frequent reporting will provide us an important measure to hold this government more accountable. With the so-called enabling legislation that we see here, accountability and reporting mechanisms are very important to ensure that the government actually is taking action.

We were also happy to support an amendment that saw tax credits extended to farmers who donate to food organizations, as well as to food banks, so I would like to recognize the member from Sarnia–Lambton for bringing that issue forward as a private member’s bill, recognizing in this House that there is an issue when it comes to hunger and the fact that people in communities across this province are using food banks.

The tax credit for farmers is good. It’s something that I support. But quite clearly, and I think all members in this House should recognize, this is actually just a band-aid solution, because people’s reliance on food banks and food charity remains the elephant in the room. This government’s failure to address food security for people living on low incomes in Ontario remains deplorable. The real problem remains that too many people in this province simply cannot afford any kind of food at all, let alone nutritious food, let alone local food or sustainably grown food. Too many people just simply cannot afford food for themselves or their families.

I want to just explain to folks at home a little bit about how we got here. My colleague from Timiskaming–Cochrane mentioned this briefly in his remarks. Bill 36 was part of a programming motion that was agreed upon between the Liberal government and the Conservative Party. The programming motion set aside seven bills to fast-track through this Legislature. Many of those bills were good bills. They were positive bills. They were bills that we would have supported and that should have passed through this House without any special motion necessary to fast-track them.

Unfortunately, the true purpose of that programming motion was to bundle those good bills together and to hide inside of them a little bill called Bill 74. As some people know, Bill 74 was an anti-labour bill that would have imposed a labour agreement in favour of construction giant EllisDon. EllisDon also happens to be a massive supporter of the Liberal Party of Ontario, and a strong supporter of the Conservative Party as well.

In addition—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** People are listening now.

Unfortunately, we saw the two parties working together to fast-track this nasty piece of legislation and put the interests of Liberal and Tory backer EllisDon ahead of the people of Ontario. The two parties worked together to

pass a programming motion that ended up hamstringing the committee in the end, and it limited our capacity in committee to constructively deal with amendments.

As a result, we had to either accept all of the amendments as they were presented or reject them completely. It meant that we couldn't actually make amendments that would incorporate different proposals within the committee. In other words, we couldn't do the work that we were sent here to do and that committees are meant to address.

Speaker, if Bill 36 was not part of this programming motion—and if the Conservatives hadn't filibustered in the first place, I should say too—we could have already passed a strengthened Local Food Act. Instead, Bill 36 got tied up in an attempt by both the Liberal government and the Conservative Party to ram through a bill to benefit this one donor and this one company in Ontario.

Speaker, if you look back at the timeline—it was interesting to hear the Premier mention this earlier today—she first started thinking about this bill back in 2004, I believe. If I recall correctly, this bill was introduced just after I was elected, soon after I was elected, and I think it died on the order paper through prorogation. It was reintroduced May 16. It passed second reading with Liberal and Conservative support. Anyway, it has been about a two-month process most recently. In fact, we could have passed this bill months or even years ago, probably, Speaker, and we could have passed a stronger version.

Unfortunately, while this government worked to fast-track Bill 74, the EllisDon bill, and tied the hands of committee members who wanted to strengthen the Local Food Act, they've been working at a snail's pace, I would say, to address the larger problems that are facing Ontarians—and Ontarians without the deep pockets of an EllisDon. Mr. Speaker, where is the government's action, where is its commitment when it comes to social assistance reform? When will they take action to address the minimum wage in Ontario? When will they take action to address the affordable housing crisis in this province? When will they take action to address the recommendations that they sought through the Healthy Kids Panel? Ironically, this report was called No Time to Wait. I believe the report was tabled last spring, and we're still waiting for any action when it comes to food security and the recommendations that were made through that report.

Speaker, I will be supporting the Local Food Act, and I'm happy that we were able to strengthen the act and make it a little bit better for the people of this province. I would like to sincerely thank the stakeholders who weighed in and who made deputations. I want to acknowledge that this is an important beginning—because we know that the fight to increase access to food and to local food and to establish a sustainable food system is not over. This, to me, is one of the most important things that we should be talking about, is—how do we protect our food and water in this province, how do we make sure that we protect our environment, how is it that we reduce health costs so that people don't get sick in the first place, and how do we invest in our children, invest in the

kind of good food that they have access to? So we'll continue to push this issue to the front. We'll continue to put food first for the people of this province.

I'd like to ask the government to consider its future priorities going forward and to consider strong targets and goals for local food in the province, and to take concrete action to address the issues that hamper people's access to food across Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's my pleasure to add my comments on behalf of the residents of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, who sent me here.

Speaker, we are disappointed, as are the stakeholders, that this bill doesn't do more to support agriculture and food. It is a step in the right direction. It's motherhood and apple pie. How do you not say you're going to be relatively supportive of it? But we understand that to support local food you need to support our farmers on the broad scale. You need to be much more thinking of the critical issues that are impacting them in their ability to be sustainable, profitable farmers out there in our communities. This bill does nothing to address the challenges that farmers in my riding of Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound are talking to me about. Those things that they're talking about are the red tape and the regulation.

Continually, this government has brought more needs to do reporting, brought more reason for them to be away from the farm—rather than actually on the land or with their animals and their livestock and their crops—and be in an office projecting more paper, moving it through the system. Speaker, it's just not acceptable.

The increasing hydro costs—we already know this government has doubled the hydro costs in the last eight years. I believe this month they're going to increase again, and there's projection that they're going to double yet again in the next two or three years. This has huge impact on our farming, as well as our broader communities, to remain sustainable and viable.

The abattoir closings—a colossal nightmare that has happened across rural Ontario. In my riding alone, a number of good, solid family businesses that have been there basically from day one have closed and will never be back. People tell me, "There's no way I would ever re-enter that marketplace with the way this Liberal government has imposed the regulations—and the changing regulations—over time on them." So they're gone, and those local farmers are now travelling 200, 300, 400 kilometres to try to get, in many cases, their beef or pork to market, just to get them to be slaughtered and be able to go to the marketplace. They could have done something a long time ago. They haven't even re-addressed it. They haven't come back and tried to find a way to bring that back so that truly local agriculture and local food could be being done in our local communities.

**1510**

The destruction of the horse racing industry—we've talked about this in here significantly. It saddens me, in my riding, the number of people who approach me and

say, “Again, a lifestyle, a rural fabric, a rural culture has been decimated by this government.” I think the people of Ontario out there need to understand that they’ve just come in and announced that they’re going to put \$400 million to try to rescue the sector over five years. What they glaringly omit to tell the public is that they spent \$527 million on the three-person panel to study the problem that they created. Mr. Speaker, in my world, you’re not a hero if you start the fire and pour a pail of water on it. That’s really what I think they’ve done, in that industry in particular.

We need to ensure that at the end of the day—sorry; before I go on, I should also bring up another one: this whole issue with the bees right now. There are a lot of issues going on with our bees dying in huge, huge numbers. I have a number of local producers coming to me, talking to me about it. They tell me that they don’t really see the government doing anything of an action. They’re going to talk, they’re going to study, but they’re really not getting anywhere.

I want to pay credit to my colleague Sarnia–Lambton MPP Bob Bailey for drafting a meaningful and thoughtful amendment to the local food bill to create a tax credit for farmers who donated agricultural products to an Ontario food bank. His amendment was applauded by farmers in Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound and by Women’s Institutes.

Furthermore, our caucus also proposed an amendment to the act to require food education in the curriculum in every grade in our schools. This amendment was supported by all the Women’s Institutes. Across Bruce and Grey alone, it was applauded by: Purple Grove Women’s Institute in Ripley; Southline Women’s Institute in Walkerton; Colpoy’s Bay Women’s Institute; Bruce County District Women’s Institute; Park Head Women’s Institute; North Grey Women’s Institute; Bervie Women’s Institute and Grey-Bruce Area Women’s Institute.

Now, imagine the disappointment of these same Women’s Institutes when this government, under the leadership of Premier Kathleen Wynne, and agriculture minister—part-time—chose to block that amendment. It’s a disappointment for the Women’s Institutes not only because their members passed resolutions in favour of making nutrition courses a requirement in school—it’s a disappointment as the Premier and ag minister, whose political role model and hero is none other than Women’s Institute founder and pioneer Nellie McClung. She’s turned her back on their beliefs and principles, Mr. Speaker. It’s very ironic for me because McClung was born on a farm near Chatsworth, which is in Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, and she founded the Federated Women’s Institute of Canada and the Women’s Institute of Edmonton, of which she was the first president.

Agriculture and local food organizations submitted a large number of ideas and proposals for this bill which were ignored by the McGuinty-Wynne government. As one of my colleagues in this House stated, this started in 2004. If this was really a priority, would we not already have it implemented and be utilizing it as opposed to

talking about it again? But we go back to prorogation: They put their own bills out, then prorogue and it all dies.

Our agriculture critic, Ernie Hardeman from Oxford, put out a white paper. In that, he put forward a number of concrete ideas that would improve Ontario’s food system, such as creating a regional food terminal, implementing a one-window access to government for farmers and agribusinesses, and a dedicated fund for the Risk Management Program.

Lisa Thompson spoke here just prior to me. Lisa was executive director of the goat producers of Ontario. She’s got a history of family farming. She brings a lot of great credibility and good ideas, and I think she’s on the same page, that there could have been so much more done.

We need to ensure that when we’re doing things in this House, they’re practical and pragmatic and they’re going to have a significant impact; that they’re going to be core fundamental changes to legislation, not tweaking around the edges, not just rhetoric and spin for the 30-second titles that they give these bills.

Mr. Speaker, I will be supporting this bill. I wish it really had more substance and was dealing with the true issues: the cost of energy, the red tape and bureaucracy, the horse racing industry and the whole mismanagement of the ag and energy files under this Liberal government.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to represent my people of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, and I look forward to further debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** It’s my pleasure to have an opportunity for a few minutes to speak to Bill 36, An Act to enact the Local Food Act, 2013. I did have an opportunity at second reading to speak more at length, and I just have a couple of minutes today to be able to add some comments.

I note that the bill was amended fairly substantially at committee. I think it’s been improved, certainly, because it was quite light before going to committee.

I want to thank the member from Oxford, Ernie Hardeman, for the good work he’s done on this, but I especially want to thank the member for Sarnia–Lambton, Bob Bailey, because I note that his private member’s bill has been really taken into this bill. I think that’s probably the most substantive part of the bill now, is his bill, which was previously called the Fighting Hunger with Local Food Act. That’s now part of the bill. It creates this non-refundable tax credit for, I guess, excess food from farms that goes to food banks and other charitable organizations.

I note that he had pointed out that there has been some 25 million pounds of excess food, I guess you could call it, that just gets plowed under at this time, and the possible benefits of having this as part of the bill would be some five million pounds of food that could go to help out those in need. I think that’s a real positive. As he pointed out, the cost of that to the government is some \$750,000, which in terms of government spending is not a lot of money, certainly, for this government. Congratu-

lations to the member from Sarnia–Lambton. He was very persistent. I think this was his third try at getting that done and it looks like it will be. We're now at third reading and nearing the end of debate. I'm really pleased to see that; I think that's a big improvement.

As has been noted, I'm pleased to see that Agriculture Week is going to be maintained in the fall. I know former MPP Bert Johnson worked hard to get that happening. Now there will be this new Local Food Week happening in June of each year.

I note that the member for Oxford pointed out that there are many more things that could be done to improve the food industry and agriculture in the province of Ontario, and we have a white paper out pointing out some of those measures, like creating a new regional food terminal and cutting a lot of the red tape that's involved with farming—I think that's true for just about any business in the province of Ontario—how much money and effort could be saved by reducing that. The member from Oxford also talked about the effect of high energy prices and the current policies of the Liberal government to do with energy prices, which are driving up energy prices, and the effect that has on the cost of food as well.

At second reading, I did have an opportunity to talk about some of the local food producers in Parry Sound–Muskoka. You don't normally think of Parry Sound–Muskoka as being a big food production area, but we do have a share of agriculture, including lots of maple syrup bushes in the Parry Sound area, places like Long's of Laurier township. We have producers like Crofter's, who make organic jams in Parry Sound. Wasauksing First Nation has Aqua-Cage on Georgian Bay—going on to businesses like Milford Bay Trout Farm. We have Iroquois Cranberry Growers and Johnston's Cranberry Marsh and cranberry wine, and the list goes on and on and on. Certainly, I want to support those businesses and will be supporting this act.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I recognize the Minister of Education on a point of order.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Speaker, I know that we recognized this morning that children's aid was here to lobby. You pointed out that the good folks from Guelph and Wellington Family and Children's Services are here. I just wanted to draw to your attention that two constituents of yours, Gord and Wilma Tosh, were just recognized for 30 years of fostering 80 children. They did an amazing job. They're your constituents. Wilma was my seatmate at the Upper Grand District School Board when I was a trustee. There's a wonderful article about them in the Wellington Advertiser and you can all pull it down from the Internet.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I appreciate the Minister of Education informing the House about the contribution of Gord and Wilma Tosh. They were your constituents, I believe, prior to the redistribution in 2007, so I'm delighted that you brought their incredible public

service to the attention of the House this afternoon. Thank you very much. It's a good point of information.

Further debate?

Pursuant to the order of the House dated Thursday, October 3, 2013, I am now required to put the question.

**1520**

Mr. McMeekin has moved third reading of Bill 36, An Act to enact the Local Food Act, 2013 and to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to provide for a tax credit to farmers for donating certain agricultural products that they have produced.

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

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

I wish to inform the House that I have received from the chief government whip a notice asking that the vote be deferred. Pursuant to standing order 28(h), he has requested that the vote on third reading of Bill 36 be deferred until deferred votes on Tuesday, November 5, 2013, which is tomorrow.

*Third reading vote deferred.*

## ORDER OF BUSINESS

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, I think you'll find that we have unanimous consent that after Bill 123 receives second reading, that bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order shall be immediately called and the question put without further debate or amendment.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to allow for the calling of third reading of Bill 123 immediately after second reading, the question to be put without further debate or amendment. Agreed? Agreed.

## MEMBERS' ACCOMMODATION ALLOWANCES ACT, 2013

### LOI DE 2013 SUR LES ALLOCATIONS DE LOGEMENT DES DÉPUTÉS

Mr. Milloy moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 123, An Act to amend the Executive Council Act and the Legislative Assembly Act in relation to accommodation allowances / *Projet de loi 123, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le Conseil exécutif et la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative en ce qui concerne les allocations de logement.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I recognize the government House leader to lead off the debate.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Very briefly, this is a bill that has an administrative function. It clarifies the two acts that govern members' accommodation here in Queen's Park.

