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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 9 May 2007

Mercredi 9 mai 2007

Speaker
Honourable Michael A. Brown

Président
L'honorable Michael A. Brown

Clerk
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 9 May 2007

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 9 mai 2007

The House met at 1845.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Jim Watson (Minister of Health Promotion): I move that, pursuant to standing order 46 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House relating to Bill 174, An Act to enact the Taxation Act, 2006 and make complementary and other amendments to other Acts, when Bill 174 is next called as a government order the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the standing committee on finance and economic affairs; and

That the standing committee on finance and economic affairs shall be authorized to meet, in addition to its regularly scheduled meeting times, on Tuesday, May 15, 2007 after routine proceedings for the purpose of conducting public hearings on the bill; and

That the deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the clerk of the committee shall be 12 p.m. on Wednesday, May 16, 2007. No later than 5 p.m. on May 17, 2007 those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill, and any amendments thereto. The committee shall be authorized to meet beyond the normal hour of adjournment until completion of clause-by-clause consideration. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 127(a); and

That the committee shall report the bill to the House not later than May 28, 2007. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on that day, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House; and

That, upon receiving the report of the standing committee on finance and economic affairs, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading, which order may be called on that same day; and

That on the day the order for third reading of the bill is called, the time available for debate shall be one hour, and the time shall be apportioned equally among the recognized parties; and

That when the time allotted for debate has expired, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and put every question necessary to dispose of the third reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That there shall be no deferral of any vote allowed pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

That, in the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to 10 minutes.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier): Mr. Watson has moved government notice of motion number 362. Mr. Watson.

Hon. Mr. Watson: I'm pleased to speak in support of Bill 174, a great piece of legislation put forward by our government. I know it will have the support of all members of the House, because this bill does a couple of things that the constituents in the business community have been asking for for some time.

If passed, the Strengthening Business through a Simpler Tax System Act, 2006, will accomplish three important goals—and the title of the bill says it all, as my friend the Minister of Revenue knows all too well.

First, it will deliver clear benefits to businesses of all sizes. They'll spend less time on paperwork and save up to \$100 million annually from one set of tax forms, one audit and one set of rules. That's going to simplify things for businesses in my riding in Ottawa West–Nepean. They've been asking for this kind of simplification for some time.

Second, there's going to be a modest reduction in the amount corporations in Ontario will have to pay, of some \$90 million a year. That is money that businesses are going to be able to save, that they're not spending on paperwork and duplication of efforts.

Third, it's going to reduce red tape by cutting the combined personal and corporate tax legislation and regulations currently in existence by more than half.

The other party talked about cutting red tape. We're doing something about it; we're doing something in a concrete fashion with Bill 174.

1850

Mr. Jeff Leal (Peterborough): You're not going to bring back the Red Tape Commission, are you?

Hon. Mr. Watson: No we're not going to bring back the Red Tape Commission. What we are doing is rolling

out the red carpet for businesses, and we're doing that through the creation of the Ministry of Small Business and Entrepreneurship. My friend Mr. Lalonde, who is from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, is working with the small business agency, a great initiative of Premier McGuinty's, made up of parliamentary assistants from various ministries. They've been out holding hearings. I know Mr. Lalonde was in Hawkesbury, I believe, and Cornwall, talking to people in the small business community. They've said that they support this piece of legislation. They support it for the very reason that it's going to save them time, money and effort. I thank Jean-Marc Lalonde, the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, un grand défenseur des petites et moyennes entreprises dans la province de l'Ontario. Il comprend bien les grands défis des petites entreprises dans les municipalités comme Alexandria, Clarence-Rockland, Hawkesbury et toutes les municipalités de l'est de l'Ontario, et il appuie ce projet de loi et les buts de ce projet de loi.

We know that businesses are going to see clear benefits. The people in Sudbury have been telling their very effective MPP, Mr. Bartolucci. They want to spend less time doing paperwork, less time on the kinds of things that frustrate the business community. That's why people like our colleague from Markham, the Minister of Revenue, our colleague from Mississauga Centre, the Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship, and the Minister of Finance are working in collaboration to ensure that whatever initiatives we take, we have in mind the priorities of the small business community. The businesses are going to spend less time on paperwork. They're going to see that these savings can be invested in creating jobs and fostering a strong, prosperous economy.

