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**Tuesday 25 February 2014**

**Mardi 25 février 2014**

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 25 February 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 25 février 2014

*The House met at 0900.*

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

*Prayers.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ONTARIO IMMIGRATION ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR L'IMMIGRATION  
EN ONTARIO

Mr. Coteau moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 161, An Act with respect to immigration to Ontario and a related amendment to the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 / Projet de loi 161, Loi portant sur l'immigration en Ontario et apportant une modification connexe à la Loi de 1991 sur les professions de la santé réglementées.

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

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** Good morning. It gives me great pleasure to stand before the House today to speak in regard to our proposed legislation, the Ontario Immigration Act, Bill 161. Mr. Speaker, I believe that this piece of legislation will start a new chapter in the province of Ontario. I think it's the right time for this type of legislation and I think it's critical for what we're doing here in the province of Ontario. So I want to take an opportunity to talk about why I believe this piece of legislation, this proposed legislation, is critical to Ontario, but also I want to take an opportunity to respond a bit to my critics from the opposition and the third party. They made some remarks last week and I just wanted to bring some insight into those remarks. But first I'll talk about why this bill is critical for the province of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, we have some challenges when it comes to our birth rate in the province of Ontario, but we also know that we have an aging population; our baby boomers are retiring. We know that new sectors are being developed all the time, new technologies are being brought in, and there's a skills shortage when it comes to specific skills in the province of Ontario. We also know that over the next 10 years there will be 2.5 million job openings in the province of Ontario, and the majority of those positions will be highly skilled positions. Over the next 25 years immigration is going to be the major source of market growth in the province of Ontario. The simple fact is that immigration is critical to our economy. We need to ensure that we continue to attract the best and

brightest from around the world. We also need to make sure we put in place the right type of educational programs so we can respond to that labour market need, that we offer retraining. But we do know that immigration will play a part in building a strong economy here in the province of Ontario, so it is critical.

But we also know that immigration, Mr. Speaker, has played such a huge role in the development of this province. If we think about our past, Ontario's past—I know that the Premier says this all the time—outside of our aboriginal population, every single person in this province has some type of immigrant past. It could be two weeks ago; it could be 200 years ago, but there's a strong connection with immigration here in the province of Ontario. In fact, I know many of the members here in this Legislature were born outside the province or country. Mr. Speaker, I was born outside of Canada. I came here as a young man from England. My father went from Grenada to England, and we benefited off of what Canada had to offer, what Ontario has to offer.

Being in this position as Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, I feel so proud when I get to meet newcomers here in the province of Ontario—and I get to meet them all the time. I ask them, “Why have you chosen Ontario as your destination?” Because I'm curious to hear what the answer is. Often, I hear words like “freedom”; I hear words like “opportunity”; I hear words like “success.” “I can find success for me and my family.” And I believe without question that if you work hard in this province, you can take advantage of those opportunities that are here and you can find success for yourself and your family.

I think Ontario is a unique place. The member from Oakville, Mr. Flynn—a few months ago, I was at an event with him. He said that Ontario is unique. He said that never in the history of the world has a place like Ontario existed, and I think that's true because you look around and we know there are so many different cultures. In fact, there are over 200 different cultures, and we have over 250 languages that are spoken here in the province of Ontario.

So it is my honour to bring forward this proposed legislation, Bill 161, the Ontario Immigration Act, as a newcomer to Canada myself, from a newcomer family, and as a member of this Legislature, but I think most importantly as an Ontarian, because I believe this piece of legislation is coming at the right time for Ontario.

If this proposed legislation passes, it will do a few things. It will affirm our commitment to settlement and integration programs here in the province of Ontario. It

will strengthen our role in immigrant selection in the province of Ontario, which I think is so critical, especially for trying to fill those skill gaps that exist. It will also support the implementation of our immigration strategy, which was brought forward by my predecessor, now the Minister of Finance, and the PA for children and youth services, because I know she played a huge role in the consultation process. But this immigration strategy is key to making sure that Ontario continues to move forward.

I want to take a few moments to talk about our settlement programs here in the province of Ontario. I think that this piece of proposed legislation is key to ensuring that these important and critical programs that we have here in Ontario are recognized and enabled, for the first time, through legislation. If this legislation does pass, it will enable and recognize those programs that we have here, that exist in the province of Ontario. And I have to say that the programs that are offered in the province, settlement services for newcomers, are the best, I believe, in this entire country, and they're the envy of many countries around the world. In fact, I've had other countries come here to talk about these programs because they always say to us, "How does Ontario do it so well?" It's because of those settlement services and those programs that we have here in the province of Ontario.

My critic the member from Beaches–East York last week stood in the House and said that our programs are not the way they used to be back—I guess back years ago. He said that there has been a decline in the services that we offer, and he talked about a program at the airport where people come in and get information. I have to say that the settlement services in the province of Ontario are extraordinary. I get to go out there and meet these different programs all the time, and there's no question that these programs are world-class.

In fact, if you talk about, for example, our bridge training program, our bridge training program, over the last several years, has successfully had over 50,000 people graduate from the program, and these are foreign-trained professionals who come into the province of Ontario. We want to figure out how we can fast-track them as fast as possible so they can get their credentials and they can continue to work in the field that they've been trained to do. We've had over 50,000 people go through these courses over the last several years.

If you look at our other programs, our French- and English-as-second-language programs, we currently have over 100,000 people across the province enrolled in those courses. Our programs are a bit different from the federal programs because you don't have to—it doesn't matter if you're a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident. Everyone qualifies for those programs because we even know that when sometimes people come into the province of Ontario—I met a gentleman, for example, a few weeks ago, who was born in Ontario, and went to Greece his whole life. He came back and had difficulty with English. He qualified for our courses. The federal program doesn't allow people who have their Canadian citizenship to take the courses. We have an open approach to our ESL and

FSL language courses here in the province of Ontario, and they're right across the province of Ontario. The rule for us is, if you can show that you have capacity to deliver the course and you have the demand for it, we will fund those courses.

#### 0910

Since 2003, this government has invested over \$900 million into settlement and immigrant services here in the province of Ontario, and I think that's important. I think that the member from Beaches–East York has to recognize that this is, I would argue, probably the largest commitment of any government in the history of Ontario when it comes to investment in our settlement programs and services.

Madam Speaker, if the legislation does pass, it will also do another thing. It will allow us to have a little bit more control over our selection process here in the province of Ontario. I want to take an opportunity to talk about Ontario and the current numbers. I know the member from Prince Edward–Hastings last week talked about Ontario. He says there's more opportunities, I believe, in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and other places than there are in Ontario. He also said that "Ontario used to be the number one destination for newcomers to Canada." I'm going to read that one more time. He said that "Ontario used to be the number one destination for newcomers to Canada." Well, I want to correct—well, I can't correct his record, but I want to just point out to the member opposite that Ontario remains the number one destination in Canada for newcomers. It remains the number one destination. In fact, if you take all the newcomers west of Ontario, so you take all the provinces and you add them up, it doesn't even equal what Ontario attracts. The fact is that there is opportunity here in the province of Ontario. It's a great time to be in the province of Ontario, and that's why newcomers are choosing Ontario and it remains the number one destination in the country for newcomers. I think that's important to say.

There are some challenges that we do have, though, when it comes to the newcomers that are coming into Ontario. Back in 2001, we attracted roughly in the mid-60s when it came to the economic class of newcomers here in the province of Ontario. Currently that number has dropped, and it's dropped substantially, and that's because of federal policy. So we need to have a better ability to select newcomers into the province of Ontario, like other provinces have. We know that there are other provinces that have selection up to 34%. In Ontario, it's well below 2%; it remains below 2% in self-selection. We know that if the province has more selection power, we can work with our municipalities. We can work with companies and businesses to ensure that we continue to attract the best and brightest with those specific skills necessary to fill in those positions we can't find people to fill in Ontario, to ensure that our economy continues to grow. We are currently at 50%. We were in the mid-60s back in 2001. Here's an interesting point: Saskatchewan and Manitoba's economic-class percentages are at 87% and 77%, and the Canadian average of 70%. So there's

an issue here: Ontario is not getting its fair share of economic-class newcomers into the province of Ontario, and other provinces are getting an average of 70% and as high as 87%.

The member from Prince Edward–Hastings, my critic from the Progressive Conservative Party, made some observations last week that I believe were inaccurate, and I need to set the record straight. I need to set the record straight because the numbers are here, and I think the member from Prince Edward–Hastings needs to listen to these points. He claimed that our provincial nominee program attracts people into the province and then they leave. They leave and they go to other provinces out west.

Madam Speaker, 98% of our PNP nominees that come into Ontario remain in Ontario—98%. They don't pick up their bags, land in Ontario, pick up their bags and move out west. It's not true; it's simply not true. They remain in the province of Ontario because there is opportunity in Ontario. I think it's a great time to be in Ontario. I think there's a bright economic future in Ontario and I think that the PNP numbers speak the truth: 98% of our provincial nominee candidates that arrive here remain in Ontario. And we know that 95% of the employers that access this program are so satisfied; 95% are satisfied with the individuals that come over to fill those positions that are very highly skilled. So it's almost a perfect record—98%. I think we in the Legislature should be proud, regardless of what party we belong to. We retain 98% of our provincial nominee candidates here in the province of Ontario, and we know that the provincial nominee program helps employers attract and retain the skills they need for today's knowledge-based economy. I think that's important. We can say that PNP is a successful program here in the province of Ontario.

I want to give a few examples of the success that has taken place. In the last few years, 25 hospitals have accessed our provincial nominee programs to attract the right type of doctors or medical professionals they need in their communities to ensure Ontarians continue to live in a place where they can access good health care. Also, half of our universities in the province of Ontario have accessed the program in order to attract the right type of professors and university personnel to ensure in our province that when a young person or an adult decides to go to post-secondary education, they can continue to receive a world-class education. In addition, since 2009, our provincial nominee program here in the province of Ontario has brought in half a billion dollars in actual investment and has created thousands of jobs. So there is no question that our provincial nominee program is a successful program.

In addition to that, I believe roughly 65% of the applicants who are successful come here to study either at a master's or a PhD level. So we're attracting the best and brightest from around the world, who go through a competitive process in order to gain citizenship in this province. They come in through this academic stream, and we think it's very successful to attract the best and brightest,

but also to add to our economy, because we know that our international students contribute a lot to our economy here in the province of Ontario.

The member from Prince Edward–Hastings said something interesting last week. He said that the federal government is not growing our numbers in the PNP because of a lack of confidence, I believe it was, in our ability to manage the program and make best use of it. Since I became Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, and utilizing the hard work and dedication of my predecessors, the Minister of Tourism and Culture, as well as the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Economic Trade and Development, to be able to really push forward on the agenda that they set, we went from 1,000 PNP numbers when I started—last year, we were allocated 1,300. I'm pleased to announce today—and I'm not sure if everyone knows—that we're at 2,500 PNP. So if the member opposite believes that our provincial nominee numbers are not going up because there's a lack of confidence—well, if we've gone up, what, 150% in the last year, I think that's the best vote of confidence we could ever have from my federal counterpart and the federal government. I think this is an extraordinary time for Ontario and I think we should be very proud of the fact that we've been able to, through our advocacy and through our ability to continue to bring forward an argument that suggests Ontario needs its fair share of economic-class immigrants in the province of Ontario—you need to bring us up to the same number that you're allocating to provinces like Alberta. We're at 2,500 from 1,000, but we still need those numbers to go up. We need to be above the 5,000 mark in order to best position Ontario for success.

#### 0920

I think that the provincial nominee program is one of those programs that—we will be able to, if this legislation passes, have a framework in order to enable it to even work better, especially as the Expression of Interest model is moved forward by Ottawa. We're told that in January 2015, the Expression of Interest model will come forward here in Canada and Ontario, and we need to make sure that we have a framework put in place that allows us to participate more in the selection process of newcomers, so we can continue to help our municipalities, our businesses and, most importantly, our society here in the province of Ontario.

This bill, this legislation, if passed, will bring forward more transparency and accountability, and it will allow us to continue to expand. It would also, Madam Speaker, prevent fraud by improving compliance and enforcement measures within our selection process. I think this is something we need to do in order to prepare ourselves for the Expression of Interest model. If we can put in this process, prevent potential fraud and introduce penalties for applicants who misrepresent themselves, and for those who take advantage of newcomers—I know that the member from Beaches–East York said, “Why is there such a heavy focus on penalties for fraud?” I know he said that it was about half of a percentage of fraud that's

committed in Canada. I believe that's what he said. I know that we attract about 250,000 newcomers to Canada each year, so that would be roughly 1,200 people, based on his number, that are actually committing fraud. We need to make sure that there's an accountable system put in place if the Expression of Interest model is brought forward based on the Australia and New Zealand model. We need to make sure that if the federal government decides to move in this direction, Ontario is prepared to further participate in the selection process of newcomers here in the province of Ontario.

In conclusion, I just want to say that we are quite proud here, on this side of the House, for the Legislature and for our members here to debate this proposed legislation. I believe that Bill 161, if passed, is the right thing to do at the right time for Ontario. If you look at our past and you look at the history of this province, immigration has played a huge role in its development and will continue to do so. We need to make sure that we have in place the tools that government can use to continue to attract the best and brightest from around the world, to continue to build a province built on fairness, built on compassion, built on opportunity, so people can find success. And we need to make sure, Madam Speaker, that we build an Ontario that continues to capture the values that make us, I think, different from many jurisdictions around the world, and that's our strong education system, our strong health care system here in the province of Ontario. I think that by moving forward on this piece of legislation, we will have the ability to do just that.

I look forward to hearing the debate in this Legislature, and I just want to end by saying that when newcomers succeed, Ontario succeeds.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Comments and questions?

**Mr. Todd Smith:** It's a pleasure to stand and respond. I will have an hour-long presentation on Bill 161 in just a few moments, but I just wanted to touch on some of the comments from the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. Congratulations on your first piece of legislation since being named minister. We've been waiting for this. You got through 20 minutes or so, and we look forward to adding some comments to the comments that you made this morning.

There's no doubt that Ontario still is a destination of choice for people from around the world, Madam Speaker. But we've seen the numbers of new immigrants declining in Ontario. That's a fact; it's a simple fact. I'll go over some of the numbers when I have a little more time to elaborate on those numbers. But the simple fact is, not as many people are coming to Ontario as there once was, and there is a big reason for that. The big reason for that is because Ontario is not the land of opportunity anymore. The member opposite, the minister, spoke about the fact that when he moved to Ontario this was the land of opportunity. This was a place where people wanted to come. There was going to be hope and there was going to be freedom, and he mentioned another

bunch of important words. Ontario isn't the symbol of those words any longer. Under the last 10 years, we have seen the opportunity in Ontario dissipating. It's just a fact. Unemployment is rising. Taxes are rising, and they want to continue raising taxes. People from around the world are doing their homework. They're looking at the numbers and they're saying, "There's a better opportunity in other jurisdictions for me to raise my family than there is in Ontario." Just the simple facts, Madam Speaker, and I'll elaborate later.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Kitchener–Waterloo.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It actually is a pleasure to stand up and talk a little bit and respond to some of the comments from the minister with regard to Bill 161. This is a step in the right direction, and it is long overdue. We welcome this because we share the principled position that immigration is an important part of the culture, the history and the economy of this province. There's a lot of work, though, that we can move forward on. There are some things that we'll be addressing, I think, in committee; certainly, the fact that this bill does not address the long-standing problem of ensuring that highly trained immigrants are able to work in their professional field.

When the former Premier of this province came to Kitchener–Waterloo, which is the fourth-largest draw for immigrants and refugees in the province, he said, to a packed house—this is some 10 years ago—"Listen, I know that there are doctors in this room who are driving cabs, and we're going to get that taken care of." This has been a long-standing issue. Hopefully, now that we have a piece of legislation that we can work with, we can actually make sure that people who come to this country and come to this province, who have skills that are needed, actually can apply those skills in their respective fields.

The other part of this bill that is missing, and this is something that I know OCASI feels strongly about, is that the bill recognizes municipalities and employers as important partners but is silent on the role of the community-based non-profit immigrant and refugee serving sector. I've served on Reception House in Kitchener–Waterloo for the last four years. They do important work. They're on the front lines. They know their communities best, and it is a missed opportunity if we do not make sure those not-for-profit agencies are part of the solution going forward. Those are two issues that we see as problematic, but they can be solved, and we're willing to do the hard work to get it done.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. Teresa Piruzza:** I'm proud to rise this morning to support my colleague with respect to Bill 161, the Ontario Immigration Act, as he has indicated. When I was the parliamentary assistant at MCI, I led, I facilitated a number of consultations across the province. Through those consultations, Madam Speaker, we spoke to hundreds of people across the province. We spoke with newcomers, we spoke with agencies, and we spoke with

industry and business to really provide the backbone in terms of what we're seeing come forward in this immigration act today, so I'm very excited and proud to have been part of that process.

The reason I'm proud of being part of that process is twofold. One is that, prior to being elected, I was very active in our community with our local immigration planning committee. That was where agencies came together, and we came forward with recommendations in terms of how to strengthen our services and ensure that all newcomers that came into our community, that came into this province, had the supports that they required to be successful. I'm proud to say that in Ontario we have a fantastic system of agencies, of groups, of educators and health care that really supports our newcomers. The other element is that although I was born in Ontario, my parents came here from Italy. I grew up listening to their stories of why they came to Ontario, why it was important for all of us to work together to ensure that we all have a successful future. It doesn't matter where we come from when we come to Ontario' we all have a future here, and in order to have that success we need to have the programs and services that support them.

I work quite often and I visit quite often with all our agencies in Windsor, including women's economic skills training, W5, our Multicultural Council, our newcomer centre of excellence as well, and we celebrate our diversity. We celebrate our diversity and we ensure that we're working together in partnership to ensure that we can move forward. This act does that. It ensures that we have all our programs and services in place so that we can be the best place and everyone can succeed in Ontario. Thank you.

0930

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments and questions.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Again, it's my pleasure to stand and just briefly address Bill 161, the act with respect to immigration in Ontario.

Speaker, in my riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex, I recall back to about two and a half years ago, when I was getting to know the people of Leamington. Leamington is a very diverse, strong, rich-in-culture community. But, unfortunately, it's been hard hit. Now, when I say "rich in culture," there's a strong Italian base there, a strong Portuguese base there, and of course there are other people who have immigrated into that town. And there was a reason why they came, years ago: because Ontario was what I would call the land of milk and honey. Unfortunately, the milk has soured and the honey has gotten hard.

Unfortunately, we look at the current situation right now and, of course, we see what the federal government is trying to do and wanting to do and needing to do. Speaker, I look at this and I go—Ontario is not going to get its share of provincial nominee spots until it decides to get the economy back on track. Our party does, in fact, have a plan to do that, to get things back in order, because we look at how this economy has been slapped

around constantly over the last 10, 11 years, where the debt has more than doubled from when this government came into being back in 2003.

Again, will we support this? Yes, we will. We will support this. But there are things that need to be looked at more strongly to strengthen this particular bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The minister has two minutes to respond.

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** I'd like to thank the member from Prince Edward–Hastings, the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, the Minister of Children and Youth Services and the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex for weighing in on the introduction of the second reading of this bill.

I just wanted to say that, yes, our share of newcomers here in the province of Ontario has gone from about 135,000 to about 100,000 over the last several years. It is true, and I agree with the member from Prince Edward–Hastings. This is exactly why we brought forward the immigration strategy to the province of Ontario: to tell the federal government, who have control of who comes into the province of Ontario—they control the flow of newcomers in the country. We need to unite and we need to drop our partisan divides. We need to unite and stand up and tell the federal government that Ontario needs its fair share of PNP spots, of skilled workers, economic-class workers and newcomers here to the province of Ontario and our fair share of newcomers as a whole. We need to get back to our number of 135,000. I hope that the members from the Progressive Conservative Party and the members from the NDP will stand with me and this government to ensure that the federal government allows this province to chart its course when it comes to immigrant selection, but also put in place the tools necessary, through our programs that we work with them to develop and to implement and to run, so we can continue to build an Ontario that we've all benefited from.

I'm proud to stand here and participate in this debate, and I look forward to all the comments from all members in this House, because I know it's an issue that matters to every single person here. Thank you very much.

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

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Good morning. It is a pleasure to rise and speak on Bill 161, An Act with respect to immigration to Ontario and a related amendment to the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991.

This bill is not a bad bill, Madam Speaker. It's not a bad bill. Actually, as a matter of fact, there are probably some good things in this bill—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Todd Smith:** That's the largest ovation I've ever received here, from that side of the House anyway.

Bill 161, though, is another indication of this government putting the cart before the horse. What needs to happen first is, there need to be some fundamental changes in the province of Ontario. We'll get to those eventually. I've got lots of time here to talk about this.

But first of all I would like to say that, over the last five months or so, it's been an honour and a pleasure for

me to be the critic for citizenship and immigration for Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC caucus, travelling into the different multicultural communities in the greater Toronto area in particular, but right across the province. There are so many rich communities out there that provide such tremendous culture to our province. They've made so many contributions, not just to the culture of the province but to the academics of the province, to the economy in the province, and it has been a wonderful experience for me as a young guy who grew up in New Brunswick—not the most multicultural province in Canada—to come here to Ontario.

I live, of course, in the Belleville area, in Sterling, in Prince Edward–Hastings, but to come into the greater Toronto area, where the majority of newcomers to Canada do call home, and to experience the Vaisakhi in the Brampton area or in Mississauga; to experience Diwali—it's a wonderful time; great celebrations, tremendous food, of course, which I like. Then, to spend lunar new year, Chinese new year in the communities, mostly in Richmond Hill and Markham, over the last several months and celebrate the new year—of course, 2014 is the year of the horse, Madam Speaker—spending time in those communities understanding the issues that these people are facing in their communities, and then bringing their issues here to Queen's Park. We celebrated Thai Pongal in the Tamil community back in January—the Tamil new year. It was a wonderful time to celebrate with them and another growing community within Ontario. So I've experienced many new holidays and celebrations in these communities that I had never experienced before, and it has been a wonderful experience for me on behalf of our party to represent our caucus at these various events.

As I mentioned, I moved to Ontario over 20 years ago now from New Brunswick. The reason that I moved from New Brunswick to Ontario was because, at that time, New Brunswick was a rather depressed area. There was not a lot of opportunity. I love the Maritimes—it's a great place to visit in the summer, Madam Speaker, if you get the opportunity—but there was going to be a far better chance of me finding full-time employment in my chosen field here in Ontario than there was in New Brunswick.

In those days, New Brunswick, as I say, wasn't doing all that well. Ontario was the engine of Confederation, Ontario was where the opportunity was and Ontario was where you wanted to move if you wanted to make your mark. I was a young broadcast journalist, and, of course, Ontario is where the majority of the people in Canada live, as well, so I'm not telling you anything you don't know, but there was a lot more opportunity here in Ontario than there was in New Brunswick at the time.

So I came here. I was educated in Belleville at Loyalist College, in the broadcast journalism program there, and quickly caught on a position with Quinte Broadcasting radio stations. Now I have, of course, a beautiful wife, and two children in Ontario that are in school at Bayside and doing extremely well and taking French immersion. I'm doing everything that a young guy from

New Brunswick had envisioned when he moved here. I didn't actually envision being an MPP at Queen's Park when I moved to Ontario, but here I am, and I'm happy to be here and proud to be representing the people of Prince Edward–Hastings in the Legislature.

As the minister alluded to earlier, he and his family moved here from England. I know his father is from Grenada. His family is from Grenada, and they live the Ontario dream as well, as so many people in this Legislature actually have and as so many people in this province have.

**0940**

But the Ontario that we moved to 20 years ago, 15 years ago, 10 years ago has whittled away. It has been whittled away over time. We've seen that opportunity disappear, and when I'm talking to people in Brampton or Mississauga or Scarborough or Richmond Hill or Markham or even in Prince Edward–Hastings, where I'm from, they all come to the same conclusion: There's just not as much opportunity out there. They're worried now that their children aren't going to have the opportunities that they had when they decided to move to Ontario.

Unemployment is significantly high in Ontario. As a matter of fact, I believe the number is 80 months now—correct me if I'm wrong, but I believe it's 80 months, that unemployment in Ontario has been higher than the national average. The economy isn't exactly ticking at full speed, Madam Speaker. I think there are many, many reasons for that, and I think the chief reason for that is because the government isn't doing a good enough job at making sure that we're creating jobs in the province of Ontario. Driving up debt with multi-billion-dollar deficits year after year is making Ontario a lacklustre destination for investors in our province.

People look at the fundamentals of a province before deciding whether to invest here or whether to move here, and people are doing their homework now. I mean, 20 years ago when I moved here, I don't even think I knew what an Internet was, but we live now in such a small world that if you're deciding to come here from India—in speaking of Canada—if you're deciding to locate, you're now able to do your homework. Everything is available at the flick of a switch, on your keyboard, and—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Todd Smith:** The Minister of Labour says, “Yes, they're coming to Ontario.” But they're not coming to Ontario in the numbers that they once were, Madam Speaker. They're not, and that's the fact. The Minister of Citizenship and Immigration admitted as much just a moment ago, that the numbers have significantly dropped, and there's a reason for that. The reason is, they're doing their homework and they're understanding that the opportunity that once existed here in Ontario doesn't exist in the same way any longer, and there are a lot of things that have to happen. Our leader, Tim Hudak, has talked about his Million Jobs Act and the fact that we have to start creating jobs again in the province.

We have not seen a single jobs plan from the government, but yet we have this piece of legislation—and this



is where I go back to the fact that we've put the cart before the horse when it comes to this piece of legislation. Bill 161 is a fine piece of legislation, but it's too early. We have to have a jobs plan. We have to start creating jobs in the province, and what we've seen is jobs disappearing at a record pace from Ontario. My colleague from Chatham–Kent–Essex just talked moments ago about what's happened in Leamington. Heinz ketchup was in Leamington for over 100 years. It was an opportunity, as my colleague mentioned, where people immigrated into Canada and they would work at the Heinz ketchup factory in Leamington. They would grow the tomatoes and send them on to the factory. Hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of people worked at Heinz ketchup in Leamington. The fact of the matter is that we're still making ketchup in the world. People are still putting ketchup on their french fries and on their Kraft Dinner—my kids have it on their Kraft Dinner; I don't quite like that but they're having it on their Kraft Dinner. They're having it on their hamburgers. Right? That ketchup is still being made, but the ketchup isn't being made in Leamington any longer; that ketchup is being made in the United States.

This is what's happening. Our jobs aren't disappearing; they're just disappearing from Ontario, because we're not the location of choice for investors any longer, and there are many, many reasons for that. There's the high debt and the high deficit that this government continues to put on the table. We'll look forward to seeing what happens at budget time in about a month or so here, Madam Speaker, to see if those blank spots that are in the budget ledger for the years 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18 are actually filled in this time. They talk about the fact that they want to balance the budget, but they have absolutely no plan to do that. And until we start to get our finances under control, investors like Heinz and many others are going to decide to locate elsewhere.

