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of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 21 October 2004

Jeudi 21 octobre 2004

Speaker
Honourable Alvin Curling

Président
L'honorable Alvin Curling

Clerk
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 21 October 2004

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 21 octobre 2004

The House met at 1845.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TAX TERMINOLOGY
HARMONIZATION ACT, 2004
LOI DE 2004 SUR L'HARMONISATION
DE LA TERMINOLOGIE FISCALE

Mr Phillips, on behalf of Mr Sorbara, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 105, An Act to revise terminology used in the French version of certain statutes / Projet de loi 105, Loi révisant la terminologie utilisée dans la version française de certaines lois.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Joseph N. Tascona): Debate?

Mr Peter Kormos (Niagara Centre): Mr Bisson cannot be here at the moment; he's going to be coming back shortly. He's doing some French-language taping, as a matter of fact, with TFO. I indicated to my colleague the member from Timmins-James Bay that I would commence his one-hour leadoff on this bill in terms of debate.

Here it is now second reading. I would indicate to the Chair, although we should understand that the standing orders don't require that I indicate this, that I may well, in a rare occurrence, share the time with Mr Bisson. But I may not, because if Mr Bisson doesn't get here within the hour, Mr Bisson will have to wait his turn in rotation.

My wonderful colleague from Hamilton East, Andrea Horwath—and everybody in the province knows her—is here with us as well tonight. Michael Prue is up in our caucus room. Rosario Marchese is here. He dropped in. He's got some telephone calling to do. Howard Hampton and Shelley Martel are tending to their kids. As a matter of fact, Jonathan came in the top 20th percentile in the little school marathon that they did today—long-distance running.

Mr Ted Chudleigh (Halton): How long did he run?

Mr Kormos: He ran a long, long time. He runs physically as well as his father does politically or electorally. And Shelley was telling me earlier how incredibly proud and moved she was by Jonathan's successful completion of that very youthful marathon. Indeed, when she told me where he ranked, I thought that was pretty darn good.

Mr Chudleigh: He's probably going to bed early.

Mr Kormos: I'm sure that he's not watching the legislative channel. I'm sure he's going to be retiring early, and Shelley, bless her, will have no problem getting those kids into bed.

We are of course debating Bill 105, which has been to committee after first reading and may well go to committee again after second reading, depending upon the preference of this House—well, really depending upon the preference of any given single member of the chamber, right? Any one of us has the power to effectively force the bill into committee after second reading, notwithstanding that it has already been in committee after first reading, because going into committee after first reading is the sole prerogative of the government and not of opposition members.

This is a strange sitting evening because in the 16 years or so—some days it seems longer; some days it seems like it was only yesterday, doesn't it?—I have rarely have seen the House sit on Thursday evenings, but we're faced with peculiar times, and I suppose peculiar times prompt peculiar circumstances. So here we are.

1850

I got served with notices of motion today—oh, incredible. The government wants to sit until midnight every day in this week, the week after that and the week after that. Well, please don't play the Christmas ruse for me. I'll sit Christmas Day if I have to. I've got no sentimentality around Christmas. Please, as long as somebody feeds me in the morning, I'm good for the day.

Here we are debating Bill 105, Speaker. Let me compliment you on your ascension to the chair, member from Oshawa. You're an impressive member, and even more impressive when you're in the chair.

I was telling you last night, you recall, when Mr Barrett was speaking—I wasn't heckling Mr Barrett, but I was interrupting him and he was responding to me such that Hansard then recorded the comments that I was making. That's one of the nice things about sitting right here, because Hansard has no trouble hearing me when I'm engaging in that.

I was just telling Ms Horwath, as a matter of fact, how on Sunday I was down at St John the Baptist Hungarian Greek Catholic Church in Welland, where we celebrated the fall dinner. We celebrated the 25th anniversary of ordination of Father Angyal from Windsor. We also had a chance to meet, for the first time, Father Miskei. He's a Hungarian from Slovakia, which isn't an unusual thing. He just got into town last Wednesday from Slovakia and has never been to Canada before. He's the new pastor for Our Lady of Hungary Roman Catholic Church on

Hellems Avenue, just beside the Hungarian Hall on Hellems Avenue.

In addition, we had as a welcome return guest at that dinner Reverend Kántor from the Hungarian Presbyterian Church in Delhi. That's how it happened that Mr Barrett, who is of course the member from Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant, was speaking. That's how we had occasion to exchange, because Reverend Kántor was speaking highly of Mr Barrett, the member for Haldimand-Norfolk-Brant. Reverend Kántor and others were at the Hungarian Hall, and Mr Barrett showed up as the MPP and wanted to be right in the kitchen, right where all the action was. He spoke with the people, the cooks in there, a lot of women and some men who work incredibly hard preparing wonderful meals. I had occasion to compliment Mr Barrett last night on the high regard with which these people hold him and how pleased they were that he dropped by the Hungarian Hall.

I was so pleased to have Reverend Kántor in Welland again. Don't forget, this is a generation of Hungarian-Canadians. In the case of Reverend Kántor, he was telling me that he left Hungary, not unpredictably, in the aftermath of the Hungarian Revolution. He was a 19-year-old, he told me, at the time, and he left with his father. His father was a cabinetmaker. They ended up in Connecticut, where there were some aunts, as I recall him telling me. As a young man, 19 years old and still a student, he was moving to Connecticut.

Again, when we think of a European or any immigrant to the United States, we think of them going to perhaps more cosmopolitan communities: New York City—bigger, broader New York City; Chicago; Cleveland; any one of those cities that has a reputation or that you identify with immigrant communities. Connecticut, somehow, perhaps naively, least of all in the 1950s in the United States—you know what our image is of Connecticut.

Then again, I think Toronto wasn't a very multi-ethnic community back in the 1950s, was it? It was a pretty Anglo community.

I was down in the summer months for the South Asian festival along Gerrard Street East, where the South Asian community is now. It was a wonderful festival. It's Marilyn Churley's riding. Walking down the street—and again, it's a lot of South Asian families who live and work there; their shops are there and their restaurants. Then you see some of the signs that are chiselled into the cornerstones, and I identified that as a very Anglo-Irish neighbourhood—totally transformed.

Mind you, in its own day it was an immigrant neighbourhood. When Irish immigrants were living there, settling there, it was an immigrant neighbourhood too. That's an incredible transformation, but again, let's not forget that Toronto in the 1950s was not a particularly—when I say ethnic, I perhaps am inaccurate. Far too often maybe it's just bad form to deny ethnic flavour or character to Anglo-speaking immigrants, because of course Irish is an ethnicity. Again, I just found it strange that Reverend Kántor's family ended up in Connecticut, of all places.