We know about job creation on this side of the House. Over 320,000 net new jobs have been created since Premier McGuinty took office in October, 2003. I know in northern Ontario, my friend the Minister of Northern Development and Mines proudly boasts about the net new jobs that have been created—

Interjection: 18,000.

Hon. Mr. Watson: Over 18,000 net new jobs in northern Ontario, and that's due to the policies of our friend from Sudbury.

This is an agreement. It's an important step in our plan to build a more competitive economy that reduces costs and simplifies the rules for businesses. These benefits far outweigh any costs. There are still some steps that have to be taken before we can conclude a tax collection agreement with the federal government, but we look forward to working with the federal government in a spirit of co-operation, as has been done by my colleague the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, for instance, in the work that he has done to bring forward an immigration agreement with the federal government. We were the only province that did not have the immigration agreement and the labour mobility agreement, and it was the McGuinty government that delivered those historic documents. The unfairness that an immigrant arriving at Pearson Airport would receive simply \$800, where an immi-

grant going to the Trudeau airport in Dorval, Quebec would receive \$3,800: These are the kinds of arrangements we have made that make good sense. Bill 174 follows along the same strategy.

We know that at the end of process, some people who now work for us will be working for the federal government. This is a transition period, and we respect the individuals who are working in the Ontario public service. We know that change is never easy, but we will continue to work with those affected and with their bargaining units to help ensure the process is both fair and transparent.

This is a piece of legislation that one would assume the opposition, both parties, would want to support. It's a reasonable piece of legislation. We hope they're not going to engage in some of the puerile tactics of bell-ringing and stalling time. They're always on the one hand complaining that they want more debating time, but whose party is standing up, day in and day out, ringing the bells, wasting the time of this Legislature?

I would suggest that the honourable members across the way would do their constituents a better service if they actually engaged in the debate on this particular piece of legislation. We all know businesses in our own communities, whether they're in Willowdale, Orléans, Kitchener, the good people in my friend Mario Sergio's riding, or Brampton. They work hard, they put in long hours. The small business community is the backbone of any progressive economy, and these individuals work hard. They don't have a lot of free time to spend with family and friends. We have to give them those tools that are going to minimize their effort at filling out endless streams of paperwork for the federal government and the provincial government. So harmonizing this particular activity for the business community through the Strengthening Business through a Simpler Tax System Act is something that I'm very proud to speak out in favour of and to support.

To all of those businesses in my own community in Ottawa West–Nepean, whether they're at some of the shopping malls—Bayshore, Carlingwood or Pinecrest—or some of the small businesses along Carling or Woodroffe Avenues, these people work hard, they pay their share of taxes, but when it comes time to fill out the paperwork, why not simplify the process and create, in essence, one-stop shopping? I was pleased, when I was the former Minister of Consumer and Business Services, to create the ServiceOntario concept, which is one-stop shopping.

We have a wonderful system in Ottawa, where the federal government, the municipal government and the provincial government are housed in one storefront operation at Ottawa city hall. It's a great initiative that I signed with the former federal minister and my colleague the member from Kitchener Centre. We signed the agreement in Brockville a couple of years ago, and that allowed us to work with the federal government, with the local municipal governments, because people are busy in the 21st century. They don't have time to go and take a

civics lesson and figure out which level of government is responsible for what.

So we've consolidated in centres across Ontario under the banner of ServiceOntario, and at the federal level under Service Canada, and we now allow people in Ottawa city hall, for instance, to come in, pay perhaps their property tax, if they have a parking fine, if they need information on job searching skills, if they need a birth certificate—

Mr. Leal: Register their kids.

Hon. Mr. Watson: Register their kids for recreation programs—my colleague from Peterborough, who served the city council in Peterborough so admirably for 18 years, I believe.

So this is the change that this government has brought to this particular approach. We work in collaboration with other levels of government.

I had the honour of being a mayor and city councillor for nine years in my community, and it was like World War III when we were constantly fighting with the provincial government that was downloading services and costs to the local taxpayers. There was no advance warning, there was no heads-up, there was no consultation back then.

Mr. Leal: Mike Harris just sent you a fax.

Hon. Mr. Watson: We got a fax from Mike Harris or Ernie Eves after the fact, and it was not the kind of co-operation that I think most of us have come to expect.