We haven't even touched on the high cost of electricity, the rising and soaring cost of electricity, and what that means for investors in our province as well. I represent the Quinte area. I meet with the Quinte Manufacturers Association on a quarterly basis, but I hear from them a heck of a lot more than that, Madam Speaker, because every day they're contacting my office, talking about the rising cost of electricity. As a matter of fact, yesterday I had a meeting on the telephone with the general manager of a manufacturing facility in Belleville. He told me his global adjustment last month on his hydro bill was \$2,100. That's a number that didn't exist—and that's a small manufacturing facility. There are much larger manufacturing facilities that have seen huge increases on their hydro bills. This is the biggest concern right now in rural Ontario, and I know it's a concern here in the GTA with our manufacturers as well: the rising cost of electricity.

I've mentioned many times here about Sigma Stretch Film in Belleville. Two and a half years ago, their hydro bill was \$131,000 a month. That's a lot of money, \$131,000 a month. In December of this year, their hydro

bill was \$240,000, and according to the Liberals' long-term energy plan, by the time 2015 hits, that hydro bill is going to be \$461,000 a month. That's up from \$131,000. These are—

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Yes?

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** I know that we're talking about the Ontario Immigration Act, and he's focusing entirely on electricity. I think the member should return back to Bill 161.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** I would just remind the member to remember that it is Bill 161. Thank you.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Sure. And again, Madam Speaker, I'm happy to talk about the bill. I have 47 minutes remaining, and I will of course get to the bill, but I'm trying to paint a larger picture as to why investors aren't creating jobs in Ontario, which of course makes it very difficult for newcomers to come to Ontario, if there are no jobs here in Ontario or if jobs are disappearing at a record pace. So I can appreciate that the minister would like me to talk to the bill, and I will be talking to the bill, but again, I'm just trying to relay that we are in a very dire situation in Ontario, and we have a government that doesn't seem to realize that we're in a desperate situation here. We need to make some changes, and we need to implement the Million Jobs Act that our leader, Tim Hudak, has been talking about in order for us to attract newcomers at the pace that we need to attract newcomers to Ontario.

As the minister mentioned in his remarks, we need to bring in skilled workers. We all understand that we need to bring in skilled employees to fill the job shortages that we're about to face down the road, and I think the number that he mentioned was 2.5 million job openings in the coming years. So we all recognize the fact that we do have some challenges in Ontario, and one challenge that I think the minister mentioned was the low birth rate, but we have many, many challenges that are far more important and significant than that.

We need to create an environment where investors want to create jobs here in Ontario, and we need to create an environment such that newcomers will want to come and begin their new lives here in Ontario and not choose Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba or British Columbia.

I do have a few numbers, and I will speak specifically to some of the numbers in regard to other provinces. I'm just trying to find them here, Madam Speaker. I apologize.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Take your time, Todd.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Thank you very much. I appreciate that. I have lots of time, I understand.

**0950**

Provinces like Manitoba and Saskatchewan have seen their immigration rates double and triple, respectively. Manitoba and Saskatchewan—and by no means do I mean to run down other provinces, but Manitoba and Saskatchewan weren't high on the list of destinations for people from around the world to locate to. There's a rea-

son why those numbers are significantly higher in those two provinces right now. If you look at Saskatchewan in particular, there's a province that has its act together. There's no such thing as unemployment in Saskatchewan. People in Saskatchewan have good jobs now. They know that when they wake up in the morning, they're going to be able to go to work. There's no such thing as unemployment in Saskatchewan—low single digits in unemployment, if there is any.

They've done such a good job in Saskatchewan at creating an environment where people want to come. They actually did have some wonderful commercials on during the Olympic Games. It is probably a very nice place to visit and to raise a family now because there is that opportunity.

So many people are choosing other provinces now, like Manitoba and Saskatchewan, who have taken advantage of the provincial nominee program. When you look at what the feds have done—they allocate the provincial nominees program spaces—they're looking at the job creation opportunities, they're looking at what's happening in those other provinces and so they're allocating increased numbers there.

While Ontario has seen some increase in provincial nominee program numbers, we believe that, yes, we need to have more spaces in the provincial nominee program, which is a sponsorship program where people come here and are guaranteed to have a job when they get here in their chosen field. We believe that there do need to be more provincial nominee program spaces here in Ontario, and we look forward to the day when we actually have the investors and the businesses here in Ontario that want to create those opportunities and fill those opportunities.

The federal government has made multiple extensive changes to the immigration system here in Canada over the last decade, including the federal skilled worker program, the provincial nominee program, and others like the Canadian experience class. It's a good program as well, where we attract newcomers here. They can come, study in our schools and then eventually receive permanent status here in Ontario. These are all good programs, but again I go back to the fact that if we don't get the fundamentals right here in Ontario, then we're not going to attract those people to our province.

I've been talking to an awful lot of people in the Brampton and Mississauga areas, and even home in Prince Edward-Hastings, about credentials. This is an issue that I believe needs to be addressed as well in Ontario. A few weeks back—I guess it was just before Christmas—I was having some small business round tables. I was previously the small business critic for the PC caucus, and the red tape critic, so I have had small business and red tape meetings right across the province and met with many people. With the citizenship and immigration file, it has been interesting to also hear the same things within the communities of our newcomers and our new Canadians. They're dealing with the same things. They're dealing with red tape issues, and credentials are a big part of that.

Let me tell you a quick story about two gentlemen I was speaking with at a real estate office in Brampton just before Christmas. They were both foreign-trained doctors. Neither of them was working in a hospital or in our health care system. As a matter of fact, I believe one of them was a security guard and the other was a taxi driver—just doing whatever job they could do to make ends meet. They told me that when they were doing their homework and deciding where they were going to relocate here in Canada, they decided—this was many years ago now—to come to Ontario because this was where they were going to be able to get a job and work in their chosen field. The way that one of the gentlemen put it to me was, when he left India on the airplane, he had his credentials. He was going to be able to get a job when he landed here. But when he actually hit the airport up in Mississauga, Lester B. Pearson international airport, he became a zero. These are his words. He said, "I became a zero when I landed at Pearson." He was unable to get a job. This, in a province where we've had some serious physician shortages, especially in some of our more rural areas. He wants to work in his field. It's not like he was working in MASH unit somewhere. He was working at a fully functional and modern, up-to-date hospital in India, with really impressive credentials and experience—20 years' experience working in all different kinds of situations. He wants to work here and contribute to our health care system. When he landed he couldn't get that opportunity.

He got the red tape runaround, the bureaucratic runaround. He did a test. He passed his examinations, but he was unable to get a job in the field. He told me that he'd be willing to work as an apprentice, even, to a fully trained medical practitioner here in Ontario, be it in Thunder Bay or Kirkland Lake or here in the GTA, wherever the opportunity would arise, in order to prove that he knew his profession, that he would be able to provide a service here in Ontario in a field where we could actually use some help and some experience. But he continues to get the runaround.

We need to have an Ontario government that will address that red tape runaround. Treat this as a situation where we want to give our newcomers an opportunity to show us that they can contribute in a positive way to our health care system. They were willing to do anything, these guys: to work in a lab, to work in a family health team setting, to work anywhere in our medical field to get some experience and to prove themselves so that they could be a medical professional here in Ontario, but they're not being given that opportunity.

There's a young lady, actually, whom I met with last summer. She's from the Bancroft area, at the northern end of my riding. She decided that she would go to medical school over in Scotland. She's a fully trained, fully qualified pediatrician in Scotland, but she wants to work at home. She wants to work here in Ontario. Her family is in Bancroft. They have a beautiful home next to the golf course, and Jennifer would love to come back and work at the North Hastings Hospital in Bancroft or

Quinte Health Care hospitals in Belleville or Trenton or Prince Edward county. But she's being denied residency here in Ontario because there are not enough slots here.

We have a pediatrician shortage in eastern Ontario. I can tell you that there needs to be a pediatrician on call 24 hours a day. What's been happening in Belleville, at Belleville General Hospital periodically, is, because we don't have enough pediatricians, babies who are being born at the maternity ward of Belleville General Hospital—brand new babies, just welcomed into the world—are being put in an ambulance and sent to Kingston General Hospital because there's a pediatrician there. The families are actually getting in their cars and driving to Kingston, which is an hour away, to be with their brand new family member. And then when a pediatrician comes on call, the baby is being put back in the ambulance and sent back to Belleville General Hospital. These are the kinds of things that are costing enormous amounts of money, for one, and creating unfortunate situations for families in Ontario at what should be a very celebratory time. It's a huge problem.

We have a pediatrician who's from the Quinte region, who is from Prince Edward–Hastings, who would love to come back and work in their hometown hospital, but they're not getting that opportunity because of the red tape runaround, because of bureaucracy, because of a credentialing system that doesn't work. So that's something that we could potentially look at when we discuss this bill in committee as well: giving those who have the credentials in another country an opportunity to work in their chosen field here in Ontario. That's not just medical practitioners; it's electrical engineers, it's—you name it. People are unable to get into their chosen field here in Ontario. We need to fix that, Madam Speaker.

**1000**

But again, I go back to the fact that if we pass this bill—and I'm sure this bill will eventually make it to committee and will get support; there will be amendments, of course, to this bill—there are not going to be the desired outcomes from this bill, because the province needs to get its financial situation in order.

We decided—when I say “we,” our party and our leader, Tim Hudak, and the PC caucus—back in November and December that we would pass a number of bills that the government wanted passed so that we could see a jobs plan from this government. We had a number of very good bills that were passed, some excellent bills, as a matter of fact: Sikh Heritage Month was passed, First Responders Day was passed, and we had the tanning bed bill for teenagers passed. There were many, many bills that we allowed swift passage to in the Legislature so that we could get to a jobs plan here in Ontario, so that we could make sure that we were addressing the financial crisis that we're in here in Ontario. And when you're looking at a debt that's approaching \$300 billion, this is something that needs to be fixed in order for Ontario to be seen as a desirable location for investment, and we haven't seen that. We haven't seen a government that is taking a laser-like focus to eliminate the deficit in the

province; we've actually seen a government that's looking at introducing future taxes in Ontario, which is going to make us an even less desirable location.

They're talking about bringing in a 10-cent-per-litre increase in the gas tax. What's that going to do to our small businesses, our manufacturers? It's going to make it more expensive for them again to do business here in Ontario—increasing the gas tax. We already know the electricity prices are going through the roof. Our propane prices are up almost triple in the last several months, particularly in eastern Ontario, and there are many people in my region who are dealing with propane that was once at about 50 cents a litre, now at \$1.12 a litre, and it's causing huge hardships on homeowners and residents in eastern Ontario.

It goes back to what I've been saying from the outset, that unless we get our fundamentals in place to make Ontario a desired location for investment, for newcomers to call home, then we're not going to get the numbers that we need to fill the vacancies that the minister was talking about during his presentation: 2.5 million job openings in the coming years.

We need to make changes in our education policy as well and our curriculum so that we're actually training our students for the jobs that are available—people without jobs, jobs without people. But we have to be training people for those job vacancies, and we have to be sure that we're giving them the skills that they need when they're in elementary school, public school and right up through in their post-secondary education so that when they do have an opportunity to join the workforce, they're actually trained for the jobs that are available at that time. We're not doing a good enough job. When you look at the math test results that we had from the EQAO that were recently released, we're not doing a good enough job in financial literacy and in improving our math scores. We need to do a much better job to ensure that when the jobs are available we're actually training our students to fill those job vacancies.

The federal government is encouraging provinces to develop systems that will allow for them to participate in the Expression of Interest program after 2015. The feds are going to be introducing Expression of Interest immigration reform to make the immigration system much more responsive to labour market demands. The minister has touched on that as well in the legislation that's coming forward. Again, this legislation is good legislation, Madam Speaker. There are some very good points throughout this that we commend, but again, it's just a situation where the province is a little bit too quick to put these in place without addressing some of the larger things that we need to address in the province.

We're not matching our immigration to our labour needs. We need to do a better job of doing that. It's merely allowing new immigrants to settle here based on a set of credentials. While assessing credentials is a critical element to good immigration policy, it doesn't ensure that the individuals that settle in Ontario will have a job waiting for them when they arrive. This is the provincial

nominee program. We need to make sure that we're creating more opportunity for employers to create these types of positions and sponsorships. We need to tailor our immigration policy to our province's labour needs. I talked a little bit about the fact that when it comes to our health care system, there are many places where we can make improvements and eliminate some of the red tape that exists so that we're filling in some of those positions that need to be addressed.

I go back to my first comments, Madam Speaker, in the closing minutes that I have here. I look forward to continuing this debate at a future date. The province needs to get its act together. Don Drummond, in his report that he put out a couple of years ago that has been largely ignored by the government, despite paying a significant amount of money and building up the Drummond report: 60% of it, they'll say, has been implemented. They'll say that 60% of it has actually been implemented. Don Drummond will actually say that you needed to implement 100% of this. If you didn't like something that was in the Drummond report, you were going to have to replace what you don't like with something that's going to end up finding the same efficiencies in savings, but the government hasn't done that. As a matter of fact, when it came to the big recommendations in the Drummond report—those were going to be some hard decisions, and they didn't want to make those decisions.

What I find most interesting is that the Drummond report had great fanfare. It was like an Ontario budget. There was all of this hype, and the government spent a significant amount of money in making sure that this was a comprehensive report. It was a very comprehensive report on how we can get our province back to a balanced budget. There were a couple of items that were chosen but there were a lot that weren't, and they certainly haven't been replaced by new ideas on how we can get to balance. There has been no mention at all on getting us back to balance. It's almost laughable when the finance minister stands up and says that we're headed for a balanced budget in 2017-18, but there's absolutely no plan on how we're going to get there; just blank spaces in the budget columns.

We've done our part, as the official opposition, to put a plan on the table. The government has ignored our recommendations. The government has ignored many of the recommendations from its own report from Don Drummond.

Until we actually get our province back to balance, until we actually start to reduce the size of our multi-billion-dollar deficit, we're not going to become a location that's a desirable one for newcomers to Ontario, because, as I say, they are doing their homework. They're looking at jurisdictions that they can move to where they can get a job and raise a family with some predictability. I talk about families, but you talk about business owners, investors, job creators, and they're looking at the financial situation here in Ontario and they are not choosing Ontario, for a lot of reasons that I have mentioned over the last 45 minutes or so.

We've got to get these fundamentals right in Ontario. We've cleared the decks to allow the government to bring in a jobs plan. I look forward to seeing what their budget includes in the coming weeks, but from what we've been hearing and the legislation that we're debating, aside from this piece of legislation—much of the legislation that we're debating in the Legislature is going to make it more expensive to live in Ontario. It's going to make Ontario less attractive for investors.

Alberta, BC, Saskatchewan and Manitoba—you know, we talk about the numbers and the fact that we've seen the number of new Canadians doubling and tripling in some of these other western jurisdictions in particular. There's a reason for that. They are jurisdictions that have their financial act together. They have low deficits or no deficits and are possibly in surplus. They have low unemployment or no unemployment. They have many, many opportunities. Right now, we're living in a province where the government thinks that everything is just fine, and anybody looking at the provinces from outside can clearly see that we have a crisis here in Ontario financially. We're looking down the barrel of further tax increases under the current government. We need to bring in a new government with a new plan for Ontario to make it a desirable location for businesses, with an economic climate where they know that they can grow and expand and create jobs.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** We are nearly at 10:15. This House stands recessed until 10:30.

*The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF MEMBER FOR THORNHILL

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I beg to inform the House that the Clerk has received from the Chief Electoral Officer and laid upon the table a certificate of the by-election in the electoral district of Thornhill.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** A certificate of the by-election is addressed to Mrs. Deborah Deller, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, and it reads as follows:

“Dear Mrs. Deller:

“A writ of election dated the 15th day of January, 2014, was issued by the Honourable Lieutenant Governor of the province of Ontario, and was addressed to Anna Di Ruscio, returning officer for the electoral district of Thornhill, for the election of a member to represent the said electoral district of Thornhill in the Legislative Assembly of this province in the room of Peter Shurman, who, since his election as representative of the said electoral district of Thornhill, has resigned his seat. This is to certify that, a poll having been granted and held in Thornhill on the 13th day of February, 2014, Gila Martow has been returned as duly elected as appears by the return of the said writ of election, dated the 21st day of February, 2014, which is now lodged of record in my office.”

Signed:

“Greg Essensa

“Chief Electoral Officer

“Toronto, February 24, 2014.”

*Ms. Martow was escorted into the House by Mr. Hudak and Mr. Wilson.*

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Speaker, I have the honour to present to you and to the House Gila Martow, member-elect for the electoral district of Thornhill, who has taken the oath, signed the roll and now claims the right to take her seat.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Let the honourable member take her seat.

### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I'm proud to welcome to Queen's Park this morning the mayor of Brooke-Alvinston, Don McGugan; his wife, Anne; councillors Frank Nemcek, Jim Hayter and Wayne Deans; and Jack MacDonald. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I'd like to welcome Mr. Graham Murray to question period this morning, joining us in the west members' gallery. Mr. Murray certainly is no stranger to the Legislature, having published his newsletter, *Inside Queen's Park*, for 27 years. I hope all members will join the Public Affairs Association of Canada this evening in room 230, where they will be honouring Graham for his years of service.

**Hon. Reza Moridi:** It's my pleasure to welcome Ms. Shipra Mendiratta, mother of page Meera Chopra, and her grandparents Ram and Daya Mendiratta to the House today. They are visiting from Richmond Hill and we welcome them to the House.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I'd like to welcome three of my constituents from the great riding of Chatham-Kent-Essex, who are here as part of the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program. They are Brady Elliott, Gary Segeren and Samantha Stevens. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** Speaker, good morning. I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome the family of page Aqil Syed—mother, Aniza Baksh; father, Syed Mahboob; and grandfather Mashiur Syed—from the great riding of Pickering-Scarborough East to the Ontario Legislature to watch page Aqil as page captain today. Welcome to the Ontario Legislature.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I've got a few constituents here today for the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program. I've got constituents Jeremy Giret and Rod Crinklaw.

In the stands here today is Bayham councillor Tom Southwick. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's my distinct pleasure to introduce Kate Barrie Hyatt, who's part of the class 15, Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program, as well as I believe one of the leaders herself, Marlene Werry, a well-respected agricultural leader in Durham region.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm very pleased to welcome, in the west members' gallery the mayor of Bracebridge, Mr. Graydon Smith, and deputy mayor of Bracebridge, Mr. Rick Maloney, who are down here for the ROMA-OGRA conference. Welcome.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** I want to welcome a very hard-working member of my constituency office staff in Thunder Bay—Superior North. Welcome, Stephen Margarit.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It's my pleasure to introduce some great eastern Ontarians who are taking over Toronto today. From the township of Champlain in the Glengarry-Prescott-Russell area: Paul Emile Duval—why don't you give everybody a wave, Paul Emile? We've got Troy Carkner, Jacques Lacelle, James McMahon and, of course, my two favourites, Helen and Ray MacLeod.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** We have here today, from class 15, the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program, Marvin Talsma, visiting Queen's Park from London, Ontario. Welcome, Marvin.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** I'd like to introduce Joe Daunt, Troy Hamilton, Sara Little, Linda Slits, Peter Stolk and Sarah Van Nes here with the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program, all from Perth-Wellington.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** It's my pleasure to introduce, from the wonderful riding of Huron-Bruce, Jutta Spletstoesser, who also is participating in the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I have some friends here too from the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program: CEO Rob Black, Barry Micallef of the University of Guelph and participant Carolyn Kozak. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** It's my pleasure to introduce, from the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program, initiated by Earl Mighton many years ago, Ridha Chilmeran from my riding of Halton.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm delighted to welcome Anne Marie Gillis, a councillor from Sarnia, to the Legislature today. I hope you'll be sitting down here soon.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** In the Speaker's gallery today, we have the mayor of Brantford, Ontario—as Walter Gretzky calls it, the centre of the universe—Mayor Chris Friel.

### RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

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

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I have a point of order regarding petition P173. First, I want to thank Molly Sorensen from my riding for bringing this to my attention. I tabled petition P173, Minimum Care Standards in Long-Term Care Homes, Speaker, on October 8, and I believe I was due an answer from the ministry in early December.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** After checking with the table—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order, please. After checking with the table, it is indeed overdue. Minister, I want to remind you that you are required by standing order 39(i) to file a response within 24 sessional days. Your response is now overdue, and I would ask if you give the House some indication as to when that response would be forthcoming.

1040

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I will ensure it is done in very short order.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. I appreciate the point of order.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** While I'm standing, I'll wait for the attention of the member from Durham, who wants to have a conversation while I'm standing. Thank you.

#### MEMBERS' PRIVILEGES

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** On February 19, the member from Timmins–James Bay raised a point of privilege relating to an unsuccessful attempt the day before by the member from Prince Edward–Hastings, during introduction of bills, to receive unanimous consent to have his just-introduced Bill 156 immediately called for second and third reading.

The member from Timmins–James Bay noted that an open letter was later issued by the member for Prince Edward–Hastings that asserted it was a member, or members, of the New Democratic caucus who said “no” to the request for unanimous consent.

The member from Timmins–James Bay took particular offence to this because he asserted his caucus was, in fact, in favour of the request for unanimous consent, and therefore no member of the NDP would have, or did, say “no.” For his part, the member for Prince Edward–Hastings said it was and remains his honest belief there were “noes” from the NDP caucus and that the opposite cannot be proven. This, of course, is exactly the point of the matter. I think this is sufficient to state the obvious, that being that on a request for unanimous consent no recording of the ayes or the nays is made and therefore no record exists of which member or members might have declined their consent. The Speaker simply hears at least one “no” and the House moves on. It is, therefore, dangerous to make allegations about requests for unanimous consent, and even more so to attribute motive for the perceived refusal, since by their nature requests for unanimous consent are handled without debate and, therefore, without any opportunity for a member to state a position for or against.

It is important to note that requests for unanimous consent are required when a deviation from the standing orders is being sought. This is not a trivial thing, and it is perfectly within the right of any member to object, and no justification needs to be made for doing so. In the case of the request by the member from Prince Edward–Hastings, his bill had just been introduced and no other

member of the assembly had even seen it yet. From my perspective, it seems a bit unfair to put other members in that position, and uncharitable to criticize when the House does not blindly agree. In saying this, I note that more and more we seem to be seeing requests for unanimous consent that in my opinion are frankly engineered to be declined so that some sort of political advantage can be taken by the so-called “aggrieved party” that did not get its way. I can't say that I approve of this when it occurs, but I also have to note that during my Speakership I have seen this tactic used by all parties of this House, and I am satisfied—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Indeed—in this House, and I am satisfied enough by the evidence before me that this is another one of those instances. Being the victim of an ill-advised but all-too-common political tactic does not rise to the abuse of parliamentary privilege.

I do not want to seem dismissive of the point raised by the member of Timmins–James Bay, however, and want to address the ruling from the Canadian House of Commons that the member for Timmins–James Bay pointed out. As that ruling makes clear, it could amount to a breach of privilege if anyone, including a member of this assembly, were to deliberately misrepresent parliamentary proceedings, whatever the motivation for doing so, or its result. In this case, there are no actual recorded votes involved since, as I pointed out, none are recorded on requests for unanimous consent. The members from Timmins–James Bay and Prince Edward–Hastings are left having a dispute that the Speaker cannot resolve. I therefore cannot find that a prima facie case has been made out.

It is now time for—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Point of order.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** A point of order, the member for Timmins–James Bay.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I would like to thank you for your ruling.

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

It is now time for question period.

#### ORAL QUESTIONS

##### JOB CREATION

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** A question to the Premier: Premier, this morning, I addressed the ROMA-Good Roads conference and I talked about our plan to create a million jobs in our province over the next eight years.

While we were presenting our plan for good jobs in our province and better take-home pay, the Liberal government was more concerned about restaurant menus. While we're counting on creating more jobs, your focus is on counting calories.

Let me ask you a very direct question, Premier. How many additional jobs will your restaurant menu legislation create in the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Well, you know, the role of government is to do many things at the same time, Mr. Speaker. In fact, I notice the grade 5 students from Blessed John XXIII who have joined us this morning, and the menu labelling initiative that we brought forward is at least in part to make sure that those young people, who happen to come from the riding of Don Valley West, have all of the supports that they need to make sure they grow up healthy.

We're going to continue to bring forward education initiatives, we're going to continue to bring forward health initiatives, and we're going to continue to bring forward initiatives that will invest in businesses, support businesses to create jobs—all of those things at the same time, Mr. Speaker. That's what government has to do.

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Well, respectfully, Premier, I want to see, when students grow up and graduate, that they've got a good job in the province of Ontario. Really, shouldn't that be our number one priority? I was certainly edified by your health minister's debate about what has more calories, a cheeseburger or a raisin muffin, but respectfully, I think the bigger debate is, how are we going to get people back to work in the province of Ontario? How are we going to get our energy costs under control? How will we get taxes down so all businesses can succeed in our province?

And I know you can do this, because time and time again the New Democratic Party props you up, no matter what you do. You've been given a licence to bring forward secondary bills instead of dealing with the true issues around jobs and the economy. So if they're going to prop you up again two times today, let me at least ask you this: Will you set aside your restaurant menu legislation and clear the way for my million jobs plan for people to go back to work in our province?

*Interjections.*

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

Premier?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Well, the Leader of the Opposition can minimize health initiatives, Mr. Speaker. He can minimize clean air initiatives like green energy. He can undermine and try to minimize education initiatives. But from my perspective, the economy is all of those things. Having healthy people, having an educated workforce, having businesses that are supported, having infrastructure that's in place: All of that is part of a healthy economy. So he can compartmentalize and—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** That will do. The member from Northumberland will come to order.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** He can compartmentalize, Mr. Speaker, and pretend that the health and well-being of our students is not part of a strong economy, but that is just not the case. I want to make sure that as the jobs that we are creating—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Lambton–Kent–Middlesex will come to order. The mem-

ber from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke will come to order.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:**—for example, at Conestoga Meat Packers in Breslau, 425 existing jobs and 100 new jobs because of investment; at CentreLine in Windsor, 31 new jobs and retaining 482 existing positions—I hope he would support those, even in his compartmentalized view of the world.

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I know the Premier wants to hold everyone's hand 24 hours a day. I want to—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Rural Affairs, come to order.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:**—give people jobs in our province. I want to see business succeed again. While the Liberal Party seems lost in a maze of secondary legislation, we have a very clear-eyed vision to get Ontario back on track with more jobs and less debt.

I want to say, Speaker, I'm proud to introduce today the new member for Thornhill, Gila Martow. She is going to be a tremendous asset here in this Legislature. But I'll tell you this, Premier: When Gila Martow and I were knocking on doors in Thornhill, I didn't hear people, moms and dads, saying, "We want you to focus on counting calories." They wanted us to focus on counting that their kids would have a job when they graduate from school.

So put that aside. Pass our bill. Let's put people back to work in the province of Ontario.

1050

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, I want to welcome—I should have done it off the top—the new member for Thornhill to the House. Welcome. It's great to have you here.