As I think members are aware, those MPPs who travel from more than 50 kilometres outside the Queen's Park area are eligible to receive assistance to have accommodation here in the Queen's Park area. What this piece of legislation does—it's a very simple piece of legislation based upon consultation between all three parties—is ensure that those members who will be eligible for this allowance both have a principal residence that is further than 50 kilometres from Queen's Park and also represent ridings that are themselves more than 50 kilometres from Queen's Park.

As I say, Mr. Speaker, it's an administrative clarification that amends the two acts that govern accommodation for MPPs. I'm going to be the only speaker on our side to just put on the record what this very simple administrative bill does.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

Further debate?

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** I just want to echo what the government House leader said in terms of: We really see this bill as an administrative matter of closing perhaps a loophole, perhaps a misunderstanding, perhaps a mistake in the Legislative Assembly Act around members' accommodation. I think we're now adopting a fair bill, Bill 123, that makes the rules around MPP accommodation in Toronto more transparent and clear and more easily understood by all members of this assembly and, more importantly, by the people of Ontario, who pay for these allowances. Clear rules, clearly, are needed, and all three parties are agreeing today, I think, to put this legislation through and to fix the act, as probably should have been done years ago.

I want to thank Tim Hudak, leader of the Ontario PC Party. He was one of the first leaders to come out and demand that this problem be fixed. I want to thank the other House leaders in the other parties for us working together in a relatively swift fashion to make sure that there is more transparency and clarity in the act.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

Further debate?

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I'm going to take a little bit of time in the debate because I think it's important in the context of where we find ourselves in politics in Canada and in Ontario and in our cities across Canada these days in regard to the whole issue of the integrity of our system as far as being able to make sure that everything is on the up and up and that there is transparency and that there is accountability for how we use other people's money.

All of us have seen what has been happening in Ottawa in regard to the Duffy/Wallin/Patrick Brazeau affair. Today, in fact, there's a debate in the Senate in regard to this whole particular issue. I think what it raises is that we saw what happened in Ottawa, that there was a situation where members were claiming apartments in Ottawa and not claiming their principal residence as being the one that it should have been. Clearly, that's something that the public didn't like, in the sense of

nobody begrudges a Senator or member of the provincial Legislature or the federal House of Commons the ability to have an apartment in Ottawa or Toronto in order to be able to conduct their business here. For example, I represent a riding up in northern Ontario: Timmins—James Bay. If I had to commute every day to go to work, it would be a pretty tough thing to do. We would be buying a lot of Porter Airlines tickets, I would say, for me to be able to get home every night. So it makes sense that there is an apartment here in Toronto provided by the assembly and that that be paid for in a way that is transparent and that everybody knows what it's all about. I forget what the exact amount is; I think it works out to, for us as provincial members, we're entitled to a rent of around \$1,700 or \$1,800 a month.

The interesting part is—and I've been talking to members who were just elected in the last Parliament—I've been here for 23 or 24 years, so my rent has been locked in for some time. I pay under what it is that I'm allowed to pay, but for members just coming into the House now, as of the last Parliament, a number of them are having to pay out of their pocket because the actual allowance doesn't meet the actual rent being paid. In other words, the rent is higher than what the allowance has allowed. Clearly, there's probably something that needs to be done there at one time or other, and that probably would have to be something better addressed at the Board of Internal Economy.

What's clear is, that rule was never meant to be used in a way that would be anything other than by some member who lives far away from Queen's Park and has an apartment here in Toronto. What we had here in Ontario is, we had a particular member who was claiming his principal residence being in Niagara Falls and not the actual riding that he came from. That is not what was meant by that rule. Although that was the rule that allowed that, that's not what was meant.

There was a furor, and I think I understand why, as any of us here, as we watch what's happening in the House of Commons and the Senate. We see the Duffy/Brazeau/Wallin affair and we have their situation, where it is perceived by the public that there has been some largesse on the part of those senators. If there is largesse or there isn't largesse—I will leave that to the auditors of the Senate and I will leave that to the members of the Senate to deal with.

1530

But clearly, people are upset. They say, "Hey, I go to work every day, I play by the rules, I make whatever salary it is that I have and I can only reclaim what I'm entitled to. How could somebody claim something and get paid for something when clearly it was not the intent they would be entitled to it?" So people get upset, and they say, "Well, that's not right." In the case we had here in Ontario, when it came to what happened with one particular member, a Conservative member from—I forget what the riding is—I think it's Thornhill, it was a question where he felt he was entitled, but clearly the public didn't see it the same way. The media jumped all

over it and said, “Hey, how can you do that?” So what we have here is a bit of damage control on the part of the Conservatives, trying to do what they can in order to be seen as trying to fix something that should have been fixed and never been allowed to happen in the first place.

What we have here is an amendment to the legislation that will essentially do what both the House leaders have said, which is that you can only claim an apartment in Toronto if your riding is more than 50 kilometres away and you actually live 50 kilometres away. Hopefully, that’s going to fix the problem that was addressed in the Sun, the Star, the Globe, the National Post and others that wrote about it, and in various electronic media on what happened with the member from Thornhill some time ago.

What I think needs to be said here—and I think this is something we can be proud of here in Ontario—is that the rules that apply to our expenses as members are much stricter here than they were and, I would argue, are in Ottawa. For example, we’re not allowed to expense meals—not one meal. You’re not allowed. I think you’re allowed six meals per year or six days per year if you’re travelling on assembly business and you go to Thunder Bay or Ottawa or somewhere and you have a meal. I think there’s six days that you’re allowed to charge meals as a member.

Other than that, none of us here are allowed to expense meals when we’re in our riding, none of us here are allowed to expense meals while we’re at Queen’s Park for the four or five days a week that we’re working. We’re only allowed to claim our airplane tickets to and from our riding, and you can only claim this—and this is the interesting part—if you have a receipt that shows you’ve actually expended the money and a boarding pass.

You’ve got to say to yourself, the Senate was a much different situation, where they had an honour system. The honour system was, let’s say—and it happens. Listen, the reason I deal with Youtlen Travel up in Timmins, and I encourage others to do the same, is that I get a statement every month because I travel a lot to and from Queen’s Park, and sometimes within Ontario, and it’s happened in the past where I forget to claim something because I just don’t have the receipt handy in my little portfolio. Then I find out three or four months later, when I’m balancing out my credit card, and I go, “Oh my God,” and I’ve got to chase down a receipt from the airline and I’ve got to show that I was actually on the airplane, which I think is a good thing, because what it does is it prevents members of the assembly from ever being tempted to do what you saw in Ottawa, where it is alleged—I don’t know if this is the case; I’m only saying what I read in the paper and I may stand corrected, but I understand that what Senator Wallin did was claim expenses for travel without accompanying receipts. That was my understanding. I may be wrong, but that’s my understanding. That particular Conservative senator has been investigated by the RCMP and by internal audits within the Senate. In fact, the honour system is what caused this Conservative senator to sort of stray off the path and—how would you say?—have a

little bit of largesse with the money of the people of Canada.

Again I say—and I won’t speak for the House of Commons, because I don’t know what they do there as far as expenses—that if the Senate did what we do here in Ontario, there’s no way in heck that could happen, because you have to prove that you have an airline ticket and a boarding pass for the flight of the airline ticket. It’s happened to me when I sent my expenses in that I booked a flight, let’s say, for Thursday, and ended up leaving on Friday and I got a boarding pass for Friday. I had to explain why that was, and they had to be able to trace it back to make sure that the boarding pass actually matched the airline ticket. Thank God the airline companies have this locator number, because the locator number shows it’s one and the same.

The point is, they didn’t have that in Ottawa, so certain Conservative members in the Senate and Liberals took some advantage, I would say, of the rules that existed and had a bit of largesse on the taxpayers’ dime. I think that’s sad, because when you see Conservatives and Liberals do that in the Senate, nobody takes any account—they think we’re all the same; all politicians, no matter what the stripe might be, New Democrat or otherwise, are doing the same thing. I think that’s a really sad thing because it lessens the confidence that people have in elected officials and our ability to do our jobs here, and that is to represent the people of our ridings in the policy matters that are important to them and important to this province.

When you see Conservative senators and Liberal senators do that kind of thing in Ottawa, people rightfully get mad. They say, “Hey, listen, that’s not a good thing. How can you do that when I go to work every day, I try real hard to make sure that I work hard for my boss, I get a paycheque every week or two,” whenever you’re paid, “and I don’t get to do those kinds of things? If I did, my boss would fire me.” I think they see this and they say to themselves, “How is it that you could be allowed to do that and get away with it?”

So what we’re trying to do here in the House is to tighten the rules so that what the member from Thornhill did is not something that another member in the future could do. Now, did the member knowingly break the rules? I don’t know. I wasn’t part of any investigation. All I know is that there was an apartment that was charged in Toronto when he didn’t live in his riding and actually lived in another riding down in the Niagara area. Was the member right for doing that? According to the rules—and that’s why we’re changing these rules today in the House by way of legislation—he was allowed to do that. It beckons the question, did the Conservative caucus know? Did the leader know?

I think that’s what is at issue in the fight with the said member and the leader, because they both have a bit of a different version of events when it comes to that particular issue. Was he asked ahead of time if he had the permission to do this or was he not? I think that is a fair enough question. But we’re fixing it, so I think that’s a

good thing and that's why we, as New Democrats, are saying, "Okay, listen. Anything that makes our system more transparent and more accountable, we're all for that."

As you know, one of the things that New Democrats and Andrea Horwath, the leader of the New Democrats, have been doing in this minority Parliament is a theme of making sure that we put in place mechanisms by which there is transparency and there is accountability. The people back home have to know that in the end their dollars will be taken care of; they will not be squandered in ways that we've seen, such as the gas plant debacle, where we've spent \$1.1 billion to cancel a couple of gas plants that should never have been built in the first place, and if the government had dealt with them differently, we could have let the contracts expire and it would not have cost that kind of money. People see that and they get mad.

They see the Liberal government and what they did with Ornge. We had a perfectly good air ambulance system and the government decided to change it. And what did that do? It ended up costing us another billion dollars, another scandal. Before that, it was eHealth, and now we've got the Pan Am Games coming.

I think it's important that we do everything we can to give the public confidence in our Legislature. The way you do that is by making this place as transparent as possible so that, in fact, the public has the right to know, through the process of our provincial auditor and through the process of the Financial Accountability Office which will be put in place, and the various reporting mechanisms that we currently have—that we have a way of being able to make sure there is a transparency to the money that's spent.

In Ontario, we have a pretty rigorous system. The public accounts committee has the ability, if it agrees—or the government, if it wants—to have the auditor look at any item. Now, in a minority Parliament that works really well. In this case, when it came to our wanting to have the auditor take a look at the expenses when it came to the cancellation of those gas plants, because there is a minority Parliament and because the opposition was able to work together, we had the ability by way of votes to make that happen. But if this had been a majority government, the government could have said no to the public accounts committee request to look into the cost of the gas plants and they wouldn't have called it themselves under the act.

So it beckons the question: Do we need to change the auditor's act in order to make it easier to be able to take a look at expenses once they're done and not have the government have to agree to the audit taking place? Because a majority government will never give a committee the authority to have the auditor look at something if they're not comfortable with it in a majority situation. Maybe one of the things that we need to do is to be able to change the rules around the public auditor so that there's a better way of being able to have the auditor do the type of reporting that needs to be done and look at the numbers.

Now, I take great pride, along with my NDP caucus members here, in regard to what we did with the Financial Accountability Office. We said, "Listen, we saw the gas plants; we saw Ornge; we saw eHealth. If we had a Financial Accountability Officer in place who had the ability to look at expenses before they're spent"—and that's the difference between the FAO and the auditor: The Financial Accountability Officer looks at things before we spend the money so that we can say, "In fact, how much is this really going to cost us?"

**1540**

In the case of Ornge, I think the Financial Accountability Officer could have looked at this and said, "Here's an expense that is going to cost us a whole bunch of money. Are we really getting any better public policy and service out of it?" I think it would have been fair to say that the Financial Accountability Office would have found, "No."

On the question of the gas plants, if the government knew, prior to the last election, that there was a Financial Accountability Officer in place and that any member of the Legislature—as we put in the legislation, as New Democrats—can call for the Financial Accountability Officer to look into anything, would they have done what they did in the last election? I don't think so. I think we could have probably saved ourselves \$1 billion.

The FAO that Andrea Horwath and the New Democrats demanded be part of the budget last spring, in fact, is going to give us some of that transparency and some of the accountability that we need so that governments—even in majority—are going to have a harder time pulling off the kinds of things they did with Ornge, eHealth, the gas plant scandal, and possibly what's going on with the Pan Am Games.

I think that's a good thing, because, again, we are just caretakers of the taxpayers' money. We are just the ones here to make the decisions about how that money is to be spent, and we need to make sure that, in the end, the money is spent in a way that is wise and a way that makes sense, and that it's not being blown on things that we shouldn't be spending the money on. We need to, here in this Legislature, take that responsibility very seriously. By way of getting the FAO, we're able to provide some of that transparency and accountability.

In the case of this legislation, Bill 123, it's a very minor amendment. It's not going to take a whole bunch of time to deal with this. It doesn't need a whole bunch of review at this point, because all it does is change one thing. It says that you must both live within the riding more than 50 kilometres away, and your riding has got to be more than 50 kilometres away. It's a pretty straightforward kind of change and I think that's why we're having a certain amount of agreement here, because this matter was actually discussed with other members of the Board of Internal Economy. They're the ones that worked at developing this language, and I trust that they looked at this and figured out a way to make that happen.

Again, it comes back to transparency and again it comes back to accountability. I ask myself: How did we

get into this mess in the first place? Why are we debating this particular piece of legislation? I've got to believe that the member from Thornhill must have gone to the finance branch before he did what he did, and he must have gone to his leader and said, "Here's what I'm going to do." All of a sudden, there are denials that that ever happened. I would have liked to see the member have an opportunity to speak on that; I take it he is busy today and can't do that, and I respect that, but I'd just, on behalf of that member, say that it must be a pretty tough thing to take. I don't agree that what he did was right, but the way this whole thing was dealt with was rather Conservatives-ish, if you know what I mean. It was a question of them trying to do political damage control once the barn doors were open.

Is that the way that we should be dealing with legislation? I think not. That's why Andrea Horwath and the New Democrats proposed, in the last budget, as a condition for support, that there be a Financial Accountability Office—in other words, that we look at the dollars before you open the barn doors, and that you decide, "How much is this really going to cost to do, and are we getting a good bang for our buck?"