Those of us who served in municipal government very much appreciate the work that Minister Gerretsen, Brad Duguid and others have done with respect to the AMO agreement, where we have a formalized memorandum of understanding, where we actually consult the municipal sector before we do anything that's going to affect them.

In conclusion, I'm very pleased to support Bill 174. I hosted a breakfast just on Friday with the chamber of commerce at Scotiabank Place. Some of you may know what Scotiabank Place is. It's the home of the Ottawa Senators. I had the pleasure of hosting my monthly breakfast series with the chamber of commerce and our friend Gail Logan, the president of the chamber. My guest speaker at that particular breakfast was Eugene Melnick, who was the owner of the Senators. We were able to sign a \$2-million agreement that we're providing to host the World Junior Hockey Championship in Ottawa in 2009. It's going to be great for the community.

When I talked to business people—there were over 250 business people at that breakfast—those individuals were saying time and time again, "Whatever you can do as a legislator, as an MPP and as a minister to simplify the tax reporting system in the province and the country, please do it." For those people who I had the chance to speak with on Friday at Scotiabank Place, I say I proudly support Bill 174.

I thank the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Revenue, the Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship and Premier McGuinty for making sure that this got on to the agenda of the federal government, and at the end of the day this is going to make life a lot

simpler for the small businessmen and -women of our community.

1900

I thank my friend the member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, who was the chair of the small business working group and has done some great work. One of the hallmarks of this government that I'm very proud of is that we are engaged in dialogue. It's not just monologue; it's dialogue. It's going out and listening to the small business individuals—small business people—and I thank M. Lalonde very much for the work that he and the other parliamentary assistants are doing. Mr. Leal has been instrumental in that committee as well. It shows that all members of this government are taking an active role in ensuring that the small business community's voice is heard, but more importantly that we act on those things that they tell us they need help on.

Bill 174 is a good piece of legislation, and I look forward to hearing the supportive comments of my friends on the opposite side of the House.

Mr. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Glengarry–Prescott–Russell): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: We have visitors in the gallery today. They are from the French fries capital of the world. Both of them are councillors of a municipality in my riding, Alfred et Plantagenet, and they're also directors of the Hydro commission. One of them is Benoit Lamarche, the director of Embrun Hydro, and the other is René Beaulne, Hydro 2000, Alfred et Plantagenet. Bienvenue à Queen's Park.

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Further debate?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo (Parkdale–High Park): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I just wanted to introduce—

Interjection.

Ms. DiNovo: I'm sitting next to Rosario. This shows true love—my husband, Gil Gaspar.

The Deputy Speaker: I'm sure the government side doesn't mind that time being on their clock.

Further debate? The member for Durham.

Mr. John O'Toole (Durham): On Bill 174, once again, the Minister of Health Promotion introduced this time allocation motion, which is a travesty of democracy, to put it mildly.

This is a case where—today we had another bill; I think it was 178. Now we have Bill 174. These are budget bills. They're actually related to important decisions by the government and by cabinet where they've shut down debate. They've invoked notice of closure of debate, and it limits the opposition's opportunity to comment.

I want to put on the record that I would like to consider sharing my time with other members present. I think—I'm putting the member on notice—the member from Burlington may be interested, because as a former elected chair of Halton region, I think it's important that we get that sorted out early on.

It's good that the Speaker is paying attention temporarily.

But here we have a huge bill. The member from Willowdale, Mr. Zimmer—certainly Peter Kormos is

well-dressed when compared to David tonight, but actually, Peter is always here and always underdressed.

There are two schedules here that I think, if you look at the bill and its structure, are frightening. But at the same time, I would say in summation, this large bill that's actually 239 pages—I know that members have laboured over this bill and they've considered; it's an act to make complementary and other amendments to several important finance acts.

I see the new minister is here. Welcome; I haven't heard your maiden speech yet, let alone your speech on this bill.

Interjections.

Mr. O'Toole: I missed it, and I'll get a copy of Hansard or the transcript. I respect—it's important to go immediately right into cabinet. It's kind of a double victory, which is good; it means you must be really strong, and that is something I respect because you worked hard to get elected. You won fairly—pretty well. I would say that to be a minister immediately is phenomenal. That's absolutely amazing. I know there are other members of your caucus that aren't too pleased, perhaps David Zimmer and others, but I won't get into debate on that.