He first became a tool and die maker and then went into the ministry. He has been all over the United States, including Buffalo, and ended up in Delhi, which as you know has a strong Hungarian community, a strong Belgian community, a strong German community, amongst others, and a Polish community as well.

So there I was at the St John the Baptist Hungarian Greek Catholic Church, as I was telling Ms Horwath during our supper break this evening, with this wonderful collection of people. Father Angyal, of course, from Windsor is a frequent visitor to Welland and to the Greek Catholic and the Hungarian community there. Father Miskei, as I say, speaks far better English than I do Hungarian or Slovak, make no mistake about that—far, far better. It was a delight meeting him, and I extended a sincere welcome to him on behalf of the community.

We're just so fortunate that people of this calibre choose Canada, as this world becomes smaller and smaller, when the choices become greater—really they do—that they choose Canada. I am convinced that every time a new Canadian sets foot on Canadian soil, regardless of where they're from in the world, this country becomes richer and stronger; this country's prosperity is reinforced. The incredible wealth of talent and skill that new Canadians bring to this country is just tremendous.

Of course, one of the concerns that I'm sure all of us in this Legislature continue to have—and I know that Bill 105 is not, in and of itself, any sort of panacea for this particular problem—is the underutilization of the tremendous skills and talents that new Canadians bring with them to this country. It's trite to say, but there are far too many new Canadians who were delivering babies in their homeland but now are delivering pizzas in Canada—yes, and even in Ontario.

One doesn't have to be altruistic to support this campaign for recognition of the skills and capacity and training of foreign-trained professionals. One could be very self-interested; one could be very selfish. It is an incredible waste of resources to have an engineer, a doctor, a veterinarian, a nurse, any number of incredibly skilled trades and professions, grossly underemployed. We're all losers when that happens.

That's why, while Bill 105 doesn't specifically address this issue, I think it is important that—I have no hesitation in seizing this occasion to make the plea once again, yet once again, for us as a province, and the province certainly can't do it alone. There's a whole lot of responsibility that rests with the federal government to expedite this process of recognizing foreign-trained professionals. We're so blessed with these people, women and men who come to Canada under any number of circumstances and who are so underemployed once they get here.

1900

I appreciate that Bill 105 doesn't reflect any of the promises made by the Liberals during the course of the election campaign, but much has been made of the campaign promises and the aftermath of that election campaign.

I'm reminded of the story of the very senior Liberal politician, and this fellow apparently had held elected positions in city councils, in provincial government, in federal government and had gone on to join the Senate. He was in his senior years but he was tragically killed in a motor vehicle accident. A truck ran him over as he was crossing the street. This very senior and experienced Liberal politician of course was rapidly sent to heaven, where he was confronted by Saint Peter. Saint Peter said, "It's rare that we get politicians of your experience up here in heaven in the first place, but now that you're here, I want you to know that the rules are that you get to choose where you want to spend eternity—in heaven or in hell." This now sadly, tragically dead Liberal politician said, "That's easy; I want to spend eternity in heaven." Saint Peter said, "No, no, no. It's not a matter of just making a choice; you have to spend one day in hell first and one day in heaven before you make that choice."

So this very senior Liberal politician, who may well have been one of the authors, one of the protagonists, of Bill 105, took the elevator down to hell. The elevator doors opened and he saw beautiful greenery and flowing streams and crisp, sunlit skies. He started to recognize it. He was in hell, and he started to recognize a whole lot of his former colleagues. They were impeccably dressed and eating caviar and lobster and drinking champagne from Waterford crystal. They were laughing and singing. Indeed, the Devil himself joined our sadly, tragically deceased Liberal politician. They told jokes and they bantered. Time went by so quickly; it was such a beautiful place. Time flies when you're having fun.

Before you knew it, the 24 hours were over and our deceased Liberal politician had to take the elevator up to heaven and experience his 24 hours there. In heaven there were clouds, and he spent time with angels and they played harps and they sang a lot. Sure enough, that 24 hours went by quickly. Saint Peter had the tragically deceased Liberal politician brought before him and said, "Well, you have to make your choice." The politician said, "I never thought I'd say this. Heaven is very nice, but hell was exceptional. So many of my friends are there, and it is such a wonderful, beautiful place that I've got to tell you that, yes, I select, I pick, I choose to spend my eternity in hell."

He took the elevator down, and the elevator doors opened and he marched out, only to be confronted by a dry, arid, barren landscape. All the people who were well-groomed and happy and well-dressed before, including so many of his old friends, were in rags and tatters. They were thirsty and they were hungry, and their skin was burnt and dry from the blazing, hot sun. Lucifer was standing there—Satan—with his arms crossed. The deceased Liberal politician said, "I don't believe this. Two days ago, when I was here, this was so beautiful. How could this happen?" Lucifer said, "It's simple. Two days ago, you were still campaigning. Today, they voted."

It's a very long story, but the moral is so apt. You see, two days ago, we were still campaigning. After folks

voted, my goodness, they sure got confronted with a different reality. It's, "Yikes, how could this happen? How could this be? What gives here? What's going on?"

I was just down at the Toronto Hilton hotel on a picket line with some members of HERE, who were locked out by the Airport Hilton on Monday. They were locked out. They haven't had a contract since April. We're talking about cleaning staff, the folks who clean your room, your bathtub, your toilet, your sink and make your bed. I'm talking about the folks who clean the corridors of that hotel. It's a high-priced hotel. It's the Airport Hilton. We're talking about servers and waiters and backroom kitchen staff. They haven't had a contract in six months, and then they were locked out. They didn't go on strike, Ms Horwath; they were locked out by management, their jobs taken over by scabs crossing picket lines. A whole lot of these workers are women, and a whole lot of these workers are new Canadians, people who came here with optimism, people who came here with enthusiasm.

What are the issues of the negotiations? Well, the Airport Hilton is trying to force the cleaning staff—people who clean rooms, most of them women—into doing it on piecework instead of on an hourly salary. Quite frankly, one of the efforts, one of the struggles of hotel-industry employees in the city of Toronto and across this province has been to reduce the number of rooms a day that they're required to clean. You're talking about quotas imposed on them of 12 to 14 rooms a day. It doesn't matter whether some drunk the night before left a hellish mess that involves getting on one's hands and knees and not only scrubbing the toilet and bathroom facilities but the carpet as well. It doesn't matter whether the people left the snotty, snarky penny on the side table as some sort of joke, a gag pourboire.

Mr Michael Prue (Beaches-East York): "Pourboire" is a French word.

Mr Kormos: Well, Bill 105 is about French-language amendments to various tax legislation.

I stood with those people with great pride, because one of the other issues that's a subject matter of their negotiations—negotiations that the Airport Hilton has refused to participate in in good faith, and has forced them on to the streets by locking them out—is the theft of their tips by the Airport Hilton.