I think the ability to be able to look at those things in an open way and a transparent way will allow all of us to do our jobs a lot more easily and a lot better, because in the end we need to make sure that we are as fiscally prudent as we can be with the taxpayers' dollars. We look at people back in our constituencies who work hard every day, who go to work, do the right thing and try to pay their bills, and they've got to give money to provincial, federal and municipal governments in order to provide the important services that they need.

I don't think anybody begrudges paying money so that mom or dad or your child—whoever—has good health care services available in a public system. I don't think anybody begrudges the fact that we have a good system of public education. I don't think anybody begrudges that we have to have a transportation infrastructure system, both inside our cities and outside our cities, that works well.

I don't think the public has a problem with that. I think the public feels that we probably pay more than we'd like to. I don't know anybody that I've run across over the last number of years who said, "I'm really happy paying taxes. I would love to really pay more." I think everybody is feeling the squeeze, and they're saying, "Jeez, I'm having a hard time trying to make ends meet."

When they see these kinds of things which happened with the Conservative senators in Ottawa, or what's happened with the Conservative member here in Toronto, at Queen's Park, they say to themselves, "Why should I agree for you to increase my taxes if you can't get your own spending under control and you're allowing these kinds of things to happen?" I think we need to make sure that we have transparency in the system and we need to make sure that we're as accountable as possible when it comes to the ability to spend the money of the people of Ontario.

I'm more and more taken aback in my constituency, and I imagine everybody in their constituencies are seeing the same thing as me. We're seeing more and more people in our ridings who are having an increasingly harder time to make ends meet. I was at a funeral yesterday. My cousin's son Paul passed away—32, 34 years old. We were at his funeral. It's pretty tragic that a young man of that age is no longer with us. But as I was sitting there talking to people at the funeral, their topic of discussion—everybody my age and a little bit older—was talking about how they can't afford to retire because hydro has gone up. Everything has gone up to the point that they're not able to retire because they don't have adequate pensions, or no pensions at all, in all the cases of the people I talked to yesterday, and they're feeling squeezed.

I look at a neighbour just behind me who a couple of months ago ended up selling his house because he needed the equity for him and his wife to be able to survive. They moved into an apartment. Why? They couldn't afford to keep the house going, because by the time they paid their hydro, their gas, the taxes and everything else, they were having a harder and harder time to make ends meet. They look at us and they say, "What? I see a senator doing what? I see the Conservatives in Ottawa doing what? I see the Conservatives in Toronto doing what?" And they say, "My God, certainly to God we shouldn't allow this to happen," and they get mad—and rightfully so.

I think it's important that we pass this legislation and we allow the rules to be tightened up so that this kind of thing can't happen in the future. I think that's a step in the right direction. But I go back to the need to be able to provide that transparency and accountability for the people back home. In the end, if we cannot demonstrate, as legislators, that we're serious and we're vigilant and we're frugal in the way that we spend the money that is entrusted to us to spend on behalf of the people back home, then I think we lose not the confidence of this House, we lose the confidence of the people back home. I think it's important that we do what we can in order to make this—how would you say?—a much more accountable system.

I look back at the debate that we had—and we're going to have a chance when we get to the opposition day motion with the Conservatives this week, I believe on Wednesday. I look back at Mr. Hudak and his positioning on the budget last year. It would have been really easy for New Democrats to play the game that Mr. Hudak played: Throw up your hands in the air and say, "Oh, well, we're opposed to everything. We're just going to say no to whatever comes through. We're not going to try to make any changes because our job is to try to serve our political interests and get elected." Well, New Democrats said, "No, that's not the way this place should work." The people in the last election said what? There's going to be a minority Parliament. They gave a punishment to the Liberals by taking away the majority but they didn't kick them out of office. I don't like that. I would



have rather they had elected New Democrats to office. But I have to respect what the people of Ontario said, and what the people of this province said is that there's a minority Parliament here. With the minority Parliament comes a responsibility for us to respect what the voters back home told us. It's a little bit the same as what we're talking about in this bill, Bill 123, when it comes to accountability, how we spend their money. Should we have apartments outside of our ridings? Shouldn't we? All of that kind of stuff. We have to make sure that we try as best as we can within this minority Parliament to make things work and get results for people.

So Andrea Horwath and New Democrats, in the first budget and then in the second budget, managed to get some pretty important concessions from the government in their budgets to be able to get those budgets passed. Was it easy? Hell, no. Was it something that was so easy to do that we were just laughing all the way to the vote? Absolutely not. Mr. Hudak and the Conservatives kept on saying that the only way that you can fix the problems that are going on in Ontario was to defeat the Liberals and vote in a Conservative government. Well, I beg to differ. I watch what happens with the Tories in Ottawa, with Mr. Harper; I look at what the Tories have done in the Senate when it comes to expense scandals; I take a look at what just happened in their own caucus and why we're having this debate, and I say, "Do I really want to put those people in charge? I don't think so." I think, in the end, what we need to do is to do the best that we can, and New Democrats got concessions from the government around the Financial Accountability Office and other measures in order to make the spending of the money of the people of Ontario more accountable. We're in the process of now putting forward—we've passed that legislation and we're in the process of now naming our nominees to the committees that will hire the FAO.

1550

The other part is what we've done with the gas plant committee. If we had listened to Mr. Hudak last spring—again, it's a question of accountability. Do we go to an election or do we allow the committee to finish its work? We decided it was best to allow that committee to do its work and come back with its recommendation on how to prevent this kind of expenditure in the future—because that's really what the public wants. The public wants to punish; I understand that. The public does want somebody to pay for this. I get that. In my riding, I hear people talk to me about that all the time. But it's also a question of we have to put measures in place that stop this kind of stuff from happening in the future. That's what we're doing here today, amending this legislation. We're preventing the situation, such as what happened to the member from Thornhill, who found himself in the position of thinking he had the permission of his caucus and thinking he had the permission of the Legislature to do what he did, and then be told that, no, he never had that conversation. I can imagine he must feel pretty upset about that, because I know the member from Thornhill. I don't agree with his politics; I find him much more extreme than me

when it comes to most items. He is extremely on the right, I would say. But on this one, I think that he genuinely thought that he had the agreement of his party leader to do what he did. Then all of a sudden, he finds out the party leader says, "No, I don't remember that." So whose version of the truth—I shouldn't say that. I take that back because it would be out of order to say that. But whose version of events is the correct one? Is it the member from Thornhill's or is it the leader of the Conservative Party's? A fair question.

We're tightening up the rules nonetheless. We're saying under this particular bill, Bill 123, that there is going to be a stronger measure, a stronger standard applied to who is able, first of all, to get an apartment in downtown Toronto, and that the requirement is that you have to live within that particular riding so that you can't be in the situation that the member from Thornhill found himself in, where he thought he had permission from people to have his house in Niagara as his principal residence and then have his apartment paid for here in Toronto. This rule clarifies that and says you both have to have a riding that's 50 kilometres away from Queen's Park and you also have to live within that riding. I think that clarifies this type of thing from happening in the future.

Who knows? The unfortunate truth here is that if that rule would have existed—and I don't think any of us thought about this before because it's the first time I've heard of such a thing happening in the 24 years I've been here, and as far as I know, I don't think it has happened before. It might have and nobody noticed; I have no idea. But if this rule had been in place, the member from Thornhill could never have been put in a situation where he did what he did. He did so thinking he had permission from the Conservative leader, Mr. Hudak. Mr. Hudak says, "No, I never gave him that permission." Who there is the one who remembers the version of events correctly? Only their conscience can tell. All I know as a legislator and as a New Democrat is that we have an issue, and that issue has to be fixed. The compromise that was found—it's not even a compromise; it's a way of re-drafting the legislation that the board and others have come up with as a way of being able to close the loop on that particular one.

I would be remiss if I didn't talk about the machinations of what's happening in Toronto with regard to this particular issue. We see the same kind of thing, where there's a real sense on the part of the public that things are not the way they should be when it comes to the integrity of members and the integrity of our word. I look at what's happening in the city of Toronto and I say, "How does that help politics in this province when you see these kinds of things happening?" You see what happened with the member from Thornhill. You see what's happening with the mayor of Toronto, Mr. Ford. You see what's happening with Conservative senators in Ottawa, with Liberal senators in Ottawa. One has already resigned, a Liberal member, because of expenses that he shouldn't have incurred that he did. I think he was

actually charged, if I remember correctly, and you've got three others who are in the process of the same. It shakes the confidence of the public when it comes to how they feel about their confidence in their members and their confidence in our institutions.

I just want to say to those who are reading this debate later in Hansard and those who may be watching that what we're attempting to do with Andrea Horwath and the New Democratic Party is say, "Listen, we're not holier than anybody else. We don't pretend to be without our own little foibles." I'm sure if you all went looking, we all have our own little foibles—and I'm not saying about expenses and stuff; I don't think that's happening. But my point is, we have been working hard to put in place measures that account for transparency and account for accountability, so that in the end the public can have a better sense of, "You can have confidence in this particular institution."

With that, Mr. Speaker, I've pretty well said what I had to say. I only wish that at one point we can find ourselves in a position where the member from Thornhill and the leader of the Conservative Party can come together and remember what actually happened so that within their own caucus there's a better understanding of what the events were and that not one or the other is penalized one way or another. I have to hope that at one point that's going to happen within the Conservative caucus, but I'll leave that to them.

All I know is what we're in control of and what we can do here. What we can do is try to fix this rule, as we are doing right now, so that, in the end, in fact, this type of thing can never happen again.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

Further debate?

Mr. Milloy has moved second reading of Bill 123. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** In accordance with the order of the House passed earlier this afternoon, the bill is ordered for third reading.

#### MEMBERS' ACCOMMODATION ALLOWANCES ACT, 2013

#### LOI DE 2013 SUR LES ALLOCATIONS DE LOGEMENT DES DÉPUTÉS

Mr. Milloy moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 123, An Act to amend the Executive Council Act and the Legislative Assembly Act in relation to accommodation allowances / Projet de loi 123, Loi modifiant la Loi sur le Conseil exécutif et la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative en ce qui concerne les allocations de logement.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

*Third reading agreed to.*

#### WASTE REDUCTION ACT, 2013 LOI DE 2013 SUR LA RÉDUCTION DES DÉCHETS

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 31, 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 (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I recognize the member for Beaches–East York.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I was having a discussion with my colleague the member from Timmins–James Bay and I thought that the rotation was presently with the Liberal Party. I guess I was mistaken.

I'm not sure whether anyone else will be speaking to this, but I thought it important that I stand up in the 10 minutes I'm given to just talk a little bit about this. I would like to preface my remarks on the debate with how long this debate has been taking place in Ontario.

I go back many, many years ago to the former government of Metropolitan Toronto. When I was the mayor, I served on the Metropolitan Toronto board, and I remember the significance and the passion of the debate that we were having as the blue box was introduced to Toronto. There were people there who were opposed to the blue box and thought that we should just sort everything by hand or have electronic sorting of the materials as they came from the garbage truck—how expensive it was going to be—and there was a lot of stuff being debated about packaging and user pays and producer pays, and it's all come full cycle to me. After 20 years, we're back here in exactly the same place, arguing exactly the same things.

The city of Toronto then, or then, Metropolitan Toronto, determined to go away from reuse and instead went to recycling, which is the third phase of the process of reduce, reuse and recycle. We should always remember that that is the order in which we should be doing things. The city of Metro Toronto, in its wisdom, back in those days, decided to go down the recycling route because it was convenient, because they thought that's what consumers wanted and because the producers of things like plastic pop bottles were convinced that this was cheaper and better for them in the long term than having returnable pop bottles. They did this because they thought it better to recycle a great many things rather than to simply reduce them.

1600

I think about all the debates that we had over newspapers. There was a time when we put newspapers out in the blue box in the borough of East York and we had to hire people to drive around the streets to make sure that

those newspapers were not stolen. I don't know if people remember this, but the market for used newsprint grew so high because the United States, particularly in Chicago, determined that they wanted to use 100% recycled fibre in their newspapers. The big daily newspapers in Chicago were going worldwide to try to find that fibre, including coming to Toronto. The market shot way up, so there were enterprising people in the city of Toronto who were driving around in trucks, taking the newspapers out of the blue boxes. We, in East York, had to hire people to go around in cars at night to make sure that when the recycled paper was put out, it was still there in the morning so that we could pick it up and East York and Metropolitan Toronto could get the revenues from it. This is the kind of excitement that could be built someday around this, so I just wanted to hearken back to those memories.

This is a bill that is being discussed yet again. It has been discussed my entire political life, and I look at this bill and think: What is new in the body of this bill? I went down and looked at the bill, and the bill is a relatively complex one. The bill talks about many things—not many of them, though, very well.

It talks about going toward 0% waste. We all want zero waste. If there was no waste, it would be a whole lot better environment in this country and in the world than with the production of waste that we're currently into.

The bill talks grudgingly about the three Rs, the hierarchy being reduce, reuse and recycle. As I've already said, we have never come down to the number one principle, and that is: We should be reducing everywhere we can possibly reduce—the reduction of the use of energy, the reduction of packaging, the reduction of production facilities. Everything that we can do to reduce waste should be done first, and to reduce what we, in fact, have ourselves.

When I go into the supermarket, they always ask me if I want a plastic bag. Of course, they charge a nickel for it. I don't refuse it because it costs a nickel; I refuse it because I don't really need it. We don't really need to have all of those bags produced that are handed out, some of them for free, some of them for a nickel; it depends on the store you shop at in the city or the place you shop at in Ontario. We need, as consumers, to say that we don't need that.

When I look at packaging, especially packaging aimed at children, it's huge packaging. We don't need that kind of packaging. What we need is something to contain the product, to keep it new and pristine, if that is what you're looking for. That's what we need.

When I look in the body of the bill, I don't see a whole lot around reduction, and I don't really see a whole lot around reuse as well. I think immediately to the big debates that took place at Metro Hall 20 years ago. The big debate was about pop bottles, about returnable bottles, which were largely made out of glass, versus those new ones that were made out of plastic and would be recycled and melted down and made into something else. I remember that debate as clearly as if it was yesterday.

Those of us on the one side—and I was one—thought that the reuse of those glass bottles was the most energy-efficient thing that we could possibly do with those glass bottles. The use of a glass bottle for one use is absolutely wrong; it verges on the criminal. To this day, I know of pop bottles—you can hardly find them anymore, if you can find them at all—that are made out of glass and returnable. I still see them when I go to the east coast, but I haven't seen any in Ontario for years, and I doubt very much there are any left, anywhere at all, in this entire province.