Bill 174 basically is a bill that we would support. I would say the reason is because it's looking at the importance of being competitive as an economy. There was a lot of work done, and there were some shades of criticism from the Minister of Health Promotion, who wasn't here then, because he's new here, and I understand that he's new to the ministry as well. But he knows that we did a lot of good work in the Red Tape Commission. If he disagrees with that comment, he would know that ultimately this bill is doing a similar thing: It's harmonizing and simplifying the important work of stakeholders like the CFIB. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business has advocated for this for years, especially the new minister. They represent a lot of new and emerging businesses, and they want to simplify the tax process. Tax harmonization is the reason we support this particular bill.

Is it perfect? Well, we have areas that we have consideration of, and we'll get to that, but, quite frankly, what's important to—I'm speaking directly to the viewers in the province of Ontario and my riding of Durham. I'm speaking directly to the small businesses, the downtown business improvement area, Ron Hooper, Garth Gilpin, Port Perry, Uxbridge, the new part of my riding, which Wayne Arthurs—and I would say that I spent a good part of this morning with McDonald's. It was McHappy Day at McDonald's today. I did that, and a lot of members do, because they support children in my area. It's Ginger Jackson and her family. I think they run two or three different McDonald's. Part of the proceeds from the meals will be donated to the Jennifer Ashleigh Children's Charity and Precious Minds, which is a children's resource centre.

I think of small business as the very engine of the economy, while at the same time—

Hon. David Caplan (Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal, Deputy Government House Leader): The backbone.

Mr. O'Toole: Yes, the backbone, as the minister for lotteries is commenting.

Quite frankly, my sense is that—

Interjection.

Mr. O'Toole: I couldn't think of the full name—the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal.

I don't like to get moved off topic because it's—

Interjection: Stay focused.

Mr. O'Toole: Yes, stay focused.

I think the key here is that because it's a time allocation motion, if you look at the order paper—and for the viewers watching tonight, Minister Watson read this whole page here. They are trying to strangle the opposition's opportunity, and if you talk about—what was the main topic in question period for the last 250 questions? Demanding an audit of the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. And today, the Premier, without the conviction of leadership, admitted softly, tacitly, that they did the wrong thing—*mea culpa*—but he didn't have the courage to actually call in the auditor.

What is its relationship to this act? This is all about the audit procedures as well as the harmonization procedures with the federal government in the corporate tax area.

I've been kind of instructed here, but I'm very passionate on this topic. The only thing is, I'm so frustrated because of the time allocation thing. There are five here, so I'm going to move adjournment of the debate.

The Deputy Speaker: Mr. O'Toole has moved adjournment of the debate. 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 nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1909 to 1939.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour, please stand and be counted by the Clerk.

All those opposed, please stand and be counted by the Clerk.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): The ayes are 8; the nays are 31.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

Hon. Mr. Watson: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I've chatted with members on the other side and there may be unanimous consent, following in the great footsteps of my friend from Sudbury, to allow members to wear the Ottawa Senators pin as the last Canadian team.

Mr. Tim Hudak (Erie-Lincoln): On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker: I will grant my personal consent as long as members who have Buffalo Sabres pins are similarly allowed to wear theirs this evening.

Mr. Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker: While I appreciate the comment from my friend across the way, this is a provincial Legislature; it's not a national one. Therefore, we do not

enter into international arrangements. We have to think only of Canadian teams.

The Deputy Speaker: If I have this correctly, I have dual unanimous consent: one for the Ottawa Senators, one for the Buffalo Sabres. Agreed? Agreed.

Mr. O'Toole.

Mr. O'Toole: Since we're celebrating sports and their importance to our lifestyle and wellness—he's the minister of health and wellness—we also recognized Glenn Howard, the world cup champion from Garfield Dunlop's riding today. It's important to respect the Canadian teams, the Ottawa Senators of course being the last Canadian team left. But the Sudbury Wolves: The member from Sudbury has stood relentlessly at his table, sometimes unnecessarily, to seek unanimous consent to wear the Sudbury Wolves pin. I'm glad that they're going on to greater heights, unlike the minister.

If you want to talk in serious terms, I was there the night the mining association was there with DeBeers—

Interjection: De Beers.