Let me explain to you how that happens. We're all familiar with booking events for our family or for sports clubs or political parties or any number of things, whether it's a group of six or a group of 60. We're told by the caterer, by the company that's going to accommodate us, that there will be a service charge added: 15%. Well, the only conclusion that's drawn by any of us who, as consumers, make that contract is that it's a 15% tip, a gratuity, the pourboire for those wait staff and kitchen staff and people who accommodate us. Well, at the Airport Hilton, they charge a 15% service charge for events like weddings and banquets. The workers don't see a penny of it; not a penny.

Now, where I come from, that's called stealing. Where I come from, it's called stealing from hard-working

people who work really hard for very modest wages. You've got a big multinational company like the Hilton hotel chain—and this is the Hilton chain that's based in the United Kingdom—that rips off these hard-working women and men and, quite frankly, deceives their customers. It's a deceit of their customers too, because people sign those contracts and say, "OK, the tip is taken care of." You've been to some of these banquets. Sometimes you pass the bread basket, where people throw in a toonie or \$4 or \$5, because that's the tip. But in this case we don't have to do that. It's embarrassing to do that at a wedding. You're not likely to do it. You say, "It's OK. It's no problem, because the 15% is added to the bill." But the Airport Hilton's scab bosses rip off those workers by stealing from them the tip that's added to the bill for a banquet service.

These people are locked out, and scabs are being bused across their picket line. You see, these are workers who know that if we still had NDP anti-scab legislation in this province, they never would have been locked out, that they would have been allowed to stay working at their jobs, which they were pleased to do, notwithstanding not having a contract for six months, and there would be meaningful and real negotiations.

1910

Why, these people had less than pleasurable memories of the two terms of previous government. They, I'm sure, like so many others—and I'll bet you money that some of them voted Liberal; I bet you money some did. As a matter of fact, it's a pretty safe bet. I mean, 145 workers—you can bet your boots some of them voted Liberal. A lot voted NDP; I suspect they did. I don't think any voted Tory, but some voted Liberal. If they weren't citizens yet and couldn't vote, I'm sure they might have taken a Liberal sign and put it on their front porch, because they believed the Liberals when they were campaigning and they believed Dalton McGuinty and his message of change. But here we go: People voted for change and they got more of the same. They got a government here at Queen's Park, Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals, that tinkers with labour law reform—tinkers—yet won't come close to the real issues, like the need to restore anti-scab legislation in this province so that those workers, like those workers at the Airport Hilton, those 145 women and men, hard-, hard-, hard-working women and men, many of them—please, don't get me wrong. I mean, look, don't try the line, "Oh well, maybe those are the best jobs they deserve." They're a whole lot of educated people. You remember how I started these comments by talking about foreign-trained professionals. You've got a whole lot of well-educated people cleaning those hotel rooms at the Airport Hilton, serving those meals, working hard as dishwashers and food prep people in the kitchens and cleaning hallways and scrubbing down carpets and banquet rooms.

So the two are very much related. And I say this government would do right were it to move quickly to reinstate anti-scab legislation, although I understand that it would be hard-pressed to do so in view of the fact that

it supported the newly elected Conservative government's, Mike Harris's government's, repeal of that same legislation back in 1995, after that election which put Conservatives into power here at Queen's Park.

The other day we had the chicken farmers here—a good group of people. I think most areas of the province are covered, unless you get really far north, but especially down where I'm from, the central south through north of Lake Ontario, down into the southwest—they had a map of, I think, seven districts of chicken farmers; all this for a law, but you saw the map they produced. And again, Mr Ouellette would know some of these chicken farmers, entrepreneurs, some third- or fourth-generation.

Mr Jerry J. Ouellette (Oshawa): I worked on a chicken farm.

Mr Kormos: I'm going to get to that. I'm going to get to working on a chicken farm.

We spoke with those people about some of their special interests—I don't think it's inappropriate to call them special interests—one of them being the need to preserve the federal tariffs to protect them from cheaply produced chicken, in particular from Brazil. These farmers are at risk from a federal government that is going to sell them out. You know that, don't you? These chicken farmers are at risk from a federal government that is going to sell them out at the bargaining table. And it's not that there isn't already a window for imported chickens. Indeed there is a significant number—I think it's 7.5%—of imported chickens. It's only after that that the quota kicks in.

One of the hardest-working groups of people I have ever met are chicken catchers. One of the hardest-working groups of women and men I have ever had occasion to know, and I'm proud of them, are chicken catchers. You can spot a chicken catcher half a mile away, because the chicken catcher has clawed and scratched-up wrists, often infected and pus-y. The chicken catcher has puffy, pus-y eyes—I'll explain that to you in just a minute—and oftentimes infected nostrils and ears.

I know these people. They are part of that community of invisible workers in our society. We don't see them. We see firefighters, police officers and teachers and nurses, as we should. But we don't see those workers at the Airport Hilton who have been forced out on to a picket line because they've been locked out, because they're working in the bowels of the kitchen, or they come to your room after you're gone. Think about this: You're talking about women and men who are on their hands and knees scrubbing toilets and bathtubs almost twice every hour, scrubbing out a toilet and a bathtub and a sink twice every hour on their hands and knees, and making beds and turning mattresses. You're talking about hotel workers, an industry and a job class that has high, high rates of injuries, especially back problems, because of the lifting.

Chicken catchers: I can tell you that we have a strong community of chicken catchers down where I come from in Niagara and, I think, in every part of the province where chickens are produced. They are bused out,

trucked out, vanned out to chicken barns, usually in the dark of night. I know one of the Liberals, Mrs Van Bommel, could elaborate on this, because she's a chicken farmer. You're talking about barns that contain not just 50 chickens, not 150 chickens but thousands of chickens. And you're talking about an industry that doesn't have any standards around health and safety. You're not talking about an industry that, as part of its culture, has safety clothing assigned to it—safety boots and goggles. Many chicken catchers even bring their own bottle of water, because they can't necessarily expect to get water—it's piecework.

They rush into these chicken barns with thousands of chickens and literally chase them—the chickens don't like to be caught, do they, Mr Ouellette?—and there is a dust storm of chicken feces and chicken urine and various mites and insects. That's what causes the infected nostrils and the infected eyes. Of course, as they are being caught, the chickens will urinate into the chicken catcher's eyes, causing incredible discomfort and, quite frankly, pain, and the chickens will claw away and scratch the wrists, and those wrists will get infected. You're in a condition where you can't run out and wash off with anti-bacterial soap every time you catch a chicken; you have to keep chasing these damned things and getting them into crates, and other people are throwing those crates on to the back of the huge trucks that you see from time to time travelling across the 400-series highways and the QEW.