When you go to the Beer Store, you see that 85% or 90% of the bottles are returned and reused. What wasn't good for pop anymore is still the mindset for beer. All of us, when you drink beer, know that that bottle has been used many times. It has been used many, many, many times. It has a shelf life of about 20 times, on average, before it gets too old, too scratched or too broken to be used again.

But when you go to the liquor store to buy wine, my goodness, that wine bottle is used once. It is used once, and it is never used again. The only purpose in you taking back and getting 20 cents for that wine bottle is so it can be crushed and used again in a road. That's pretty much all it is used for. This is not an efficient use that we are making of it.

I will tell you that if Ontario insisted that its wineries—and we have some excellent wineries in three major regions; in fact, across this entire province—insisted that wine be sold in bottles that could be returned and reused, we would start a revolution. There are countries on this planet that do exactly that. It's done in France; it's done in Spain, where the bottles are returned.

There are only two types of generic wine bottles used in Ontario and, in fact, much of the world. I know you can get a wine bottle that looks like a cat, and I know you can get one that's carved in 100 different ways and has all kinds of fancy stuff on it. But 95% of all the wine bottles you find in the liquor store are of two types: There is a Bordeaux type, which is cylindrical, and there is a Burgundy type, which is flask-shaped. They're common. Those are the two that are used in Ontario.

If we had those bottles and we could use them again, all we would have to do is put on ordinary, natural glue—not the synthetic stuff, because it's too hard to get the label off. You can actually soak the bottle, and they'll fall off, if you get a French wine bottle or a Spanish one. You soak the bottle and they fall off. What we need to do is use those bottles again.

To produce each of those bottles costs about 80 cents, and they're crushed. If we could take them back and they could use them again, then each wine manufacturer in Ontario could save 80 cents. That may not sound like a lot, but if you can reduce the cost of that wine by 80 cents, then you can start to compete more favourably with wine from somewhere else.

I'm telling you that there is a reason for doing that, and we need to start looking at reuse in this province. We can no longer just say we want to recycle; we need to

start looking at reduction, and that's the place I would start. Thank you very much for the opportunity.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's a pleasure to rise on Bill 91. There are a lot of, I think, good points that have been made. The committee process is what follows, should this bill pass. If it is allowed to pass, certainly we'll be able to hear from the stakeholders. If there are any amendments that need to be made to make this a better bill, that would be the time to do it. So I would urge the opposition parties: Let's move on, on this.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I've always liked to listen to my good friend the member from Beaches–East York. He's very sensitive, very inclusive in his remarks, except when it comes to this topic. He seemed to be somewhat unnecessarily outraged on this whole idea of including recovery. An important part of the three Rs—reduce, reuse and recycle—is to recover.

All matter is in one of three forms: liquid, solid or gas. We can't waste resources; we'd all agree with that, okay? It could be a gas that goes into making wraps and various packaging materials, and when you apply temperature to liquid, it becomes a solid—ice. I'm saying that they're overlooking the science of where we are today, and I think it's wrong.

But this government has failed completely. If you look at the history here, the largest contributor to the whole waste cycle we're dealing with is industrial-commercial waste: the spent lumber, the drywall, the various things when they're renovating buildings and stuff. All of it today—60% of the whole waste stream, comes from that ICI sector. This government has taken us down the wrong road. These are the statistics; this isn't political. That's worse, okay?

1610

When you look at the residential—this is from the Ontario Waste Management Association. These are people who believe in the environment, unlike just the words. They've gone in the other direction in the residential component as well; they've gone down in that as well.

The record speaks for itself, and I can only say this: If the member from Beaches–East York is right, we need to talk about it, and it sounds like the government side doesn't want to talk about it anymore. This bill hides the real cost of the eco tax, and I'll have more to say later, I'm sure.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It's a pleasure to comment on the member from Beaches–East York. I don't know where the member from Durham found that the member from Beaches–East York was outraged. I mean, we've seen outrage in this House. There are good reasons to be outraged in the province of Ontario when you consider the waste, which is a good transition to the waste diversion act.

We've just come from a completely different place with regard to this piece of legislation. We admit that it needs to be improved, but it's long overdue. It took a long time to get here, and I know there are some producers out in the province of Ontario who want us to drag it out a little bit more. We do believe this debate is important, and we actually want to strengthen the legislation when it does get to committee. Certainly, we will be bringing a very different lens to the conversation, as opposed to the PCs, who I assume are not going to be supporting it—but as we know, they haven't been supporting much in the last two years.

It does remind me of that the Tragically Hip song *Wheat Kings*. There's a great line in that song. I don't know if the Tragically Hip have been quoted in this House before, but in the song *Wheat Kings*, the line is "no one's interested in something you didn't do." I think, actually, there's good evidence in the province of Ontario that people are not interested. One has only to read Mr. Regg Cohn's piece today: "Hudak's Scorched Earth Strategy Isn't Working." There are lots of things burning in the province of Ontario, and let's get that under control.

We are going to be bringing a lens to this debate at committee around understanding the market before regulating the market. We've done extensive research, and we've actually consulted with some of the front-line people in the province, and the Ontario Waste Management Association in particular. We are going to be bringing some integrity to this waste management act. We look forward to that work. That's why we're here.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I'm pleased to speak to Bill 91, the Waste Reduction Act. I've heard a lot of good things in this Legislature from the New Democratic Party, that they're very supportive of many parts of this bill. We've had a lot of debate on this now, so I'm looking forward to getting into committee, hearing from the industry and getting on to that phase. I think we should move this out of second reading, into committee, and get on with it.

This is a good bill. It needs changes, but we have good support from the New Democratic Party, from what I've heard from their members, and I look forward to that part of the bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our time for questions and comments, and I return to the member for Beaches–East York for his reply.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I thank the members from Oakville, Durham, Kitchener and Orléans for their comments.

To my two Liberal colleagues: They want to get on with the bill, and, yes, I think we need to get on with the bill at some point. I don't know how many other speakers there are.

I did feel compelled to speak today, though, because I think the whole issue about the return of wine bottles—to know that when you're taking them back, they're simply going to be ground up and then the same thing done with them again, either production of new wine bottles or

they're put into a road somewhere—it seems to me that an awful lot of energy and an awful lot of waste is occurring in that production. If we can find it in our hearts to recycle beer bottles 20 times, we should start thinking about whether we can recycle wine bottles and, in the process, actually save the wineries a great deal of money and the consumers a great deal of money, because if they can be used again—and most of them can; most of them are generic—then that's why I felt I needed to speak to that.

The member from Durham talked about science, and in fact, I think he's wrong. On Earth, there are only three forms, and he's correct in that. There is the gaseous form, a liquid form and then, of course, a solid form as things cool down. But there are other forms known to science, and I would suggest he talk about plasma, perhaps, as well.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Michael Prue:** No, no, plasma is also a form, but it's under extreme pressure and heat, something we're not likely to find here. But it is a fourth element.

As for the member from Kitchener, I thank you for your quote from the Tragically Hip. I had never heard that before. I have heard the group sing, but I had never nuanced that exact phrase, and I think it's a wonderful phrase. If you don't mind, I may steal it from you at some future time because it's really important: Nobody wants to listen for something you've never done. I think that if people are critical and if people want to make changes, then they have to lead and not just simply stand back.

I thank everyone for their comments.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** It's my pleasure to have the opportunity to speak to Bill 91, which is An Act to establish a new regime for the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste and to repeal the Waste Diversion Act, 2002.

Just off the top, I'll say that I think this government is taking the wrong approach to recycling and reusing of waste, and I'll talk a bit about that as we go forward. It was back in 2005 that I actually had a private member's bill, the product stewardship bill, that was debated here in the Legislature and was supported and passed. I believe all three parties supported it at that time. It really suggested a different approach: For industry to take responsibility for their waste and to have full life-cycle responsibility for whatever waste they create, whether it's the packaging or anything involved with various products. I'd like to go back to that because I think it's a better approach, and it's actually one that our party has adopted. Our party has suggested that, "Under our plan, government would set measurable and achievable recycling targets, establish environmental standards and measure outcomes." That's the sort of approach that my private member's bill took. It would return oversight back to the Ministry of the Environment, where it truly belongs.

Mr. Speaker, the reason I think that approach works is that government really is in the business, then, of setting the recycling targets for any given product and setting the standards they want to see achieved, but it lets industry figure out how to do it to achieve the results and do it in the most cost-effective manner. They have an inherent interest to want to do that because they're the ones that are going to be paying for it. Whereas the system the government is setting up is one that's really being run by government, and government has proven many times that it's not that great at running things, so the costs go up and you don't necessarily achieve any better results. In fact, you probably achieve poorer results.

I would also say, when you're setting up sort of a unique program to Ontario—I mean, you have national companies operating across the country, and you end up with a different system in every province. I've received correspondence from companies like Sony that want to see a national program and point to other provinces like BC that have been so much more successful.

It was back in May 2005, May 19, when I was debating my product stewardship bill, which essentially puts forward the same idea.

"So what is product stewardship? It's a management system based on industry and consumers taking full responsibility for the products they produce and use, from their inception through to their final reuse or recycle state. It's cradle-to-cradle management. The way it works is that government, on behalf of consumers, has three supportive roles.

"First, it identifies which products it wants embraced, establishes targets for product capture and charges industry with the responsibility of forming a management board and preparing stewardship plans. Second, it assists industry by putting in place regulations to support the collective industry approach and ensures a level playing field for all corporations involved in the relevant sector. Third, it approves stewardship plans, monitors industry progress and ensures that plans are altered to achieve overall objectives.

"Through this product stewardship approach, government moves away from funding, at taxpayers' expense, waste management. Instead, it holds industry responsible for the full life cycle of a product but leaves it to industry to find the most cost-effective and efficient way to achieve it, assisting where necessary and desired....

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"Product stewardship works because industry comes up with the solutions. They know their business best, and they will come up with solutions that are both cost-effective and that get the job done."

That was back in 2005, and I think that's still the better approach now. Certainly it's supported in the correspondence I've been getting with concerns on this bill.

I note that Sony, obviously a large corporation, has written to MPPs with their concerns. They've got programs in effect across the country that work. Their program is called the Electronic Products Recycling Association. I'd just like to quote from the letter they've

written to MPPs to demonstrate their concerns and how their approach is more like the one I just described, from my private member's bill of 2005.

This is the letter from Sony. It reads:

"Through the Electronic Products Recycling Association, our industry has developed a nationally harmonized, non-profit organization to operate diversion programs for waste electronics in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec, Nova Scotia, PEI, and Newfoundland and Labrador. EPRA has been able to achieve great efficiencies through shared resources and economies of scale that have resulted in improved diversion performance and lower costs.

"Sony is of the strong belief that those producers that are involved in the design, manufacture, distribution, and sale of products are best suited to develop and manage end-of-life management programs for those products. Sony's own recycling program and the creation of EPRA has demonstrated that—when afforded the responsibility of crafting the right program for the right audience, industry—can excel."

They go on with a long list of concerns with Bill 91. I won't read them all, but it goes on: "Sony would prefer an environment where the provincial government mandates what it would like to see in such a program, and that industry manages this responsibility individually or through their chosen, collective intermediaries, or a combination of both." That's exactly what I was talking about in my product stewardship bill of May 2005.

They go on to say:

"In other provinces the electronics industry works directly with the provincial government to set expectations and industry has the sole discretion to implement and manage these programs to achieve the agreed-to outcomes. In these provinces, roles and responsibilities are clear, industry is fully accountable, and stakeholders are satisfied. Unfortunately, the approach to date in Ontario has been for government and its agencies to become unnecessarily involved in the minutiae of program design, development and operation. This has resulted in a highly inefficient structure unable to respond to a rapidly changing environment and where all stakeholders are dissatisfied with the program.

"Bill 91 continues the highly complex and prescriptive approach. We do not believe a complex piece of legislation is necessary for managing waste electronics.

"Fortunately, Ontario already has a suitable legislative framework that can easily accommodate waste electronics and replicate the successful model used in other provinces—the Environmental Protection Act. Similar to how pharmaceuticals are managed under the EPA, so too could electronics. We ask that electronics be removed from the scope of Bill 91 and be more efficiently regulated under the EPA."

That's the approach that I think makes a lot more sense, and would achieve better results.

I also heard from Magazines Canada. They wrote, and they're unhappy with the legislation as well. They say, "Magazines Canada is a member of a coalition of Ontario

industry associations representing over \$300 billion of business activity and nearly one million jobs. We have submitted a response to the draft act. The submission argues that, if enacted as drafted, the act will be as bad—or worse—for the taxpayer and the environment as the current problematic and flawed waste diversion system.

"Additionally, Ontario's magazines, the largest of the provinces' cultural media, have submitted their own point of view on the damage the current regime causes and the potential for even more damage triggered by the new act. Over 75% of Canada's vibrant \$2-billion magazine media is based in Ontario. We employ 9,400 people in this province, all in high-value jobs.

"We are aware that there is less consensus today, even within many groups who had supported this legislation when it was introduced. At the same time there appears to be increasing unease in all camps about the efficacy of this draft act.

"We ask that you urge your colleagues in the Legislature to take a big step back from this act and to objectively review it in the context of the public good. We are ready to assist in a constructive process."

So, Mr. Speaker, there you have it, from Magazines Canada—a huge industry. Another industry asking for a different approach to waste diversion in the province of Ontario. I sincerely believe that we're on the wrong track here, that we'll not achieve the environmental benefits we want to see achieved and it will cost a lot more for businesses and for consumers.

I would like to see this government change their approach, although it doesn't look like they're going to. Obviously, they're trying to push through this legislation. But I wanted to get the concerns of industry out there and register that I think we're going down the wrong path.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I'm glad to contribute to the debate here today. One thing that we shouldn't be proud of is the province of Ontario's record on waste diversion. We have one of the worst records in all of Canada. This bill should be taken very seriously by all of us that we need to do something for our environment and we need to make sure that the waste that we produce is handled responsibly.

Some of those things that we should be considering about this bill is, we need to recognize—and the member from East Beaches—York—

**Mr. Mike Colle:** East York-Beaches.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** East York-Beaches—now I know, Speaker, what your challenge is when you have to remember everybody's riding.

One of the things he talked about, and we've mentioned this before, is the three Rs. Those are paramount to waste reduction. When we talk about waste reduction, it's reduce, reuse and recycle. I know a lot of people in the London community in my riding do their part. When he talked about going to the grocery store and saying, "No plastic bags," they bring their recycling bags; they put their blue boxes out.