Mr. O'Toole: De Beers, rather, was there. It was rather boring, actually. But I think when—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. O'Toole: Speaker, I've got to slow down a bit here, because a lot of members are just getting in their places or leaving because I'm speaking. You've got to focus on this. The point that I'm trying to make is, this is actually what we're debating tonight: yet another Liberal time allocation of an important bill.

The time allocation here is about a budget bill. We've had the second bill on the budget today, and our member from Erie-Lincoln, Tim Hudak, the critic, has been relentless about how they just don't get it. They've increased spending and they've reduced service. They've eliminated chiropractic, they've eliminated ophthalmology, physiotherapy, yet they've raised taxes on health care by \$2.6 billion.

Our leader, John Tory, told us this: "Don't take a thing from them because"—you can trust what our leader, John Tory, says. What is at question here, what this whole debate about the bells is about, for those listening, is accountability. At the end of the day, a time allocation motion—in fact, the most ironic time allocation motion in the last short period. Bill 155, for the viewer, is on the referendum that's going to be held this October. They kind of screwed it up, so they had to time-allocate a bill on democratic renewal. That's a contradiction. Democratic renewal is about inclusiveness, about debate. They time-allocated that bill, as the member for Trinity-Spadina would know well.

Here we are again. Bill 174, as I said, is an omnibus bill, for those viewing.

Interjection.

Mr. O'Toole: Omnibus bill. It's ominous. It's an ominous bill. Listen to the words.

This ominous bill, which is omnibus in nature, is, quite frankly, 240 pages long. It has schedules in here.

Here's the point. Our critic on this file has instructed us in much detail. In fact, we would say that we finally realized that there's some hope that the newly elected Minister of Revenue—I think that's his title. I missed his maiden speech, which was his introduction of this bill. We actually quite agree with some of the complements of this bill.

Schedule B amends the Corporations Information Act, the Corporations Tax Act, the Electricity Act, the Income Tax Act and the Taxpayer Protection Act.

They do achieve one principal objective here: They streamline the revenue collection part of government business, I think, to the federal level. I was surprised that they didn't harmonize the PST and GST. I was surprised they didn't go the whole route, because small business says that the administrivia of the PST and the GST is problematic for small business, for the small pizzeria, for the small restaurant, for the small business operator. The CFIB have been trying to argue this for years.

They didn't go quite far enough. They got it partially right, but they didn't go all the way.

I think it's important to put on the record that when we were attending, as I tried to state, De Beers's opening of a billion-dollar mining operation in northern Ontario, the president of De Beers Canada was standing beside the minister, and I'm sure the minister was shocked—after, there was a bit of a reception going on, which is always pleasant. The fellow said that it was sort of like a Third World government. I don't think he meant that—because the minister, I know, would have done the right thing.

Greg Sorbara is cash-hungry. They want to tax you more and reduce your levels of service. That's what's worrying people. They're paying more and getting less. Are you waiting longer? Yes, you are. Do you have a doctor? Yes, you don't. That's kind of a contradiction.

Interjections.

Mr. O'Toole: Well, there you go. But the people of Ontario get it.

They're not to be trusted. It's in that vein that I'm going to have to move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker: 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 nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1948 to 2018.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour, please stand to be counted by the Clerk.

All those opposed, please stand to be counted by the Clerk.

The Deputy Clerk: The ayes are 7; the nays are 33.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost. Member for Durham.

Mr. O'Toole: With the very limited time I have left, 36 minutes, I'm not sure I can cover a bill that's this comprehensive, but there are a couple of points that need to be made.

For the viewer tonight, we're debating Bill 174—but we're not actually debating that bill. What the government has done—another budget bill. I don't know what they're trying to slip through here, but quite frankly, the motion we're debating is actually a time allocation motion, a rather long motion, I might say, that exempts members from any particular time with respect to debating an important bill.

That being said, we had an earlier bill today which was the budget bill itself, again time-allocated—and that's becoming the order of the day, time allocation, but substantively for the viewer—

Interjection.

Mr. O'Toole: I think the viewer should know this. Why have the opposition, both the Conservative and the NDP caucuses, been trying in unison to gain the Premier's focus on an important issue? What the substance is behind the debate on the time allocation motion, behind the debate on Bill 174—there's a more important attribute that we should be considering, and that's the debate that we've been having. Over 250 questions have been asked, through the Speaker, of the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and indeed the Premier, and we have yet to receive an answer or an apology for comments made by the Premier attributing racial remarks to the opposition, both the NDP and the Conservative caucuses.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Will the members please keep it down a little? I'm having trouble listening. The member for Durham.