These are hard-working women and men. They understand that they are not in a high-wage industry; they know that. They know that they're never going to be shopping at Holt Renfrew or at any of those places on Bloor Street; they know that.

1920

They know that, as often as not, rather than buying the groceries at a Loblaws or a Zehrs or Pupo's, they're going to be at the food bank. Because when you're a low-wage worker like that, with an unstable, irregular income, you're one of the working poor, you're one of that increasing number of people here in the city of Toronto—my Toronto colleagues will confirm this—where to work and to be working steadily doesn't necessarily mean that you have a home. Does it, Mr Prue?

Mr Prue: It doesn't.

Mr Kormos: Because when you're working for minimum wage in the city of Toronto, and in most other parts of this province as well—in fact, probably all of them—why, notwithstanding that you're working 40, 45 hours a week, you're homeless. Of course, this is one of the reasons why a whole lot of minimum-wage people—a whole lot; not all of them. And I dare say that very few voted for Conservatives in the election of last year because they saw what eight years, two terms, of Conservative government did with respect to minimum wage. They did. Not a penny increase. The last increase was by the New Democrats. Not a penny increase in over eight years.

Not all of them, but I'm sure a whole lot of minimum-wage people voted NDP. But I think a whole lot also

voted Liberal because they believed Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals and their candidates and their high-priced slick campaign ads on television and billboards and radio, that voting for Liberals meant voting for change. Well, those same minimum-wage people find themselves getting poorer and poorer because the few-cents-an-hour increase that the Liberals eventually gave them doesn't even begin to make up for the wage reduction they suffered over the course of eight years, Mr Ouellette. It doesn't even begin to compensate for eight years of zero increment.

So after eight years—the last time minimum-wage workers enjoyed a wage increase was during the NDP government of 1990-95—they get insulted by this government with coins. They got nickelled-and-dimed by the Liberals, the same Liberals who'll charge fat-cat rich friends five grand a pop to come to their fundraising dinners. But when it comes to the poorest workers out there: nickelled-and-dimed.

Chicken catchers are among those poorest of workers. Quite frankly, so are the women and men who work in the hospitality industry, like those workers at the Airport Hilton who were forced on to the street by the Airport Hilton hotel. The interesting thing is, of course, that the Airport Hilton, when it takes reservations or when it gets calls and people want a room, don't tell potential guests that they just threw all their workers out on to the street and that there's going to be a picket line.

I guess we're telling folks now. The Airport Hilton is a scab hotel at the moment. It's employing scab workers. It's forced its workers out on to the street, and it's stealing and has been stealing. The Airport Hilton and its management are thieves. They have been stealing money from those workers because they've been ripping them off, stealing the gratuity that has been attached to banquet hall and similar bills being paid by customers of the Airport Hilton, without telling those customers, of course, that that money is not going to those workers.

The New Democrats have no hesitation standing shoulder to shoulder, arm in arm, in solidarity, side by side with every one of those workers—and their union. Let's face it, if there weren't a union, those workers wouldn't be negotiating anything, and there would be no process whatsoever.

I've got folks down where I come from—you folks will remember the Ramundo family. They run Celi and Presti; I was in there last Saturday. Celi and Presti is a long-time family-run business. It's an Italian delicatessen, a small supermarket delicatessen. You go there for the cheeses, the Italian-style cured meats—prosciutto, capicollo, things like that—just outstanding food. It's either them or Joe's gelateria up the road on Crowland Avenue.

I remember when the first record highs occurred in electricity prices when the Tories commenced the deregulation of electricity. Celi and Presti, and the Ramundo family, like everybody else who as small entrepreneurs, small business people struggling and working hard—these people don't know what holidays are, they

don't know what a day off is, they don't know what overtime is. They work. That's all they know. They work from early in the morning until late at night. And do you know what? They've still got time for their community and they've still got time for their church. I know that the Ramundo family is very supportive of St Mary's church over on Hellems Avenue. They work hard. They work seven days a week from early morning until late at night and they've still got time for family, they've still got time for community and they've still got time for church. But these are people who started ringing the alarm bells. They rang the alarm bells around the impact of high electricity prices on small businesses like theirs. And they're going to be hit again. The caps are off.

The government is talking about smart meters. If you have thousands of dollars of meat sitting in a cooler to keep fresh for your customers, you can't plug in and unplug the cooler so it only operates when the smart meter tells you electricity is cheaper. It simply doesn't work that way. One prosciutto can cost as much as \$300. You know what I mean—the cured pressed ham. A good-quality prosciutto can cost \$300. So it's just naive, it's silly, to tell small entrepreneurs like the owners of Celi and Presti that somehow smart meters are going to reduce their electricity costs. It is downright, plain silly, and it's not particularly straightforward or honest either.

These are, again, hard-working people. They are never going to buy \$75,000 BMWs. They're never going to own a condo somewhere in a tropical or subtropical zone; not even a time-share. They worked hard, they saved, they made sure their kids got far better educations than they did—we know that's so typical. As it is, the Ramundos are new Canadians in their own right, a long time here but new Canadians in their own right, first-generation immigrants from Italy. They were hell-bent that their kids weren't going to spend their lives working 16 hours a day in a groceteria or a delicatessen. Their kids were going to get educations, and they did. Just like those women and men I was standing with today on their picket line outside the Hilton hotel—again, not to suggest they aren't well-educated. There would be a whole lot of people in that group I was with who are very well-educated, but because of our xenophobic reluctance to recognize foreign-trained professionals, they simply don't have the opportunities they should have. But those people are going to work hard.

Being that level of worker in the hotel industry is a tough, tough way to make a buck. But they'll do it. Just like their sisters and brothers in the needle trades, the textile industry and the home workers, the ones who put together all that high-priced Gucci clothing that Hilary Weston sells for outrageous, rip-off prices over at Holt Renfrew. None of these people are ever going to match Hilary Weston's couture standards. They're too darned busy working. And do you know what? There's that doorman at Holt Renfrew. I'm not sure, but I've got a feeling that the people would be told, "No, workers enter through the back," should they even try going to Holt Renfrew over on Bloor Street.

1930

At Holt Renfrew you see those big Mercedes S500s and S600s—Liberal friend fat cats and Tory friend fat cats—parked out in front with the motors running, parked in a no-parking zone. But when you've got a Mercedes—every time I see one of those Mercedes S500s or S600s, I say, "There's another person who's still not paying enough income tax, there's another person who got that huge tax cut from the Tories and hasn't returned a penny of it and, now that the Liberals have been elected, indeed enjoys yet more preferential treatment as a result of the Liberal government's so-called health tax premium, which leaves the very rich alone and punishes, hammers away at, low-income and middle-income folks, including retirees."