This sounds like flip political rhetoric that's coming from the Leader of the Opposition, but it's actually much more serious than that, because what the Leader of the Opposition is saying is that an economic plan and a jobs growth plan have nothing to do with the health and education of the people of this province. That is just not the case.

When Cisco Systems Canada came to Ontario and added 1,700 high-tech jobs, with the potential of 5,000 jobs by 2024, we supported that. We're working with Cisco. We've created those jobs in partnership with Cisco. The Leader of the Opposition suggests that that's not related to education. We know the prime reason that Cisco came here is because of our educated workforce. They are connected. You cannot slash those services and have a strong economy.

#### COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** My question is to the Minister of Health.

Minister, community care access centre executive salaries have skyrocketed over the last few years. In 2012, the average salary of the chief executive officers at the 14 CCACs in Ontario was \$234,000. In one case, the salary jumped by over 50% in three years. Compare this to the average personal support worker who makes an average of about \$20,000 a year, who hasn't seen any pay increase over the last three years.

Your government is now spending over \$30 million on executive salaries alone at the 14 CCACs and the Ontario association of CCACs, yet I consistently hear from seniors and families of individuals with developmental disabilities and other disabilities across the province that they are unable to access needed care.

Minister, can you tell us why you have allowed executive salaries to skyrocket over the last few years?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We are concerned about executive compensation, not just in the health care sector but in the broader public sector. I will ask the Minister of Government Services to respond in the supplementary.

I want to underline, Speaker, that our commitment to health care transformation is built on home care. We are investing more in home care so more people can get the care they need at home, so they don't have to stay in hospital and they don't have to go into long-term care before they really need that kind of intensive care.

Two hundred thousand more Ontarians are getting home care now—200,000 more now than in 2003, when your party was in charge. We are getting people home from hospital more quickly. We are providing better care.

I will stand with those front-line providers. I will stand with home care, Speaker, because that's the investment we need to make.

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

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** Whatever investment the minister says has been made is clearly not being made in front-line services. I hear from people across the province who are desperately trying to access services through their CCAC. Your ministry has cut physiotherapy services that help seniors. You've reduced the number of diabetes test strips that are available to help people manage their own care.

As one nursing care provider stated to me, "The CCACs are great at spending dollars to save nickels." Yet the bigger issue of why up to 40% of the funds allocated to CCACs never make it to front-line care has been something you've consistently ignored.

Minister, why have you failed to ensure that the health care needs of vulnerable Ontarians are being met?

*Interjections.*

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

Minister?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, I've had to make some pretty tough decisions as Minister of Health, and that party opposite has not stood with me as I have made tough decisions. Every decision I have made is about providing more care to people in their own homes.

Our community care sector is growing. It is providing higher-quality care to hundreds of thousands of more people. We do not have it perfect. It's a whole lot better than it was, and it is getting better.

I remain open to ideas on how to get better value and serve more people. That is what I live for.

Are there better ways? I'm sure there are; we're listening. But I will not take lessons from the party that did not provide the home care that was necessary.

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

*Interjections.*

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

Final supplementary.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** The fact of the matter is that thousands of Ontarians are not able to access home care. Executive salaries are skyrocketing. Front-line service providers are not being paid the rates that they should be paid for personal support workers. Up to 40% is spent on administration. There's a conflict of interest, with CCACs directly hiring people. In fact, this is a mess, and the minister has stood by and let this happen.

It's clear that we need urgent action to address the issue of the CCACs. That is why, in the Standing Committee on Public Accounts tomorrow, I will be asking for an Auditor General's review of the operations at the CCACs. Minister, will you stand and support this request?

*Interjections.*

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

Minister?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Of course I'll support the Auditor General looking at home care, which the Auditor General did in 2010 and did a report again, back in 2012, and reported that patients were, by and large, satisfied with the services. The Auditor General also noted significant expansion in home care.

The member opposite makes the case that more people need more home care. I could not agree more, and that's why the last budget increased home care and community care by 6%, and we continue to keep expanding home care. The member opposite talked about physiotherapy. More people are getting faster access to physiotherapy now than they were under the old model.

We are transforming health care. Home care is at the foundation of that. When I see people who are able to live at home because of the services provided by home care, I know we are on the right track.

## SMALL BUSINESS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I'd like to begin by taking the opportunity, on behalf of New Democrats, to welcome the new member for Thornhill to the Legislature.

My question is for the Premier. The Premier may recall that in 2011, her government promised to reduce small business taxes from 4.5% to 4%. It was on page 13



of the Liberal fiscal framework. Can the Premier tell us what progress she has made thus far?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** As the leader of the third party knows, we recently, as a result of the last budget, gave small businesses a break on the employee health tax. We are very, very aware of the needs of small businesses, and we support them. That break on their payroll was designed precisely to support them and to make sure that they have the capacity to expand and to hire more people. That's why we made that change.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** If we're going to grow and thrive, we need small businesses growing, creating jobs, innovating and building our economy. Is the Premier going to keep her promise to cut small business taxes?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** As the leader of the third party knows, we cut small business taxes from 5.5% to 4.5%. We have reduced. We extended the capital cost allowance to 2015. We reduced the employee health tax on 60,000 businesses, I think it is. So we have taken significant moves to support small business.

But the leader of the third party needs to know that revenue is extremely important in terms of delivering services, and cutting taxes across the board is not what we are going to do. That may be what the Leader of the Opposition believes is important. That's not what we're going to do. I'm surprised if that's where the leader of the third party wants to go.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock. I'm going to remind the Attorney General, the Minister of Rural Affairs and the Minister of Immigration that your Premier is answering a question while you're heckling.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** And I don't need any others.

Final supplementary.

1100

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Earlier this morning I laid out a plan, not just to increase the minimum wage but also to help small business. New Democrats are calling for a \$12 minimum wage by 2016, and we're calling for a cut to small business taxes. It's a responsible, affordable plan that will lift families out of poverty and ensure that small businesses can grow and create new jobs.

Is the Premier open to a fair and balanced approach?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Well, we're actually taking a fair and balanced approach, and it would have been fantastic if the leader of the third party had fed into that consultation, had been part of the discussion, before we brought our plan forward. This is an after-the-fact reaction. Welcome to the discussion. It's great that she has brought a position forward, Mr. Speaker.

We brought together business leaders, we brought together workers, and we brought together academics. We brought together a table of people, and they found unanimity for a predictable process going forward to index the minimum wage to inflation. We're going to be

introducing legislation to do that. I hope that the leader of the third party would support us.

As I say, we had extensive consultation. It would have been fantastic if she had taken part in that.

## TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is also for the Premier. Statistics Canada recently released a report on the squeeze facing middle-class families, and it's not good news. It says the "middle class isn't growing," and "the middle class is no springboard to higher incomes." Does the Premier agree that the middle class is more squeezed than ever?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, we have talked about this. Absolutely, we understand that people are struggling and that it is important that they have the support of their government to make sure that they have capacity to provide the opportunities that they need for their young people, for their parents.

The discussion that the Minister of Health was just having about home care is about providing opportunities for people to have supports at home and for their children and their grandchildren to get the supports that they need. So yes, we are very aware that people in the middle class need support in terms of helping their young people go to post-secondary, Mr. Speaker. That's what our 30%-off tuition grant is about.

We have put those supports in place. We will continue to do that work, and we look forward to working with whoever in this House is willing to work with us.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** This weekend, one politician in Montreal expressed his concern. He said: "We need to ensure that governments keep costs as low as possible, especially for middle-class households. The middle class is already having a hard time making ends meet and struggling with debt. Tax increases for them are not in the cards and not on the table."

Justin Trudeau said that on Saturday, Speaker. Does the Premier agree with her federal leader?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** But, of course, if Justin Trudeau were the Prime Minister, we might have a partner in investing in transit. We might have a partner in affordable housing. We might have a partner in child care. We might have a partner that wouldn't cut our transfer payments and would stand up for Ontario. So I look forward to working with Justin Trudeau as the Prime Minister of this country. We will have a partnership that does not exist today.

*Interjections.*

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

*Interjections.*

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

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I just want to remind the members that, as you do your interjections, I'm taking a mental note of who you are while you're speaking right over top of my discussion.

Final supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, Premier, just read his lips that they shouldn't be putting any new taxes on the middle class. We should be focusing on making it easier for people to get into the middle class, not squeezing them out with new unfair taxes. We should be focused on making life more fair.

Families get that, New Democrats get that, and apparently even Justin Trudeau gets that. But this Premier doesn't seem to get it. She wants new taxes on families, and she's getting ready to cut taxes for people who are making over \$1 million a year, and she's creating new tax loopholes and giveaways for corporations. Does the Premier really think that's fair?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Let me just be clear, once again, that what we believe is important is that people in this province have the infrastructure, and that means roads and bridges. Many of the members in the House have been to the Good Roads and the ROMA meeting in the last couple of days, and they know that every municipal leader there is concerned about investments in infrastructure. They know that those municipalities need to have the support, not just of the provincial government but of the federal government, to make sure that they have the investments necessary. So what I believe is that we have to make sure that that infrastructure is in place.

In my response to the first question, the point I was making is that if there were a federal partner who believed that investing in transit and roads and bridges in a systematic way across this province, that that was a priority, then we would be in a very different position.

#### ONTARIO PROVINCIAL POLICE

**Mr. Steve Clark:** My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. I have to hand it to you. It's not easy getting 324 municipalities to agree, but you've done it at this year's ROMA-OGRA conference. All 324 of Ontario's OPP-policed municipalities agree that you failed to deliver on the biggest challenge they faced: policing costs. You're a year into the OPP billing review process and no closer to a fix. In fact, you've gone back to the drawing board because your first plan went down in flames. Now you're even farther away from the answer. How's that for leadership?

Forget the solution for a minute and answer this for everybody at ROMA-OGRA: After your performance, why should municipalities have any confidence that you'll even get the job done?

*Interjections.*

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

I also want to remind a couple of members on this side that when your own member is asking the question, it's kind of nice to allow them to put the question without heckling.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Energy will come to order.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, I'm still trying to acknowledge you; I know you're excited.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I'm so excited about answering this question.

I hope the member on the other side would have been with me when I met with the 50 or more municipalities yesterday—

**Interjection:** Fifty or more meeting.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Yes—36 delegations to talk about OPP costs. I know that he was there this morning also to listen to the commissioner of the OPP, Chris Lewis, who explained that the system that we have in place is not fair and is not transparent—a system that was put in, I have to repeat, by your party, sir.

Even the Auditor General and the municipalities were complaining. The OPP knows that it's not a good system in place, and the Auditor General also told us, so that's what we are transforming. I've listened to the concerns of the community. We have consulted with all the community—

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

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Well, Minister, let me tell you something. You're going to get no thank-you cards from municipalities for what you've done to the OPP billing costs. You've let those municipalities down because you don't understand what's wrong.

This isn't about tinkering with a costing formula to hurt some municipalities a little less than others. It isn't about the service, because we all know and we all respect the OPP officers and the difficult job that they do. You need to solve the underlying problem: Policing costs are spiralling out of control.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, come to order.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Our leader, Tim Hudak, reaffirmed today his commitment to an Ontario PC government that will reintroduce the capacity to pay act and take the blank cheque away from arbitrators. That's a real plan to control costs for the long term, and you didn't need a fancy panel to tell you how to do it.

Why don't you finally admit that you don't have a plan, and use ours?

*Interjections.*

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

In case the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation didn't hear me because he was talking while I was trying to tell him to stop—stop.

Minister.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I'm going to say to the member from Leeds-Grenville that what's wrong is that there are 325 municipalities receiving OPP services. Some are paying zero and some are paying \$1,000. That's what is wrong—

**Interjection:** Per household.

1110

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Per household. So that's what we're trying to fix. We have a model that is in con-

sultation as we speak, and this model will be transparent and fair to every municipality and every taxpayer in these municipalities.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order. The member from Leeds–Grenville: Stop.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** One thing that occurred is that they are all very, very pleased with the service that the OPP is offering. I got it from every municipality. We're going to work with them. For those municipalities that will go from zero to another cost, and those that are paying \$1,000, to the real cost they should pay, we will try to help them—

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

#### MINIMUM WAGE

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** My question is to the Premier. Whether it's families that rely on paycheques from Vertis, DMI Industries or Jarvis Street Pharma, we see those paycheques gone, and people in Niagara see that the Liberal status quo isn't working for families.

An increase to the minimum wage to \$12 will ensure that families get a raise. Small business tax relief will ensure that small business—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order. Stop the clock. Start the clock.

Finish your question, please.

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Small business tax relief will ensure that small businesses that are the backbone of the economies like Niagara can grow and create jobs.

Does the Premier agree that families need an increase to the minimum wage to \$12 by 2016, and that small businesses deserve a break?

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

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** First of all, I want to welcome the member to this House. I'm pleased to have a question from him.

Just a reminder to the member that we established an advisory panel that was made up of labour, business, anti-poverty and youth groups last June, in 2013. They consulted Ontarians across this wide province. They had about 400 submissions.

How many submissions did the NDP make to that panel? Zero. How many questions have the NDP asked on the issue of minimum wage in this House? Zero. How many times did this member or his leader speak in the by-election about minimum wage? Zero.

Speaker, their position is too little, too late. We're not interested in playing The Price Is Right in this House.

*Interjections.*

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

*Interjections.*

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

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** Thank you. Now that we've asked the question, maybe you can answer it.

Mr. Speaker, small business is the backbone of our economy and they're the backbone of Niagara. Small businesses' paycheques pay the bills for thousands of families. We need a balanced approach where families get a raise and we ensure that we create more jobs by letting small businesses grow and thrive.

Will the Premier agree to lower small business taxes to offset a meaningful increase to the minimum wage?

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I thank the member again for an important question. Part of the process that we engaged in was to ensure that we have thorough understanding and consultation with businesses, especially our small businesses, across the province. That's why we made sure that the panel consisted of representatives from both the retail sector and from the tourism sector, along with labour, along with anti-poverty groups and youth groups.

Speaker, one of the things that we heard again and again and that was reported by the panel is that businesses want predictability. They do not want an ad hoc process where numbers are pulled out of hats, like the NDP is suggesting now, which is too little, too late. What they want is a predictable system by which they can do business planning and they know exactly what the minimum wage is. That's why we're going to be tabling a bill indexing the minimum wage to the cost of living. I hope the NDP supports that bill.

#### ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURIES

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I've got a question this morning for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Speaker, no parent wants their son or daughter to suffer an acquired brain injury, but when tragedy strikes, they need to know care will be there for them.

Families in Oakville, Burlington and Hamilton have been concerned recently about reports of changes in brain injury care at McMaster Children's Hospital. Recently, the member for Hamilton Mountain asked why these brain injuries are no longer being treated at that hospital. I'd like to assure my constituents that the services are indeed still there and they're available when they need them.

Would the minister tell this House what these changes mean for kids and their families in the Hamilton, Oakville and Burlington area?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'd like to thank the member from Oakville for giving me a chance to clear the air around these changes. I want to be absolutely clear: McMaster Children's Hospital is still treating children with acquired brain injuries, contrary to the assertions made by the member from Hamilton Mountain.

In fact, the recent changes will allow patients to receive more timely care. Previously, the ABI, acquired brain injury, clinic ran twice a month. That sometimes caused a delay for patients from the time they received the injury—perhaps a concussion, perhaps another brain injury—to the time when they were seen in the clinic.

Now patients with brain injuries, with head injuries, are seen within days in the pediatric neurosurgery clinic, where they're provided with a prompt assessment and referred to the appropriate type of care. That care might be in the community, Speaker, or it might be more specialized care through the Hamilton Health Sciences Chedoke site.

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

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I'm sure that all families in all of those communities I mentioned will be relieved to know this vital service is still provided by McMaster Children's Hospital. Kids with head injuries will now be cared for more effectively and efficiently.

Speaker, the minister also mentioned the growing access to community care in her response. It's well known by all of us in this House that receiving the right care, at the right time, in the right place, is a key commitment of the action plan for health care.

Would the minister share with this House how increased investments in community care can benefit patients with acquired brain injuries?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, I'm very happy to have this question.

Living with an acquired brain injury can be very difficult for the individual and also for their families, so they need supports in their day-to-day lives.

I'm very proud to say that we have nearly doubled funding for acquired brain injuries since 2003. We've also increased our investments in assisted living by 124%—well more than doubled—since 2003. We're also helping in an increased way with services like Meals on Wheels, transportation services, home maintenance and repair.

Speaker, these investments are helping dedicated workers and volunteers take care of Ontarians outside of hospitals, in their communities and in their homes. We will continue to work with people with acquired brain injuries and their advocates to continue this work.

#### NORTHERN ONTARIO DEVELOPMENT

**Mr. Norm Miller:** My question is to the Premier, and it's on the Far North Act.

Premier, part of the problem with the Far North Act, which your government passed in 2010, is that it puts half of the Far North off limits for any development that might benefit the people who live and work in the north.

There's supposed to be land use planning done so there are clear boundaries for the 225,000 square kilometres that can't be used to the benefit of northerners. This uncertainty has been a particular challenge to those seeking to explore and develop the Far North. It's sending the wrong message: that the north is closed for business. So my question to you is this: Have you figured out exactly what quarter-million square kilometres of northern Ontario are off limits for northerners?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Natural Resources.

1120

**Hon. David Oraziotti:** I'm pleased to take the question from the member opposite. I think the member opposite knows full well that the Far North planning act is designed to create exactly what he's talking about—certainty—because, left to their government, there was considerable uncertainty. We had situations in the past where we had mining activities where we've had protests and blockades. We had the KI/Platinex issue. Those are the kinds of circumstances we don't want evolving in northern Ontario.

The member knows that the Far North Act is designed to create the certainty that both First Nations want and business wants. In fact, we've got five First Nations communities in northern Ontario that have actually created land use planning that helped to create certainty in their communities.

Speaker, what I would say to the member opposite with respect to this issue is that the Far North Act, although it may be, for political opportunism, used to be misrepresented by people in northern Ontario—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member will withdraw.

**Hon. David Oraziotti:** Withdraw, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** His time is up. Supplementary?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Again to the Premier: There's no denying that the Far North Act has cost Ontario jobs. We've been forced to watch as overlapping claims and government-imposed exclusion zones have wreaked havoc for exciting new mining projects. And when you eventually get around to mapping the half of northern Ontario that is off limits, what happens when a new remote mine or the next Ring of Fire is discovered right in the middle of it? You are set to deny northerners the jobs and prosperity from future resource development when they are needed most.

Premier, what is your plan B when you get the mapping wrong?

**Hon. David Oraziotti:** Speaker, the effort that we are making to ensure that the Far North Act and that the land use planning that's undertaken in the region gets it right is the partnerships that we're building with First Nations and the communities in the Far North that want to see economic benefits, that want to see land development, but they also want the certainty of land use planning. First Nation communities have indicated their support, and Julie Denomme, the vice-chair of the Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce, also said, "Overall, we agree with the act and we like it and we see there's value" in it.

So both sides—First Nations communities, people who represent business in the Far North and represent communities, agree that the Far North Act is something that is of value and creates certainty for businesses, and they support it, Speaker. That's why we move forward with the legislation.

## EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. For years, New Democrats have urged this government to focus on delivering front-line care to patients instead of lining the pockets of health care executives. In December, we finally heard a promise from this government, but no action followed.

This month, the exorbitant salaries and pay increases to CCAC CEOs, like London CEO Sandra Coleman's increase of 144%, made the front page news. Once again, Speaker, the minister made a promise to do something, but again no action has been taken.

Can the minister explain why even outrageous salary increases like Ms. Coleman's do not inspire the minister to take action right now?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** To the Minister of Government Services.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. John Milloy:** It's great to be popular, Mr. Speaker.

I'm happy to talk about our plans for executive compensation, but at the beginning I just want to reiterate what the Minister of Health said about the improvements within community care in this province over the past 11 years. I remember, quite frankly, it was one of the biggest issues in 2003: the cuts that had taken place under the previous government. When you compare and contrast what's happened, Mr. Speaker, I'm very, very proud of the story this government can tell.

In terms of executive compensation, as I indicated in this House before Christmas, we will be coming forward shortly with legislation which will empower the government to undertake the analysis and work that needs to be done to set forward frameworks, complete with a hard cap, to deal with executive compensation in the broader public service.

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

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I heard the House leader say that he is proud of the story that this government has told. It's a horror story, Speaker. So many of the people who deliver care continue to struggle to make ends meet, and they are the first ones to have their hours cut when this government is looking for cost savings in health care. Seniors who depend on a home care system keep telling us that they want improvements to the front-line care, but instead we keep seeing the money that should be invested in care going to well-paid executives, lining their pockets.

Why should Ontarians believe this minister and her latest promise to do something will result in action? Can we get a promise to see any kind of action any time soon?

**Hon. John Milloy:** Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I think it's time for a few facts, so let me share some facts with you. As the members opposite will know, we used to have 42 CCACs; we

now have 14. That has saved \$2 million in executive compensation. The total percentage of CCAC budgets spent on CEO salaries has been cut in half.

When it comes to getting better care for patients, CCACs have been leaders in transformation. Let me give you some examples: The Home First program, which supports people at home rather than waiting in a hospital for long-term care, has been an extraordinary success. Internationally, people are looking at this practice. In the South West LHIN alone, Home First has saved, in one year, \$10 million and provided a significantly higher quality of care.

There are many examples I would love to share with the House on home care improvement.

## SENIOR CITIZENS

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** My question is for the minister responsible for seniors' affairs. I think that I can speak for everyone when I say that our seniors have contributed in a significant way to the success of this province, and I strongly believe that seniors continue to contribute to the prosperity and the foresight of our communities, our cities and our province throughout their life.

In my riding of York South–Weston, I often meet with many seniors' groups who remain active and involved within their community, such as the York West Active Living Centre, the St. Fidelis Golden Age Club, and club 600. Groups such as these are a great example for all of us.

With inspiring seniors such as these across our province, what role does our government play in encouraging and supporting active seniors?

**Hon. Mario Sergio:** Let me welcome the members from Thornhill and Niagara Falls as well. Congratulations to them.

Let me say that the member from York South–Weston is a tireless worker on behalf of the people of her constituency. Her seniors are no different than seniors in my area, the ones in Hamilton or Kingston or Leamington. They all have the same aspirations. Speaker, you know and I know that growing old does not mean losing our place in society—

**Interjection:** Not at all.

**Hon. Mario Sergio:** Not at all—it does not mean that we can no longer contribute. To help do that, thanks to help from our Premier, from other members and from stakeholders, on Friday we announced the first seniors' grant program directly addressing seniors' issues. I have to say that organizations such as the United Senior Citizens of Ontario, and Bernard Jordaan—

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

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** Thank you to the minister for his commitment to the seniors of our province. Our government has been driving the implementation of programs for seniors that will help to promote volunteerism, expand education and learning, and assist Ontario seniors in overcoming issues such as social isolation. This grant

program will go a long way in helping many of our seniors' groups in my riding and beyond.

Can the minister provide us with additional details regarding this important initiative?

**Hon. Mario Sergio:** Indeed, this is the first program that directly addresses seniors in need. I'm delighted that the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat has been working very effectively in providing an application that is ready as of February 21. It's ready, it's very simple and it's accessible to all seniors' groups. It aims to support groups of seniors—non-profit, of course. That is, to engage them, to get them out of isolation, bring them into community groups and keep them active. That is the intent. These supports as well are on top of what we have already done through the Ontario seniors' action plan. This goes a long way in getting to our seniors throughout Ontario. The grants are between \$500 and \$10,000, and it's in support of providing more active activities and programs for our seniors.

1130

#### ARBITRATION

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I have a question for the Premier. Premier, municipal representatives from all over Ontario are gathered this week at the ROMA-Good Roads convention. I have met with over 20 delegations, and the most-expressed number one request was that interest arbitration must be reformed, and it must be reformed now.

Are you going to deliver on your promise to reform arbitration and save municipalities from bankruptcy?

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

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I appreciate the member's question. I had the great honour to be at the ROMA-OGRA conference. In fact, I participated in the ministers' session as well, along with our Premier. Interestingly, not a single member of the municipalities asked me about interest arbitration, nor did anybody request it from a delegation.

But that doesn't mean that we're not working on this very important issue. As I have stated before in the House, and as the Premier stated, we are very much committed to developing a new interest arbitration system in our province which is fair and balanced. But we will not bring any kind of scheme—as has been suggested by the Leader of the Opposition—that may be unconstitutional or that is going to expose the municipalities to the kind of cost that they don't want and that they should not be incurring.

We are working on a model which is based on consensus, and I will provide you a little bit more detail as to that model in my supplementary.

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** Again to the Premier: Premier, municipalities and rural residents need action today. Your indecision over any issue that may upset your public-sector support base is causing misery.

We have a plan, and we brought it to this Legislature before. It is Bill 44, the capacity to pay act, which AMO

wanted to see examined in committee. You voted it down.

Premier, do the right thing: Deliver on your commitment to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and reform interest arbitration now. Or does it take an Ontario PC bill to get things going?

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** As I mentioned, Speaker, we want to reform our interest arbitration system so it is fair and balanced, but we want to do it in a manner that is built on consensus.

That's why I'm very proud that we have a process in place right now that has brought in the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, our firefighter partners and our police associations, who are working together, building a model together that can actually work and help ensure that we have a fair and balanced system.

The kind of bill that they proposed, which this Legislature voted against, is not the way to go. It's unconstitutional, it's unilateral, and it's not going to give the kind of relief that municipalities want.

What's important to note is what our municipalities were talking about yesterday at ROMA-OGRA. They want to make sure that we continue to invest in our infrastructure. They want to make sure that there are good roads and bridges in our communities. That's the kind of partnership that we are continuing to build with our municipalities—along with ensuring that we continue with the \$2-billion upload of social assistance costs that our government committed to, and we will continue to do that.

#### WINTER HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** To the Minister of Transportation: This winter, private snow-clearing contractors in the north were fined for failing to meet road-clearing standards, which confirmed what NDP MPPs have been saying for years: that the PC and Liberal privatization of road-clearing is failing northerners.

Just this month, the minister went on CBC Radio in Thunder Bay and said that the Liberal government would look at bringing some of these services back in-house. He also apologized to those in the northwest for our road conditions. When can northern Ontario expect to see this government follow through on its promise to reverse the privatization of winter road maintenance?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I met, at ROMA-Ontario Good Roads, with all of the municipalities affected, and we've worked out, I think, a plan and partnership to go forward, to do reform and to change the model. We're working with the Ontario road builders, and we're very excited about that.

But Mr. Speaker, the party opposite would take us back to \$3 billion in infrastructure spending. That would reduce household incomes by \$18,000 and business income by \$50,000. They're not talking about invest-

ments in public services. Both parties started this morning with a new tax cut. Do you know what? I have listened to municipalities from Cornwall to Kenora asking for better public services, better snow removal, better roads and bridges. We're now at 2% of GDP. Municipalities are at 1% and the federal government is missing in action. When are they going to start—

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

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Minister, we're talking—  
*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** —the question. I don't need your interjections.