But we still need to do more. We need to be more progressive when it comes to waste reduction and educating the public. Making sure that waste reduction is convenient will go a long way towards the consumer participating in diversion and waste reduction because it does start with the consumer. If we consume less and actually put the packaging out to recycle, that is going to help waste reduction.

So the big part of this as well is making sure that the public is aware what vision we have going forward so that they can participate and be partners and make a difference in waste reduction and diversion.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I'm very pleased to speak in support of Bill 91, the Waste Reduction Act. In fact, quite a few people have spoken in support of Bill 91, the Waste Reduction Act. The debate has now been going on, Speaker, for almost 11 hours. Just to give the viewers some sort of rule of thumb, the standing orders actually allow a vote to be taken after six and a half hours—or earlier, if all parties agree.

So we've talked about this for 11 hours. People have suggested various improvements to the act. The place where that occurs is in committee. I respectfully suggest we need to get on with a second reading vote so it can go to committee and people can talk about how it could be improved.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I stayed here primarily this afternoon to listen to our speakers. The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka's remarks were, I think, reflective of what I'm hearing. In fact, he made reference to the input from Doug Wilson who is the president and chief operating officer of Sony Canada. Now here's what they said. It's important if members would listen: "Sony"—much like Tim Hudak—"supports changes to the current legislative framework that, in our opinion, has led to greater inefficiencies in the diversion of waste electronics in Ontario"—greater inefficiencies.

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"That said"—I'm quoting—"while Sony supports placing greater responsibility and oversight on industry, it's our belief that, as written, Bill 91 will continue many of the same inefficiencies...."

He's got it right. This bill is strictly a cover-up. What it does is bury the price inside the eco fee. Today, when you buy batteries, there's a charge on the bill that you can see on there. It says, "Waste reduction eco fee." It's in addition to the price, but now what you're going to see on it—it's hidden, and the transparency and the accountability are lost.

The consumers say, "How come these batteries are now \$20 for 10, instead of \$18?" We don't even know what the price is going to be. It could go from \$18 to \$25. Where's the money?

He goes on to say that all-in pricing doesn't work. It's going to lead to higher costs and less accountability.

They did a very excellent presentation, and I think the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka—to look to business, I think they need oversight; there's no question about it. But what I will say is, they want to work—I think the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka talked about the Electronic Products Recycling Association. I'd look further into that before we move further.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** It's again a pleasure and privilege to stand on Bill 91 and have some discussions on it. We've really stalled for a very long time on this initiative; as a matter of fact, for 20-plus years now.

I tend to bring things back home. I was trying to have a discussion with my boys, over the course of the weekend, on the importance of recycling and the point of reducing and reusing. Some of our discussions that we had—and this is not a prop, this wonderful thing that we have here, or maybe another little computer doohickey that my boys purchased over the course of the weekend. The thing was probably as big as this paper clip, but by the time we finished unwrapping the darn thing, we had some that went to the plastic; some of it went into the cardboard and the other part of it went into the metals. So there are certain things that we can certainly improve and change when it comes to waste reduction. Just the packaging is so enormous on some of these items that we're purchasing; it is so much waste.

When I'm talking to my kids—and they have eyes; they look within the community and they see people participating in the waste diversion program. It's unfortunate and frustrating for them to see wasted opportunities to really capitalize on a good program, where people follow their waste—they take the time to put it into their blue bin. They grab the blue bin and they go put it over at the designated area and dump it in.

But on the weekend, you pick up your leaves and your pins that are on your lawn. Over the course of the weekend, you load them up on your truck and you go bring that to the waste site, and what do you find: the garbage that you actually put into the waste disposal areas. So there are definitely ways that we need to improve it to make it more efficient for everybody to use.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our time for questions and comments. I return to the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Thank you to the member from London–Fanshawe, the Minister of Education, the member from Durham and the member from Algoma–Manitoulin for their comments.

The Minister of Education was saying, "Get on with it." We're debating this bill and continuing to debate it because we don't like the approach the government is taking. As I've outlined, I think it's the wrong approach. I think it's an approach that will cost consumers more and lead to fewer products being diverted.

The member from Algoma–Manitoulin was talking about packaging. I agree with him; I don't like to see excess packaging. But if you come up with a product

stewardship approach where industry is responsible for everything to do with the product, including the packaging, then they have to design packaging that doesn't cost a lot to be dealt with and/or is minimized. I really believe that the product stewardship approach, where government doesn't try to run the system—they set the targets, monitor the targets and police it, but they don't try to run it. They let industry figure out the best solution. That's the approach that is taken in BC, and it has been much more effective than the approach that the Ontario government has been taking.

One of the best success stories in Ontario is probably the Beer Store, where they have a deposit return system on beer bottles. I think it's in the high 90s, the percentage of bottles that are reused. I think that's the one place Ontario has done well. We have a deposit return system on wine bottles that, as the member from Beaches–East York pointed out, is not working so well.

But I simply think that government's on the wrong approach. We can do a lot better for consumers and for the environment.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I, too, waited around today to hear some of the informative speech and talk that I've heard today, like the member from Durham, because a lot is being said, and I think that's part of our right, and what people in my riding expect: that I am here to debate, especially when it's a bill that is maybe good-intentioned but, we think, in the wrong direction.

As I say, it's a great pleasure to rise with my views and get them on the record regarding the environment and our collective duty to responsibly preserve its beauty and the resources for future generations. I wish that any of these concepts were introduced in this bill we have before us, however, whose title really should be "the hide the eco tax act."

Ontarians have seen the costs of living in this province increase significantly over the past few years, to the point that companies and people are looking for work outside of this great province. In the last years, companies like Xstrata, Caterpillar, US Steel and many more have just left. It's a global market, and unfortunately for the province of Ontario, under this Liberal leadership, it's also a global labour market, and people can leave—thousands of jobs, and we see more happening all the time. We can no longer just add costs to business and industry without any thought or consideration for its impact. It's truly a sad situation.

This Liberal government has been leading this cause, creating unwieldy bureaucracies to administer policies that belong in the ministries and agencies that are accountable to this province. Waste Diversion Ontario is a glaring example. Under the Liberal watch, this unaccountable entity has grown into a juggernaut that could raise tire taxes by more than 2,000% without the government even as much as batting an eye.

Being afraid of accountability and being totally incompetent at keeping their house in order, the Liberals

are, of course, only happy to delegate the running of this province to whoever promises to keep the issue out of sight and out of mind.

Everyone remembers the last eco tax fiasco that the Liberal government quickly rescinded, blaming the unaccountable agency for the mistake. But truly, it's just all happening over again. Under this bill, the Liberals will make Waste Diversion Ontario even more powerful by giving it enforcement power and even greater fee-setting authority. They're feeding the monster we've called to scrap, and telling Ontarians they're implementing a PC idea. Nothing could be further from the truth.

In particular, the Ontario PC caucus has repeatedly called for the scrapping of eco fees that are nickel-and-diming Ontarians to death. Although the minister has made comments that appear to open the door to this, we can clearly see that the minister's real intent is to preserve these stealth taxes. They can accomplish this by shifting the point to where the consumers can no longer see the tax and do not know just how much it's affecting their purchases.

Today, eco fees show up on sales receipts and are in plain view. Under Bill 91, these will be included in the price that a consumer sees for the product in the store. This is not an improvement; it's just a shell game.

There's no difference in price between an eco fee at the point of sale and an eco fee that's hidden in the retail price. The consumer remains out of pocket. Bill 91, however, ensures that they won't even know it's the government's fault.

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Let's think of the unintended consequences. In my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, the last eco fee fiasco, the tire tax, where off-road and agricultural tires saw increases of over 2,000%, just put our local dealers out of business. Farmers and local residents can simply go out of province to Quebec and avoid the taxes. So, a local tire dealer said, "Really, I'm going to have to move out of the province, three or four miles down the road, if I'm going to stay in business." That's the impact of this. It's just more costs that are making it harder and harder for people to do business and find good jobs in Ontario.

Adding insult to injury, the current version of this bill makes it optional for the new authority to disclose how the eco fee is calculated. In spite of throwing good money after bad and sweeping the consequences under the carpet, the government has shielded the new empowered and beefed-up authority from the freedom of information act and from oversight of the Auditor General, who will only be able to review the new authority if the minister himself feels it would be appropriate.

Again, we have agencies in this Parliament that could look into these, and now this is another agency that is being shielded from any investigation. So, we must ask why you would establish another agency without proper oversight. What are they afraid of, you know, another Ornge? Look at the examples, just the poor examples we've seen in the short time I've been here.



Ontarians have come to understand that when you scratch the surface of Liberal spin and buzzwords, you reveal massive waste and inefficiencies. This is what happened at eHealth, Ornge and the power plants. Surely, considering the auditor's expertise, the Liberals would want to avoid a repeat of these scandals and let the auditor into the waste reduction agency as well.

Think of what the billions of dollars would do for this province. A billion dollars would construct 4,000 kilometres of road, enough to do a significant part of eastern Ontario, or enough for eight complete hospital expansions like we saw in Cornwall, in my riding of Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry. It would fund over 21,000 seniors in long-term-care beds for a year. These are big numbers. It would hire more than 15,000 new nurses for a year. These, as I say, are big. That's \$1 billion. But just think: This government has wasted multiple billions of dollars—\$5 billion or \$6 billion. In the Green Energy Act, we're looking at another \$1 billion per year for 20 years, and still no sign that they'll wake up and cancel that act.

Instead, what we will get under Bill 91 is a new bureaucracy that is just a recycled version of Waste Diversion Ontario, free to force others to give it money it can then waste on itself. Whichever additional fees it collects from businesses under the threat of fines will be passed on to the consumer, either in additional eco fees or increased prices for the same goods and services. This is a one-way ticket to misery, and the government is pressing on the gas pedal.

The Liberals intend to keep eco fees, blame an unaccountable authority for escalating them and ensure that consumers are none the wiser about being dinged by these bureaucrats. The Ontario PC caucus has presented a much better and straightforward plan for the management of waste that brings in the key industry players and treats recyclable products as a valuable resource rather than waste.

The task of coordinating the province's recycling strategy rests with the government, and its implementation rests on the key stakeholders involved in managing waste: producers and municipalities. At the end of the day, it isn't the Ministry of the Environment or a Waste Diversion Ontario employee who comes to the door to collect the blue box, and it isn't the minister digging the landfill and keeping seagulls away. Give those with a direct stake and direct knowledge of recycling a greater say in how we deliver the best recycling and waste management program in Ontario, and have the government set measurable and achievable recycling targets, establishing environmental standards and measuring outcomes.

As mentioned by our critic from Kitchener-Conestoga, the Minister of the Environment announced that he's repealing the current acts. But really, he's not repealing any of the recycling programs or agencies that are under it. So, it's strictly a shell game, something where they're talking about change but it's the same old problem where we see Ontario having the worst record for recycling in this country. It's a Liberal shell game that just shifts the

eco tax back onto the consumer, now with no accountability. You know, today the consumer knows what these taxes are and is aware of what a poor job this government is doing. Their answer to doing a better job is hiding their poor record.

You know, we all talk about some of the issues. We have no overall plan for waste diversion and elimination in this province. I was able to meet, at the county meeting we had last week—they had Ministry of the Environment people down there, and we talked about the creation of new landfills. The question was asked: How long was it to site and to license a new landfill? I don't know if anybody would guess here. We're talking—

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Twenty years.

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** Their answer was 20 years. Somebody suggested a decade, and the representatives—no, you're talking decades.

What kind of plan would you—you push that type of cost back onto a municipality. I know that in South Glengarry, when we looked at a landfill site under this government, we took a consultant who had just finished a plan for another municipality. It took us 10 years and \$5 million to expand a waste site. There really should have been a prescriptive design of how to do this and how to move ahead. That's money that we could have put into roads, bridges, community centres or just back to the taxpayer. It provided nothing but administration, and a lot of consultant fees that built nothing.

I wish I had more time, Speaker. I know that other members are looking to talk, so I look forward to the comments.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It's a pleasure to comment on some of the ideas that have been brought forward in this extended debate on this particular bill.

I think, though, that what the member did not connect, and something that we're incredibly interested in, is remembering that with the right policies, Ontario has the potential to become an environmental and economic leader in resource management. It's the economic impact of potentially strengthening this bill through the committee that we are incredibly interested in.

We've heard from many stakeholders across the province that they see that this bill, while not perfect—and they make some very good points: Why bring forward a piece of legislation that has some gaps in it? Why not do it right the first time? We share that frustration, believe me. But we are interested in actually creating the economic impact and having a positive impact through waste diversion.

Aside from the environmental benefits, which I think the member has outlined, the economic benefits are very clear. Every 1,000 tonnes of materials diverted generate 7.3 full-time equivalent jobs, \$711,000 in GDP and \$360,000 in wages. The economic benefits are four times greater than the net cost to recycle, so it makes a lot of sense to be proactive.

Jobs in waste diversion pay above the provincial average. These are considered good jobs, not the right-to-work jobs that we sometimes hear about: the right to work in less safe conditions, the right to work for less money, the right to work with less benefits.

We're not interested in those jobs; we're not interested in that conversation. We're interested in generating good jobs, strengthening the economy through a strong waste diversion act. We're committed to making it stronger in committee, and we look forward to that process.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Grant Crack:** It's a pleasure for me to rise this afternoon. I just want to remind members of the House that we've had 11-plus hours of debate already on this particular bill. It only requires 6.5 hours to get it to committee.

I think everything that needs to be said has been said. It would probably be a good idea if we could move this to committee so that we could hear from stakeholders and perhaps move some amendments, to move it forward.

I know that some people like to talk just to hear themselves talk. I'm not one of them, Mr. Speaker. I would recommend that we stop stalling, get this to committee and let's get to work.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I was pleased to listen to the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry. I know he talked in a personal way about being mayor and the red tape involved. I recall, as many of you would, that back in municipal times, the government of the day was the NDP and they had what they called the IWA, the Interim Waste Authority. What a boondoggle that was. Well, this Bill 91 sounds similar in nature. In fact, if you look at the bill, there are seven parts to the bill.

I want to formally, on the record here today, under my comments on Bill 91, thank our critic Michael Harris and his staff Shane and Rebecca. They have deconstructed Bill 91, all seven sections, in such a way that the Minister of the Environment, I believe, is feeling rather unsettled about Bill 91 and where it is today.

Many leading industries have commented that it doesn't get the job done. Are you listening to Sony and to other stakeholders that want to make it work? What they want are fair rules.