I ran into an old friend the other day, a retired police officer who has been retired for 18 years now. He still works, because a little extra money helps. He, as a retiree, as a pensioner with an 18-year-old pension—you know what that means, don't you? That pension is being paid in—

Mr Ouellette: In 1976—

Mr Kormos: In 1976 dollars—a big difference between 1976 dollars and 2004 dollars, ain't there, Mr Ouellette?

Mr Prue: In 1986 dollars.

Mr Kormos: In 1986 dollars. Thank you. He's working, but he's still getting whacked, hammered with the health tax. He darn near swallowed his bubble gum when he opened up the first paycheque after the health tax kicked in. "By God," he says, "I'm a pensioner. I'm working to supplement my income with a few extra bucks." It's not a high-wage job he's working at. Please understand that.

I know there's nothing in Bill 105 that's going to be of any solace—not a page. You go through any one of those pages. There's page after page after page; it's a long bill. There's not a section in Bill 105 that's of any comfort to that old friend of mine from the—well, it wasn't really the Niagara Regional Police Service. He started with the Welland police force back in the old days.

I'm seeing more and more people in my constituency office, and I suspect you are too. I was shocked, saddened, to read the data just the other day that during the helmsmanship of this Liberal government there has been an increase in the dropout rate of high-school students. Good grief, folks. Look, let's put this into perspective. I'm old enough, and so are some of you in this room with me, to recall when, let's say, a grade 10 diploma was a passage point. If you had a grade 10 diploma, and this was quite a few years ago now, you were considered sufficiently well educated to go out and get a job in a factory. It was while I was a young high-school student that that soon was recognized as being dated, and a senior matriculation diploma—grade 12 or 13, whether you were in the four-year or five-year program—was required.

Surely in the year 2004 we've got to understand, because the data reveal this, that unless you're, I don't

know, a rock and roll star or a basketball player or rich because you inherited a lot of your daddy's money, you surely need some post-secondary education or else there aren't going to be too many doors open to you. Even in those workplaces that were traditionally regarded—well, even in industrial workplaces, Lord knows, as a result of free trade; I remember 1988 so well—we continue to see industrial, value-added, manufacturing, high-wage jobs, good jobs, haemorrhaging out of Ontario.

Even in those that are left, the strong back isn't what cuts it any more. Even in the industrial workplace you need some level of post-secondary education, be it at college or university. Quite frankly, college and university students are realizing that that first level of post-secondary education is rarely in and of itself sufficient, that simply to get a bachelor of arts degree is only the beginning, not the end, right? So you've got a bachelor's degree—three years, maybe four—and you've accumulated \$60,000, \$70,000 worth of debt.

Not only are we tragically witnessing an increase in the dropout rate in high school, but I'm witnessing and talking with and spending time with more and more families who come into my constituency office—either at my constituency office or if I meet them over at an event at the Croatian Hall, at an elimination draw at the Lions Club or at Auberge Richelieu down on River Road or if I meet them at the supermarket, the Zehrs down on Niagara Street, or I meet them over at David Chev Olds where I'm getting the oil changed in my truck—David Chev Olds is a unionized workplace. CAW workers are the only ones who will service my vehicles. They do a darned good job too, by the way.

Regardless of where I am, I run into people who are telling me that their kids or grandkids are leaving university after the second or third year because of the shock of having accumulated \$20,000 or \$30,000 worth of debt and the despair of realizing that even when you get that bachelor's degree, you're still talking about at least one more degree—a bachelor of education degree, maybe a master's degree. And if you get a master's, if you're going to do academic work, a PhD or a law degree or an engineering degree or an MBA—MBA tuitions are \$20,000-plus a year. That's tuition only. Law school, University of Toronto, you're talking about an annual sticker price of well in excess of 10 grand a year.

Just as it's a crime to not let new Canadians use all of their skills, talents and training, it's a crime to not let young Ontarians with the zeal, ambition, drive and talent pursue those educational programs and acquire those degrees that will allow them to do great things in the province of Ontario.

As we increasingly restore university campuses as a bastion for the children of but the very rich, we not only deny to those young people who don't come from the families of the very rich those opportunities, we deny ourselves the contribution they can make. We short-change ourselves as a society, as a community, as a province—yes, as a country. There's nothing in Bill 105 that provides any relief, any respite for students or their families. There's nothing.

We've heard from student groups; so have you. Although the preliminary data is based on things like postal codes, they've started to see marked changes in students going into university and post-secondary school from the lower-income areas of communities and lower-income parts of the province.

I find this particularly tragic. I've said this before, but I'll say it again. When I was growing up, it was the 1960s and we had the democratization of education, the Hall-Dennis report, the growth of community colleges, building universities outside of the Ivy League towns, in places like Brock and Trent and so on. I was in the first generation—and I suspect you too, because I think we're just about the same generation, the same age—of young Canadians, in my case, the child of immigrant working-class parents, an immigrant industrial father, who got to go to college and university. We're the first generation. My fear, as I travel around this province and visit college and university campuses, is that the young people from similar working-class and immigrant families who are there now could be the last generation as we continue to witness the elitization of post-secondary education. There's nothing in Bill 105 to address that.

1940

I've got to tell you, yesterday I was down at the Sheraton hotel and I discovered that the Insurance Brokers Association of Ontario was having their annual convention. I'm going down the escalator to the convention floor, and I'm recognizing people. Then I see: I realize it's the insurance brokers' association. People are saying, "Hi," and I'm saying, "Howdy. Howdy," and I realize that these are the insurance brokers, with whom I had so many meetings over the course of so many years.

Who do I run into but Lee Romanov? Now, you'll know Lee Romanov. She is the very talented young woman who operates the Web site that you can access to have insurance rates with all the auto insurers in Ontario. You can get them in one fell swoop. I think you pay a modest, \$8 fee. It's www.insurancehotline.com. You go on that and put in your data—your name, your age, the make of car you've got, any convictions—and the computer will just whirl around a little bit and you'll have every insurance company in Ontario and their rate.

One of the things that she discovered is that the rates vary 100%, 200% from one to the other. The other thing that Lee Romanov's discovered, if you go to her Web site—www.insurancehotline.com—you'll find that one letter change in a postal code can result in a 100% change in a premium. Pretty wacky, isn't it, Mr Baird?

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean-Carleton): Unbelievable.

Mr Kormos: So Ms Romanov is involved in one of the displays in the display area of the convention. I can't get in because I don't have credentials, and security would be all over me like—I know the phrase; it's a simile, but I'm not going to—you know the phrase. They'd be all over me. So she takes me in the back door. We've got all these insurance companies in there now. This is like their perception of the fox in the henhouse.