Mr. O'Toole: Thank you very much for that respectful interruption, Mr. Speaker. I would say that if a person is just paying attention at a very modest level—there's the article in the Toronto Star today—if the viewers would realize that what we're trying to get the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration on the Liberal slush fund, the \$32 million that has been flushed out at the last minute, and to me—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Hudak: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: Despite the loud voice of the Minister of Health Promotion, I wonder if there is a quorum in the House.

The Deputy Speaker: Is there a quorum?

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

The Deputy Speaker: A quorum is present. Now, let's just keep it down. I don't want to disturb the mood of the House, but I do want to hear the speaker. The member for Durham.

Mr. O'Toole: I think it's important for those listening tonight to realize that the last two weeks have been dominated by a lack of accountability by a government that's flushed out \$32 million of your taxpayer dollars, hard-earned money. Some of it would be the health premium, the \$2.6 billion that they've collected in this tax they promised not to do. Part of that money is definitely in that bundle right there, the \$2.6 billion, as

well as other monies. Today, I heard a number of \$1.7 billion that Minister Sorbara mentioned in his remarks. I'm sure he regrets saying that number, because now it's a larger amount that's somewhat circumspect.

Basically we refer to the Toronto Star as the Liberal briefing notes. The Toronto Star is basically the Liberal briefing note. In this particular bill, we do find some agreeable, harmonious sections that our critic, Tim Hudak, has spoken to here in the House at some time, although it's been limited. It says, "Many of the grant recipients"—

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. O'Toole: —"are respected community groups, including the Maytree Foundation, Frontier College and COSTI Immigrant Services.

"The largest beneficiary was the UJA (United Jewish Appeal) Federation, which received \$15 million of the \$20.4 million granted in the most recent year."

The point is that if there's nothing to hide, why won't they call in the auditor? Mr. McCarter is the auditor of the province of Ontario. He would just love to look at this file and review the application process, review the money granted. Was there an appropriate process of spending taxpayers' money? Probably there was. But the point that our leader, John Tory, has been trying to make is that the whole issue is about accountability.

To me, it's unprecedented: There was a letter sent to the Auditor General, dated May 1, signed by every single member in opposition. It says:

"Such practices pose significant questions regarding the transparency and integrity of government. In particular our concerns centre around the following"—and goes on to list both Howard Hampton as well as our leader, John Tory.

"Ontarians deserve a full accounting of:

"—how much money exists in secret funds"—the slush fund;

"—how it is being spent"—accountability;

"—for what purpose" it is being spent;

"—who is receiving these funds;

"—how these recipients are selected."

Those are fair questions of a very neutral nature.

As I said before, it isn't Bill 174, substantively; it's the time allocation motion, the relentless attack using the rules to exempt opposition debate time. I've tried to bring the attention of this House, without much success, I might add, and it's in that vein—

Interjection.

Mr. O'Toole: The member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound has asked me to complete my remarks; my own party is asking me to wrap it up here.

It's a time allocation motion, it's a budget bill, so I'm not allowed to move adjournment of the debate anymore. I'm not allowed to adjourn the House. I'm not allowed to speak on the bill.

Mr. Hudak: Adjourn the bill.

Mr. O'Toole: I move that we adjourn the bill right now.

Mr. Bill Murdoch (Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound): Just sit down now.

Mr. O'Toole: I will relinquish the floor to the NDP, who will have much to say on this bill.

Ms. DiNovo: I would like to say that it's a pleasure to speak on Bill 174. I don't know that it's a pleasure; it's a duty I perform with some degree of trepidation, because, of course, I heard from the Minister of Health Promotion, who said that part of the aim of this bill is to stop frustrating the small business community. I can tell you what does, in fact, frustrate the small business community.

TABIA, the Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas, had their general meeting last night, and TABIA talked about what they'd like to see in a tax reform bill. They'd like to see the business education tax reformed, not sometime never, which is what the budget does, but now. I'm going to quote Mr. Lionel Miskin, who looks after their tax matters—remember, this is all of Toronto's small businesses: "The provincial levy"—he's talking about the business education tax—"is hurting Toronto very badly.... It is contributing to the erosion of the city's commercial base."