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I think this came up in the remarks from the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka. He said, "Set targets, and monitor the targets and enforcement." That's what's really required. The Ministry of the Environment simply isn't doing its job.

They went on to say—this is Michael Harris—"The Liberal government's Waste Reduction Act, which the environment minister tabled ... on June 6, continues every single one of the Liberals' eco-tax programs, including: the e-waste program, the tire-tax program and the Orange Drop Program" and household waste.

When you show up at the cash register today, you see the eco fee. Now they're hiding it in the price. Why are they hiding?

They're not changing one single thing by this legislation; they're just putting it all under wraps. It's simply not achieving the goals in ICI or any of the sectors.

Let's start from scratch. Work with our critic Michael Harris and his team. We'll get it right.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** To preface my comments on the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, I've listened to several of the Liberal commentators, and they keep talking about how we've had 11 hours of debate. In fact, that is absolutely correct. They keep saying that we only have to have six and a half hours, and then we can send it to committee. That, too, is absolutely correct. What they are not saying, and what they need to say, is that at the end of the six and a half hours, it was the Liberal government itself which said they wanted to continue debate. Is anybody over there going to deny that you stood up and said you wanted to continue debate? If you stand up after six and a half hours saying you want more debate, then you should expect more debate. It's as simple as that.

On to the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry. I listened to what he had to say. It was a sane and rational debate. I don't agree with everything, but he made some good points. I think what he's trying to say is that this bill lacks some specifics. It lacks a monitoring and enforcement program. It lacks something to deal with the reduced packaging. It's all very vague about where the government is going with all of this. It's very vague on a Waste Reduction Authority.

I'm thinking back—and the member must be as frustrated as I am. Back in the early 1990s, when we went into this blue box proposal in a Liberal and then an NDP government, Ontario was at 25% waste reduction. Today, after 10 years of Liberal government and Leona Dombrowsky standing in this place saying they were going to aim for 60% waste reduction by the year 2008, we're at 23%. We've gone down 2%.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** That's embarrassing.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** This is embarrassing, that Ontario has gone from first to last. We need to do something, but I think the member who just spoke is absolutely right, and we don't need any more lectures from a government that stands up there and asks for more debate, and then criticizes people who speak.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** We return to the member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

**Mr. Jim McDonnell:** I'd like to thank the member for Kitchener–Waterloo, who talked about some gaps. I would just caution one thing: We shouldn't look at this as a way of generating new jobs, because, really, what we should be doing is trying to lower the cost to the consumer, so that they have more money to spend on other products. That will generate new jobs. You don't want to

just create jobs that make our process inefficient. But at least there's an idea here about generating jobs. You don't see that on the other side.

The member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell and the move to committee—I guess I'm a little disappointed. We went through a committee process last week, and they stonewalled different thoughts that we had in committee on the wireless bill, with no intent of even listening to them, even though we had warnings from some of the companies that if we were to enact these laws in Ontario that cover the rest of the country—or the rest of North America, actually—whether you lived here or not, you would likely end up just moving their call centres. But, of course, that made no difference. They just stormed ahead with it anyway. But those are jobs that we need in this province. We've just seen total disregard for them.

As well, when we talk about the member from Durham and the red tape, I think we have to listen to these companies. They're the people who generate—we should encourage them not to generate as much waste. The best way of handling waste is not to create it in the first place.

Again, the member from Beaches–East York—could he be more true about listening to the other side and getting doublespeak? They talk about not wanting to debate the issue, but they had the right to stop it after six and a half. They chose, of course, to listen to some good ideas on this side. I don't blame them, but I wouldn't complain about it in the end.

We have to look at this government that has taken our waste diversion from 25%—and, of course, another target missed: 60%. It's not bad. I understand it's more like between 12% and 17%, which is gross mismanagement of the file. We think we need some changes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** It's a pleasure to rise to speak on 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.

I, for one, believe—a couple of key points here. This is a fairly important bill, and I know that a lot of members have been saying, “Let's get it to committee really quickly and we'll hear all the comments,” but I'll tell you, we do need to debate. Once the bill has passed and once we've debated, then we're going to hear about the regulations later. That's what scares me: when we pass legislation in this House and know nothing about the regulations, and over and over again we find out that something is done by a group of people behind the scenes and we hear nothing about it until someone gets it at the cash register. They find out, in a lot of cases, whether it's an eco fee or whatever it may be, that the taxes are on, and it does impact the economy and a person's ability to purchase.

A couple of things that have been said here for sure—20 years for a landfill. I think the member mentioned that just a minute ago. That's exactly what it is. And the big thing: Nobody wants a new landfill. They're simply not

popular, no matter where they're put. People fight them tooth and nail. Usually, they leak. The engineers and the hydrologists will say, “There will be no problem,” but in the end, the liners do leak and there's that impact on water quality, so we always have to have that in the back of our minds. But at the same time, we continue to produce garbage that goes into our landfills.

I want to say a couple of things. There are some shining examples in our corporate world. Someone mentioned a little earlier about the Beer Store. The Beer Store has been great. I think it's around 97%. Even the recycling we get out of our newspaper industry is the same. It's up at 93%, 94%, 95%. They do a great job. Honda Canada: I think the plant in Alliston, if I'm not mistaken, is almost 100% recyclable, what goes out of there. They recycle everything. So we can do it. If you leave it up to the corporate world and they want to set an example, they can do it.

I can tell you that if you walk around the roads, walk around the intersections and see what people toss out the windows of their cars—water bottles, coffee cups and fast food garbage all over the place, every spring in particular. I personally walk every day. I walk about six or seven kilometres, and my wife and I keep about seven kilometres of road clear of garbage. We take it back and try to recycle what we can. If more people did that, it would at least get rid of the junk on the side of the road, which I absolutely hate. I don't think I've ever thrown a coffee cup or anything out of any vehicle in my life, so I really, truly believe in this.

I want to talk for a moment—we don't have a lot of time—about a young lady in my riding. Her name is Kelly Clune. Kelly sits on all the waste management committees in the city of Orillia and is passionate about working on any plan that will improve recycling in the province of Ontario. I want to tell you a little bit about a couple of projects. My federal member, Bruce Stanton, and I hold a couple of big summer events in our riding. One is a barbecue at the Coldwater curling club. Members are all welcome to come any year to my barbecue. It's always a great time. And we have a shore lunch later on in the summer, where we have a fish dinner up on the shores of Georgian Bay. This is the first year we did this, this past year, and I'd ask anybody to do the same thing. We tried to go to a zero-waste event. At this particular event, I had Kelly Clune come in. Her company is called Kelly Clean. For \$350 for each event, she looked after handling the waste.

**1700**

Now, here's what's important about it: She made sure that every container we had there for every product was recyclable; it could go to some part of recycling. The one event, the Coldwater event, had about 700 people at it, and the shore lunch in Midland had about 800; so we had about 1,500 people at this event. The only things we couldn't recycle were those little things that butter comes in, those little containers; that's the only thing that didn't go into the recycling. Even the knives and forks—we had wooden ones. They're a little bit extra money; we used

those. All of the pop cans, any water bottles, anything we had at all was recyclable. In the end, Mr. Cycle—

*Laughter.*

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Mr. Cycle, yes.

Mr. Speaker, in the end we had photographs in each event of all of the water bottles and the plates and all that kind of food, the food etc., that we actually collected. There were bags and bags and bags of things, but all of those bags were actually going to be recycled. All we had—I'm so proud of this—was something like not even a six-quart basket from each event, like half of a six-quarter basket, that would be what we had to send to the landfill.

We took pictures of that. We did media events. We actually sent it to a group in Simcoe county called Zero Waste. They sent us back letters of congratulation. This is what they want to do; they want to do more of this kind of thing. We can educate the public to actually do that, and we can educate industry as well, but it takes time and it takes a little bit of an effort, and a little bit of cost in this case. But in the end, any other year that might have produced 10 bags of garbage to the landfill; this year, it did not do that. We're going to continue on that plan with any events we have in the future. It's a good example not only for ourselves but for other politicians in our community, in Simcoe county and, hopefully, in other parts of the province.

I have all the data if anybody wanted to follow up on that; I could show them what we did and how Kelly handled those two events. She did it with the help of the county of Simcoe. The county of Simcoe has gone through quite a bit of problems with the site 41 project. It was definitely in the wrong spot and we had to change that. The county came back and they've done massive recycling since that particular project was cancelled.

So when everybody works together—each level of government, industry and, of course, people personally, individuals—then you can do better. I know as a fact that the kids know a lot more about recycling than we do. The kids will tell you, if you go into a grade 4 or grade 5 class where the teachers have done a really good job on that, all about the coating they use on all the kinds of water bottles etc., and the kinds of glasses you can use. It does pay. I can tell you, from my perspective, I think that it's really important that we continue a strong campaign on recycling and get around to having as many of the young people recycle as possible.

I did want to pay tribute to Kelly today. I mean, she and I have had some battles over the years as far as what should be recycled and what shouldn't be, and what legislation we should put in place, but in the end we do know one thing for sure: that everyone has a responsibility. Whether it's industry, whether it's government, whether it's the individual, we all have to do a better job, because in the end nobody wants these landfills.

I also think that just adding taxes on in the form of eco fees is not a good sign, because what happens is that people will go and they'll find the product cheaper in another jurisdiction. Then that company loses out on the

sale of that particular product. Keeping the cost down is part of the overall plan or project that should follow any of these types of legislation.

I look forward to more debate on this bill, but I also look forward to hearing what people are going to say when they actually come to committee and what kind of amendments they would make to the bill. I mean, my impression—and what I've been told in the Legislature here—is that it's kind of a rehash or a review of the whole recycling industry. I think whatever happens on this as far as legislation, as far as regulations, we actually really have to get this right—because as I said earlier, when we bring out legislation like this, it's easy to sit in the committee and make amendments and pass them. But then again, the devil is usually in the regulations: What is the detail there and how does that impact people down the road? Whether it's job creation or not, I don't know, but in the end, I think it's really important that any legislation is affordable to the public, and educates the public as well. I think education is the key to everything around recycling, and, finally, making people commit to it, like not throwing garbage out the windows of their cars. That's a disgrace. There must be a pile of people doing that, because there's a pile of garbage along the sides of the roads right across our province. That is part of the thing that disturbs me and why I think we need better education on actually stopping that in the future.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It's a pleasure to respond to the member from Simcoe North. I commend him for bringing in a new practice, if you will, that reduces waste. If he's hosting an event, then he's actually demonstrating leadership. That's great.

It made me think of when I was a trustee on the Waterloo Region District School Board. We brought in a ban. Bans are not very popular because they're called "bans," but we tried to reduce our expenditures on single-use plastic bottles of water. In fact, I was shocked at the time—this was back in 2007-08. We were spending almost \$28,000, as a school board, on buying plastic bottles of water. As a board, we challenged that practice, and I think that actually it's incumbent upon all of us to champion that. In fact, even though the board reversed or backed off a little bit, schools like WCI, a local high school, championed the cause.

I think the member from Simcoe North alluded to this: that there's a whole generation coming up behind us that knows better than all of us.

I'm pleased to recognize Victoria Yang, who is here from WCI today. She's a co-op student from the school; she's working in my office. WCI is doing an amazing job on the environmental file. Thank goodness, because it should be encouraging for us as leaders who stand here.

I think the member from Simcoe North, though, ignores a very big thing, and that's the politics of Bill 91. Waste-related issues are very difficult to get on the political radar. If it was easy or if it was a priority, it would have happened 10 years ago—because we are 25 years behind

the rest of the country. I think, though, doing nothing in this instance is really not an option, which is why we're committed to making a full review of the legislation at the committee. We look forward to being part of that conversation.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** The member from Beaches–East York always repeats that after six and a half hours we agreed to continue the debate. He knows the rules, so he's just spinning the fact that we could vote after six and a half hours—and we cannot. He knows the rules.

I'll say that I commend my colleague for everything that he has been doing to keep Ontario clean. I know that in my own riding we have these cleanup days every spring and a lot of people are cleaning up, and I thank them for that.

But like we've heard time and again today, to leave this very important matter of recycling and all of this to the private sector is not the answer, because I told you before—I'm going to repeat it—when I changed tires on my car, I paid extra and it was supposed to be a disposal fee. And when I heard that everything was going to the dump instead of recycling it or paying a company to do something else with the tires—they were going to the landfill—it's not the answer. We have to be very strict about it, and I'll ask everyone to support Bill 91.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

1710

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** It's a pleasure to rise to hear the member from Simcoe North, and I don't want to claim that I stayed here for the period of the afternoon to listen only to that. There was a lot of good debate, and I stayed to listen to all of it. But I think he had a good example of what can be done. I think that's what we're lacking here: a plan that encourages people to plan to look after garbage.

In my riding, the Williamstown Fair board—which I was very proud to be a director of for about a dozen years—decided to, instead of using plastic glasses in the beer garden, they actually moved over to cans, and handed the cans out because they could be recycled. It saved the plastic glasses, it saved a lot of garbage, which was a problem each year. In turn, one of the charities actually collects the cans and collects half the refund, as part of the deal. I think that that goes with the people who are running that.

Just as I'm mentioning the Williamstown Fair, which is Canada's oldest fair, we had the president, Rick Marvell, celebrate his 70th birthday this weekend. Actually, his birthday is today, so they gathered quite a crowd and, for the things he has done in the community, I think it's well deserved.

Another example: I worked with Bell Canada in one of its largest office buildings here in Toronto. They went through a waste management program where they reduced the garbage from over 1,000 employees, I would

say, down to just a few garbage bags a week. But it took a lot of work; it took a lot of planning. It just goes to show that if you give industries some input into what their costs will be if they don't recycle, they will make changes and they will do things that will save them money because they have to add it to the bottom line. But if you take that ability out, and just legislate costs back towards them because the industry does—whether they are creating the waste or not—I think that that's a sign that doesn't allow the ingenuity that Ontarians have and a lot of these big companies have as a whole.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I listened intently to what the member from Simcoe had to say, and I commend him for his picnic, for the environmental effect that his community and his neighbourhood had, and for people of good faith everywhere in this province doing everything they can to reduce or to recycle. That's absolutely important.

I cannot help but stand up here after having listened to the Minister of Community Safety and what she had to say to this House. It is very clear on the face of the rules of procedure of this House that when a bill is being debated, after six and a half hours there are only two consequences that can take place: Either the government chooses, through a member of its cabinet, to call the vote or it chooses to extend the debate. The fact that we are here after six and a half hours is because a member of the cabinet of the government stood in their place and said, "We choose to extend the debate."