But we survived and had a chance to say hello to a whole lot of brokers, many of whom took the opportunity to bend my ear about how mean, vicious, deep-pocketed and short-armed the insurance industry—the private for-profit insurance industry—in this province is increasingly becoming, not just in the auto sector but in the home sector, and you know that too. One of the things—

Interjection.

Mr Kormos: Look, we know that home insurance is not statutorily required. Therefore, what happens—

Mr Baird: If you've got a mortgage, it does, so it means if you're middle class, you do.

Mr Kormos: No. Therefore, what happens is that homeowners who make a claim get their insurance coverage denied. I am fearful.

We've to do some work on the residents of Peterborough. We've asked the Insurance Bureau of Canada to tell us how many policies were cancelled after the last flood—not the most recent, but the one prior to that—and that left how many people uninsured for this most recent round of flooding and how many policies are going to be cancelled as a result of bona fide, legitimate claims made during the most recent flooding in Peterborough. There is not only a crisis of affordability and availability of car insurance in this province, but there is a crisis—not imminent, but a crisis—in affordability and availability of home insurance coverage.

Mr Baird: Killing mortgages; killing dreams.

Mr Kormos: My seatmate here tells me about his concern, even as a Conservative person, for the voracious, rip-off insurance companies.

I'm surprised that Conrad Black never owned an insurance company; I really am. Conrad Black is closer to going to jail than ever before. Isn't that delightful? Some people got mad at me when I made jokes about John Roth and Conrad Black sharing a cell. I remember. It was before the summer break. I made a joke about that, and people were, "Oh, you can't say that," except it's closer to reality than ever before: John Roth from Nortel and Conrad Black sharing a cell, and maybe Barbara can bunk up with Martha. These guys—have you read the stuff out of Hollinger? They stole more money from more people than any outlaw biker gang ever did. Tony Soprano looks like a piker compared to these guys. It is the height of selfishness. These people don't deserve—jail would be too good for them.

I know there's nothing in Bill 105 that protects little investors, people like our folks or our grandfolks who buy mutual funds. Who protects them from the cowardly, despicable thievery of scum like Conrad Black—fat, tubby Black, as we used to mock him—and his pretentious, pompous wife, Barbara? But there should be. There certainly should be. My God, I am far more frightened of Conrad Black and his ilk than I am of any pit bull, and I take the pit bull threat seriously. I'm far more frightened of Conrad Black and his ilk, and throw in John Roth from Nortel and his vice-president, who's building that multi-million-dollar home down on the Oakville beachfront. What bags of dirt; the whole gang of them are.

We need legislation that shuts down criminal elements like them, criminal elements like Conrad Black, John Roth and their ilk. We need an anti-crime agenda that takes on the big criminals, not some kids selling pot in the pool hall.

I regret that my time is up. This hour has gone by quickly, and my colleagues Mr Prue and Ms Horwath will be pleased to join in this debate, as will Mr Bisson and others, as the evening progresses.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Prue: It is indeed a privilege. I was on my way home when I heard that my colleague from Niagara Centre was going to be speaking, and I rushed back because I wanted to hear every word, every dulcet tone, everything that he was going to say. As always, he inspires me with his eloquence. He inspires me the way he can go from topic to topic and sometimes never really deal with the issue at hand.

Having said that, he touched on all the important issues of today. He touched on the plight of the workers out at the Hilton hotel. He touched on all the scams of the rich and the very rich who have made their money, perhaps in ways that some of us would not wish to make our money.

He touched on the problems of the chicken pluckers and the chicken pickers. I had no idea that it was such a hazardous vocation, although I guess I should by looking at the news and seeing all of the people with the avian flu and the people chasing chickens around in Thailand. It looks like a pretty dangerous job there, anyway.

I am glad that I rushed back. I am glad that I listened to my colleague and everything that he had to say, and I hope the members opposite did; I hope it helps them to reflect on the vagaries of this particular bill. When I looked at this particular bill, I have to tell you, the conjunctions of the French verbs that were being changed were somewhat difficult for me to comprehend. Some of the other things contained in the bill—the uses of words. I must admit, with my limited French vocabulary it was very difficult to tell the difference between one side and another and what was there. So I'm very glad to have had an opportunity to listen to the member from Niagara Centre, and he surely has been lucid on these very points.

Ms Andrea Horwath (Hamilton East): I too am glad to be here tonight to listen to my colleague Peter Kormos. As everyone who is at home watching and everyone here in the chamber tonight knows, Peter's quite well versed in many, many different areas, having spent such a long time dedicated to his work here in the Legislature on behalf of his constituents in the riding of Niagara Centre.

I was shaking my head vigorously on many of the points that he made. A lot of the people he described in terms of the low-wage workers in this province are people who live and work in the riding of Hamilton East, which I represent. I'm pleased that Peter, as our critic for labour, is able to articulate so clearly the issues that face workers in our cities and towns across Ontario. I think he did a great job of doing that tonight. I know that he is passionate about these issues and concerned about

moving the agenda back to a place where workers have more rights in this province.

1950

Mr Baird: What did you think of his comments on the bill?

Ms Horwath: I think his comments on the bill were very lucid, as a matter of fact, as well.

Mr Baird: What bill is this? Do you know?

Ms Horwath: Bill 105 is quite an interesting piece of legislation because it really does a lot of work around interpretation of language, particularly French to English and English to French. Although my colleague Mr Baird here thinks we don't know about this bill, we certainly do. But we also use these opportunities to speak to the people of Ontario, to let them know that their concerns truly are on our minds, and that's certainly what Mr Kormos has done tonight. He has indicated quite clearly that there are many, many issues that this government can be looking at and can be passing through on these evening sittings, instead of these kinds of bills that really don't have too much effect except to do some house-cleaning.

The Acting Speaker: No further questions and comments? Reply from the member for Niagara Centre.

Mr Kormos: I'm overwhelmed by the fact that the people who are here in the chamber are mute in response to my comments. I know I made reference to Lee Romanov, and I don't know whether I told you her Web site: www.insurancehotline.com. What www.insurancehotline.com will do for you is allow you to compare insurance premiums from all 100-plus automobile insurers in Ontario. So you get on that Web site and you learn a tremendous amount about car insurance, because inevitably, if you're watching, if you're listening, you're being ripped off on your car insurance premiums—you know that.

Our colleague Mr Bisson had to park his car—he did—because he couldn't afford the premiums. And so many others—and I don't counsel this by any stretch of the imagination—are driving without insurance in increasing numbers—they are. That constitutes a serious hazard, because if you're in a motor vehicle that is uninsured, you've got a problem. If there is, for instance, an accident and you suffer serious injuries, you could find yourself without any claim whatsoever, because there's no insurance coverage—there's no company. So I encourage people: www.insurancehotline.com, Lee Romanov's Web site. It's a modest fee; she'll hook you up with the cheapest insurance available and with the brokers who will handle your particular class of driver or automobile owner.