Viewers at home may wonder what that looks like. Well, it looks like this: In Toronto, the education tax paid on a commercially assessed property of \$0.5 million is about \$11,100, whereas in Halton it's about \$7,650. There's no rationale for this. That is why I brought in a resolution on TABIA's behalf that was dated December 12: "That, in the opinion of this House, the property tax rate levied by the province on small business should be applied more equitably across the province, and the tax rate for small business should be set at the same rate for the entire GTA."

Of course, we're also asking for an uploading of the downloads on the city so that small business isn't hit by another tax increase. That's what small business wants.

What else frustrates small business? Well, I'll tell you. It frustrates small business when they see politicians in this House give themselves a 31% pay increase in eight days but move some reform of the business education tax over five years. That frustrates them.

What also frustrates them is the lack of transparency and accountability with the \$30-million-plus that flows out of this place with no accounting, no criteria and refusal to allow the Auditor General to come in and look at the books. That frustrates small business. Anybody who has run a small business knows subterfuge when they see it. They know stonewalling; they know the lack of answers that are given in this place. They know the political dance when they see it danced, and it's certainly danced across the way. That's what is critical and really frustrating, not only to small business but to all of Ontario.

In light of that, I move adjournment of this debate.

The Deputy Speaker: Ms.—

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker: —DiNovo—thank you; sometimes I can remember first names first—from Parkdale-High Park has moved adjournment of the debate.

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 nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 2030 to 2100.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour, please stand to be counted by the clerks.

All those opposed, please stand to be counted by the clerks.

The Deputy Clerk: The ayes are 6; the nays are 31.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

The member for Parkdale-High Park.

Ms. DiNovo: Again, it's a pleasure to rise in this House. I might want to comment, just for those who are watching tonight and wondering why we are ringing bells, why we're asking for adjournments.

Interjections.

Ms. DiNovo: I hear my colleagues—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. If we listen carefully, we may find out why.

The member for Parkdale-High Park.

Ms. DiNovo: It's a sad day when a woman is shouted down by those opposing.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Thank you.

The member for Parkdale-High Park.

Ms. DiNovo: I just wanted to explain, for those who are watching at home, that what you're seeing is incredible frustration, on this side of the House, with a government that is simply not responding to questions from the opposition. They're stonewalling; they're dancing and skirting around an issue. We're asking for the auditor to have a look at the books. We want to know where the \$30 million plus went and why. We also want to know why so many groups in this province who are deserving, who represent immigrant communities, do not get that money. Again, no answer is forthcoming, so this is the only means left to us. Therefore, I move adjournment of the House.

The Deputy Speaker: Ms. DiNovo has moved adjournment of the House.

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 nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 2103 to 2133.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour, please stand to be counted by the Clerk.

Those opposed, please stand to be counted by the Clerk.

The Deputy Clerk: The ayes are 7; the nays are 30.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

Mr. Watson has moved government notice of motion number 362.

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.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 2135 to 2145.

The Deputy Speaker: All those in favour, please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arthurs, Wayne
Balkissoon, Bas
Bartolucci, Rick
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Caplan, David
Chan, Michael
Duguid, Brad
Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Gerretsen, John
Hoy, Pat

Jeffrey, Linda
Lalonde, Jean-Marc
Leal, Jeff
Levac, Dave
Marsales, Judy
McMeekin, Ted
McNeely, Phil
Milloy, John
Mitchell, Carol
Patten, Richard

Qaadri, Shafiq
Racco, Mario G.
Ramal, Khalil
Rinaldi, Lou
Ruprecht, Tony
Sandals, Liz
Sergio, Mario
Watson, Jim
Wilkinson, John
Zimmer, David

The Deputy Speaker: All those opposed, please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Arnott, Ted
DiNovo, Cheri
Hudak, Tim

Marchese, Rosario
Munro, Julia
Murdoch, Bill

O'Toole, John
Savoline, Joyce

The Deputy Clerk: The ayes are 30; the nays are 8.

The Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

It being past 9:30 of the clock, this House is adjourned until Thursday, May 10, at 10 o'clock.

The House adjourned at 2147.

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David Oraziotti, Shafiq Qadri,
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