I don't know how I can be accused of mischief. I don't know how I can be accused of spinning that fact. That is exactly what happened in this House. I don't know how a member of the government and a cabinet minister can deny that reality. It is there on the face of Hansard. Either she or one of her colleagues would have had to have stood up and said exactly that.

I think that this minister owes an apology, not only to me, but to this House, for making a statement as spurious as the one that was just made.

I thank the member from Simcoe for what he had to say, and I think the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services should go back and look at her own rule book before she spouts such nonsense.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Simcoe North, you have two minutes for a response.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I thank the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services—I didn't really find it that bad—the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry and the member from Beaches–East York for their comments.

I want to welcome Victoria to Queen's Park. I understand at your school you do a lot of great work in recycling. That's exactly what I was getting at earlier when I talked about how young people seem to have a better grasp of this. It's almost like the BlackBerrys and

the way they grab on to the Internet etc. They seem to be so much more skilled in just learning this.

I applaud the education system for making sure that our young people are learning this. I think we can learn a lot from the young people, because they seem to know all the codes of the recycled materials.

I thank you for some of the comments on that particular project we did. From now on, in our riding, that's the way it will be with any of the federal or provincial events. We just want to make sure that we have an as-close-as-possible-to-zero-waste event.

I give the credit to my friend Kelly Clune from Orillia, who has been passionate about keeping material out of the landfills. She says that we can do a lot better and I agree 100% with her. Whether this bill will allow us to do better, I'm not sure in the long run, but I know that with good education and a lot of thought, and with our young people actually educating our more senior citizens, we can do a lot better of a job.

Again, I want to go back to my days as the warden of the county of Simcoe. The idea of landfills—they are the responsibility of the regional level of government. I tell you, it is a problem and we need to do everything we can not to have to build new landfills in our province. The way around that is waste diversion and recycling.

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

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Before I start, I'd just like to commend our critic Michael Harris from Kitchener–Conestoga and his staff, Shane and Rebecca. Our job in opposition is to look at every piece of legislation proposed to this House and truly go through it with a clear eye: Is this going to be in the best interests of Ontario taxpayers? Is this going to benefit our province? Is this going to make our province a better place, both for our generation and, most importantly, that generation sitting in front of you, Mr. Speaker? I applaud them. They've done a lot of great work.

I take a look at this bill's name, even—An Act to establish a new regime for the reduction, reuse and recycling of waste and to repeal the Waste Diversion Act, 2002. The word “regime” scares me, because they've got two regimes over there, more administration and more bureaucracy—

**Interjection:** Thirty-seven panels.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Thirty-seven panels, you're correct.

**Interjection:** And growing.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** And growing.

My other colleague, Mr. Miller from Parry Sound–Muskoka, started off his remarks, and I found it very interesting that back in 2005 he actually had a private member's bill called the product stewardship act. It's interesting, because I think the fundamental difference is—what we're saying and our policy, even today, is very similar to Mr. Miller's, proposed back in 2005, is that we should be setting, as government, the guidelines. We should be making sure that we understand what products we want to have recycled and put some thought around that. We need to set targets and then we actually should

have the ability to enforce and then get out of the way and let private industry do their job and do it to the best of their ability.

Stakeholders have come to me and they have concerns. I think what Mr. Miller was trying to say in his bill and where we stand, versus the government of today, the Liberal government, is that we need to ensure that the people who are most impacted, those producers who are paying the freight—and they do pay the freight totally for the program, yet they have almost no ability to have any input into how that program is administered, how it's managed or how it's done in a municipality. But they pay the freight.

Just think if it was your business and you could lower the cost by doing things effectively and cost-efficiently so there's more money in your coffers to be able to go out and buy things, which, again, I believe my colleague from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry suggested. If people have more money to spend, they're out buying consumable products and then there is actually more money and more jobs that are coming to the economy.

These companies are no different. They want to be able to have a say. They're quite fine, as they're telling me, to pay the freight, but they need to have a say in how that freight gets done and how they administer the programs. We have a fundamental concern with this bill from that perspective.

Before I go too far, I also want to put a shout out to the municipality of Meaford in my great riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. They've recently won a recycling award and are leaders across the country. I applaud them and I hope others will go onto their website, take a look at the ways they're doing things and make sure that they try to implement them, similar to what my colleague from Simcoe North has done personally with the programs that he runs, where there's almost zero waste going to the dump.

We heard in here, earlier today, that when the Liberals took power, 19% of products were being recycled, and that has actually dropped to 12%. This is an alarming trend that they've had 10 years, supposedly, to improve. They created another level of bureaucracy. They created a group at arm's length so that they could take all the glory and kind of make this group take the heat if there were bad-news stories coming. It sounds a bit like a LHIN to me, if you really think about it. They set this group up and put them off to the side, and they come out with the good-news announcements, but whenever it's one of their bad decisions they throw that back to the LHIN, and then we just go around and around the loop here.

**1720**

It's interesting because it sounds a bit like the deficit. When they took office, I believe it was about a \$129-billion debt, and we're going to be up to \$240 billion or \$260 billion by the end of their next term, although today we heard in the House that they're overachieving—if you can believe that—on their finances.

And it sounds like hydro rates. Again, we were the leader. Ontario was the leader of Confederation and had the lowest rates across the country. Now, we have the highest rates in North America, and there's going to be another increase coming to the businesses that we're talking about. No wonder we have—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you. I'd ask the House to come to order so I can hear the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, please. The member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I apologize, Mr. Speaker. I'll maybe just repeat that because there was a lot of noise going on over there, and I want to make sure that Hansard can hear that. It's appalling that they're actually overachieving and think they're overachieving with the financial record and the mess they've created in this province of Ontario. They've doubled the debt. They've got a deficit—\$10 billion this year, and what they left out of their remarks this morning is—the Premier was quite proud that they're hitting their targets and overachieving, but I think if you read their budget, that deficit is going to balloon back up to \$14 billion next year from \$10 billion this year. Well, that's going in the wrong direction if you're an achiever in my world.

I'm going to repeat about these hydro rates as well because, at the end of the day, we were the leaders. We had the lowest rates. We had a booming economy. We had people wanting to move to Ontario. We had businesses wanting to expand in Ontario. Now, we have 300,000 manufacturing jobs that have left the province. We've got energy rates that have doubled and are continuing to escalate, and we're driving more and more and more people out.

In this bill, they may have had a grandiose purpose, but the other thing that they've really done here is they've left the administration and bureaucracy in place. In fact, they're purporting to give them more powers, which scares me to death, when you give these bureaucrats more power to be able to set rates. It's just a hidden stealth tax, what they're trying to do. I believe my colleague from Durham stated the "stealth tax," and that's exactly what it is. Right now, you can read on that package of batteries, as he referenced, that \$2, if that's the number, goes now to recycling. Now, they're going to bury it in there, and there's nothing that stops Liberals—if you think about it, "I will not raise taxes"—from going from \$2 to \$5 or \$7.

If you need evidence of that, we just have to go back a few months ago when they implemented a supposed recycling program, the Ontario Tire Stewardship program. If numbers come to my mind, it was a 2,000% increase to the very farmers that we were talking about today with that Ontario food act that they're trying to save the world with. But a 2,000% increase I don't think is ever going to help any of our industry or agricultural community.

What they've done is they've actually given more power to a bureaucracy rather than them taking responsibility. With all due respect to Minister Bradley, that is

the minister's job. It's the minister's job to set guidelines, it's the minister's job to make sure that we have targets and it's the minister's job to enforce them. Don't delegate to yet another bureaucratic nightmare like the LHINs, like Ornge. We've seen what has happened there. We delegated and look what happened with the gas plants: \$1.1 billion of waste because they didn't make the proper decision. In this case, I have fears that the same thing may happen.

Environment Minister Jim Bradley claimed at a news conference on June 6 that Bill 91 would repeal our act, the PC act, as well as scrap Liberal-created eco taxes and recycling cartels, including Ontario Tire Stewardship and Ontario Electronic Stewardship. This statement is beyond disingenuous, with all due respect. Although Bill 91 would technically repeal the Waste Diversion Act, it continues—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I'm going to ask the member to withdraw the unparliamentary remark.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Withdraw, Speaker.

The Waste Diversion Act actually continues every single recycling program, every agency and every fee created under it in a section entitled "Existing Waste Diversion Programs and Existing Industry Funding Organizations." Bill 91 does, however, give the Minister of the Environment the ability to wind down these programs and organizations through regulation, if he chooses to. I've never seen the Liberals yet repeal a tax that they've implemented, so I have no great comfort and I believe the public has no great comfort that they will follow through. Even if they did, even if they really made that over-achieving jump of faith, it would take years and years and we would be way behind.

This Waste Reduction Act is a Liberal shell game that shifts eco taxes from consumers' receipts to price tags on store shelves. It's not going to do anything to help the consumers anymore. In fact, it's going to increase costs, and most of the people in my riding can't take many more increases. If you again talk about the tire stewardship fees that were 2,000%, if you talk about their hydro bills doubling over the last eight years under this government and another increase coming at us very shortly, there are people who are afraid to turn—we're starting to get into the fall and winter months of our climate. People are already starting to come to me saying, "I can't afford it." The United Way is already telling me that they're getting calls that they're not going to be able to handle this year for people, because those hydro rates are so high because of the poor decisions of this government.

They try to use things like the environment and recycling, and they try to spin with fancy titles, and I'll give them their due: Sometimes they've got some pretty catchy titles, and people are being hoodwinked a little bit. But at the end of the day, we have to get back to facts. We have to ensure that the programs we're doing—I believe my colleague from Simcoe North said it well: The devil is in the details of the regulations that will follow. This bill, they'll make it sound nice—"everything is good and rosy; the world is wonderful, and we're

going to save the planet because of this new act”—but at the end of the day the regulations will be, no doubt, more taxation and more cost to the consumer, which will yet again detract from or actually take away more jobs from our great province. We’ve got 600,000 people now unemployed; we can’t afford any more.

We have to ensure that we get there. We’ve got the worst recycling record in Canada. I believe we can be the best. Let’s give it back to industry. We can regulate it. We can monitor it. Let them run the program and get out of the way, like most other provinces—like BC—do.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** It’s always a privilege and a lot of fun following my friend from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. I can always count on him as far as where his beliefs are and where his thoughts are. Some of them we can agree on, but definitely there are some we don’t agree on.

I want to also commend the member from Simcoe North. I was very appreciative of what I hear he and his wife do in their spare time, going out with those walks. It’s nice to see other members having that opportunity to not only make a difference within their community but to find the time to spend some good quality family time. Whatever time you do get to spend with your family, it is always quality time.

I agree with my friend from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound in regard to waste management, in regard to the context of developing the proper legislation, standards and guidelines. We need to know that up front, before we implement any of these changes, because if we don’t do those—if we don’t take those appropriate steps, and if we don’t do like we’re doing right now, having those discussions in regard to implementing those regulations—those responsibilities, that role and the cost that is going to come out of there are certainly going to fall on municipalities, and us as taxpayers.

Now, my friend really lost me when he started talking about hydro, where he actually had indicated that the government—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** No, wait a second. I agree with the fact that this government has not been making appropriate decisions in regard to hydro rates, but, in all due fairness, neither has the Conservative government over the course of the years with the privatization that they have done. You have to agree with me on that one. The conglomerate of the 15 privatization companies over there—it’s a bureaucracy in itself.

I loved your analogy when you talked about the local LHINs—which is exactly that; it’s developing bureaucracy—but, in essence, what you enacted when the Conservative government was in power was exactly that, another bureaucracy that has actually raised the hydro costs across this province. The Liberals raise taxes and have developed committees and others, but the Conservatives have always looked towards privatization, and that’s not always the answer.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I appreciate the comment from the member from East York a few moments ago, but I would like to take this opportunity to share with the member that standing order 47 allows the government House leader, or a minister of the crown acting in his or her place, to adjourn debate after we’ve reached 6.5 hours. The key word here is “adjourn.” It does not end debate. It adjourns, it suspends, it postpones debate, to be called at another date.

Again, after 6.5 hours, debate would be adjourned, just like it is adjourned at 6 o’clock on a weeknight. Now, we also get the opportunity at 6.5 hours of debate to move a motion with notice providing for the allocation of time to debate on the bill. Two hours of debate apportioned equally among the three parties is allotted to debate on the time allocation motion, at the end of which time the Speaker will, without further debate or amendment, put the question. Time allocation requires the majority of votes to carry, which we do not have in a minority government situation, unless you want to vote for that. That is why the government said yes to continue the debate when we reached 6.5 hours, because we have no mechanism to end the debate unilaterally.

**1730**

We have debated Bill 91. Why don’t we bring it to committee and have all these amendments?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. John O’Toole:** I’ve been confounded here because of the minister of the Wynne government standing and feigning an attempt at time allocation, when, in fact, they’re working with a coalition government now. We have a clear coalition, for the people of Ontario, between the NDP and the Liberals. We understand that. The only party standing up for the people of Ontario is Tim Hudak and my colleagues in the PC caucus.

But sticking to the bill: What they want to do—to the viewers: They’re trying to stifle your members from speaking. We have members on this side who have not had the chance to speak on an important environmental issue which they have simply got wrong. This Bill 91 is a disguise. I’m going to just briefly—it’s seven sections, and I’ll give you one word for each one.

Part I is a general definition. Part II is setting up a brand new bureaucracy; it’s the Waste Reduction Authority. It’s just a name change, nothing else, in terms of—there’s one today. It’s called Waste Diversion Ontario. A name change; they all get severance pay and go on to do nothing, like they’ve done for the last 10 years. The responsibility for product in part III is producer responsibility. This is what we’re advocating today. That’s our plan. Take it and run with it. Part IV is integrated prices. This is hiding the price in the product so you and I won’t know what the battery costs, what the chlorine costs. Whatever it is, you’re going to pay more, and they have told us that. Part V deals with enforcement, which we think is legitimate. We felt from the very beginning that



you should set targets, monitor them and then enforce them. This government simply doesn't enforce them.

We have a huge issue in my riding. The Drive Clean program—the Auditor General said that it's a failed program. It's a failed program. They won't enforce it. This past week, I had some constituents on a transformer station on the top of the Oak Ridges moraine. Professors from Guelph university said that they had not done proper discipline on it. This government is not performing its duties.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I ran downstairs to get a copy of the Ontario Hansard from the 22nd of October, 2013, which I would like to read into the record.

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

"Acting government House leader."