Supplementary.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Thank you, Speaker. Maybe I should remind the minister that we're talking about winter highway maintenance.

This Liberal government keeps shifting blame. But the truth is that under this Liberal government, privatization of snow-clearing contracts has increased and MTO oversight has decreased.

In the northwest, we've never seen 14 transport pilots before. In response to my question on snow clearing in November, the minister stated, "I will come to your constituency. I will meet with the contractor with you and we'll make sure you get satisfaction." Since that time, I have contacted his office numerous times and received no response. Is the minister not responding because he's nervous about driving our roads? Or is he planning to wait until spring when the snow is gone before following through on his commitment to come and see the conditions first-hand?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, we added 50 vehicles to northern roads this year, which was an unprecedented increase. I have met and talked with every mayor. We are maintaining standards and improving them.

We met with about 17 municipalities this morning, who have all said since those changes have been complete, the service in the north has been quite remarkable and good. Since the additional 16 vehicles were added, every single mayor said to me that they are pleased with the reforms in that, and we're not stopping there. We have agreed to a practice of reform for next year to make additional improvements. I'm still waiting for the third party to actually start addressing the issues raised at ROMA and Ontario Good Roads, which is: What is their position on infrastructure funding? Will they maintain \$15 billion, \$14 billion? What is their position on municipal funding? Do they have a position on anything that's important—

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

#### CONSUMER PROTECTION

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** Ma question est pour la ministre des Services aux consommateurs, the Honourable Tracy MacCharles.

Speaker, as you'll appreciate, purchasing a home—a place of one's very own—is part of the Canadian dream. Such purchases are usually the biggest transaction that people are likely to engage in during their entire lives. This is especially true in my own riding of Etobicoke North.

As stewards of this marketplace, the government of Ontario must help people feel protected, informed, knowledgeable and fully apprised of their options. This is not just a real estate transaction, but a visible and tangible correlate of people's hopes, dreams and aspirations. In Ontario, Speaker, quite reasonably, we're finding more and more people requesting a home inspection before finalizing the purchase agreement. But how can we ensure that those home inspection reports are valid, sound and up to standard?

I'd ask the minister to please inform this chamber: How can we work collectively to make sure that Ontarians are protected when making this important, life-changing purchase?

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** I want to thank the member from Etobicoke North for this fabulous question. It's very timely. Speaker, the House may or may not know that more than 70% of resale homes being inspected in Ontario are taking those inspections, which is 140,000 homes next year. That's a lot of home inspections.

The member is correct in saying that a home inspection that's sound, conducted by someone who's trained and experienced and professional can provide that sense of assurance and confidence before people make a big purchase, often their biggest one, and sign on a dotted line. The member is also correct in saying that there is currently no minimum standard, no qualification standard whatsoever for home inspectors in this province. There are many good ones, but there are no standards.

That's why we established a panel of experts. The panel has met several times. A report has been submitted, and we are currently reviewing the report and looking forward to the next steps.

1140

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

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** Thank you, Minister, for addressing this important file. I know that constituents in my own riding of Etobicoke North will benefit from this added scrutiny of the home inspection domain.

Speaker, as a government, of course, it's important for us to ensure that all Ontarians trust and have confidence in the goods and services they are buying. The larger the purchase, the more important it is that there's equity and transparency. As the qualifications and changes to the sector being considered will be of huge importance and will impact home-buying decisions across Ontario, can the minister please share with this House when we can expect these decisions to be made to benefit potential home buyers?

**Hon. Tracy MacCharles:** After we received the report, it was posted on the Ontario government registry from mid-December to January 27, and the next step, of course, is to analyze both the panel's recommendations as well as the feedback we received from the public.

We have every intention of moving forward with this very, very soon, and when we do, Speaker, I certainly hope, I really hope, that we will have all-party support for this legislation. I am confident that our government is not alone in caring about the fate of home purchasers in Ontario.

I want to all the members who worked on the panel for getting us to this point, and I look forward to bringing something forward to the House very, very soon.

#### AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** My question is to the Minister of Agriculture and Food. Minister, you know that the agri-food industry not only provides significant economic output; they purchase the majority of our farmers' products. Four months ago, you told the agri-food industry to double their growth but did nothing to make that possible. Premier, these businesses want to grow. It's your government that's holding them back. We've heard from the food processors that their biggest challenge is the massive hydro increases. In fact, we've heard that many of them have told you the same thing. As Premier and Minister of Agriculture, have you done anything at all to deal with these hydro increases hitting these food processors?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know that the Minister of Energy will want to speak generally to the energy sector in the supplementary, but what I want to say is that we are very aware that supporting the food processing industry right now is extremely important. The Minister of Children and Youth Services made an announcement on Friday with Thomas Canning, an investment that will help that organization to grow and to create 40 new full-time jobs.

We're very, very keen, Mr. Speaker, on supporting the agri-food sector. When I posed the challenge to the food processing and agri-food sector, I said that we were not expecting them to go it alone. We knew that they would need support and investment from government. We are right there with them. In fact, the food processors of Ontario have set out a plan. They know what their objectives are, and they know they have a partner in this government.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Premier, since you issued your challenge, Heinz and Kellogg's both announced closures. That's 1,260 jobs. Add the 40 jobs that you just talked about, and that's still a loss of 1,220 jobs.

Food manufacturers are facing challenges caused by your government. Research by the CFIB, Alliance of Ontario Food Processors and our caucus shows that. These businesses are struggling with red tape, trade barriers and high costs of operating in Ontario.

Two weeks ago, I wrote you and asked you to support the Million Jobs Act to reverse your government's policy that are forcing businesses out of Ontario. It would create jobs and help food processors meet your challenge. Premier, will you help these businesses to grow by supporting the Million Jobs Act introduced by our leader, Tim Hudak?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** The Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Mr. Speaker, you know, one of the great things about the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund, which has created and retained nearly 24,000 jobs together with the Eastern Ontario Development Fund, is that 95% of the investments go to manufacturing, and many of those are in food processing. I'm just going to name a few: Original Foods in Dunnville—I had the pleasure of being at the opening—150 new jobs; Armstrong Milling, 10 jobs in Hagersville; Conestoga Meat, 100 jobs in Breslau; Elmira Pet Products, 25 jobs in Elmira. The list goes on: Natra in London—I was there with the Minister of Health just a couple of weeks ago—56 jobs there as well; NutraBlend Foods in Brantford, 53 new jobs. That's in addition to the many hundreds of jobs that are retained. That's just in the last few months.

I'd be happy to continue the list—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Member from Oxford.

New question.

#### HYDRO RATES

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** My question is to the Minister of Energy.

Under this government's watch, electricity prices have doubled in this province. While power gets sold across the border to New York state at a fraction of what Ontarians pay, the Welland Curling Club in my riding is in danger of closing because of sky-high hydro bills.

How does this government justify the doubling of hydro rates, the doubling of electricity prices and the pain that it's causing residents throughout the province, including my home riding of Welland?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** Mr. Speaker, we have made significant investments in the energy sector, in transmission and generation. That created price pressures. We created a number of price mitigation programs to assist companies, and one of those was the Industrial Electricity Incentive program. As of January 2013, industrial companies could be eligible for electricity rates among the lowest in North America if they started or expanded operations and created jobs through this program.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Stop the clock.

The member from Northumberland is warned.

Carry on.

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** Under the IEI program, last month Detour Gold was one of the successful proponents in the first round, and it claims that the program will save them \$20 million in 2014.

This program uses surplus electricity, and we are providing it to companies in Ontario rather than exporting it to New York or anywhere else where they can use it against us.

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

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** Community clubs like the Welland Curling Club are at the heart of social life in our



communities. If these clubs are being hurt because of skyrocketing electricity prices—it means that community arenas, community social clubs, community curling clubs are going to be affected. There are 60,000 curlers in this province, and there are 100 curling clubs at risk of closing because of these high rates.

How does this government justify doubling the electricity prices under its watch and the harm that it's bringing to our local communities? What is this government going to do to help the skaters, the hockey players and the curlers in this province, to make sure that these avenues that are available to them today are going to remain open this year and next year?

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** Mr. Speaker, that party has no position on energy whatsoever. I understand that they haven't said so, but they don't support new nuclear. They continually get up and oppose nuclear refurbishment. That represents 50% of the generation in the province of Ontario. Their plan on energy, their program, is a blank sheet. We don't know what they will do to mitigate rates.

When we released our long-term energy plan, both leaders were asked what they would do to reduce rates. The Leader of the Opposition was asked, "Can he reduce rates?" The answer was no on that. We asked the leader of the third party, "Would she be able to reduce rates?" The answer was no on that.

Mr. Speaker, we're working on reducing rates, and we'll have more to announce in the near future.

#### VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Leader of the Opposition on a point of order.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I appreciate this. I just want to introduce a good friend who has been a very strong adviser to me on small-town economic development and agribusiness issues. Albert Witteveen from class 15 of the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program is in the gallery. I just wanted to welcome him to Queen's Park.

#### CORRECTION OF RECORD

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services on a point of order.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Mr. Speaker, I want to correct my record. I think I said that the OPP is policing 325 municipalities. It's 324.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. It was a point of order—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I found that inappropriate.

#### VISITORS

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

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** On a point of order, I'd like to introduce Myron Gerber, a member of class 15 of the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program, who is here with us today. I'd like to say welcome.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Lambton–Kent–Middlesex.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I'd like to welcome, from my riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, Gabrielle Ferguson and Erin Wright, who are here from the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Northumberland–Quinte West?

**Mr. Rob E. Milligan:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's nice to be noticed in the House.

I'd like to greet—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Don't worry. I do.

**Mr. Rob E. Milligan:** —Lori Caughey from Northumberland–Quinte West. She's a member of the class of 15 in the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program. I want to welcome her to Queen's Park.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'd like to recognize Marlene Werry from the agricultural leadership group, as well as Kate Barrie Hyatt from the class of the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Mitzie Hunter:** I'd like to welcome the grade 9 class from my riding from Maplewood High School, and they're from the Kingston-Galloway area.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** I would like to welcome the rest of class of 15, the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program: Sabrina Bladon, Claire Cowan, Donna Downey, Tom Farfaras, Heather Hargrave, Kate Hyatt, Henriette DeBruin, as well as Arlene Werner. They're all here to experience question period today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I do have one quick announcement, myself, before I move to where we are supposed to be. I do want to give you a gentle and subtle reminder that we have changed how we do introductions for the purpose so that we avoid what we just did. So please, even if they're not here, introduce them during the times of introductions, and I will give us as much leeway as we need. But if we keep doing this, well then we're just reinventing the same thing and adding more time to your valuable time during question period and debate. Thank you.

#### DEFERRED VOTES

#### INTERIM SUPPLY

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We do have a deferred vote on the motion for interim supply, so we'll call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1151 to 1156.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Members take their seats, please.

On February 24, 2014, Mr. Milloy moved that the Minister of Finance be authorized to pay the salaries of the civil servants and the necessary payments pending the voting of supply for the period commencing April 1, 2014, and ending on September 30, 2014. Such payment shall be charged to the proper appropriation for the 2014-15 fiscal year following the voting of supply.

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

#### Ayes

|                       |                     |                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Albanese, Laura       | Fraser, John        | Moridi, Reza        |
| Armstrong, Teresa J.  | Gates, Wayne        | Murray, Glen R.     |
| Balkissoon, Bas       | Gerretsen, John     | Naqvi, Yasir        |
| Berardinetti, Lorenzo | Gélinas, France     | Natyshak, Taras     |
| Bisson, Gilles        | Gravelle, Michael   | Oraziotti, David    |
| Bradley, James J.     | Hatfield, Percy     | Piruzza, Teresa     |
| Campbell, Sarah       | Hoskins, Eric       | Prue, Michael       |
| Cansfield, Donna H.   | Hunter, Mitzie      | Qaadri, Shafiq      |
| Chan, Michael         | Jaczek, Helena      | Sandals, Liz        |
| Chiarelli, Bob        | Jeffrey, Linda      | Sattler, Peggy      |
| Colle, Mike           | Kwinter, Monte      | Schein, Jonah       |
| Coteau, Michael       | Leal, Jeff          | Sergio, Mario       |
| Crack, Grant          | MacCharles, Tracy   | Singh, Jagmeet      |
| Damerla, Dipika       | Mangat, Amrit       | Sousa, Charles      |
| Del Duca, Steven      | Marchese, Rosario   | Tabuns, Peter       |
| Delaney, Bob          | Matthews, Deborah   | Takhar, Harinder S. |
| Dickson, Joe          | Mauro, Bill         | Taylor, Monique     |
| DiNovo, Cheri         | McMeekin, Ted       | Vanthof, John       |
| Duguid, Brad          | McNeely, Phil       | Wong, Soo           |
| Fife, Catherine       | Meilleur, Madeleine | Wynne, Kathleen O.  |
| Flynn, Kevin Daniel   | Miller, Paul        | Zimmer, David       |
| Forster, Cindy        | Milloy, John        |                     |

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

#### Nays

|                     |                   |                     |
|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Arnott, Ted         | Jones, Sylvia     | Nicholls, Rick      |
| Barrett, Toby       | Klees, Frank      | O'Toole, John       |
| Chudleigh, Ted      | Leone, Rob        | Ouellette, Jerry J. |
| Clark, Steve        | MacLaren, Jack    | Pettapiece, Randy   |
| Dunlop, Garfield    | MacLeod, Lisa     | Scott, Laurie       |
| Elliott, Christine  | Martow, Gila      | Smith, Todd         |
| Fedeli, Victor      | McDonnell, Jim    | Thompson, Lisa M.   |
| Hardeman, Ernie     | McKenna, Jane     | Walker, Bill        |
| Harris, Michael     | McNaughton, Monte | Wilson, Jim         |
| Holyday, Douglas C. | Miller, Norm      | Yakabuski, John     |
| Hudak, Tim          | Milligan, Rob E.  | Yurek, Jeff         |
| Jackson, Rod        | Munro, Julia      |                     |

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 65; the nays are 35.

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

*Motion agreed to.*

#### CONCURRENCE IN SUPPLY

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We have deferred votes on government orders 11 through to 21, inclusive. Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1201 to 1202.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Mr. Milloy has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Finance. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

#### Ayes

|                       |                     |                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Albanese, Laura       | Fraser, John        | Moridi, Reza        |
| Armstrong, Teresa J.  | Gates, Wayne        | Murray, Glen R.     |
| Balkissoon, Bas       | Gerretsen, John     | Naqvi, Yasir        |
| Berardinetti, Lorenzo | Gélinas, France     | Natyshak, Taras     |
| Bisson, Gilles        | Gravelle, Michael   | Oraziotti, David    |
| Bradley, James J.     | Hatfield, Percy     | Piruzza, Teresa     |
| Campbell, Sarah       | Hoskins, Eric       | Prue, Michael       |
| Cansfield, Donna H.   | Hunter, Mitzie      | Qaadri, Shafiq      |
| Chan, Michael         | Jaczek, Helena      | Sandals, Liz        |
| Chiarelli, Bob        | Jeffrey, Linda      | Sattler, Peggy      |
| Colle, Mike           | Kwinter, Monte      | Schein, Jonah       |
| Coteau, Michael       | Leal, Jeff          | Sergio, Mario       |
| Crack, Grant          | MacCharles, Tracy   | Singh, Jagmeet      |
| Damerla, Dipika       | Mangat, Amrit       | Sousa, Charles      |
| Del Duca, Steven      | Marchese, Rosario   | Tabuns, Peter       |
| Delaney, Bob          | Matthews, Deborah   | Takhar, Harinder S. |
| Dickson, Joe          | Mauro, Bill         | Taylor, Monique     |
| DiNovo, Cheri         | McMeekin, Ted       | Vanthof, John       |
| Duguid, Brad          | McNeely, Phil       | Wong, Soo           |
| Fife, Catherine       | Meilleur, Madeleine | Wynne, Kathleen O.  |
| Flynn, Kevin Daniel   | Miller, Paul        | Zimmer, David       |
| Forster, Cindy        | Milloy, John        |                     |

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

#### Nays

|                     |                   |                     |
|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Arnott, Ted         | Jones, Sylvia     | Nicholls, Rick      |
| Barrett, Toby       | Klees, Frank      | O'Toole, John       |
| Chudleigh, Ted      | Leone, Rob        | Ouellette, Jerry J. |
| Clark, Steve        | MacLaren, Jack    | Pettapiece, Randy   |
| Dunlop, Garfield    | MacLeod, Lisa     | Scott, Laurie       |
| Elliott, Christine  | Martow, Gila      | Smith, Todd         |
| Fedeli, Victor      | McDonnell, Jim    | Thompson, Lisa M.   |
| Hardeman, Ernie     | McKenna, Jane     | Walker, Bill        |
| Harris, Michael     | McNaughton, Monte | Wilson, Jim         |
| Holyday, Douglas C. | Miller, Norm      | Yakabuski, John     |
| Hudak, Tim          | Milligan, Rob E.  | Yurek, Jeff         |
| Jackson, Rod        | Munro, Julia      |                     |

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 65; the nays are 35.

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

Mr. Milloy has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

**Interjections:** Same vote.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Same vote? Agreed.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 65; the nays are 35.

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

Mr. Milloy has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. All those in favour, rise one at a time—

**Interjections:** Same vote.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Same vote? Same vote.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 65; the nays are 35.

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

Mr. Milloy has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Transportation. All those in favour, rise one at a time—

**Interjections:** Same vote.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Same vote? Same vote.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 65; the nays are 35.

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

Mr. Milloy has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. All those in favour, please rise—

**Interjections:** Same vote.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Same vote? Same vote.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 65; the nays are 35.

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

Mr. Milloy has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Energy. All those in favour, please rise—

**Interjections:** Same vote.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Same vote? Same vote.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 65; the nays are 35.

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

Mr. Milloy has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Education. All those in favour, please rise—

**Interjections:** Same vote.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Same vote? Same vote.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 65; the nays are 35.

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

Mr. Milloy has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Infrastructure. All those in favour—

**Interjections:** Same vote.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Same vote? Same vote.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 65; the nays are 35.

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

Mr. Milloy has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Children and Youth Services. All those in favour, please rise one at a time—

**Interjections:** Same vote.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Same vote? Same vote.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 65; the nays are 35.

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

Mr. Milloy has moved concurrence in supply for the Office of Francophone Affairs. All those in favour, please rise—

**Interjections:** Same vote.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Same vote? Same vote.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 65; the nays are 35.

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

Mr. Milloy has moved concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Consumer Services. All those in favour, please rise—

**Interjections:** Same vote.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Same vote? Same vote.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 65; the nays are 35.

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

*Motions agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** There are no further deferred votes.

The member from Durham on a point of order.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Earlier today, the member from Ajax-Pickering put on each member's desk an invitation to Durham Day on March 3. The point of order is that, really, the tradition here has been to respect all members representing the area that's being celebrated—on Monday, in this case. When I looked at the material, I was quite disappointed. It was organized by the member from Ajax-Pickering. The issue is, I called the regional chairman to see—because the member from Whitby-Oshawa and the member from Oshawa, as well as the member from Kawartha Lakes-Brock, were not featured as MPPs on the brochure. That was the first thing. Secondly, there were pictures of the two Liberal members on the material. The regional chairman had not seen the material or signed off.

This is an important event in Durham. All five members should be recognized. My point is this: Who paid for it? Who approved it? We were never consulted on this. That is shameful.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I really find it difficult to rule on something that the member continues to debate.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Energy is not being helpful.

That is not in particular a point of order here, except I will take the member's word about distributing materials in this House completely. Members have the right to distribute materials, but I caution, and I offer it as a serious caution, that it should not have any political overtones in it whatsoever. It is not permitted.

I would also recommend that, in this particular case, this is something that should be taken up with the group that is organizing this particular event to ensure that it doesn't happen again.

I want to offer that caution one more time: Nothing in this building is supposed to be political in nature, as distributed by anybody, including your staff. It should not be displayed in windows. It should not be put on the

tables here. We've dealt with this a couple of times and I'm using this as a reminder that it is not to be done.

There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1211 to 1500.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Today, it's my honour to welcome a good friend of mine, Graham Murray, the editor of Inside Queen's Park.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Also the original chair of the Speaker's Book Award.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### GRAHAM MURRAY

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Speaker, known for his intelligence and wit, which can often precede his presence, Graham Murray has worked in and around Queen's Park for over 40 years, first as a lobbyist, then as a political adviser and researcher for a political party and, most recently, as a consultant with his own firm.

As a consultant, Graham established the newsletter Inside Queen's Park, which became the must-read item to stay in the know around Queen's Park. But if asked, Graham will say he's most proud of his involvement with programs instrumental in forming the next generation of Ontario legislators: the Ontario Legislature Internship Programme, by which he was named an honorary intern in 2007; and the Speaker's Book Award, to which Speaker Levac appointed him founding chair.

When I first was elected, Graham Murray was very kind to me, taking me under his wing, even when he didn't have to. He's a gentleman, a straight shooter and, in the short time I've known him, I consider him both a mentor and friend.

Graham is currently pondering whether or not he is retired, but I think it's pretty doubtful. I know he'll always have an opinion to share with us.

This evening, there's a reception here at Queen's Park. The Public Affairs Association of Canada will recognize Graham's many achievements, including as president of PAAC, and give thanks to this long-time practitioner of public affairs in this province. I encourage you all to attend and honour a great guy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Speaker's prerogative would be to offer my congratulations as well and to thank Graham for all his many years of work in the public domain. Thank you.

### FAMILY DAY WALKATHON

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** Speaker, four years ago, the Mississauga Muslim Community set themselves a goal, a goal to organize a Family Day Walkathon every year and

raise a quarter of a million dollars over five years. The money was for the Trillium Health Partners Credit Valley ER expansion.

This last Sunday, under the leadership of AbdulQayyum Mufti, the Mississauga Muslim Community accomplished this goal one year ahead of schedule and have now raised \$250,000 in just four years.

Speaker, it is indeed an inspiring story, but what is even more inspiring is the leadership that Mississauga's Muslim community has shown. With this annual walkathon and the funds they have raised, the community is saying, "We are taking responsibility for the larger Mississauga community. We are willing to do the heavy lifting required to ensure that we have a healthy and vibrant Mississauga."

What they are showing us is what it means to be a fully paid-up citizen. For that, we are inspired, and we thank them so very much. I wish them well, and I look forward to being part of their walkathon next year and look forward to them raising more money.

### ONTARIO PROVINCIAL POLICE

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I rise in this House today to speak to a very important issue that has affected a number of communities in my riding as well as across rural Ontario. During the recent ROMA-OGRA conference, I had the opportunity to meet with delegations from across Parry Sound-Muskoka, who expressed a deep concern with increasing policing costs and the proposed new OPP billing model. Under the new model, small, rural townships are being asked to pay yet again, this time with staggering increases in the cost of policing.

Take, for instance, the municipalities of west Parry Sound, who will see their costs rise from \$3.4 million to over \$6.5 million. The cost of policing for the township of Archipelago is set to increase a startling 1,000%. The district of Muskoka would see a 72%, or \$7.5-million, increase. This alarming theme is playing out across rural Ontario. Municipalities with already constrained budgets are faced with yet another unexpected cost from the provincial government.

Responsible, budget-minded municipalities in my riding are trying to move forward on projects, including local public transportation projects and much-needed infrastructure improvements. These increased costs have blindsided many, and threaten to put these planned projects on hold indefinitely.

Mr. Speaker, PC Leader Tim Hudak spoke today at the ROMA-OGRA conference and pledged to bring in the capacity to pay act, if our party becomes the government, as part of the solution to address ever-increasing policing costs.

### RARE DISEASE DAY

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I rise today to recognize Rare Disease Day, which is fast approaching on Friday, February 28. Rare Disease Day is an internationally recognized

day to raise awareness for the many people across the globe who suffer from a rare disease. This year's theme is "Care," and the focus is on providing better care for those who are suffering. Patient organizations in Canada have been involved in Rare Disease Day since 2008 and serve as the voice for the one in 12 Canadians who are affected by a rare disease.

One of these Canadians lives in my riding. He sent me a message earlier this month to tell me his story. Henk van der Wilt suffers from cavernous angioma and for the past 3.5 years has suffered from severe, painful headaches and fatigue. Cavernous angioma is clusters of abnormally dilated blood vessels that can be found in the brain and spinal cord and, more rarely, in the skin and retinas. Only 0.2% of Canadians suffer from this disease, and often show symptoms beginning in their 20s and 30s. It can include seizures, stroke symptoms, hemorrhages and headaches. Mr. van der Wilt asked me to bring awareness not only to his disease but to make the Ontario Legislature aware of Rare Disease Day and the many Canadians who are affected.

I would like to thank Mr. van der Wilt for reaching out to me and for sharing his story with the Legislature.

#### ALEX PIETRANGELO

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** It is my pleasure to stand in the House after an Olympic Games for the second time to acknowledge a gold medalist from King township in my great riding of Oak Ridges–Markham. Alex Pietrangelo, who plays in the NHL for the St. Louis Blues, won a gold medal on Sunday as a member of the Canadian men's hockey team, and joins King township resident Rosie MacLennan, who was the only Canadian to win gold at the 2012 summer games.

Alex had a stellar performance at the Olympics. He formed part of the defensive core of Canada's men's hockey team, which allowed only three goals in six games during the entire Olympic tournament. In fact, Alex and his defence partner, Jay Bouwmeester, were on the ice for only one goal against during the entire tournament, and shut down some of the best players in the world time after time.

Alex's Olympic gold medal is part of a long list of accomplishments that include a gold medal at the 2009 World Junior Hockey Championship, and best defenceman at both the 2010 World Junior Hockey Championship and the 2011 World Men's Ice Hockey Championship.

I am excited that King township Mayor Steve Pellegrini has said that a township presentation will be made to Alex, much like there was this past summer to current Stanley Cup champion Danny Carcillo, another well-decorated NHL player from King township.

Congratulations, Alex and Team Canada: a job well done.

#### GASOLINE TAX

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** There is widespread opposition to the recommendation of the Premier's transit panel to

implement a 10-cent-a-litre gas hike. It was a common theme at the pre-budget hearings conducted by the finance committee in January, and a common theme at OGRA-ROMA today.

The mayor of the municipality of East Ferris wrote the Premier recently to express his dismay. He noted that rural Ontarians already pay 14.5 cents a litre to subsidize the government coffers, "without much return." He further stated, "I am not willing to have my residents charged an additional tax in order to subsidize metro Toronto transit and I am certain that I would receive unanimous support on this stand." He concluded his letter to the Premier by saying it "seems to me to be another assault on our rural municipalities."

#### 1510

The council of Papineau-Cameron, also in my riding, and the towns of Chapleau and Laurentian Hills have written me with concerns and have passed council resolutions endorsing the letter from Mayor Vrebosch.

Speaker, this is nothing more than a cash grab and a shell game to allow the government to appear to be reducing the deficit faster. Rural and northern Ontarians see right through this, and we won't stand for it. I urge this House to support my opposition day motion tomorrow not to increase taxes.