This is a stop-gap measure, because the real solution is public, non-profit, driver-owned automobile insurance where we can have affordable rates, fair rates and fairness for innocent accident victims, just like folks in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia do—public auto insurance.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Prue: It is always a very hard act to follow the member for Niagara Centre. He speaks so eloquently.

I'm going to try and change the tables just a little bit here and actually talk about Bill 105. It is a very difficult bill to talk about, I must tell you, because in order for one to adequately give service to the arcanities of this bill, to actually look at the changes of words and sentence and verb structures in the French language and how they were not adequately translated—through no fault of the translators in the past—and to use better words is quite a skill. I think that this is probably a good bill and in the end most of the members of this Legislature will end up supporting it.

We have a duty to those people whose first language is French to make sure the words that are used in this Legislature, the speeches that are made and, more importantly, the bills that are passed, the laws that are out that there extant are properly translated into language so that they can be clear, they can be interpreted, judges can look at them, courts can understand them, lawyers can argue over them, and that if they need to be changed, the changes in time can be made.

It is a difficult job being a translator. I marvel on occasion, when I put this little microphone in my ear—when someone is speaking French or English and I want to try to pick up a few words and how it is translated—how fast the workers in this place are, how accurate they are, how correct they are in everything they do. I'm sure if I were to put this in my ear now and listen to what I'm saying, the worker in that box over there would be translating everything perfectly, in cadence and in every way, so that the people out there who are watching can listen and can understand, in their own language, what is being said here.

C'est vraiment difficile de parler le français entre l'anglais en quelques secondes, comme le monsieur doit faire dans sa profession.

It is very difficult for me—I hope you translated my French and I hope it was as good as my English. I want to tell you that I have been amazed not only in this Legislature but in virtually all the places in Canada that I have worked, where people can take a profession like this and can work so diligently and so carefully to translate word by word.

As you might know, for many years I worked in the immigration department and had an opportunity to watch professional translators translate in often very difficult circumstances, with people who were in distress, with people who were in courtroom situations, with people who were new to the country or were seeking admission to the country. I saw many professional translators literally take words and sentences, build them and give meaning to them in some of the most difficult of circumstances.

I do know how difficult that is to do. One night at Pearson airport I was called upon to do what was called a "further examination" of someone coming in from the United States who spoke French. I was the only person on the staff who spoke any French at all. As you can tell from my rather rudimentary accent, it was not my first language.

Mr Baird: Speak French now.

Mr Prue: I did already. I'll do some more for you in a minute.

It was very difficult, because I had to explain Canadian immigration law, the Immigration Act and what the provisions were, and translate for him during what was called a further examination. At the end of that further examination, I vowed that I would probably never do that again. I'm not sure I gave justice to that poor man, whose first language was French, in explaining all his rights under the Immigration Act or all the consequences of the actions that might take place there.

I hold the translators in the highest of regard. That's why I felt it necessary to speak to this bill. This bill is changing words. It's very difficult for a layperson to actually look at words because words can have several meanings. One can get out a thesaurus and see there are probably 50 words for "speed" or 25 words for the colour yellow. You get out the thesaurus and you look. That's the difficulty, I think, that interpreters have, especially when the job is done rapidly, as sometimes bills are done rapidly in this Legislature and as sometimes policy pronouncements are made.

All of us serve on committees. I went through a couple of committees myself in the last few weeks. One of them was estimates, and before that I was on the committee that was looking at the Ontario Securities Commission. When we made our 14 recommendations for the Ontario Securities Commission, we had to make them in fairly fast order because they had to be translated. The interpreters had literally one day, from the time we made those changes to the Ontario Securities Commission, in language that was very difficult and even difficult for me, in English, to understand because it was all the minutiae of business. It was very difficult. They had one day to translate all of that into a package that would be printed and sent out across Ontario, and perhaps across Canada, so people could understand the legislative changes that were being recommended by the committee. I have to tell you, it is very difficult.

I understand why we have a bill like this here in front of us tonight. We have that bill because, over time, because of the speed, because of the difficulty of language, words have to be changed. We are here to change those words so that in the future, again going back to the lawyers and the judges, they will be able to judge them, they will be able to know what they are and, if they are in error, will be able to change them.

2000

We do not have the luxury of federal legislation. The Official Languages Act sets out the language of Parliament. It may surprise people in Ontario, and particularly in Toronto, that the Official Languages Act sets out that where there is a conflict between the English law and the French law, the French law or the French wording will predominate.

There is a very good reason for that. That is because the French vocabulary, the French wording, is far more perfect. It's far more perfect and precise in how it is

developed and how it is written. One needs to learn the tenses and the verbiage of the French language and look into the perfect and pluperfect tenses and all of those things to see precisely how it is structured to know that it is a far more complex and, I would think because of that, a far more judicially useful language than English. That is why in Canada the French language predominates.

Here, unfortunately, I think that is probably not the case in terms of what we do in this very Legislature. It is not the case. As a result, we have many policies and many laws that are not as accurate as they could and should be. We need to look at what is in this bill here tonight. We need all of us, if we are capable of speaking any French at all, to look at the bill and to determine whether or not the recommendations that are being proposed are correct.

I would assume that they are correct. I want to tell you, my French is not good enough to tell you the past perfect from the pluperfect. I can't tell you the legal interpretations of some tenses of verbs which are used only in the most formal of settings, but our interpreters can do that, and our interpreters need to do that. We need to be mindful of that very problem.

I go back, again, to my time in immigration. It was a time in my youth when there were a lot of things going on and a lot of very different languages and people interpreting those languages. The language of the courtroom and the vernacular of the street, of the international public who was travelling, are very different. People's lives can virtually hinge on the meaning of a word or how that word is interpreted, and I have seen mistakes be made. I have seen interpreters who were not capable of doing what they were doing dismissed from court cases. I have seen them be dismissed from inquiries and from further examinations at Pearson International Airport, and justifiably so.

Again, I go back to this: it is a *métier difficile*. It is a difficult occupation. But it is only people who can do this occupation. As good as the finest computers are—you know, I am constantly amazed. I have one of those little computers, and when I travel to Spanish-speaking countries, I take it with me, because as rudimentary as my French is, my Spanish is even more rudimentary.

Mr Baird: ¿Cómo está?

Mr Prue: ¿Cómo está? I've got that too. "Dos cervezas, por favor," I know how to say. The translation is, "Two beers, please." I know a couple of things and how to order "la cuenta, por favor," when I need the bill at the end.