The Honourable Jeff Leal gets on his feet and states the following: "Thanks very much, Madam Speaker. You're doing a great job this morning. On behalf of the Minister of the Environment, Mr. Bradley, and his wonderful bill, Bill 91, I would certainly like debate to continue."

Mr. Speaker, the government stands there and explains all kinds of stuff. The government has options. The government could invoke closure if the government wanted to try to invoke closure. They have done so even in a minority Parliament situation. They have done so with the concurrence of the Conservatives. They have done so after discussions with the House leaders. They have many tools available to them. But the tool that they chose on that occasion, through Mr. Leal, was to continue debate. That is what they chose, and no spinning by this minister or this government can get around it.

The House rules are absolutely clear. I would remind the minister that when her colleague stands up there and states, "On behalf of the Minister of the Environment, Mr. Bradley, and his wonderful bill, Bill 91, I would certainly like debate to continue," they cannot turn around thereafter and say they don't want it to continue.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound has two minutes to reply.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank my colleague from Algoma-Manitoulin. We always, I think, see more eye to eye than we disagree. I'm willing to continue to work with you on those ones that we can't agree on. I think you're salvageable, and I'll keep working with you, sir.

The Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services—you know, I'm going to let her and her colleague from the coalition continue to debate all they want. I'm not going to get into that one. I do think it's unfortunate that people will play that game in this House

and say, "We don't want a debate, we do want a debate," and then try to make us look bad when we're trying to do what we're sent here to do, and that is to stand and represent the wishes and the concerns of our constituents. That's our job. I will always do that, and I'll never apologize for doing that.

My esteemed colleague from Durham said it well. He brought up, again, that NDP-Liberal coalition. If there hadn't been that prop-up vote at budget time, we probably wouldn't be having any of these discussions because, hopefully, there would have been a change in government, and we could have saved those kids in front of you a lot of duress and concern over their lives.

I think what he brought up was a really good thing. We should be debating about the environment and things that are going to help our environment and ensure we have a safe and sustainable environment. He talked about hiding the price that the consumer pays. That's one of the big things in this bill that I'm afraid of. It's one more way for the Liberals to do what they do extremely well.

**Interjection:** Secret tax.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** That's secret tax, stealth tax: "We will not raise your taxes. There will not be a health tax. There will not be stewardship fees on your tractor tires." Mr. Speaker, it goes on and on and on. The public is catching on to this.

We need to get out of the way of people being able to do their jobs. The government's job is not to do every single job in the world. That's not our philosophy. It's not what the people of Ontario—they want the most cost-effective, efficient, best service possible. We need to ensure that, as government, we set the standard, we set the guidelines, we set the targets and we have the ability to enforce. When there's a case where there is private industry, which, by the way, keeps our economy going, those small businesses that everyone's proud to talk about—85% to 95% of our small businesses drive this economy. We need them to be driving it in this case as well. Get out of their way, and let them truly make it cost-effective.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Before I ask for further debate, I want to indicate to the House that I've allowed some latitude this afternoon because I thought it was appropriate to do so, but I think it's also necessary for me to point out a couple of things.

When we're debating Bill 91, I would ask members to confine their comments to the bill. I would also remind them that questions and comments are to relate back to the member who has just spoken, who has just given us their presentation, not previous rounds of debate. And third, the members should address their comments through the Chair, not to the cameras.

Further debate?

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** I appreciate the opportunity to address my remarks to the Chair and to talk a little bit about this proposed legislation, the Waste Reduction Act.

My present critic role is consumer services, but I was the opposition's environment critic at the time this government introduced eco taxes back in 2008.

We know the goal of Bill 91 and, like legislation before, of course, it's to reduce waste. It's something we, in this House, all agree about in principle. We're in favour of the concept, obviously. What we've heard during discussions even this afternoon—obviously the devil's in the details, but we really question how this will be implemented, who's going to pay for it and how much it's going to cost.

This new waste reduction strategy—and this government has been talking about it for over 10 years now, Speaker—does identify some challenges—four challenges specifically: waste diversion has stalled under the current act; lost opportunities to attract investment, to create new jobs, to foster innovation and conserve resources—none of that that is really occurring. The third major issue is the dwindling of our municipal landfills and the rising costs for those municipalities for the various diversion programs.

It's been 10 years now that we've been discussing this and, apart from making progress—in fact, in many ways, especially if you look at some of the targets that were set 10 years ago, we're going backwards as far as diversion.

The province of Ontario, at the present time, generates 12 million tonnes. That's enough garbage to fill the Rogers Centre—I'm sure this has been said before—every year. Only 25% of that waste is diverted. Actually, it might be 24% or it might be closer to 23%.

**1740**

One of the main planks of the current recycling system, curbside blue boxes were introduced under the last government in 2002. That's been a success. Although it was a success, the overall diversion rate has only gotten worse.

In 2008, the Ministry of the Environment put out a discussion paper talking about amendments and a new direction. I'll just quote:

“Over the past few years much progress has been made on waste diversion in Ontario. Programs initiated and developed under the Waste Diversion Act are changing the way we approach waste diversion. These initiatives have incorporated, to varying extent, principles associated with extended producer responsibility, which hold that producers should be responsible for the costs associated with the environmental impact of their products. Much more needs to be done. Stakeholders have identified a number of challenges,” this document goes on to say, “associated with the existing waste diversion framework, the programs that have been approved, and the act itself. Many feel that it is time to reflect on the approaches Ontario has taken, consider how best to undertake future waste diversion initiatives, and define what kind of a future we should drive toward, as a society.”

That was written back in 2008. Here we are, five years in. At the time, the goal was to move to a zero-waste strategy, and the move to zero waste was based, again, in researching these documents, on four building blocks:

“(1) A clear framework built upon the foundation of extended producer responsibility.

“(2) A greater focus on the first and second of the 3Rs—waste reduction, and reuse.

“(3) Increasing reduction and diversion of waste from the industrial, commercial and institutional sectors,” the ICI sector.

“(4) Greater clarity around roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities, to ensure that all players are contributing to a common goal.”

So, Speaker, here we are five years later, and things have gotten worse. The current waste reduction strategy for this bill admits, “We are still lagging behind other jurisdictions when it comes to reducing, reusing and recycling our waste,” this despite seeing the tax increases, the eco fees on a multitude of products and the move to have consumers pay for the end-of-life recycling of products. I think we have one of those “I told you so” moments.

The backgrounder then talked about surprise eco fees. We talked about sneaky eco fees. Whether they're surprise or sneaky, they both allude to a consumer not expecting that extra surcharge in addition to the transaction fee. I'd get people dropping into my office back then. They had just been charged what became a very significant fee from Leon's across the street or the Brick located down the street.

There's also an admission that recycling has been stalled at only 23% for 10 years. Again, we talked about the program not working five years ago. We'll say it again: Waste diversion and landfill management has not been successful under this present government.

I don't know whether people here would recall—there will be some Liberal members that may recall very early in this government, April 5, 2004, when then-environment minister Leona Dombrowsky announced her 60% waste diversion/reduction from landfills. She made the announcement in this House that there would be a 60% reduction in waste, and that was to be fulfilled the following year, in 2005. Now, she did later amend the target to 2008. What happened to that 60% reduction target? What happened to that promise to reduce waste by 60% made by this government 10 years ago? What's the waste reduction rate today, 10 years later? It's certainly not 60%. It's something like 23%. Did Ms. Dombrowsky know that at the time, that the waste reduction rate in 10 years was actually going to be worse, that it was going to be down to 23%, in spite of her commitment in this House to divert 60% of waste from landfill?

What did we get in the last 10 years? Well, we know about the eco fees; we know about the taxes—bad for the customer, bad for business and, essentially, it's bad for the environment. I really regret that those eco fees were snuck in under the cloak of environmentalism. That's an approach that obviously backfired. It affects all of us, those of us who are concerned about the environment, and it really had a very negative effect on the integrity of words like “stewardship,” “environmentalism” and “green.”

If that eco fee debacle didn't put “green” in a bad light, certainly the hundreds of industrial wind turbines

that are cropping up across rural Ontario are pretty well the final nail in that coffin. We're seeing a move away from eco fees now, to a structure where recycling costs—if I read this correctly—will initially be picked up by the manufacturer or the importer. We'll see how that works out.

I'll use, maybe, a better example: the tire stewardship program. There have been some hiccups with that program. I do talk to people in the industry; by and large, they're doing their best to try and make this work. The Used Tires Program goes back to 2009, as operated by the Ontario Tire Stewardship—so there have been some successes there. Certainly, we don't see the stockpiles of tires sitting in warehouses that we did a number of years ago, but then they kind of had to mess that up with these very large fees for off-road equipment and farm equipment—the horrendous tax increases on combine tires, for example.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I listened to the member, and it sounds like he wants to have waste diversion. He did talk about how this government has done a bad job since they've been governing, and they certainly didn't meet their targets.

Having this bill here, though—there is something in there that is worth bringing up. There's a section in there on the consideration of bans. Bans can be a good thing. In Nova Scotia and in BC, they had bans in place. There are provinces out there you can maybe use as a guide to see, if you do put a ban in, how to make sure that ban will help, for instance, innovation. When you ban something, people have to come up with different ideas on how to dispose of that sort of material.

Perhaps also making sure that, when people take their waste to the landfills, it's charged appropriately so then that forces them—if the cost is reflective of what the cost is for a landfill, then perhaps they should be looking at other ways to divert their waste. It forces people to think outside of the box and come up with ideas and new ways of disposing waste.

I'm not going to mention the member's riding, because I don't think that would be appropriate—but there are members in the opposition party who sometimes throw a comment out there and rile everyone up, and then they just run out. You know those kids in class—what were they called?—the “something”-disturbers. I can't remember the first word, but you know those kids. Then they'd run out the door, and everybody would be riled up. Before you make those comments, please, let's have an effective debate about waste diversion, and skip that. Try it; you might like it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I want to thank the member opposite for his comments, although I must say it seems to be a bit contrary to the position that his leader has taken in terms of clearing the decks and letting the Legislature get on

with the work. We've had 12 hours of debate on Bill 91; 47 members of the Legislature have spoken to this bill. I guess on this side, we're wondering why we're not moving forward with a piece of legislation that we believe would create some jobs and is a good piece of legislation we need to get in place.

1750

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I'm proud to rise to comment on the words of the member from Haldimand–Norfolk. I understand, from previous talk, that this government had the chance to limit debate, but they chose not to. So I'm somewhat surprised by the comments. Saying that, I look at some of the comments he talked about, the amount of waste, and I think really that's what we think this bill should be: something that actually attacks the amount of waste that we're seeing, not just another way of charging people to get rid of it.

In my own riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, I actually met with somebody that was trying to get more recycled tires. There was scarcity and he couldn't get a hold of them, or at least he couldn't get them back from the group that looks after these tires now. I think that there's a market out there; there's a chance for people to actually make money out of it and not charge consumers for it.

It's interesting, we talk about—this is 10 years of Liberal government here, and Minister Dombrowsky with a 60% diversion target the next year. We see promises—but we never saw anything on that again.

It's just typical of how the government gets out there with big, flashy headlines. We heard just a few weeks ago how the government was going to save us hundreds of millions of dollars by paying windmill operators not to produce power. But we've already paid them hundreds of millions of dollars to build the darn things, and now we're going to save money by paying them not to produce power because we've got a surplus. I guess, like through the gas plants, they saved us money by delaying them—\$1.6 billion, but then we turned around and we've got \$200 billion in savings, because we didn't need them anyway. That's the speak we hear from this government.

People are rebelling. It's time to think of the people that are paying the taxes, people paying the hydro bills.

This is just another example where if they can hide the tax, that's what they go for, as long as people don't know what they're paying.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** We have time for one last question or comment.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I always wanted to get up and thank the member from Haldimand–Norfolk, who puts a lot of time and effort and is a true champion of the environment. If you look at his record, he has been the critic of the environment. He stands up for what he believes in and speaks to truth. In fact, the real truth is he does speak, as my colleague from Sarnia–Lambton says—sorry?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Truth to power.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Yes, truth to power—Sarnia–Lambton.

The real issue here is that in one section of seven sections of the bill—there's one section that is most telling of all the sections, and that is the section where they're hiding the cost—through you, Speaker; I wouldn't speak to the camera unless, of course, it was following me. The fact is, though, that section 3, I believe it is, where they hide the cost is the most telling. What have they got to hide on this? We're meeting on Wednesday on openness and transparency. What is this about? They say one thing and do another; it's almost like a shell game.

Bill 91 purports to do something which it doesn't do. It changes the name of the organization. It changes their name—they all get severance pay or something, or new uniforms or something like that—and then they try to change the definition. I can't believe the treachery that is in this bill, and I only focused on that one section.

The member from Haldimand–Norfolk—I think the content of his remarks was really referring to practical solutions that he put on the table.

Remember, I now know, because of the member from Beaches–East York, that there are four forms of matter: solid, liquid, gas and plasma. I've been advanced.

But see, we live in an innovation economy in society. I'm certain I've talked to Sony and other companies that have ideas; they want some standards and some measures and some enforcement. They're pleased to save the environment. We all share the environment.

Don't let them think that they're fooling anyone in this House, that's for sure.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. I return to the member for Haldimand–Norfolk for his response.

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** Yet again, I appreciate the opportunity to just say some additional remarks.

I can understand why the government does want to suffocate debate, and it is embarrassing when we do talk about promises that were made 10 years ago to divert 60% of waste from landfill. Here we are today to find out only 23% of waste is being diverted from landfill.

I tried to be charitable. There have been successes with the tire stewardship, the truck recycling program—this is what some of the fellows tell me. There have been some problems, though. They run deficits, I know. In off-road tires in 2009, they ran a deficit of \$8 million. What was their solution? Jack up the rates. They jacked up the rates by something like 1,000% in that sector.

There was a proposal. Say for a John Deere 9770 combine tire, the disposal fee—unbelievable—is \$1,646.40. If you're combining in British Columbia and you've got to replace a tire, you're looking at \$210. There are five other provinces where there's no fee at all.

One other thing I wanted to mention—and I know it's embarrassing for the government—is in 2010, this government collected something like \$44 million in eco taxes on the waste electrical and electronic equipment program, the WEEE program. Guess what the diversion rate was there? It wasn't 60%. It wasn't 23%. It was 2%. They met 2% of their recycling targets. That's a lot of money for a 98% failure rate.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** It being quite close to 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1757.*

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott  
Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon  
Cheri DiNovo, Christine Elliott  
Mitzie Hunter, Rod Jackson  
Sylvia Jones, Monique Taylor  
Soo Wong  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day





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