#### OLYMPIC ATHLETES

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I'm pleased today to rise and add my voice to the chorus of support and appreciation and thanks for all of Canada's winter Olympians who have returned from Sochi, Russia.

As all of us in the House know, Canada this year won gold in men's and women's hockey, and as most of us know, Canada won gold in 2010 in Vancouver in both men's and women's hockey as well.

Now, Speaker, there is a common denominator with those four gold medals, and that is that each of those four teams, in 2010 and 2014, had Thunder Bay athletes on those teams. The 2010 women's team had Haley Irwin on it. The 2010 men's team had Eric Staal on it. We in Thunder Bay are still trying to figure out how Staal was not on the 2014 team. The 2014 team once again had Haley Irwin on it, a two-time gold medal winner, and the 2014 men's team, of course, had Patrick Sharp, a two-time Stanley Cup winner from the Chicago Blackhawks and from the Thunder Bay minor hockey league program, on the team as well.

Congratulations to them. Thunder Bay continues to produce amazing hockey talent on an annual basis. We're very proud of these people.

I need to also congratulate an old friend of mine, the assistant coach of the men's curling team, who didn't get a lot of notoriety while he was over there, but a former world champ in his own right, Ricky Lang. Rick, along with Al Hackner, won more than one world curling championship. Rick was the assistant coach for the men's gold-winning curling team as well.

Congratulations to all of the Thunder Bay gang and to everybody from—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** A fantastic turnout.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Two words: Wayne Gretzky.

#### MATT DUCHENE

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize local Olympian Matt Duchene. What can I say? In Sochi, Matt Duchene was part of the men's Olympic hockey team that won the gold medal. Together, they faced the best hockey players in the world to bring the gold medal back to Canada.

Born and raised in Haliburton, Ontario, by dedicated parents Vince and Christine, Matt is just one of several hockey players from this small town who have gone on to play in the NHL. At only 23 years old, Matt is a five-year veteran of the Colorado Avalanche after having been selected third overall in the 2009 NHL entry draft. Matt has worn the maple leaf in international play for Canada seven times, winning gold at the 2008 International Ice Hockey Federation under-18 championship, as well as part of Team Canada at the 2012 Spengler Cup.

It's also important to acknowledge Matt Duchene's commitment to his community. He spends much of his off season up in the Haliburton Highlands, meeting with young people, encouraging them, and donating his much-sought-after memorabilia—I have a signed sweater myself—to the many auctions and charities up in the riding. Last year, he and fellow NHLer Cody Hodgson hosted a golf tournament to support the Minden flood relief effort, which raised close to \$120,000 in a single day.

The town of Haliburton and all of the Haliburton Highlands could not be more proud of Matt and all that he has accomplished. On behalf of the riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, I again congratulate Matt Duchene and Team Canada on winning Olympic gold in Sochi, and I wish him all the best for future success.

#### OLYMPIC ATHLETES

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I rise today to offer my sincere congratulations to Canada's Olympic team in the recent Sochi games. Canada was represented by 221 athletes competing in 15 different winter sports. These remarkable athletes awed us with their hard-fought and inspirational performances.

In total, more than 2,800 athletes, coaches and team officials from 80 countries participated in this exciting event. Each and every one of them is to be congratulated for their dedication and commitment to sporting excellence.

My riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, specifically the town of Ilderton, is home ice to three Sochi

Olympians: ice dancing silver medallists Scott Moir and Tessa Virtue and, just heading over to Sochi, Canadian Paralympic curler Mark Ideson. Speaker, I can tell you that all of my riding and, indeed, all of Canada are extremely proud of the way Scott, Tessa and Mark have and will continue to represent Canada.

I was also pleased to join with Mark's family, friends and colleagues as part of his official send-off on Sunday afternoon at the Ilderton Curling Club. I can tell you that excitement for Mark and his rink is high, especially after the gold medal in curling we have already seen.

Canada is a top sports nation, and each of our athletes' performances is a reflection of our country's amazing athletic talent and national pride. On behalf of all MPPs, I would like to say that we are proud of you and the way you represented Canada.

#### OLYMPIC ATHLETES

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Speaker, on a point of order: I just want to congratulate Mike Smith and Jayna Hefford for being on two Olympic gold medal teams in Canada.

*Interjection.*

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Winter Olympics as well. Congratulations, Jayna and Mike.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I do believe there is a rule that ministers don't get statements, but that's a sneaky way of getting it in there.

I do want to echo something, if you don't mind. We are all extremely proud of all of our athletes, the coaches, the supporters and the sponsors. We performed well, and I just wanted to make sure that everyone understood that we have to have pride in our own local athletes. It's a good thing to do, so congratulations to everybody.

#### CORRECTION OF RECORD

**Hon. Bob Chiarelli:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order to correct my record. In response to a question from the member from Toronto–Danforth on December 9, 2013, I cited \$6 billion in electricity export profits to Ontario since 2008, a figure that was supplied to me by the Independent Electricity System Operator. The IESO has since amended that calculation, and it is more accurate to say that Ontario has made \$4.4 billion in revenue since 2006. In 2013 alone, exports reduced costs for Ontarians by \$300 million.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** My comment to that would be to shorten the corrected record, to ensure that, if you made a mistake in the comment, you simply correct that mistake. I would ask that all members abide by that request. When you do correct your record—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** —it's to correct something that you said, and it's specific.

I don't need anyone making comments in the middle of my sentence. It's not going to happen anymore. Please.

It's a serious issue that when you do correct your record, it is something that you said, and you are correct—

ing it only and not making any other modifications or comments. I appreciate your fulfilling that request.

This reform was requested by a majority of Toronto city councillors, and it's important to our city and to my constituents. I'm pleased to introduce this bill and to show my support for this issue today.

## REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Standing order 63(a) provides that, "The Standing Committee on Estimates shall present one report with respect to all of the estimates and supplementary estimates considered pursuant to standing orders 60 and 62 no later than the third Thursday in November of each calendar year."

The House not having received a report from the Standing Committee on Estimates for certain offices on Thursday, November 21, 2013, as required by the standing orders of this House, pursuant to standing order 63(b), the estimates before the committee of the Office of the Assembly, Office of the Auditor General, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, and Ombudsman Ontario are deemed to be passed by the committee and are deemed to be reported to and received by the House.

Pursuant to standing order 61(b), the estimates 2013-14 of these offices, not having been selected for consideration, are deemed to be received and concurred in.

*Report deemed received.*

1520

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### CITY OF TORONTO ALTERNATIVE VOTING SYSTEM ACT, 2014

### LOI DE 2014 SUR L'ADOPTION D'UN SYSTÈME DE VOTE DE REMPLACEMENT PAR LA CITÉ DE TORONTO

Mr. Schein moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 163, An Act to amend the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 to allow the City of Toronto to adopt an alternative voting system / Projet de loi 163, Loi visant à modifier la Loi de 1996 sur les élections municipales afin de permettre à la cité de Toronto d'adopter un système de vote de remplacement.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

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

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** My bill will give the city of Toronto the ability to determine how its representatives are elected. It will authorize the city of Toronto to pass a bylaw adopting an alternative voting system for the election of members of city council, including the mayor.

### SUPPLY ACT, 2014 LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 2014

Mr. Sousa moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 164, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2014 / Projet de loi 164, Loi autorisant l'utilisation de certaines sommes pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2014.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Short statement?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** No statement, Mr. Speaker.

### FAIR MINIMUM WAGE ACT, 2014 LOI DE 2014 POUR UN SALAIRE MINIMUM ÉQUITABLE

Mr. Naqvi moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 165, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 with respect to the minimum wage / Projet de loi 165, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi en ce qui concerne le salaire minimum.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

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

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I'll make my statement during ministerial statements.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### MINIMUM WAGE

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Our government is committed to building a more prosperous Ontario, while creating the jobs of today and tomorrow and providing more opportunities for all.

I was proud to stand with the Premier recently to announce that our government is increasing the minimum wage to \$11 an hour on June 1 of this year. This will give Ontario the highest provincial minimum wage in Canada and build on our strong track record of rising living standards for workers.

It is important to remember that when we came to office, the minimum wage had been frozen for eight years straight. That was not fair to workers, who saw their cost of living increase while their wages stayed

frozen. That's why, Speaker, our government initially increased the minimum wage by 50%, starting in 2003.

Against the opposition's wishes, our government raised the minimum wage from \$6.85 to the \$10.25 it is today. We increased it during good times and during the depths of the recession because it was the right thing to do. Ontario went from having one of the lowest minimum wages in Canada to one of the highest because that's what hard-working Ontario families deserved. A look at the past 20 years shows us that decisions on minimum wage were too often ad hoc and left to the political whims of the day. That meant that the NDP increased minimum wage less than two dollars during their five years in office and the PC government failed to raise it one penny. That was not fair to workers who did not know what their hourly wage would be from one year to the next, and unpredictable for businesses who could not plan for the future.

That is why our government is introducing the Fair Minimum Wage Act. If passed, it will establish a fair, predictable and transparent approach to setting minimum wage in the future. This legislation will require all future adjustments to the minimum wage to be annual and tied to increases in Ontario's consumer price index. This would ensure that Ontario's minimum wage keeps pace with the cost of living in a way that allows our businesses to plan for the future and continue to create jobs.

Tying minimum wage to the change in Ontario's annual CPI was one of the recommendations in the consensus report put forward by Ontario's Minimum Wage Advisory Panel. The panel, which included representatives from business, labour, community and anti-poverty groups, travelled across the province to get advice and feedback from Ontarians on all sides of the issue. It travelled to 10 cities and heard over 400 submissions from businesses large and small, organized labour, community and anti-poverty groups, and others on this important topic.

I would like to thank Professor Anil Verma and all the members of the panel for their dedication on this report and all their hard work in getting us to this point. We will be acting on all of the panel's thorough and thoughtful recommendations. This means that, if passed, the first CPI adjustment would take effect on October 1, 2015, and would be announced by April 1, 2015. This would give both workers and businesses six months to plan, and all future annual changes to the minimum wage would use the same schedule. Any changes would be rounded to the nearest five cents, and there will be no decreases.

In addition, our proposed legislation would, if passed, put in place a five-year review of the minimum wage and how it is set. As I mentioned, the advisory panel met with over 400 business, labour and community groups who represent thousands more members, business owners and Ontario families. It was disappointing, however, that neither of the opposition parties made a presentation or submission to the panel nor spoke up on this topic during question period. They chose not to participate when they had the chance.

Increasing the minimum wage and establishing a fair and predictable way of setting it in the future is part of the government's economic plan that is creating jobs for today and tomorrow. The comprehensive plan and its six priorities focus on Ontario's greatest strength: its people and strategic partnerships.

One of the ways we are working to create and attract good jobs and help families is by setting a fair and balanced minimum wage. Raising the minimum wage to \$11 on June 1 of this year will help improve the standard of living for hard-working people across the province. Those working on minimum wage will not see their wages fall below the cost of living again. If passed, our legislation would take setting minimum wage out of the hands of politicians and provide predictability and certainty to businesses to stay competitive and create jobs.

Raising the minimum wage and calling for an annual increase tied to the cost of living would put more money in people's pockets. It would also give our businesses predictability and help build a more prosperous economy, while ensuring a fair society for all. I hope that all parties in the House will support this very important legislation.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** It is now time for responses.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I'm pleased to rise today to speak on the important issue of minimum wage, and I thank the minister for his statement here this afternoon.

Members of this House will be hearing that many businesses are scrambling in preparation for the minimum wage hike to come on June 1 of this year. In fact, many are reporting having to scale back on hours or even cutting jobs. I've heard from businesses and job creators throughout Ontario and from my riding in Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, and I can tell you that few are prepared to weather this change.

**1530**

This change brings about concerns, as it will have the biggest direct impact on important industries, such as food services, where there's a large number of minimum wage workers. The increase comes at a time when a lot of employers will be getting ready to hire a new wave of seasonal workers, and it will be a challenge for them to determine whether they are able to hire at the same rate they did in previous years with this increase in payroll costs. Businesses will also need to be prepared for additional costs beyond the new minimum wage, as there will be additional payroll taxes and costs that businesses have yet to bear because of the higher minimum wage.

We know that minimum wage increases do little to improve the financial situation of low-income workers. While small businesses understand and often support the government's efforts to reduce poverty amongst its workers, minimum wage hikes are not the most effective option. Ever since 2004, Ontario workers have faced an uphill battle against the McGuinty-Wynne Liberal government. The rate of Ontario residents working in minimum-wage jobs has gone up from 6.3% in 2007 to 8.1% in 2009, and now, currently, it has increased all the



way up to 9%, an increase that is now almost triple the amount it was under the former PC government in 2003.

Under the former PC record, our party has shown dramatic decreases in the rate of workers in minimum wage jobs, at 4.6% in 2000, 4.1% in 2001, 3.9% in 2002 and 3.5% in 2003. The facts speak for themselves, and it's evident that the current path that this government has taken Ontario down has put our economy in a downward spiral. We need to change direction immediately.

Our PC leader, Tim Hudak, has put forward his Million Jobs Act. If passed, this legislation will immediately begin its task of creating good jobs. Our plan is focused on getting people more than the minimum wage, specifically, paycheques for people with none at all and full-time employment for those who are settling for part-time.

There are over 1 million people out of work in Ontario today. We have lost 300,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs in the past 10 years. I can tell you that these changes today will do nothing to change that. These changes are nothing more than window dressing because, of course, the government has yet to unveil any sort of a comprehensive jobs plan.

While we can support the specific legislation that will have minimum wage tied to inflation, it fails to address the issues affecting Ontario residents and their future long-term prosperity. Ontario workers don't want to be stuck in minimum-wage jobs. They deserve and want jobs with good wages that will allow them to support themselves and their families.

An increase to the minimum wage does nothing to establish long-term economic security and happiness. We want to focus on good, well-paying jobs that people in this province can depend on.

I again thank the minister for his announcement today, and would use the balance of my time to urge him to dedicate his most urgent and most serious attention to working on and releasing a comprehensive and detailed jobs plan with this Premier, a plan so that Ontario workers can know where you are going and a plan so that our businesses and job creators are able to properly plan and account for the direction this Liberal government is taking us.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I'm pleased to rise today on behalf of the new Ontario New Democratic caucus as our party's leader to provide a response to the minister's announcement. Earlier today, the Minister of Labour put forward the government's position. Now I'll make a case for a more balanced approach.

New Democrats have a solid plan for investing in our workforce and for strengthening our economy. Our plan will deliver results by increasing the minimum wage while at the same time cutting small-business taxes. Instead of springing this idea in the middle of a by-election for political gain, New Democrats took the time to talk to people and businesses across our province that will be affected by the upgrades to the minimum wage. This is a reasonable and economically feasible plan that

will ensure that hard-working families are fairly compensated without putting any undue burden on small businesses. It's not only about raising Ontario's minimum wage, Speaker. It is about growing Ontario's economy.

For the last 10 years, this government has put the squeeze on the middle class in Ontario. There's no doubt that families are struggling. They're struggling here in Toronto, they're struggling in my home riding in Essex, and they're struggling in every corner of our province. So we've reached out. We've listened, and we've heard from single moms trying to raise their kids on minimum wage. We've heard from new Canadians and young people who can't make ends meet, and we've have heard from small business owners across the province who need a willing partner in government.

We know that small business is the engine of our local economies and we need to help small businesses to create jobs. We need to help people make ends meet. So our plan calls on the minimum wage to increase to \$11 an hour this June, and following it with a 50-cent-per-hour increase to \$11.50 on June 1, 2015, and a 50-cent increase to \$12 an hour on June 1, 2016, with an annual cost-of-living increase. However, Speaker, we'll balance this increase with a reduction in the small business tax rate, a reduction from 4.5% this June 1 to 4%, a reduction from 4% to 3.5% June 1, 2015, and a further reduction from 3.5% to 3% on June 1, 2016.

Speaker, this is an economically responsible plan that will take steps to help lift Ontarians out of poverty, but it's not an easy solution. It's not easy for people living on minimum wage to pay the bills and to put food on the table. It's not easy for small business owners to make payroll and to make their contribution to Ontario's economy. Government will have to set stronger priorities in order to help small businesses and lower the tax rate.

The Minister of Labour talked about Liberal timelines and Liberal priorities earlier this afternoon. Instead of taking care of political needs of this government, they should try considering the needs of Ontarians. It's time to put people first. New Democrats are listening, and we're putting forward a responsible measure that will make life more affordable and help put people back to work in the province of Ontario.

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

It is now time for petitions.

## PETITIONS

### PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to present a petition here on behalf of my constituents. It reads as follows:

For improved post-stroke physiotherapy eligibility:

"Whereas current OHIP legislation and policies prevent Ontario post-stroke patients between the ages of

20 and 64 from receiving additional one-on-one OHIP-funded physiotherapy; and

“Whereas these post-stroke patients deserve to be rehabilitated to their greatest ability possible to maybe return to work and become provincial income taxpayers again and productive citizens” themselves;

“Whereas current OHIP policies prevent Ontarians under age 65 and over the age of 20 from receiving additional OHIP-funded physiotherapy and rehabilitation after their initial stroke treatment; and

“Whereas these OHIP policies are discriminatory in nature, forcing university/college students and other Ontarians to wait until age 65”—and over—“to receive more OHIP-funded physiotherapy;

“Whereas the lack of post-stroke physiotherapy offered to Ontarians between the ages of 20 and 64 is forcing these people to prematurely cash in their RRSPs and/or sell their houses to raise funds;

“Now therefore we, the undersigned, hereby respectfully petition the Ontario Legislature to introduce and pass amending legislation and new regulations to provide OHIP-funded post-stroke physiotherapy and treatment for all qualified post-stroke patients, thereby eliminating the discriminatory nature of current treatment” process.

I’m pleased to sign and support this and send it to the table with Ibrahim.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** This is a petition from my riding of Ajax–Pickering.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the regions of York and Durham are at the final stages of completing an EA for the YD-WPCP (York Durham water pollution control plant’s) outfall; and

**1540**

“Whereas the regions of York and Durham have chosen as the final solution an alternative which will not address the quantity of total phosphorus (TP) nor soluble reactive phosphorus (SRP) being deposited into Lake Ontario; and

“Whereas Lake Ontario has been identified as the most stressed lake of the Great Lakes in the July/August 2013 issue of Canadian Geographic; and

“Whereas the town of Ajax and PACT POW (Pickering Ajax Citizens Together—Protecting our Water) have documented the excessive algae blooms on the Ajax waterfront with photos and complaints to the region of Durham; and

“Whereas SRP, and indirectly TP, contribute to the growth of algae in Lake Ontario;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to ask that the government of Ontario require the regions of York and Durham to implement an alternative that will reduce the amount of phosphorus (both TP and SRP) being deposited into Lake Ontario from the YD-WPCP.”

I agree with that. I attach my name to it, and I will pass it to Samer.

#### LCBO OUTLET

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

“Whereas the LCBO is opening a new location in Lindsay at Kent Street and requesting closure of the town’s original location at Russell Street; and

“Whereas we the residents, with the support of current and past MPPs, councillors, BIA and other local businesses and we, the undersigned, request the province of Ontario to encourage the LCBO to leave our downtown LCBO in place for our residents and a large number of tourists;

“Therefore, we recommend the LCBO reconsider and leave our Russell store open as a pilot project to assist the business areas and maintain jobs in Lindsay.”

Brought to me by local Councillor Gord James from the city of Kawartha Lakes.

#### FIREFIGHTERS

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition that comes to me from Mark Lalonde in and around the Petawawa area, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas firefighters are routinely exposed to burning chemicals and other toxins in the course of protecting the lives and property of fellow citizens; and

“Whereas even with the best respiratory practices and protective equipment, exposures will continue to occur due to absorption through the skin once a firefighter has become soaked during fire suppression activities; and

“Whereas epidemiological, medical and scientific studies conclusively demonstrate an increased rate of diseases such as cancer in firefighters versus the general population;

They “petition the Legislative Assembly” as follows:

“Amend the regulations of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act (WSIA), 1997 to include cancer of the lungs, breasts, testicles, prostate, skin and multiple myeloma in presumptive legislation for occupational diseases related to firefighting.”

I fully support this petition, will affix my name to it and ask page Jaclyn to bring it to the Clerk.

#### LCBO OUTLET

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** In support of the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, I also have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the LCBO is opening a new location in Lindsay at Kent Street and requesting closure of the town’s original location at Russell Street; and

“Whereas we the residents, with the support of current and past MPPs, councillors, BIA and other local businesses and we, the undersigned, request the province of Ontario to encourage the LCBO to leave our downtown

LCBO in place for our residents and a large number of tourists;

“Therefore, we recommend the LCBO reconsider and leave our Russell store open as a pilot project to assist the business areas and maintain jobs in Lindsay.”

I agree with the petition, will sign it and pass it to Robin.

#### CHARITABLE GAMING

**Mr. Todd Smith:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the government of Ontario, through the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario, levies the Ontario provincial fee on the sale of break-open tickets by charitable and non-profit organizations in the province; and

“Whereas local hospital auxiliaries/associations across the province, who are members of the Hospital Auxiliaries Association of Ontario, use break-open tickets to raise funds to support local health care equipment needs in more than 100 communities across the province; and

“Whereas in September 2010, the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario announced a series of changes to the Ontario provincial fee which included a reduction of the fee for certain organizations and the complete elimination of the fee for other organizations, depending on where the break-open tickets are sold; and

“Whereas the September 2010 changes to the Ontario provincial fee unfairly treat certain charitable and non-profit organizations (local hospital auxiliaries) by not providing for the complete elimination of the fee which would otherwise be used by these organizations to increase their support for local health care equipment needs and other community needs;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to eliminate the Ontario provincial fee on break-open tickets for all charitable and non-profit organizations in Ontario and allow all organizations using this fundraising tool to invest more funds in local community projects, including local health care equipment needs, for the benefit of Ontarians.”

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

#### LONG-TERM CARE

**Miss Monique Taylor:** This petition was given to me from the Village of Wentworth Heights, which is a long-term-care facility in my riding, and it reads:

“Whereas seniors living in long-term-care homes in Ontario receive an inadequate food allowance; and

“Whereas the food allowance in Ontario’s long-term-care homes has only marginally increased since 2007; and

“Whereas the Long-Term Care Homes Act states that every licensee of a long-term-care home shall ensure that there is an organized program of nutrition care and

dietary services for the home to meet the daily nutritional needs of the residents; and

“Whereas the current funding model of \$7.68 per day does not allow for necessities that are mandated under the act such as adequate therapeutic diets or nutritional supplements;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to increase the daily food allowance for seniors in long-term care to \$11 per day.”

I couldn’t agree with this more. I will affix my name to it and give it to page Aqil to bring to the table.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** This is a petition to fund Avalon Public School II in my riding of Ottawa–Orléans.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the current enrolment of Avalon Public School in Orléans is 732 students, with 11 portables onsite;

“Whereas under current projections, by 2014, enrolment at the Avalon Public School is forecast to be in the 900 range, increasing to approximately 1,359 students by 2022;

“Whereas the issue of overcrowding and lack of space threatens the OCDSB’s ability to offer full-day kindergarten in Avalon under the Ministry of Education’s targets;

“Whereas the enrolment at Avalon Public School is expected to continue rising at a rate of 10% to 15% a year for the foreseeable future;

“Whereas the staff of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, following an objective, evidence-based process, recommended Avalon PS II as its top priority for a new school, calling the need ‘urgent’;

“Whereas the board disregarded independent staff counsel and ranked the school from number 1 to number 7;

“We, the undersigned, call on the government of Ontario and the Ministry of Education to provide the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board with the necessary funding to build Avalon Public School II in the next round of capital projects.”

It’s signed by Marie France Lalonde, Katherine Winters and many others. I will send it forward with Thomas.

#### UTILITY CHARGES

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** “To the Premier and Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas section 398(2) of the Municipal Act, 2001 (the ‘act’), allows a municipality to add public utility arrears incurred by a tenant to the municipal tax bill of the owner; and

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

“Whereas these provisions reversed the long-standing law in this area that held that a landlord was not

responsible for utility charges where the landlord was not the consumer; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

I sign my name to this and hand it to page Alessia.

#### REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“December 9, 2013, was a precedent-setting day in this Legislature for Ontario’s most vulnerable citizens. Premier Kathleen Wynne gave a heartfelt and official apology challenging all Ontarians ‘to be led by our sense of moral purpose before all else’ when she publicly, on behalf of the people of Ontario, took responsibility for the profound suffering of the former residents of Huronia, Rideau and Southwestern Regional Centres ‘who were deeply harmed and continue to bear the scars and the consequences.’

**1550**

“Whereas the institutional model of care at each of these centres has been acknowledged in the public apology to have been deeply flawed whereby residents ‘suffered neglect and abuse within the very system that was meant to provide them care’; and

“Whereas it was acknowledged that former residents ‘were forcibly restrained, left in unbearable seclusion, separated from their families and robbed of their potential, their comfort, safety and their dignity’; and

“Whereas all of the class actions for former residents at Huronia, Rideau and Southwestern Regional Centres

have reached settlement agreements with the province for a combined total of \$67.7 million; and

“Whereas a \$67.7-million settlement is wholly inadequate as compensation to the thousands of former residents and their families to redress the long-term debilitating impact of this harm; and

“Whereas all legal costs of \$15.6 million are being taken from the combined settlement total before any compensation is paid to the former residents;

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

“We ask that Premier Kathleen Wynne be led by her sense of moral purpose and use her power as Premier to pay the legitimate legal costs of Koskie Minsky LLP from Toronto who acted on behalf of the Huronia, Southwestern and Rideau Regional Centre class members, from sources over and above the combined \$67.7-million settlement.”

I sign my signature to this petition and give it to page Kiranpreet.

#### EDUCATION FUNDING

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Another petition to fund Avalon Public School II:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the current enrolment of Avalon Public School in Orléans is 732 students, with 11 portables onsite;

“Whereas under current projections, by 2014, enrolment at the Avalon Public School is forecast to be in the 900 range increasing to approximately 1,359 students by 2022;

“Whereas the issue of overcrowding and lack of space threatens the OCDSB’s ability to offer full-day kindergarten in Avalon under the Ministry of Education’s targets;

“Whereas the enrolment at Avalon Public School is expected to continue rising at a rate of 10% to 15% a year for the foreseeable future;

“Whereas the staff of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, following an objective, evidence-based process, recommended Avalon PS II as its top priority for a new school, calling the need ‘urgent’;

“Whereas the board disregarded independent staff counsel and ranked the school from number 1 to number 7;

“We, the undersigned, call on the government of Ontario and the Ministry of Education to provide the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board with the necessary funding to build Avalon Public School II in the next round of capital projects.”