They have little computers today. Have you ever seen those little computers? You punch in in English what you want to say, and then the computer prints back out in Spanish what your question is or what the words you're looking for are. But those are not the same. Even if we had such a computerized system in this Legislature, it would not match the talent of the people in that room, because no computer can capture the nuances of a language.

No computer can tell you the difference between verbs and verb structures. No computer can list all the various

differences that can be in a simple word, and no computer can act as a thesaurus with a brain. That's why I think we need to commend the people who do this. We need to understand that they are providing a service, and we need to understand that we cannot do this without them. We rely on them. The people of Ontario, particularly those whose first language is French or those who rely on the written word in both languages, need to know that the law is sound.

I was quite impressed, a couple of days ago, in the city of Toronto to see that a left-turn ticket was overturned. I believe when I looked at the news, it was just down the street here at Bay and Elm streets. That's the illegal left-hand turn, and I have seen that many times when I have driven the member for Timmins-James Bay home after these debates late at night. He lives very close to there. You can make a left turn at that time of the night, but you can't during the day, and when I have driven him home after the 6 o'clock meetings on occasion, I have had to be very careful not to make that left-hand turn. But this is, I guess, some of the beauty of this country, that we as Canadians can demand that the service be in either official language, in French or in English, and that the signs must convey, as the legislation must convey, the exact accuracy so that people can understand the rights and privileges it takes to be a Canadian citizen.

Those rights and privileges can only be met if we pass this particular bill. This bill will help those people to understand what this Legislature has intended to do, not just today but over the last period of time when some of the bills that came forward were flawed in that the translations of them were not up to the standard that we have come to expect in Ontario and in Canada.

Perhaps what we should be striving to do is to have people qui peuvent parler le français mieux que moi, who understand how the language structures are developed. I think the only way that is likely to happen is if we start to educate our younger people in both official languages. I would like to see a day, quite frankly, when all Canadian children are able to speak fluently both languages by the time they're finished public school, because that is the only way we are going to get around the difficulties of me trying to express myself in this Legislature adequately in French and those who live in parts of Ontario where French is the spoken word understanding everything that is being said here in Toronto. We live in a very small world. We live in a world which is constantly shrinking, and we as Canadians have an opportunity to show the world that two languages can coexist side by side, that people can know them and people can use them.

One only needs to go to a place like Belgium or Switzerland or go to countries where there are two or three or four languages—go to India, where there are probably 25 languages, where people can communicate not in one, not in two, but sometimes three or four or five languages—to know that it can be done. If they can do that, I am sure that we in this country can accommodate two languages that have very similar root structures, come from the original Frankish, come from the original

Roman, and have many roots and common phrases from within them. I am standing here tonight to say that this is one very tiny, minuscule but important step along that structure to change the words and to bring life to the laws that people need to understand.

I don't know whether anyone is going to oppose this bill, because I haven't heard anyone speak to it, other than my colleague Mr Kormos. But I feel compelled as a proud Ontarian, as a person who was born in Toronto and who really never had the opportunity to learn much French until I went to university, and then unfortunately never had an opportunity to practise it after I left university until I arrived in this House, where I get to hear it from time to time—I think we need to make sure that this is not the end of the process but the beginning of the process. We need, through this legislation, and people, I hope, watching it, to understand that we have an obligation on behalf of all Canadians to service them in their first language, the language of their birth, the language they feel comfortable using, and this bill will indeed do that.

2010

Having said that, I wish to digress—and I've only got a couple of minutes left—to say how very proud I have been in this Legislature to hear French spoken from time to time. Certainly, I did not have that opportunity in the city of Toronto or in the borough of East York, hardly ever, to hear French being spoken, although I did hear Greek from time to time in East York. I must tell you, it is probably the second language of East York. But to hear French spoken in this Legislature by the member for Glengarry-Prescott-Russell, who often is quite eloquent and stands up in French, the member for Nepean-Carleton and the member for Timmins-James Bay and others who have a greater fluency, of course, than I do—we need to try, all of us, to give great credibility to that.

I do enjoy going from time to time to the APF meetings—not that I can contribute a great deal, because again, as I have explained, I feel a little inadequate in terms of my spoken French, although I can certainly understand it and read it quite well even to this day—but to go there to get greater fluency so that I can understand when people make statements directly. With all respect to the people translating in the booth, I think it is always better to listen to someone and understand them directly than to understand them through an interpreter, because the interpreters, as good as they are, must do it on the fly, must do it very quickly, and the human brain is probably faster in understanding it than in saying back those same words a couple of seconds later. So I would invite the other members of the Legislature, if you have an opportunity and if you have even rudimentary French, to come out to the next meeting of the APF. The last meeting was very poorly attended, was it not, Mr Chair and Mr Vice-Chair? It was very poorly attended. There were only five of us there.

Mr Baird: I didn't hear about it.

Mr Prue: You were not there, and we missed you. There were only five of us there. There were a great many things being discussed about la francophonie

around the world—some of the congresses, some of the elections.

I would hope that members of the Legislature will understand that this is important government relations that we have here in Ontario. There are very few places in the world that have an opportunity to belong to la francophonie, but we in Canada have that option. Ontario has seized that option. Ontario has put forward an opportunity for us to interact and to react with people from around the world whose first language is French. We need to develop that and we need to make sure our members develop that and understand the very powerful and wonderful heritage we have in this country of two official languages. We need to do that, not only for around the world but in order to better understand the people we serve, those people who speak the other official language. Now, there are not many. Less than 1% of the people of Beaches-East York give French as their first language. But I will tell you that in travels to the Ottawa area, to eastern Ontario, to northern Ontario, to Quebec, to New Brunswick, the reverse is true. I am very proud to be able to carry on at least a rudimentary conversation with them, and we can understand and empathize with each other in the language of choice.

I have spoken for 20 minutes. I have tried to give some passion to this debate and actually speak to it. I am asking that all members of the Legislature support this bill for the people who are francophones in Ontario.

Mr Baird: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would ask for unanimous consent to call the question on second reading of this bill, and, should the Legislature pass it, to

order it for third reading, and then that the House be adjourned.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Nepean-Carleton has moved unanimous consent for second reading of Bill 105. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say “aye.”

Interjections.

Mr Baird: There’s no unanimous consent.

The Acting Speaker: OK. Questions and comments? Further debate?

Mr Phillips has moved second reading of Bill 105. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say “aye.”

All those opposed, say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it. The motion carries.

Shall the bill be ordered for third reading? Agreed.

Orders of the day.

Hon Gerry Phillips (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet): Mr Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker: All those in favour of the motion of adjournment of the House?

All those in favour, say “aye.”

All those opposed, say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it. Motion carried.

This House stands adjourned until 1:30 pm on Monday.

The House adjourned at 2016.

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