I have this signed by Patricia Joyce, Melanie Vinette and seven others. I’ll sign the petition and send it forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The time for petitions has expired.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### INFRASTRUCTURE FOR JOBS AND PROSPERITY ACT, 2014

#### LOI DE 2014 SUR L'INFRASTRUCTURE AU SERVICE DE L'EMPLOI ET DE LA PROSPÉRITÉ

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 18, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 141, An Act to enact the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2013 / Projet de loi 141, Loi édictant la Loi de 2013 sur l'infrastructure au service de l'emploi et de la prospérité.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further debate? The member for Windsor West.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Windsor–Tecumseh, Speaker.

It is an honour to stand in this House and speak on behalf of the residents of the town of Tecumseh and the city of Windsor on any occasion, and on this bill, Bill 141. It's my intention to continue with my lead, which I had started last week. I had to break for time on Bill 141.

But first, I'd like to join those who earlier paid tribute to my good friend Graham Murray, who is in the audience this afternoon and who will be honoured at Queen's Park later this afternoon. As you all know, Graham is the publisher of Inside Queen's Park.

When I finished the last time, I was reminiscing about how the minister started his introduction to this bill. He was talking about how, when he put together his speaking notes, he was channeling Bill Davis, a former Conservative Premier, and he spoke of the vision that Mr. Davis had for infrastructure in Ontario. The minister said his bill would be actionable, it would be measurable and it would be transparent. The minister used the Herb Gray Parkway, which we are all very familiar with now in this House, as a shining example of how the P3 partnerships are going forward in the province of Ontario. His bill is to embellish those partnerships.

I ended last week—I started to remind us all of some of the lessons we've learned the hard way from the Herb Gray Parkway. As I recall, the contract was given out, basically, to a European consortium. They bid on it in a major bundle and then part of what they did was pass along any risks involved with that to the local contractors.

Of course, over the course of time, we found out that girders being manufactured for use in that parkway were not considered safe, and the work had to be delayed. An expert panel was brought in by the minister to examine the whole affair, and the expert panel found that the girders were not up to Ontario standards. They were built without CSA approval and standards. The work was stopped and, unfortunately, the contractor stopped paying his bills at that time as well.

On the advice of the expert panel that the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation had assembled, the minister did the right thing, and the only thing he could

do, really. For reasons of public safety, he ordered the hundreds of those deficient girders to be removed. Now, the government has told us here in the House that this will be done at no cost to Ontario taxpayers. However, had this work been tendered under the more traditional method, not the P3 method, the ministry and Infrastructure Ontario would have retained the ability to get the test results of the girder manufacturing process as the work progressed. Those who were paying the bills, meaning the government, the ministry, Infrastructure Ontario, would have had quality control and supervision over that project. The sloppy work on the girders would have been detected and corrected thanks to independent testing.

Now that, to me, was the biggest failure of the Herb Gray example. That should be corrected in Bill 141 because, as we now know, under this system quality control was missing, supervision was lacking, independent testing was scarce, and the results of those tests were not given to the ministry but to the big money men who put the bid in, who were supposedly policing themselves. Someone was not looking out for the best interests of the taxpayers on this project. To repeat that, no one was looking out for the best interests of the taxpayers.

This brings me to a critical point in this discussion. I can't say it more clearly than this, that the sad, unfortunate, inexcusable fact is that the government has failed to protect the small business people who were asked to supply goods and services to this big multinational company that was handed the contract for this huge project, the biggest infrastructure road-building project in the history of our great province.

I know the private member's bill being brought forward by the member from Vaughn, the prompt payment bill, may assist in projects in the future, but it does little for what has already taken place.

The minister can promise, as he has, that Bill 141 will see infrastructure projects in this province more transparent in the future, but let's look at what we've learned from the mistakes of the Herb Gray example.

#### 1600

Small business owners, small companies in Windsor Essex county and Kent county, and local suppliers feel that they've been hosed by this government. The way the government signed off on this contract has cost the government its credibility with the local suppliers who are working on the Herb Gray Parkway. Suppliers can't understand why, nor do they accept that, the government paying the bills for the project claims it has no ability to insist that the foreign contractors doing the work actually pay the bills that are owed to the local suppliers.

The money for this project comes from Ontario taxpayers. It's collected by this government. It's doled out in increments to the foreign multinational companies which the government selected to do the work. These multinational companies have a duty and an obligation to pay their bills. Yet when one of them says no, when they stop paying their bills, hanging a host of local companies out to dry, the government refuses to step in.

Hotham Building Materials is owed more than \$100,000, and they've been owed that money since last August. Jake's Crane is owed almost \$100,000, Waltron Trailers in Ridgetown \$50,000, R.J. Cyr nearly \$15,000, and the list goes on and on. Despite assurances that the minister was on top of the situation, the banks keep calling the suppliers expressing concerns. The employees keep looking for assurances that their jobs will be secure and that they'll still be able to put food on their tables.

This, to me, is a matter of principle: the principle that, in Ontario, small business people, when doing business with the government of the day—this government—will be treated fairly and that they will be fairly compensated. They should not have to resort to expensive legal action to force this government to stand up for the little guys, to stand up for the rights of people who did everything that was asked of them: to supply quality goods and services in a timely fashion and at a good price. They've been asking since last fall—all they've been asking is to be paid what is owed to them.

Specific to Bill 141, this failure has everything to do with the construction method that was chosen for this project. If it can happen in Windsor, it can happen on every major construction project in the future. That's why people on the council of construction trades have serious concerns about the way the government tenders infrastructure projects these days.

Speaker, let me quote from a news release issued by Jim Lyons. He represents the Heavy Construction Association of Windsor. "Why, might you ask, on a government of Ontario construction project, should the risk be so high to subcontractors engaged on this project? The answer, quite simply, is that the Ontario Ministry of Transportation and Ministry of Infrastructure have tendered this project under provisions of an alternative financial procurement (AFP) design, build, finance and maintain (DBFM) method, where risk transferred to the successful bidder is extremely high.

"Unfortunately, such risk transfer, assumed by the Windsor Essex Mobility Group and their constructor partner, Parkway Infrastructure Constructors (PIC) is being passed on to all subcontractors and suppliers who are willing to take on such a risk."

This memo was written before the problems arose with the unpaid bills.

Six concerns were raised by the Heavy Construction Association over the AFP/DBFM method:

Contract tenders are very poor in terms of drawing and specification content, forcing bidders to qualify their tenders;

Subcontract tender results are not being shared with all bidders, and this is not how the Ministry of Transportation would normally handle such tenders;

Bidders are actually being asked to negotiate lower prices, and then these new prices are being shopped to other bidders to achieve more savings;

Awards of tenders are too lengthy, forcing bidders to forgo bidding on other work;

Holdbacks for all contract packages are being withheld, in some cases for the entire project duration—

there are no considerations for early release of holdback monies;

The contracts in this case have been very onerous and complicated, with tie-ins to the consortia contracts, which are 800 pages or more. The Heavy Construction Association of Windsor asks, "What's wrong with using the old CCDC contracts?" We all want our best bang for the buck, but 800-page contracts to local suppliers, small companies wanting to bid, wanting to help out, wanting to secure employment for their people in their region—they are being forced to go out and find a lawyer and help them negotiate through 800 pages just to put in a bid on some supplies.

For these reasons, many local—and, for that matter, other provincial and national—companies are shying away from bidding on such work.

Mr. Lyons goes on to say that what should have been a fairly straightforward MTO contract has turned into a very risky prospect.

Now, as the minister knows, Mr. Lyons is a member of the Infrastructure Ontario task force to address these concerns with the DBDM development model. The Council of Ontario Construction Associations represents 31 mixed trade and trade contractors' associations throughout Ontario. They all have serious concerns with the way this government has been creating unintended hardships for their industry.

I'm guessing that what the minister is proposing is in front of us because various stakeholders in the construction field have indicated to the government that they had similar serious concerns. Those concerns would flow from the way the government moved away from traditional methods of putting projects out to tender a few years ago. This jump or shift to the AFP or P3 projects and the bundling of traditionally financed projects has sidelined many in the industry. That's because their companies can't compete; they are too small. They are too small to compete on the same scale as the trans-global consortia which have swept in from Europe and elsewhere and gobbled up many of the major construction projects in Ontario.

New Democrats have fundamental problems with the government's P3 model of infrastructure, which realistically, I suppose, we did not believe would be addressed in the legislation. However, based on published reports, there was some reason to believe that this legislation would deal with at least some of the issues that various construction stakeholders were raising with us, and were raising with the minister as well.

So at first glance, what do we see? All broader public sector entities must consider a specified list of infrastructure planning principles when making decisions related to infrastructure. These principles include things such as taking a long-term view: "Decision-makers should take into account the needs of Ontarians by being mindful of ... demographic and economic trends in Ontario." Let me repeat that. "Decision-makers should take into account the needs of Ontarians by being mindful of ... demographic and economic trends in Ontario." I wait

with bated breath to have that explained in depth at some point. I've read it a few times, and I still need help with that.

**1610**

So let's see. The Minister of Infrastructure must, from time to time, develop a 10-year infrastructure plan providing a description of the government's anticipated infrastructure needs and a strategy to meet those needs, and that's a good thing. I guess some of us would have expected that that was already happening, and I guess it hasn't been happening or we wouldn't be here today discussing the need for this to be put into the legislation.

Further, when this long-term infrastructure plan is being developed, it must be made public. Again, that's a good thing, a very good thing. As we in this House are always saying, we believe in open and transparent government. At least we in the NDP have been saying that all along for some time.

When evaluating and prioritizing proposed projects, the government must consider a specified list of criteria. Criteria to be assessed before construction of new infrastructure assets would include such things as whether the project fits in with existing municipal planning documents. Again, that's a good thing. As we all know, too often our municipal partners feel the province doesn't give their concerns much weight or consideration. I know when I was at the Rural Ontario Municipal Association and the Ontario Good Roads Association yesterday, we heard quite a bit from our municipal partners about what their concerns are. They think they should have more input on a regional level, on a local level, into some of the decision-making going on up here.

Now, I know there will be more details to follow as this bill gets to a committee and discussions are held with the various stakeholders; for instance, the requirement that architects and other design professionals relating to infrastructure must be involved in the design of our new infrastructure projects. That might set the stage for more creative approaches and more interesting designs to buildings, bridges and railway underpasses, for example.

The legislation will require that certain numbers of apprentices will be employed on these future projects and in their maintenance afterward. Obviously, the building tradespeople will have much to say about this. I anticipate they'll be discussing ratios on year-one apprentices with years two, three, four and five and journeymen and how these apprentices can be moved from one project or one site to another so as to broaden their education and their experience. The last thing we would want is somebody working for two or three years on an infrastructure project in Ontario as an apprentice just doing the same thing day in and day out and not getting that broader experience that would be required to have a better-trained professional at the end of the day.

I've heard government officials describe this new requirement for apprentice involvement as a living legacy which stays in the community after the work is done. So on the one hand, the community gets the new hospital or the college or the bridge, which remains in the com-

munity—it's part of the infrastructure—and on the other hand, the project helped create a new batch of skilled tradespeople, who are now, under the right conditions, where jobs are there, ready, willing and able to work on future projects in their community. They've been trained as apprentices. They're there. The work is there. They can take it. That's the living legacy.

Again, I look forward to learning more from the construction industry, especially the union leadership, on how they see this unfolding across the province.

I note in the act that the ministry must consult with relevant stakeholders before a regulation is adopted. That's, again, a good thing—consultation with relevant stakeholders.

I mentioned I was at the ROMA-OGRA conference yesterday, and we talked to a number of delegations. When it comes to infrastructure, they're most certainly interested in speaking to this government about the infrastructure around broadband, about opening up the World Wide Web, if you will, with high-speed Internet into rural areas in this province.

When you talk to the farmers in this province, they're mostly interested in talking to the government about infrastructure projects surrounding the extension and expansion of the natural gas pipelines across Ontario, so they can get natural gas going out to their farms so they can lower their hydro costs and become more proficient and efficient in their farming operations—major infrastructure projects that they'd like to be dealing with, and they probably will be speaking to the government on this bill when they have the opportunity.

Speaker, shortly after the bill was introduced, I met with a representative from the construction association in the greater Sudbury area. He and others in northern Ontario want nothing to do with the government's new P3 model. They scrape out a living with more traditional methods up north. There are hundreds of construction companies in the north, but not on the same scale as those in the Toronto area, and certainly not in the same pool as their multinational, transglobal consortia that bid with ease on the P3s.

If the minister cares about the north, if he cares about jobs and cares about future employment levels, he will keep the construction bids in northern Ontario in small, bite-sized pieces. That's what they tell me. They've asked me to ask the government to do the northern work in phases. Now, you might do it at \$100 million and maybe even \$200 million, but, that way, the companies in the north can afford to bid on the work and keep their employees on the job.

They told me about one example during my northern tour as infrastructure critic, and that was when the government tendered out the construction of 10 OPP stations. Instead of doing it one station at a time, they put them in a bundle and put them up for tender. The company that won the bid, in this case, was from Toronto. I'm not saying the process wasn't fair by any means—don't get me wrong on that—but the Toronto company brought up most of the workers with them. I can

understand that. That may have been good for a few motels and restaurants in the north, but it didn't help the labourers and skilled tradespeople in the north when construction of those 10 OPP stations went on. They were pretty well shut out of it.

Another point that was raised was the need for more input from the contractors on the board of Infrastructure Ontario. I know you need your lawyers, your bankers and all that, but, Minister, it would help if there were more people on the board with some real, hands-on construction experience—small, medium and large contractors all bring different and valuable experience and insight. For example, just in one region, there are more than 50 contractors in the greater Sudbury area employing between 10,000 to 15,000 people, depending on the season.

In summary, we in the NDP look forward to working with the minister on Bill 141, Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity, but at this point, we say that our support is cautious in nature at this time. We feel Bill 141 could be improved. There is a decent foundation to the bill, but we feel the government should take into account the views expressed by the stakeholders. The construction associations certainly would like to see more meat on the bones, so to speak, and we in the NDP take our role very seriously. We're working in a minority government situation, understanding that the three parties need to cooperate on such matters. We respect the legislative process, and we respect the views of our colleagues on all sides of the House. That's why we look forward to this bill advancing through the legislative process. Again, what a privilege to be afforded time to speak on the bill today in this House, and especially on the day after our jobs champion, Wayne Gates, from Niagara Falls, was introduced to the House.

**1620**

Speaker, when I was doing some research on this, I went on the Internet and found a blog. It's called [rabble.ca](http://rabble.ca). We're talking about P3s, Speaker.

"P3s are big business:"—according to this site—"Canadian governments closed deals on a reported \$7 billion in P3 contracts in both 2010 and 2011. This was the highest in the world in 2010 and second only to France in 2011.... We're well above the US, Australia and even the UK, which had been a world leader before their PFI program imploded...."

"While Canada may be one of the leaders in the market for P3s, we're far from a leader when it comes to transparency, assessment and accounting for P3s." According to this site, "P3s are already a murky business when it comes to financial transparency—and we're close to the bottom of that pool. The value-for-money assessments used to justify P3s in Canada are simply not credible for a number of reasons," according to this site.

"Early P3s in Canada were often used by governments mainly to shift their debt off-book...."

"All the Canadian P3s I've seen in the past decade or so" according to the author, Toby Sanger, "have been justified on the basis that they transfer large amounts of

risk to the private sector." But "every single P3 project was justified on the basis of value-for-money assessments that claimed P3s transferred large amounts of risk from the public to the private sector.

"The average amount of risk calculated for these projects was almost half"—about 49%—"the base project costs. For some projects, the value of the 'risk' calculated amounted to over 80% of the base project cost, averaged over \$100 million for each of the 28 projects and over \$3 billion in total. That's a lot of money, no matter how you count it. Just to be clear: Not one of these P3s would be justified on the basis of the central value-for-money assessments without this assumption that large amounts of risk were transferred to the private sector."

"But how is this risk calculated? They don't say." The government doesn't say. "The value-for-money risk assessment templates Infrastructure Ontario provides are frankly" according to this author, "embarrassing from a public policy perspective, especially for decisions that have involved billions of dollars of the public's money. There's no evidence provided for any of the numbers proposed in their risk matrix—and other provinces are no better. The value-for-money assessments released for each P3 project are superficial window dressing that provide none of the details necessary for an independent assessment. And in the instances where auditors have reviewed the actual finances of P3s, they've generally always found that the project would have cost less if it were publicly financed and not run as a P3. The way risk is calculated for specific P3s may be more sophisticated and complicated but there's very little transparency: They hold risk workshops where people apparently come up with numbers adding up to tens and hundreds of millions of dollars, but nothing is revealed about the specifics."

The article says that "the real risk the private sector assumes through a P3 is limited by the net amount of unsecured money they have put into the project. The amount is represented by the equity they provide and any net cash they have committed, less funds received. The initial equity share of the cost of P3s is usually no more than 10% to 15% and sometimes as low as 8% or less. Since P3s are invariably set up as 'special purpose vehicles' ... the big companies behind them can simply walk away if they aren't making" enough money or "enough profit or if things go wrong, thanks to limited liability laws for corporations. The maximum they lose is any equity and any net cash they've put in, less what they've been paid. And a number of P3 companies have abandoned the projects or used the threat of doing so to get more money out of the government.

"Government always bears the ultimate risk because it's ultimately responsible for delivering the service. This is a fact that seems to be ignored in these P3 risk assessments. The government can then end up being responsible for paying off the bond holders, whose money is secured through the asset and project agreements. As we saw with the Ontario gas plants scandal that led to former Premier McGuinty's resignation, the cost of paying off the bond holders (in that case, hedge funds based in the



US and Cayman Islands) can amount to many times the actual cost of the project. And as that example shows, P3s often magnify the risk for the public sector, instead of reducing and transferring it.”

Speaker, there’s a lot left unsaid in the bill that was introduced. In many ways, it’s the bare bones; it’s an empty shell without having all the content and context that needs to be provided, and we hope it will be provided at some point. At this point, I believe, on our side of the House, we’re willing to see where it goes. We will proceed with caution as the bill makes its progress through the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Comments and questions?

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** I want to thank the member from Windsor–Tecumseh for his comments, and I want to thank him for his cautious support, because I should hate to have reckless support from anybody for such a thoughtful bill. Cautious support is most welcome, and we thank him for that.

Speaker, at its most basic, this bill is about long-term planning. It’s something that this government is already doing, and what this proposed legislation does is just formalizing it.

As many of you may know, one of the criteria that the Ministry of Infrastructure now has, before it approves any funding to any municipality, is that the municipality must have an asset-management plan. So what we are asking municipalities to do, the province is saying we’re going to do ourselves as well; that is, we’re going to plan for the long term—and I cannot imagine that there is much that can be criticized for the idea.

I did hear the member from Windsor–Tecumseh speak at length about the public-private partnership, although I’m not entirely sure how that fits into the idea of long-term planning in general. There are pros and cons for the PPP model, but I think that takes away from the real intent of what this bill is, which is about ensuring that any money that is spent on infrastructure is spent on infrastructure that is planned at least for the next 10 years. My favourite example: It’s a waste of taxpayer money if you first fix the roads and then you tear them up because you realize you have to fix the water pipes under them. If you have a plan, you know that in two years the pipes have to be replaced, so can we wait and resurface the road at the same time? That’s the sort of thing we are talking about, but on a more sophisticated and comprehensive level.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Laurie Scott):** The member from Chatham–Kent–Essex has two minutes.

1630

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** It’s an honour, again, to talk with regard to Bill 141, in reference to my colleague from Windsor–Tecumseh. This is Bill 141, An Act to enact the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act. As a caucus, we’ve reviewed this. We would like to support it, but again, it’s subject to what I would call caucus discussion. We need some more information on it.

We do support some of the principles in this particular bill. For example, the need for long-term planning is a

definite for infrastructure. Infrastructure should also be prioritized based on a specific list of criteria. I will actually be addressing in greater length this afternoon, if time permits, my further thoughts on this Bill 141 as well. Also, we support in principle the fact that—the current state of government-owned infrastructure assets and that the government should, in fact, publish a 10-year plan that sets out anticipated infrastructure needs.

To me, it’s all about planning. If you don’t plan ahead, then you’re going to find yourself all of a sudden at a point of, “Where’s the money going to come from? What has to happen? What are we going to do?” One of the things that I’m very concerned about is the fact that this legislation actually fails to mandate any specific measures that would, in fact, enable practical implementation of what we call the proposed principles. So we do have some concerns about this as well.

As we proceed further in debate with this particular bill, I think we need to proceed with caution as we continue to review this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Laurie Scott):** The member from London West.

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I want to thank the member for Windsor–Tecumseh for his detailed presentation and some of the insights he brought to the debate today based on his experience in Windsor with the Herb Grey Parkway. When we are looking at issues like this that are so critical to the future of our province and the livelihood of the people who live in our province, having a reference point that is based in some real experience with infrastructure projects is really helpful.

Some of the issues he raised are quite alarming. He talked about the lack of protection for small business people in his community who were involved in the construction of that Herb Grey Parkway. I can’t imagine what it would mean to a small building supply company, a crane company, to have \$100,000 owed to them by the government after they’ve already performed the work, after they’ve already hired the staff to do the work. What are the implications for the business?

I think that, ultimately, what the member reinforced in his comments was about the need to uphold the principle of fair treatment by government. When government embarks on infrastructure projects, there have to be fundamental principles that the government adheres to and fundamentally fair ways of dealing with the people who are involved in the project.

Some of the other things he mentioned were also of concern, and I will talk more about that later.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Laurie Scott):** The member for Oakville.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It’s a pleasure to join the debate this afternoon following the remarks of the member for Windsor–Tecumseh, whose remarks I listened to quite intently. I thought they were well thought out. It’s hard to speak for that length of time and remain on topic, and I think that for the most part he did. He had some very constructive remarks and some criticisms that may be fair or may not be fair but certainly formed a good part of the debate.

Prior to serving as an MPP, I spent 18 years on regional council. I served under a Liberal government, under a Conservative government and under the Bob Rae government with the New Democrats. During that period of time, obviously, our population in the GTA and around the province was growing quite significantly. To be honest with you—and I think this was reflected by a number of people on local councils around the province, a number of mayors and regional chairs—I don't think the planning we did was the best planning we could have done. That was probably due to a number of factors, but certainly it seemed to me that it was a lot of very short-term planning, and a lot of it was sort of “flavour of the month” planning.

I think what's being proposed by Bill 141, the underlying concept of this bill, should meet with the approval of all three parties in this House. I think when you look at the five key components of the bill, it's long-term planning. I can't imagine anybody could argue with that. The principles that are being espoused by the bill ask that those people who are making the decisions consider key principles such as new technology, protecting the environment and others; that projects are prioritized; and that we promote design excellence in public works. Some of the architecture we're seeing today is probably not as good as it could be and, of course, we know the importance of skilled training. If we can include that in our own infrastructure programs, I think that is something that serves us all positively.

I would hope all members would support this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Laurie Scott):** The member from Windsor–Tecumseh has two minutes to wrap up.

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Thank you, Speaker, and may I add that you look very good in that chair this afternoon.

Thank you to the members from Mississauga East–Cooksville, Chatham–Kent–Essex, London West and Oakville. Thank you for letting me know that my cautious support was not a reckless support, and I would like to think that any support for your government at this time would be appreciated.

I will add, when you talked about digging up the roads—and that's part of the P3 problem, if you will—we've seen in our municipalities, where we've paved the roads and then the utilities people come along, dig it up and fix the sewer or whatever. What we're finding now on the Herb Gray Parkway is that the P3 partnership has gone ahead and done work on the municipal drainage system along the parkway without getting prior approval, without having that work get the stamp of approval from the municipal engineers and from the conservation authority and any other number of people.

So there is interference with a well-thought-out drainage scheme, that is now being interfered with without approval, without the people that had the original plans and the scheme put in place for flood prevention; the work has just gone ahead. As an afterthought, they say, “Oh, maybe we should have gotten approval first.” Well, hello, maybe you should have.

That is why it is necessary, if you're dealing with a P3 project, to involve the municipalities; always think of the municipal work, if you're doing work in a municipality. But thank you for raising that issue.

Speaker, again, thank you for the time accorded to me this afternoon to speak on this matter.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Further debate? The member from Chatham–Kent–Essex.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I might add, as well, that it's nice to see you in the Speaker's chair this afternoon.

It's my pleasure to rise this afternoon and to, in fact, debate Bill 141, An Act to enact the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act. This bill, as a matter of fact, deals with an issue that impacts every single Ontarian on a daily basis, but it's often overlooked. Bill 141 seeks to put in place the requirement that ministers create and update long-term infrastructure plans, grounding their planning in evidence-based policy.

During the minister's opening remarks, he stated that the objectives of this bill are to support job creation and training opportunities, economic growth and protection of the environment, and to incorporate design excellence into infrastructure planning. These are objectives that the official opposition supports wholeheartedly.

But our political system often leads to a lack of long-term thinking as parties are more focused on, perhaps, re-election than they are with effective public policy. There are plenty of examples of governments ignoring what is needed in the future to save their skins today.

For its part, Bill 141 looks to take some of the partisanship out of infrastructure policy and planning. The people in our ridings don't care about political games and partisanship. No, they don't. They care about things like the condition of their drinking water systems, the conditions of their highways and reliable waste water management.

**1640**

Over the past few months, throughout the GTA, streets and homes flooded as sewers backed up. I might add, Speaker, it wasn't just in the GTA. But why did this happen? Because the critically important infrastructure was ignored and allowed to fall into disrepair. While the storms that hit this province were, perhaps, once-in-a-generation events, that is exactly what long-term planning should take into account well before disaster strikes.

Madam Speaker, infrastructure planning and investment is a subject that has gained a lot of attention in my great riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex. Last year, it was announced that the municipality of Chatham-Kent is facing—read my lips—a \$19-million infrastructure deficit. In Chatham-Kent alone, there are over 828 bridges that are three metres or more in width. Additionally, there are over 20,000 culverts in the municipality of Chatham-Kent. Needless to say, there is plenty of infrastructure in my riding that requires a lot of expensive maintenance. I might add that Chatham-Kent is having a tough time keeping up. “Why?” you might ask. I'm glad you asked that question. It's perhaps because there has

been a lack of a manufacturing tax base, resulting in a lack of jobs, all of which pay taxes to help pay for infrastructure.

One way to help with this provincially would be to change how we give out gas tax revenue. There's a novel idea. Currently, gas tax revenue is only distributed to municipalities with public transportation systems, even though everybody pays for it. As Ontario's largest rural municipality with the largest number of bridges, Chatham-Kent's infrastructure costs are much more significant than its transit costs. For less-populated municipalities, highways and bridges are the public transportation, and it's only fair—only fair—that they receive their share of revenues from the gas tax to maintain them.

My colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke—that's a mouthful—introduced a private member's bill that sought to fix this problem. His bill seeks to ensure that gas tax revenue is shared with townships for roads and bridges instead of designing it solely for public transportation systems.

Now, if we're talking about the need for a long-term infrastructure plan, we should also mention the need of municipalities to have stable, predictable funding. This is a way to get more funding for the Chatham-Kent municipality to build and maintain the things that we need today. Interestingly enough, this afternoon, I was at the ROMA-Good Roads, down at the Royal York, meeting with administration folk and councillors from the municipality of Chatham-Kent. Even though we were discussing a different issue regarding the Ministry of Natural Resources, we did, in fact, have a sidebar discussion regarding infrastructure and the problems that are being faced within the municipality of Chatham-Kent today.

Back home, the folks at the municipality of Chatham-Kent made the effort to take stock of their infrastructure, and they realized that the area is in a state of disrepair. As alarming as it is to know that you have a \$19-million infrastructure deficit, it's much more concerning to be unaware of this deficit. It was sobering news, and the municipality is now doing its best to handle that problem.

This points also to the critical importance of knowing the existing infrastructure inventory and its state of repair or disrepair here in the province of Ontario. This is something that was stated by the minister and our critic, and it's the kind of thinking that we don't often see in this Legislature.

Specifically, the bill states, "Each long-term infrastructure plan shall include the following information:

"1. A description of the state, as of the date or during the period specified in the plan, of the infrastructure wholly or partly owned by the government, including,

"(i) an inventory of the infrastructure,

"(ii) a valuation of the infrastructure,

"(iii) the age of infrastructure assets, and

"(iv) the condition of infrastructure assets."

Let me just summarize very quickly. It looks at the inventory, the valuation, the age and the condition of all the infrastructure assets. By looking at infrastructure with

a focus based in reality, we set aside partisan gains and ensure that Ontarians will receive the services that they need and deserve.

Unfortunately, we have seen plenty of partisanship when it comes to infrastructure in Ontario. In recent weeks, the minister has, in fact, taken it upon himself to attack the federal government on television and on Twitter in an attempt to pre-emptively shift any blame away from the provincial government. You have to wonder what happened to the Premier's promise to govern with civility. Perhaps this promise doesn't extend to her ministers.

Madam Speaker, while the minister frequently states that Ontario is, in fact, investing in infrastructure, spending alone is a very poor metric of results. Tangible results are what matters, not how many dollars have been spent on a given project. If the amount of money spent on a project is all that matters to the minister, then eHealth, Ornge and the gas plant scandals would be resounding successes. Billions of dollars were spent on these initiatives. Do we have a world-leading electronic health registry that Ontarians can be proud of? No. Do we have a provincial air ambulance service that we can count on when we need it most? No. Are Ontario families receiving a break on their home hydro bills after this government spent billions of taxpayer dollars on cancelled plants in Oakville and Mississauga? My guess is no. This is what happens when you lack a long-term plan and simply throw money at problems.

What we've been seeing during the Liberals' reign in office is a series of knee-jerk reactions, time and time again, in an attempt to hold on to power. We've seen it each time the Liberal Party is in danger of losing a seat. This has been painfully obvious with the large number of by-elections that we've gone through since the 2011 general election.

Niagara Falls was a riding that was completely ignored by the governing Liberals. Kim Craitor, the former member for Niagara Falls, often fought his own government, trying to get funding for projects in his riding. Sadly, he was ignored, and it took a by-election to—

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Laurie Scott):** A point of order.

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** It's not clear to me how what the member is speaking about is in any way related to the bill that we are discussing. My understanding is that under the standing orders, it's required that we speak to the bill. It's not clear to me at all that the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex has spoken to the bill at all so far. I would ask that you ask him to stick to the topic at hand.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Laurie Scott):** I thank the member from Mississauga East-Cooksville for her comments, and I ask the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex to please—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**Interjection:** Infrastructure—just say it.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Apparently, the infrastructure—infrastructure with an R.

Niagara Falls was a riding—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** How many Rs are in Oakville?

Niagara Falls was, in fact, a riding that was completely ignored by the governing Liberals. Kim Craiton, the former member from Niagara Falls, often fought his own government, trying to get funding for infrastructure projects in his riding. Sadly, he was ignored, and it took a by-election to force the Liberals to think about these projects. Suddenly, funding the hospital is a priority, and there's money for the racetrack after all, so they say. But while it makes for good campaign literature, this kind of approach the government has been employing for the last decade does not make for effective infrastructure management.

But back to the bill.

1650

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** That would be nice.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you. In section 6, Bill 141 calls on the government to use a specified set of criteria when evaluating and prioritizing proposed projects for the construction of infrastructure assets. This bill does not mention throwing everything out the window if there's ever a by-election in a riding that is vulnerable to the government.

Session after session, year after year, many Liberal ministers have, in fact, stood up in this Legislature and boldly stated that it is now time for long-term plans. The party opposite has been in power for over a decade now. Why is it that they're still only proposing coming up with a long-term plan? They've had over 10 years, Madam Speaker, to get it done. But at the end of the day, what do we have to show for it? Well, here we are with a piece of legislation that tells us something that every party in this House agrees with: Infrastructure planning is important, and we should develop a 10-year plan. We all agree to that.

After all that time in office, the Liberal government puts forward a bill that asks Ontarians to wait three more years to put together a plan. How many years does it take for the Liberal government to put a plan together? That's not a riddle. But I'll tell you something: The answer is always a couple of years more.

My riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex doesn't have a few more years to wait, Madam Speaker. We have lost over 1,000 jobs in my riding in the last few months alone, and infrastructure is crumbling just like a cookie. Immediate action is needed. What we need is a government that will make tough decisions and establish a plan as soon as possible, instead of perpetually kicking the can further down the road.

So let me say again that I support the initiatives that are present in this bill. While we may disagree on exactly how we should go about paying for it, every member in this Legislature understands and values the importance of infrastructure.

Madam Speaker, tough decisions are being forced on municipalities as they desperately look for ways to address serious infrastructure needs with limited funds. In tough times, prioritization based on severity must be made, something this government has failed to address with any real moxie.

On paper, this bill says all the right things. But if you look into the context of when this bill is being brought forward, over 10 years after the Liberals formed government, Ontarians sit there scratching their heads and wondering just how much more time they need to develop a plan. Perhaps I should take you back to the riddle again: How many years does it take a Liberal to develop a plan?

**Mr. Todd Smith:** How many?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** They always say just two more. Just two more.

We've all seen what happens when you do not develop and stick to a long-term plan. The record of this Liberal government demonstrates just what can go wrong when you don't manage and plan properly. Hard-earned tax dollars are spent with little to no oversight and even less results. So for the sake of Ontarians, I hope that Bill 141 demonstrates a change in the way this province is governed. We simply cannot continue to go down the same path over and over and over again.

One more thing I might add, again: How many years does it take the Liberals to develop a plan? They'll tell us just two more.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Just a few more.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Just a few more.

Madam Speaker, I know that my time is not up, but for the sake of expediency, I want to thank the members for listening attentively, and I hope that—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Do you just want a few minutes? Just a few more minutes?

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Have you got any more riddles?

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** No, but I will tell you about the land of milk and honey. Did you know that, with this Liberal government, that milk turned sour, and the honey turned hard?

Madam Speaker, without any further ado, I want to thank you again for the opportunity of addressing this wonderful Legislature and, again, addressing Bill 141, An Act to enact the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act.

I find it a little bit interesting. They do talk about a number of different things in here, like long-term planning and how important that is. They also talk about having guiding principles. Well now, that is really something that we need to take a look at. But you know what? What would that include? Well, perhaps demographic and economic trends, and fiscal plans, no less, or how about advancing the use of new technologies and practices, and supporting innovation partnerships between government and industry? Now that's innovative.

Or how about protecting the environment and considering the impact of severe weather on infrastructure?

We do know for a fact, Madam Speaker, that this past winter has been an extremely harsh winter. All you have to do is drive around Toronto, or perhaps even in your own ridings, and take a look at the number of potholes that have been created and whatnot.

That's going to mean more paving of streets. You've got broken water mains. You have all kinds of issues and flooding, even in the Chatham–Kent–Essex riding. We have a beautiful provincial park called Rondeau Provincial Park, and that particular park was hard hit because the buildup of the ice caused movement that basically destroyed the beautiful dock there, which is probably going to cost around \$1 million to repair, which is really, really unfortunate.

I also talked about project prioritization. I think that that's obviously extremely critical, especially when municipalities have limited funds, and they're looking at, "What do we do? We're not getting the help that we need from this provincial government."

Having said that, I think that we need to look at such things as the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. What about transportation plans under the Metro-linx Act? Or how about the Lake Simcoe Protection Act and municipal water sustainability plans under the Water Opportunities Act?

I think that there are also other elements that need to be considered when prioritizing plans, which would include project proposals that would, in fact, demonstrate a full consideration of all related capital and life-cycle costs and a long-term return on investment; we call that ROI. Or how about maximized tax base growth and, lastly, stimulated productivity and economic competitiveness? One of the other areas that we need to look at is also promoting design excellence in public works. Of course, we talked earlier about skills training and apprenticeship.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank you again for the opportunity of presenting my thoughts and findings to this Legislature.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Comments and questions?

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I listened to the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex when he started speaking, and I was wondering how long it would take the Liberals to stand up and make a point of order so that he would actually speak to the content of the bill, because we were listening here, my colleagues and I. We were commenting, as well: "What's going on? He's not talking to the bill." So kudos to you for standing up and recognizing that 10 minutes into the 20-minute speech; that's great.

The last item that the member had touched on was the apprenticeship training piece in this bill, where the government does require that there are apprentices used in the construction of a building in this act here. It's going to speak a little bit to the fact that we need to keep our apprentices engaged and working so that they can continue their education and develop their skills in order to get certification.

It also speaks to the College of Trades. Now, this government kind of did a dismal job on promoting and

educating the public and making people aware of the College of Trades. Those who are affected by the College of Trades—we heard a lot of complaints. They didn't know what the College of Trades does, the structure—they weren't aware of that. They weren't aware of the fee.

**1700**

I'm hoping that this bill is going to promote apprentices working in the field; and then, of course, we're going to have the College of Trades, which is going to help with the apprenticeship issues. There have been some reviews on that. But I like the piece where there's an apprenticeship requirement, because we have to do more in order to make sure we promote that labour force. The College of Trades is there, and their purpose should be to promote trades and get the word out to make sure we get those apprenticeships certified.

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

**Mr. Bill Mauro:** I want to thank the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex for his comments on Bill 141.

Speaker, this really is an important piece of legislation. Long-term infrastructure planning can never be overstated in terms of its importance. I know that the ROMA-OGRA conference is under way this week here in Toronto—I was down there this morning on behalf of our Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. As is their wont and their like—and I used to be a municipal councillor; we all did it: We come down here looking for more. There's nothing wrong with that. But to suggest that perhaps they have not already been doing very well when it comes to infrastructure funding over the course of the last 10, going on 11, years under our Liberal government I would say is a bit disingenuous.

In my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan, through our investments in infrastructure, I could give you example after example of significant infrastructure projects that we've managed to move forward. In fact, in the first eight years or so, we spent approximately \$60 billion on infrastructure, and we've committed a further \$35 billion. When we were elected in 2003, we identified infrastructure spending as one of three deficits that existed in the province of Ontario at the time of our election. Money was not being spent on infrastructure in this province, in a variety of sectors—not just sewer and water, but sewage treatment plants, mass transit, and on and on it went. It was a very significant deficit.

We have now, as you may or may not know, created a permanent \$100-million infrastructure fund for small, northern and rural municipalities that is going to provide them with the certainty of money flowing on a regular basis. In my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan, Neebing, Connee, O'Connor, Gillies and Oliver Paipoonge have all benefited from our infrastructure investments over the course of the last 10 years. This fund will provide them with a guarantee on a go-forward basis that they will be receiving at least some money on an annual basis to help them with their infrastructure needs. We know they are great. We know the small municipalities have large

geographic areas to cover and small tax bases. That fund is one in a long line of things that we've done to help them.

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

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** I'm pleased to rise to comment on the debate that the Chatham–Kent–Essex member raised. I was very pleased that in his debate he talked about the ice storm and the infrastructure challenges that our municipal partners are now faced with.

In Dufferin–Caledon, we were hit pretty aggressively during the ice storm over the Christmas break. I remember it well because there were many, many families who were out for eight—some as long as 10—days. You can imagine the frustration when they called Hydro One and the response back was, “You'll be back up tomorrow at 11.” What happened is that the families within my communities said, “I can deal with one more day,” and of course, it stretched out, in some cases, to eight and 10 days.

Those were the individual challenges that happened as a result of the ice storm. The municipal challenges we're all very well aware of. There was so much damage, particularly in Caledon, with downed trees. The clearing and the infrastructure challenges that are going to occur and will continue to occur for months are still there, and they're still dealing with them. It's unfortunate that they are still waiting for some kind of feedback, some kind of response from the government as to what, if any, assistance will be offered. So I was pleased that my caucus colleague from Chatham–Kent–Essex was able to raise that in the debate about Bill 143. I hope that we are able to offer some assistance and feedback to our municipal partners soon, because it has been too long in coming.

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

**Ms. Peggy Sattler:** I'm pleased to stand and comment on the remarks from the member for Chatham–Kent–Essex. One of the things he touched on in his remarks concerns apprentices. This is something that was also mentioned by my colleague the member for London–Fanshawe when she was giving her input on his remarks.

Certainly, in our community, opportunities for apprentices to gain experience in the variety of trades that they need to become certified is critical, and it's especially critical for young people who are trying to make their way in the world and become a skilled tradesperson. We need to be able to provide more opportunities for these young people in our communities to gain employment, gain experience and to make a living for themselves and for their families. For that reason, I appreciate the provision of the legislation, Bill 141, that requires certain numbers of apprentices to be employed in the construction or maintenance of infrastructure projects.

I'm a little bit concerned about the lack of definition around what that means. How many apprentices can we expect to see employed, and how will that be enforced?

How will we be able to ensure that the government makes good on that commitment to employ apprentices?

Thank you very much for this opportunity to comment.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I want to thank the members from London–Fanshawe, from Thunder Bay–Atikokan, from Dufferin–Caledon, as well as the member from London West for their comments, their insightfulness and their concerns with regard to Bill 141.

Speaker, one of the members did talk specifically about skills training and apprenticeships, but they did fall short of saying that perhaps those ratios should be one-to-one, something that we fully support and feel that the ratio should be that way so that, again, it's not a punishment with regard to small businesses.

Again, I know one of their arguments might be, “Well, the ratios need to be 3 to 1 or 4 to 1 for safety reasons.” Well, we're not falling short on safety as well. That is also very paramount with each one of us in the PC caucus as well.

I want to thank the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan. He referenced sewer and water treatment and other infrastructure projects, but he also mentioned a \$100-million infrastructure project that has been undertaken up in—if I understood him correctly—rural northern Ontario, in his riding, and he went at great lengths and talked about that.

But then I thought afterwards, “Well, that's kind of interesting that all of that money, or a good portion of that money, is in fact going back into a partisan riding.” That money needs to be spread around, Speaker, not just in northern Ontario, but also throughout the rest of Ontario as well.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** That is, if I understood him correctly.

Also, the other thing that we had talked about was the importance of having infrastructure available, especially when we're hard hit by such things as the ice storm that the member from Dufferin–Caledon had spoken about as well.

So I think it's very important that we take a look at all aspects, and I look forward to moving this into committee, where amendments will be forthcoming.

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

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Essex.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Essex.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for your indulgence.

Thank you to my colleagues who are in the House who are paying considerable attention to this bill that has been proposed by the government. I have enjoyed listening to my colleagues add their thoughts and insight to the debate. I think it's a worthwhile discussion to have, considering that many of us visited the Ontario Good Roads Association and the Rural Ontario Municipal—the ROMA—

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** Rural Ontario Municipal Association.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** Rural Ontario Municipal Association. Thank you to my good friend, the member for Windsor–Tecumseh, who is a former municipal representative in the city of Windsor and is well versed on the needs of our municipalities when it comes to infrastructure.

1710

Madam Speaker, I can tell you that the entire discussion around infrastructure, particularly our needs in rural areas, is one that is near and dear to my heart. I come from the construction sector, the heavy sector. Specifically I spent, on and off, about 10 years working on the roads, mainly on the 401—a fulfilling career, one that taught me some valuable skills in terms of construction, taught me the ethics of hard work, the nature of construction and the gruelling demands that it puts on labourers, specifically; and also, the fact that our province's contractors do a pretty bang-up job and are proud of the products that they produce each and every day in the province. I, in turn, was proud to be a part of building our infrastructure hands-on. When I go under the overpasses on my way from Essex to Toronto, I see various projects that I worked on, and it fills me with a sense of accomplishment knowing that those dollars were spent building good, tangible products in our province. It also afforded me, as a young worker, a really good wage to be able to pay off my university education and buy my first home. The benefits and wages that were afforded to me as a union labourer were certainly far beyond what you would find in your normal, average, everyday home construction or basic construction sector. I guess that's the nature of heavy construction: Those skills are a little bit more enhanced and require, I guess, a higher level of knowledge. So I was proud to learn that and to be a part of that sector.

We all know, in this House, the importance of constant, continued oversight of our province's infrastructure needs. In fact, when we went through the 2008 recession—one caused, I would argue, by deregulation, privatization and globalization in the United States in the financial sector, not by any situation here in our jurisdiction in the province of Ontario, but solely on a system that was meant to bankrupt the middle class—I would say that we relied on investments in infrastructure to stimulate the economy as a primary driver. We all recognized it. You saw massive amounts of stimulus money go to various states and provinces to spur economic development and growth through infrastructure. Why is that? It's because we know as a province that when we spend a dollar on infrastructure, we get several other dollars in return. There's a multiplier effect. There's a triple net benefit. There are spinoff jobs. I think I've heard that a job in infrastructure spurs seven other jobs in those local communities. So we know that, at the end of the day, it's good value for money. It's Keynesian in its implementation and its thought because it actually works when you invest in your nation's infrastructure, in

those vital links that bring us all together, whether it be rail or road transportation or air—or even our knowledge infrastructure, being high-speed Internet and the kind of activity there that's required.

So we all know the importance. The concerns that I think are being raised or born of this bill are because this province has gone so far off track—no pun intended, Madam Speaker. The fact is that we used to do infrastructure in a certain way that understood the principles of that value-added component to issuing tenders, identifying local suppliers, prioritizing the needs of jurisdictions. Since that time, we have relied on what is the new baby, darling, of infrastructure procurement policy: the P3s, the public-private partnerships. It infuses an aspect of global tendering, I guess I would say, and an outsourcing of our province's infrastructure needs to multinational conglomerates that really don't have any skin in the game. We're seeing that as evidenced with the Herb Gray Parkway. My colleague from Windsor–Tecumseh so eloquently explained to members some of the fundamental failures in that project that we're already seeing, and it's not even completed yet. Thankfully, we have the diligent oversight of the member from Windsor–Tecumseh to catch those issues, to work with those who are providing the oversight in the MTO and to bring them to the light of the government to hopefully act on them.

We have seen that, but what if we didn't have that mechanism? At the very least, we would see corners being cut, we would see massive pressures on our smaller contractors and we would see a degradation of training standards and health and safety standards. These are things that are of concern to those in municipalities who want to see the value-added aspects of infrastructure projects but understand that we need to set the standard ourselves here in this province.

P3s eliminate that vital component, that component that returns that investment, that recycles that investment, that says that we identify a project, we identify a local contractor, we support that through an open bidding process, a transparent process, and ultimately we all benefit. Our communities benefit with enhanced infrastructure and our businesses benefit with conductivity and ease of transportation of their goods and services. Then productivity goes up and things get better.

What happens is that the multinationals that have really brokered many of these deals, not only in this province but across Canada and certainly across developed countries and in some national jurisdictions around the world, are removing, first of all, the aspect of profit. They will take it back to their home jurisdiction, and it doesn't get reused. It doesn't get applied in other areas of the province or in the jurisdiction where the infrastructure project is. That's an important component. That, in and of itself, makes these projects more expensive.

When we're talking to our constituents and speaking with them about the need to have multi-billion-dollar long-term frameworks for infrastructure spending and we're telling them that we need to spend billions of

dollars, I know that many of our friends in our communities—their eyes glaze over. How could we speak of these enormous types of costs? But when we tell them that the company that's going to come in could potentially not hire anyone in this jurisdiction, not hire any local contractors and the local workers' work isn't even guaranteed, then people start to have to question.

So I think this bill, the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, is born out of those concerns about the shift of this province from traditional methods of procurement to the P3 model of infrastructure. There are many points of evidence that you can see—many indications of where P3s have failed drastically and actually haven't shifted the burden of responsibility onto the proponent, as it is stated to be, but have actually had the province retain that—I'm losing my train of thought, Speaker—"responsibility" is the word I was looking for.

The responsibility ultimately, we know, lies on the province, and we're seeing that—back to the example of the Herb Gray Parkway, where local contractors, and we met with several of them a couple of weeks ago, are feeling as though the public dollars that are being used for the Herb Gray Parkway are in fact putting them out of business, because those public dollars, in essence, triggered the group that built the girders and has now backed away from any of its fiduciary responsibilities to those companies, or contractual responsibilities. There are no provisions within the P3 model to call them to question on that or to take that money back and force them to actually own up to their responsibilities. That's a massive failure that the minister has yet to acknowledge, has yet to take action on—despite his overtures of actually wanting to do that, he has not done anything. I think that abdication of responsibility is built into the P3 model.

**1720**

So you've got a province that has outsourced its procurement and management of vital infrastructure needs all across the province—yet it's interesting that we see a central focus on the infrastructure needs of the GTA, as if they give personal attention and care to the needs of the greater Toronto area. That leaves quite a bad taste in the mouths of the municipalities in areas that are outside of the GTA, like Windsor, like Niagara Falls, like anywhere else in the province. They feel as though we have a government that is the government of Toronto. We need a government of Ontario that is looking after the needs of the entire province when it comes to infrastructure and not outsourcing it to the P3 model.

It is your responsibility to provide the oversight, and yes, it may mean that you might need to hire new Ministry of Transportation officials or enhance the ability for Infrastructure Ontario to provide that oversight. It might mean that you have to do some more work.

Whoever is in the bureaucracy there and whoever is selling this government on the need to go full bore on the P3 model is selling you a bill of goods that I don't think will provide the value that you think it will—and it certainly hasn't. We haven't seen the track record of it.

My friend from Windsor–Tecumseh talked about bundling. That's another aspect of P3s, where it ultimately cuts out the ability of any local contractor to bid on projects that would be within their scope, and because of the bundling of the projects, requires the proponent to provide the financing of it, too. It certainly cuts out any community-based contractors, because they just don't have the hundreds of millions of dollars in available financing. They can't acquire that from their local credit union or their bank. They're just not that big. So they get shut out of that work that they'll have to drive past on the 401, whether it be a service centre or an OPP centre in their hometown, when they are fully capable of doing that.

Does it add value? Again, I submit and I argue that you take out that component of a renewable sort of resource. That's how it should be looked at, as far as I'm concerned, because when you know your local contractors are doing well, then you know that you have a healthy economic base and you know that your infrastructure needs are being met.

Speaker, there are other considerations that come into play when we're talking about our provincial infrastructure needs, ones that I don't think this bill necessarily addresses. I'm not even sure if this bill necessarily addresses too much in the way of actual, specific regulatory changes. It seems like a broad-scope type of initial conversation to start to bring parties in—and I guess that's a welcome piece of legislation that, as I'm hearing, we'll all endorse. But I want to tell you that when it comes to infrastructure in the province and our desire to see local contractors and local workers provide and build that infrastructure and be proud of it and reap the benefits of government procurement—there's the comprehensive economic trading agreement. It's called CETA. It has been called the Canada-European trading agreement; actually, it's not. It's the comprehensive economic trading agreement with the European Union, which supposedly, purportedly, cuts out the ability of municipalities to even require local content. So this is being brokered, we think—because we don't know what the terms of the CETA agreement are. We think that they are selling off the ability of municipalities to hire, should they choose, a local contractor.

I'm sorry to bring the realm of free trade and globalization into the debate, but it is directly tied to infrastructure procurement. I wish it wasn't the fact. I wish it wasn't a part of it because it doesn't make economic sense, when, again—back to the point that there is a benefit to identifying and maintaining local product, local procurement and local content, because that money recycles. We've seen time and time again where this government has failed in its ability to value that component. We've seen them launch into private contracts, abdicate, again, their responsibility to provide the oversight and just leave it to the free market and private industry to manage, maintain and fulfill when, in fact, many times those deals go sour.

Again, that responsibility and risk gets put right back onto the taxpayer. As evidence, we have the Oakville and



Mississauga gas plants; as evidence, we have Ornge air ambulance—again, although non-profit-based, this was an abdication of responsibility to a private operator, who then spun it off into private enterprises. I would say that eHealth is another aspect of a P3.

So we have a common denominator here in terms of the failures of government procurement when we're either building or providing services. Why not have the guts, why not have the fortitude to actually do it ourselves? Governments should be able to be proud of their ability to provide good services and good value for money to their constituents.

I guess we've seen that that message still hasn't gotten through, or maybe it has. Maybe this is the beginning of that conversation. I hope that it is. I certainly look forward to inviting my good friends who are subcontractors on the Herb Gray Parkway to come and testify, should this bill actually reach committee, and to talk about their experiences under P3s and their experiences being shut out of projects that have been bundled, because it hasn't been good.

In fact, if you look at the article that was in the Windsor Star about my friend Charlie Hotham, who owns Hotham Building Supplies, they asked him what he thought overall of the P3 model in terms of construction, and he said that it isn't good, it doesn't work, and it's certainly not working for those subcontractors in Windsor. It's not working for the various municipalities that want to support their small local contractors.

But I think that this bill could be the impetus to us having a broader discussion. I'm hopeful that the minister actually is sincere in his desire to fix the issues that have been brought about by various construction associations when it comes to the bundling, because they are the ones who are dealing with these 800-page contracts, they are the ones who are dealing with holdbacks on their work that seem to carry no reason whatsoever, and they are the ones who are ultimately saying that this is just not a model that works for the future of the province. Of course, they want to be partners in infrastructure and in our infrastructure planning.

I do see that there are some thresholds that the government is considering: that the province would give priority to infrastructure projects that align with provincial plans. I think that that's a good step, of course, but that's identifying that there is a plan. We should go ahead and do it, but through which method: Through a method that has a proven track record of failure, cost overruns and, again, eliminates that net benefit, or through what we know has worked, a historic type of plan that continues to understand the underlying values of provincial procurement and supporting our domestic content?

Madam Speaker, I thank you very much. I can't believe the time is gone already. I welcome comments from my colleagues.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Comments and questions?

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you very much, Speaker, for recognizing me to speak on this very important bill

dealing with infrastructure and what it really means for jobs and prosperity in all our respective communities.

I want to thank the member from Essex for talking about it. I think that at some point he was trying to make a reference that there somehow has not been that much investment in infrastructure outside the greater Toronto area. I just want to bring my perspective from Ottawa and tell him that he's not correct in that assertion, because if you look at the investments that our government has made in infrastructure, just in Ottawa alone, it's incredible.

**1730**

Right now we're building a state-of-the-art light rail system in Ottawa; most of it, actually, is getting built in my community of Ottawa Centre with a tunnel going through downtown, so we'll have our first subway being built. The provincial government is investing \$600 million in that project. The federal government is putting in the same amount of money. So we are a one-third partner in that incredible project.

Also, we were the first to the table, investing about \$33 million for the Ottawa River action plan to stop the flow of raw sewage from our city into the Ottawa River. Again, that investment has resulted in the raw sewage in the Ottawa River declining by 40%, and we're working hard towards the second phase of that project.

Then, not to mention, occurring at every single university and college and hospital in Ottawa—those great public institutions have doubled in size over the last 10 years, making sure that citizens of Ottawa continue to get the best public service possible. We are continuing with those investments because we know that they not only create jobs but ensure that the residents of Ottawa get good education and good health care.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Further comments? The member from London Essex. No, Middlesex—

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Elgin–Middlesex–London. Thanks very much, Speaker. I'd have to say that the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek is the only Speaker in the House that gets my riding right, so don't feel bad. But I applaud the Deputy Speaker—

**Mr. Shafiq Qadri:** Alas, poor Yurek! I knew him well.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Poor Yurek; you're not kidding.

I just want to make a few comments regarding this debate that's going on that the member from Essex has brought up. He brought a good point forward—worried about being able to get local companies to get local jobs in our infrastructure projects. I'd like to expand that further: opening up the tendering for all government work, whether they are union or non-unionized companies, to have everyone have fair competition on jobs.

We had a courthouse being rebuilt in our riding, and, unfortunately, there were numerous companies in my riding that weren't allowed to bid on the project because they're not unionized. I thought, "That's a shame," because maybe they could have brought in a little competition and a lower price. A union company may have still

got the price at the end of the day; however, there wasn't the competition allowed for that job. I was quite disappointed on that fact.

The other point you bring up about planning and infrastructure: I'd hope you'd agree with us that the government should expand the provincial gas tax program to include all municipalities, especially rural Ontario, who may not be able to afford or need a transit system but do need that money to build their roads and bridges. Unfortunately, the government is shutting them out of a share of the gas tax.

Everybody in this province pays the gas tax when they fill up their car or truck or what have you. However, this government inhibits that money coming back to the ridings of people who would desperately need the gas tax funding, considering this government has been cutting the OMPF funding for many years now. There's no predictable funding model for infrastructure for our rural municipalities. I hope you take our advice and maybe expand the provincial gas tax and support us in this Legislature.

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

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** I stepped out shortly, so I'm back, and I've listened to many members debate the bill.

I touched earlier on the fact that apprenticeship is one of the areas that this bill addresses and that we should be using more apprentices when there's construction infrastructure. I hope that this bill is going to be able to get through debate in the House and go to committee, because it's long overdue that we have a direction and a plan for infrastructure. We've heard from several municipalities how their infrastructure is crumbling. Even the universities and colleges that I've visited sites on—they're about 50 years old, most of them, and their infrastructure is crumbling. Yet they're getting funding for new buildings, which is wonderful, but we need to make sure that we're looking after the infrastructure that we put in place if we're going to utilize that and not just let it sit there and deteriorate and crumble away.

Speaker, I do want to say that, back in 2009, when the College of Trades act was enacted, it took about—it just came into fruition, I think, in April 2013, so that was four years. I'm assuming the government did a lot of planning on that College of Trades act, but unfortunately, it didn't roll out that way. There was mass confusion. People were being pitted against each other. There's a lot of support for it; I've heard much support. I've also heard very much criticism from the Conservatives.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** We're criticizing it.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Yes, there we go. They're acknowledging that yes, they do. But overall, I think the concept of the College of Trades is a positive thing. We need to get employers engaged more in order to connect it—that's a little bit of a hint. I've read some research recently on how we need to make sure that employers are educated on the great programs and grants that are available to help apprentices to be hired in their field.

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

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** Madam.

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** Madam Speaker—yes, we don't want to make that mistake. It's a habit. We have more men in that chair than women, so we have to get more—

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Let's change that.

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** We should change that. Yes, I agree. Do we have unanimous consent to change that?

In any case, I'm pleased to add my voice to Bill 141. What I like about this bill is that it sets up a long-term view and it wants to create a framework for long-term planning. Why is that important? We know that infrastructure creates jobs, and if we can have this long-term view instead of a short-term view, I think everyone would benefit: Ontarians as residents of our province, but also the jobs that we want to create, especially now in this time of economic uncertainty that we're just exiting.

One of the key components that I like in the bill is the one that focuses on skills training and apprenticeships. The member from Essex was referring before to community benefits agreements that are in place in public procurement in other countries, in other places, that are targeted to recruit and train local youth in public sector projects. That's something that many members even on this side of the House have been advocating for. I have one example in my own riding. It's the Hammer Heads program. That's a skills and employment program that does great work within construction, really setting a career path for youth in underprivileged areas. I am a great advocate of that. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you. The member from Essex has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I thank my colleagues the Minister of Labour, the members for Elgin–Middlesex–London, London–Fanshawe and York South–Weston.

There's certainly room for this minority government to find consensus within the aspects of this bill. I think that when we're talking about apprenticeships—you know, it's interesting. I agree that we need to ensure that our apprenticeship regime is being utilized, and we're focusing on that, yet I think the bill calls for the minister to prescribe apprentices to be on these provincial infrastructure projects, whereas the College of Trades is purported to take the decision of apprenticeship ratios out of the hands of the minister. So there's a little bit of conflict there.

I like the fact that the decision around the ministry and apprentices is outside of the ministry and it's given to industry and to those who understand the needs of their labour demands.

There is some conflict there in my understanding of the implications of the bill, but there's no doubt that we need to be farsighted. We need to project well into the future in terms of our infrastructure needs and plan accordingly.

The minister speaks of cranes in the sky. That's almost like an old Russian proverb: Look at all the smokestacks and the smoke from our industry. Well, it doesn't necessarily mean that the system of all of that activity is actually a system that's built on a good foundation. If you've got cranes in the sky that are all under P3 models, then you're simply pushing that cost off well into the future for another generation to actually bear the burden of. It does eventually come up to catch you from behind there.

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

1740

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I will use my 20 minutes and finish off the day here today.

I rise to speak to Bill 141, An Act to enact the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2013. We have a bill here that the minister states will establish a mechanism to encourage “principled, evidence-based and strategic long-term infrastructure planning for the province of Ontario.” He indicated that underlying this legislation was the objective to support job creation and training opportunities, economic growth and protection of the environment, and to incorporate design excellence into infrastructure planning.

Let me take a couple of moments to discuss those five various components of the bill.

With respect to number 1, long-term planning:

“The Minister of Infrastructure would be required to table a 10-year plan in the Legislature. The first plan is to be tabled within three years of the legislation coming into force and subsequent plans tabled every five years.”

Number 2 is the guiding principles:

“The province and broader public sector organizations, such as universities, hospitals and municipalities, would consider key principles when determining infrastructure plans and investments, including the following:

—demographic and economic trends and fiscal plans;

—advancing the use of new technologies and practices and supporting innovative partnerships between government and industry;

—protecting the environment and considering the impacts of severe weather on infrastructure.”

Number 3, project prioritization:

“The province would consider giving priority to infrastructure proposals that align with provincial plans.” Here's where we might go off the rails a little, and I use that word quite literally. The examples that are in the document provided by the government on Bill 141 are transportation plans under the Metrolinx Act of 2006, the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan, municipal water sustainability plans under the Water Opportunities Act of 2010 and other things. I think I saw a Golden Horseshoe plan in there somewhere.

But what I didn't see is what concerns me here. There is no mention whatsoever of the north, no mention of northern Ontario. In fact, there is a provincial plan. It's called the northern growth plan. Sadly, I believe I

understand why it is not included in this infrastructure, for many other reasons, one being that when that growth plan came out, if you could imagine the surprise—I was the mayor of the city of North Bay at the time and was presented with the northern growth plan. The Ontario Northland Transportation Commission was not mentioned anywhere in the document. That's the agency, that's the commission, that's the body that has been there for 100 years that handles all rail, bus, marine and telecom for northern Ontario, and other divisions as well. This was our passenger rail, this was our freight rail, all of the transportation needs. It's how we grew. It's how northern Ontario was built. To see that that northern growth plan did not include Ontario Northland and to see that the northern growth plan was not mentioned in this Bill 141 kind of leads us to wonder what the plans are for the north. Of course, we now know there are no plans. Strip the railway; have a fire sale of the assets. When I see that, I have to say this government has continued to say one thing and do exactly the opposite. So I am very disappointed that the north is not considered.

There is no mention of the Ring of Fire—again, one of the greatest opportunities not just for northern Ontario, but for many organizations here in southern Ontario as well. There are many engineering firms who were working in the Ring of Fire until the companies pulled out. There's no consideration in this infrastructure plan for northern Ontario, the Ring of Fire and Ontario Northland.

Other elements that would be considered when prioritizing plans include project proposals that demonstrate a full consideration of related capital and life cycle costs, a long-term return on investment, maximized tax base growth, and stimulated productivity and economic competitiveness.

Number 4 talks about promoting design excellence in public works. We're going to talk about that in a minute, but basically, it says, “Architects and other professionals with design expertise and experience would be involved in certain provincially owned and funded infrastructure projects. Regulations would be required before this provision would come into effect.” When I finish number 5, I'm going to go back and talk about this particular mention.

Number 5 is skills training and apprenticeship: “The province would employ or engage apprentices in the construction or maintenance of certain provincial infrastructure projects. Regulations would be required before this would come into effect.”

If the minister really wanted to make an impact on jobs through infrastructure, with that last point, when they talked about bringing the trades in, he would include what our party has been asking for since day one: a 1 to 1 journeyman-to-apprentice ratio. It's in our leader Tim Hudak's Million Jobs Act, which will be voted on in two days. If you want a real jobs plan to bring jobs for apprentices, we hope that they'll adopt our plan, change the apprenticeship ratio to 1 to 1 and support Tim Hudak's million jobs plan.

Now, regardless, we support the principles, such as the need for long-term planning for infrastructure, that infrastructure investments should be prioritized based on a specific list of criteria, that we should know the current state of all government-owned infrastructure assets and that government should publish, at minimum, a 10-year plan setting out the anticipated infrastructure needs, with a strategy to meet those. Those are all admirable goals that one would hope you would be following—that we should have been following for the last 10 years, as well.

However, the legislation fails to mandate any specific measures that would enable the practical implementation of those proposed principles. Again, they talk about them; it's a lot of talk and no action. They've had 10 years to perform some of these three-year, five-year and 10-year studies and forecasts.

I will mention one other issue with this bill that I referred to earlier, and that's specifically section 7.(1), as it contains what I would consider a very significant omission, and something very telling. I wish I understood and could get to the bottom of why this is here. I'll read you the section of Bill 141. It says:

“Requirements respecting architects, others

“7.(1) The government shall require the following persons to be involved in the preparation of a design for the construction of every infrastructure asset described in subsection (2), unless it is not practicable”—that's what it says—“in the circumstances:

“1. An architect as defined in section 1 of the Architects Act.”

Now, Speaker, I appreciate that. As they said earlier—I think the comment earlier was good design and promoting design excellence in public works—admirable.

However, I'm very concerned that there is a specific role listed for architects, but it is silent on the role for professional engineers. After all, these are infrastructure jobs—infrastructure. I think that most people would presume that infrastructure jobs require the service of professional engineers. In fact, the Professional Engineers Act stipulates that any infrastructure project of 600 square metres or larger requires the services of a professional engineer.

This is a startling omission, quite frankly, on behalf of the minister with regard to Bill 141. They specifically talk about architects for infrastructure projects, but do not make mention of engineers. Now, either this Bill 141 is all about building bricks-and-mortar buildings that they can go to ribbon cuttings for—but it doesn't address engineers, which will be required to have sewer and water projects, various roads and bridge projects.

**1750**

They don't need architects for those. We don't need architectural design excellence for roads. We don't need them for sewer and water projects—perhaps not even for bridges—but I'll tell you what we do need, Speaker: engineers. There is no mention of engineers—a glaring omission. I hope it's only a typographical mistake, Speaker, but from what I've been led to understand, it's not. Architects were put in by design and engineers were

left out by design. I don't understand what the grand plan is if you're having infrastructure programs and you don't engage engineers.

When it comes to the important issue of infrastructure in this province, this is a policy that really should be beyond politics. When committing to an infrastructure project, assuming that it has been planned and prioritized properly, once the decision has been made to invest in that infrastructure project, it should be beyond political, and I hope that's what will happen.

I want to speak to one issue that the minister has raised in this bill, and that's the need for long-term planning for infrastructure. In his bill, the minister made reference to the importance of having an inventory of our infrastructure assets in the province. I agree. Again, as mayor, we worked hard, and we spent considerable dollars to locate every sewer line, every water line. We inventoried all of our buildings. You can't fix what you can't measure, so you need to know those things. In fact, the minister makes reference to the fact that infrastructure planning and investment should take into account, of course, applicable budgets or fiscal plans. But I want to talk about the issue of the inventory of our assets. We cannot make an intelligent decision and a responsible decision about which infrastructure projects should be prioritized if we don't know the existing infrastructure inventory and the state of repair or disrepair.

I'm a northern boy. Obviously, I like to talk about northern Ontario, and I am going to give you the perfect example of what I'm talking about. Again, I refer to Ontario Northland. We have a government who doesn't quite understand anything north of Steeles Avenue. They don't understand our valuable, 112-year-old Ontario Northland. It was painfully obvious when, in the budget of 2012 the finance minister said he would save \$265 million out of the budget by having a fire sale of Ontario Northland—when the documents that we obtained through the gas plant scandal hearings and subsequently called the Auditor General in based on those documents—the new Auditor General provided a report to this Legislature in December that indeed showed it would not save \$265 million but in fact cost over \$800 million to have this fire sale. That's a spread or, as we call it in business, a delta, of \$1 billion.

This is a government who talks about planning and understanding their infrastructure, Ontario Northland—rail, road, buses, marine, telecom, fibre; all kinds of infrastructure assets. They fail to understand the nature of one of their crown jewels. In fact, part of that \$1-billion mistake they were making is that they didn't even know of the six-year and 14-year severances that were on the books for these various employees. You would think that before you were making—I'll call the Ontario Northland fire sale an infrastructure decision. It was a decision to get rid of rail and freight and passenger lines and the marine division, telecom division and others. It was an infrastructure decision that they weren't even aware of, yet here we talk about making intelligent decisions on infrastructure projects.

This isn't the only infrastructure bungle that this government is guilty of, and I'm not sure if Bill 141 will address it or not because, as I said, in the colossal delays with respect to the Ring of Fire, I don't see any mention in the bill of the infrastructure. They make very specific references to things such as the Lake Simcoe Protection Act of 2008, Metrolinx—they're very specific in some of these—but there's certainly nothing about the Ring of Fire; there's certainly nothing about northern Ontario or Ontario Northland.

I can tell you, Speaker, again, it's this lack of understanding of the north. It's this lack of planning. They talk about infrastructure, but Speaker, I was in the Ring of Fire only two weeks ago for my fourth trip there, and I can tell you, this is an enormous opportunity that is awaiting decisions on infrastructure.

Cliffs resources had their plan. I visited the camp when they had 85 people. Two weeks ago when I visited the camp, it was six people. They're down to six people, and their job is to pack everything up and ship it home.

I also visited, in 2011, Noront resources camp. They had 125 people there. They had, on this last trip, again, only six people.

At least there's hope on the Noront site. What they want right now is infrastructure. They've got a proposal, what's called the east-west route, and it's to ship the nickel that they can pull out of the ground in a shaft—pull the nickel out, ship it to Pickle Lake by an existing winter road; build a winter road to Webeque and ship the nickel towards Pickle Lake by the existing winter road. It's an entirely feasible and plausible kick-start to the Ring of Fire. It's one of those easy wins we can do right now. We can put some scores on the board. But they can't get anywhere with this provincial government, which has dithered five years.

It's so sad to have seen so many hundreds of employees there and two weeks ago to see it dwindling down to only the dozen employees who were amongst these camps. It's very sad. Why it's sad is because two years ago, one of those companies spent over \$200 million on drill bits and drill rods. I have 12 manufacturers in my riding that make those drill bits and drill rods. Some \$200 million: It was unbelievable employment in our city only a couple of years ago. Last summer, I asked one of the companies, "How much are you spending drilling now?" and they said, "Zero." They went from \$200 million to zero. Why? He said, "Vic, why would I continue"—and I don't blame him for this, by the way—"to spend my shareholders' money delineating our ore body when there's no infrastructure existing to get my ore to market?"

As a consequence from \$200 million to zero, we saw companies close in the city of North Bay. We saw Sandvik close, leave and move to New Brunswick—42 people unemployed there. We saw the other two major drilling manufacturing and drill rod companies have

massive layoffs. We have very high unemployment in the city of North Bay today, amongst the highest in the north. Certainly, as you go farther north, it is considerably worse.

But the problem is we're sitting, looking. I flew over the Ring of Fire before I landed and we looked at all of this opportunity. It's sitting; it's sitting almost on the surface of the ground there. Knowing that those riches can't be tapped because there's—you know, the expression, "You can't get there from here." Well, you can't get that product out of the ground. It's really sad to know that that is there. It's a golden opportunity—in this case, a nickel and a chromite opportunity—that we're missing in northern Ontario because this government has dithered on the infrastructure plan. They just can't seem to kick it over the goalpost when it comes to northern Ontario. We saw that in their fire sale of Ontario Northland. We saw that in the Ring of Fire. We saw that when they shut down 10 tourist information centres, and nine of them were in non-Liberal-held northern ridings.

They don't understand our infrastructure in the north. They said in the tourist information centres in the northwest, "Oh, don't worry; you can use your mobile apps to get all the tourism info." It's obvious they've never been north of Steeles Avenue, because there are many beautiful wilderness places that are not spoiled by telecommunications, so that you can't have a mobile app. There's no broadband; it's beautiful and unspoiled. They don't understand infrastructure. They certainly don't understand infrastructure in northern Ontario.

Speaker, the solution that they seem to come up with all the time is tax and spend. Here in Toronto, their solution for infrastructure is to add 10 cents a litre in gas. I read a member's statement only a couple of hours ago—three hours ago—that talked against that, with all of the members from the north fighting hard to avoid that type of tax-and-spend infrastructure investment.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

#### VISITOR

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** The member for Essex.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** On a point of order: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for your indulgence. I simply wanted to welcome a guest to the members' west gallery: my cousin Chad Guerin from Oakville, who has come for his first time ever to Queen's Park. I'm happy to have him this evening to see a little bit of the proceedings. So I just want to welcome him to Queen's Park.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro):** Thank you.

It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

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Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

| Member and Party /<br>Député(e) et parti     | Constituency /<br>Circonscription                        | Other responsibilities /<br>Autres responsabilités  |
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| <b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b>                      | Wellington–Halton Hills                                  | First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée  |
| Bailey, Robert (PC)                          | Sarnia–Lambton   |   |
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| Barrett, Toby (PC)                           | Haldimand–Norfolk  |   |
| Bartolucci, Rick (LIB)                       | Sudbury  |   |
| Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)                  | Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough–Sud-Ouest            |   |
| Bisson, Gilles (NDP)                         | Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James                   | House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu  |
| <b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b> | St. Catharines   | Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement<br>Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement  |
| Campbell, Sarah (NDP)                        | Kenora–Rainy River                                       |   |
| Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)                    | Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre                      |   |
| <b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>     | Markham–Unionville                                       | Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport<br>Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015 |
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| Chudleigh, Ted (PC)                          | Halton   |   |
| Clark, Steve (PC)                            | Leeds–Grenville  | Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle  |
| Colle, Mike (LIB)                            | Eglinton–Lawrence  |   |
| <b>Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>   | Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est                         | Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration   |
| Crack, Grant (LIB)                           | Glengarry–Prescott–Russell                               |   |
| Damerla, Dipika (LIB)                        | Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville |   |
| Del Duca, Steven (LIB)                       | Vaughan  |   |
| Delaney, Bob (LIB)                           | Mississauga–Streetsville                                 |   |
| Dhillon, Vic (LIB)                           | Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest                           |   |
| Dickson, Joe (LIB)                           | Ajax–Pickering   |   |
| DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)                          | Parkdale–High Park                                       |   |
| <b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>      | Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre                  | Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités   |
| Dunlop, Garfield (PC)                        | Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord                               |   |
| Elliott, Christine (PC)                      | Whitby–Oshawa  | Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle   |
| Fedeli, Victor (PC)                          | Nipissing  |   |
| Fife, Catherine (NDP)                        | Kitchener–Waterloo                                       |   |
| Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)                    | Oakville   |   |
| Forster, Cindy (NDP)                         | Welland  | Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu  |
| Fraser, John (LIB)                           | Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud                                |   |
| Gates, Wayne (NDP)                           | Niagara Falls  |   |
| Gélinas, France (NDP)                        | Nickel Belt  |   |

| <b>Member and Party /<br/>Député(e) et parti</b> | <b>Constituency /<br/>Circonscription</b>                 | <b>Other responsibilities /<br/>Autres responsabilités</b>  |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>       | Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles           | Attorney General / Procureur général  |
| <b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>     | Thunder Bay–Superior North /<br>Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord | Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines   |
| Hardeman, Ernie (PC)                             | Oxford  |   |
| Harris, Michael (PC)                             | Kitchener–Conestoga                                       |   |
| Hatfield, Percy (NDP)                            | Windsor–Tecumseh  |   |
| Hillier, Randy (PC)                              | Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington                     |   |
| Holyday, Douglas C. (PC)                         | Etobicoke–Lakeshore                                       |   |
| Horwath, Andrea (NDP)                            | Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre                         | Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu<br>Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario   |
| <b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>         | St. Paul's  | Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment /<br>Ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et de l'Emploi  |
| Hudak, Tim (PC)                                  | Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook          | Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle<br>Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario   |
| Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)                             | Scarborough–Guildwood                                     |   |
| Jackson, Rod (PC)                                | Barrie  |   |
| Jaczek, Helena (LIB)                             | Oak Ridges–Markham  |   |
| <b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>        | Brampton–Springdale                                       | Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres<br>Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement  |
| Jones, Sylvia (PC)                               | Dufferin–Caledon  |   |
| Klees, Frank (PC)                                | Newmarket–Aurora  |   |
| Kwinter, Monte (LIB)                             | York Centre / York-Centre                                 |   |
| <b>Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)</b>            | Peterborough  | Minister of Rural Affairs / Ministre des Affaires rurales   |
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| <b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>           | Brant   | Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative  |
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| MacLeod, Lisa (PC)                               | Nepean–Carleton   |   |
| Mangat, Amrit (LIB)                              | Mississauga–Brampton South /<br>Mississauga–Brampton-Sud  |   |
| Mantha, Michael (NDP)                            | Algoma–Manitoulin   |   |
| Marchese, Rosario (NDP)                          | Trinity–Spadina   |   |
| Martow, Gila (PC)                                | Thornhill   |   |
| <b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>     | London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord                  | Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre<br>Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée  |
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| McDonnell, Jim (PC)                              | Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry                           |   |
| McKenna, Jane (PC)                               | Burlington  |   |
| <b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>         | Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–<br>Westdale                  | Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires   |
| McNaughton, Monte (PC)                           | Lambton–Kent–Middlesex                                    |   |
| McNeely, Phil (LIB)                              | Ottawa–Orléans  |   |
| <b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>   | Ottawa–Vanier   | Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels<br>Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones |
| Miller, Norm (PC)                                | Parry Sound–Muskoka                                       |   |
| <b>Miller, Paul (NDP)</b>                        | Hamilton East–Stoney Creek /<br>Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek | Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House /<br>Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative   |
| Milligan, Rob E. (PC)                            | Northumberland–Quinte West                                |   |
| <b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>          | Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre                       | Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux<br>Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement   |

| <b>Member and Party /<br/>Député(e) et parti</b> | <b>Constituency /<br/>Circonscription</b> | <b>Other responsibilities /<br/>Autres responsabilités</b>  |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)</b>          | Richmond Hill                             | Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation   |
| <b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>                         | York–Simcoe                               | Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative   |
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| <b>Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)</b>          | Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre             | Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail  |
| Natyshak, Taras (NDP)                            | Essex                                     |   |
| Nicholls, Rick (PC)                              | Chatham–Kent–Essex                        |   |
| O'Toole, John (PC)                               | Durham                                    |   |
| <b>Oraziotti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>      | Sault Ste. Marie                          | Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles   |
| Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)                         | Oshawa                                    |   |
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| <b>Piruzza, Hon. / L'hon. Teresa (LIB)</b>       | Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest              | Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse<br>Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine   |
| Prue, Michael (NDP)                              | Beaches–East York                         |   |
| Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)                             | Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord          |   |
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| Sattler, Peggy (NDP)                             | London West / London-Ouest                |   |
| Schein, Jonah (NDP)                              | Davenport                                 |   |
| Scott, Laurie (PC)                               | Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock           |   |
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| Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)                             | Bramalea–Gore–Malton                      |   |
| Smith, Todd (PC)                                 | Prince Edward–Hastings                    |   |
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| Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)                        | Mississauga–Erindale                      |   |
| Taylor, Monique (NDP)                            | Hamilton Mountain                         |   |
| Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)                           | Huron–Bruce                               |   |
| Vanthof, John (NDP)                              | Timiskaming–Cochrane                      |   |
| Walker, Bill (PC)                                | Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound                     |   |
| Wilson, Jim (PC)                                 | Simcoe–Grey                               | Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle   |
| Wong, Soo (LIB)                                  | Scarborough–Agincourt                     |   |
| <b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>    | Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest        | Minister of Agriculture and Food / Ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation<br>Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales<br>Premier / Première ministre<br>Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement<br>Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario |
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| Yurek, Jeff (PC)                                 | Elgin–Middlesex–London                    |   |
| <b>Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>         | Willowdale                                | Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones  |



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Mike Colle, Joe Dickson  
Rob Leone, Amrit Mangat  
Taras Natyshak, Jerry J. Ouellette  
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Vic Dhillon, Garfield Dunlop  
Cindy Forster, Lisa MacLeod  
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha  
Todd Smith  
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Toby Barrett, Lorenzo Berardinetti  
France Gélinas, Helena Jaczek  
Bill Mauro, Phil McNeely  
Norm Miller, John O'Toole  
Jagmeet Singh  
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Peter Tabuns, John Vanthof  
Bill Walker  
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Bas Balkissoon, Ted Chudleigh  
Mike Colle, Vic Dhillon  
Cheri DiNovo, Ernie Hardeman  
Rod Jackson, Helena Jaczek  
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Cheri DiNovo, Christine Elliott  
Mitzie Hunter, Rod Jackson  
Sylvia Jones, Monique Taylor  
Soo Wong  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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**Visitors**

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Mr. Monte McNaughton .....5433  
Mr. Rob E. Milligan .....5433  
Mr. John O'Toole.....5433  
Ms. Mitzie Hunter .....5433  
Ms. Lisa M. Thompson .....5433

**DEFERRED VOTES / VOTES DIFFÉRÉS**

**Interim supply**

Motion agreed to .....5434

**Concurrence in supply**

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