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(Hansard)**

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des débats
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 19 March 2014

Mercredi 19 mars 2014

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 19 March 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 19 mars 2014

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

COMPLYING WITH INTERNATIONAL
TRADE OBLIGATIONS ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 DE CONFORMITÉ
AUX OBLIGATIONS COMMERCIALES
INTERNATIONALES

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 5, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 153, An Act to amend the Electricity Act, 1998 with respect to a World Trade Organization decision /
Projet de loi 153, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur l'électricité en ce qui concerne une décision de l'Organisation mondiale du commerce.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate. The member for Nepean–Carleton, you have the floor.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It is a pleasure to rise once again to conclude my hour leadoff on Bill 153, the government motion to bring Ontario into compliance from failing to adhere to World Trade Organization rules, thereby breaking international law—the first time in Canadian history that a province has done that to the federal government.

Speaker, I'll take some of my time actually to discuss some of the implications of the Green Energy Act and why we won't be supporting this legislation but why we will be encouraging the government and the third party to do exactly what we are doing, which is conclude debate after the three leadoffs in order for this bill to have speedy passage, in order to ensure that Canada is in compliance. That said, I want to make it very clear that the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus, under the leadership of our leader, Tim Hudak, has opposed the Green Energy Act since its inception, and we will continue to do that. That is why we cannot in good conscience support this modification to the Green Energy Act. In fact, we believe, as Progressive Conservatives, the best way to comply with international law is actually to end the Green Energy Act and the FIT program once and for all. We have been very vocal on this since 2009, and we have brought many of those concerns to the floor of this Legislative Assembly. If you look back to my speech a week ago in the chamber, near the same time,

you'll see that many of the same arguments I made then, I'll make again today.

We have been very reserved—or very opposed, I should say, not even reserved—

Mr. Rick Bartolucci: Ha—reserved.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I see my colleague from Sudbury having quite a giggle over there that I might be reserved at any given time in this assembly, Speaker.

Mr. Rick Bartolucci: You're not reserved on anything.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: But I can assure you that our caucus has been steadfast in our opposition, and let me tell you why. A couple of weeks ago in question period, the Minister of Energy stood up and said that the Green Energy Act, the FIT program itself, for these wind turbine developments that are destroying rural Ontario, cost \$20 billion. At the same moment that he said that, I checked the IESO and wanted to see what the given supply was for that \$20-billion investment from this provincial government: 1.1% of our power supply at that given moment was from wind power. That means we have spent \$20 billion for 1.1% of our power supply in the province.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Some days less.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: As my colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke notes, it is sometimes less.

Now the government, in all its glory and intelligence, has decided that that is not enough. We're going to have to invest more and build more of these wind turbine developments for, effectively, unreliable and unaffordable power. That is driving up the rates in this province. In fact, at the last rate increase by the OEB last November, when they decided to increase rates by 4%, they cited the fact that it was the cost of the Green Energy Act that people were paying for.

We also noticed, for many business owners across Ontario, that people are seeing something we call the black box, the global adjustment. That global adjustment is effectively where all the sins and all the mistakes by this Liberal government have been added and accumulated onto people's bills, and it is hurting our employers across this province. It's effectively hurting everybody. It has now become a pattern for this government just to hide everything under the rug in the energy bills of this province, but that is hurting the people we represent.

We have said very distinctly in this assembly that not only should that FIT program be ended and not only should those subsidies stop, but if any future communities want a wind turbine development—by now 80 municipalities in this province have said they are not willing

hosts, but say there was—we have said very clearly, as Progressive Conservatives, that the only way they could move forward with a wind turbine development is if the municipality and those local decision-makers say so.

Presently—and we understand this, Speaker—this Liberal government will override any municipal decisions and put a wind turbine or solar development anywhere that it is not wanted. We have vast concerns with that, and that's why we have said that not only will we end the FIT program, but we will also restore locally based decision-making.

We also have a concern—and I want to talk about some areas like the Oak Ridges moraine and other places like Amherst Island, which are, I think, environmentally sensitive areas that are subject to these wind turbines. We have been very clear, as Ontario Progressive Conservatives: On those environmentally sensitive lands, there should be no development whatsoever of these invasive wind turbines. I want to be very clear to anyone who is watching from home when I say that places like Ostrander Point and Amherst Island and when I talk about the Oak Ridges moraine—the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus opposes wind turbine developments on those environmentally sensitive lands. In fact, that is why we have been calling for a moratorium on any future wind turbine developments until the appropriate scientific, environmental and health effect studies have been completed.

It has been the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus, under the steadfast leadership of Tim Hudak, who has been travelling the province, saying we need to have those health, scientific and environmental impact studies completed. That is why we are proud that the government of Canada listened to our caucus and to other Conservative members of Parliament in calling for health studies that are now being done. We were instrumental in calling for the Waterloo Institute for Sustainable Energy to put forward their study as well, which is now ongoing, and their interim report was not very favourable to the government plan. In fact, the government is ignoring their plan, which they are paying for.

Let's recap where I am. We're ending the FIT program, as Progressive Conservatives. We will restore locally based decision-making. We will hold a moratorium until health and environmental impacts are completed. We are the only party in this assembly, and we will be the only party in the next election, that will be standing up for those in rural Ontario who are opposed to these invasive wind turbines and the Green Energy Act. We have been doing this since 2009, and we will continue to do it. It is unaffordable.

You cannot continue to pay \$20 billion for 1.1% of Ontario's energy. You add that to the cost of the cancelled gas plants in Mississauga and Oakville, and that is \$1.1 billion added to the \$20 billion. You add the fact that this green energy program is causing us to have an oversupply. When that happens, we lose a lot more money because we have to subsidize other jurisdictions to take our power. That costs another billion dollars. Our

energy rates in this province and our bills across this province are becoming so high that seniors are telling us that their hydro bills are higher than their old age security cheque. We have businesses across Ontario telling us that they're either going to have to shut down or move to the United States or Quebec or to Manitoba. That is the real impact of the Green Energy Act.

0910

If that's not bad enough, let me raise two other very significant points. The first is, the Auditor General here in the province of Ontario reviewed the Green Energy Act and the math behind what Mr. McGuinty, and now what Ms. Kathleen Wynne, have supported. The Auditor General of Ontario has said that for every job the Green Energy Act creates, we lose four. For a province that has lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs, we are losing hundreds of jobs by the week. That is significant. That tells me that if you don't believe Wind Concerns Ontario, if you don't believe the Association of Power Producers of Ontario, if you don't believe the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario, at least believe the Auditor General of Ontario, who has no vested interest other than good governance, accountability and transparency of government.

So for a province that has been so linked with its economy and its energy policy, I can say to you, Speaker, with full confidence that the Green Energy Act is destroying jobs in our province, it is destroying rural Ontario and it is pitting neighbours and family members against one another.

If that is not bad enough, here is my next point: We are now here today debating a change to the Electricity Act of 1998, and we are doing so because this Green Energy Act, which subsidizes power to \$20 billion for 1.1% of energy, which has stripped locally based decision-making from people, which has unknown health and environmental impacts, which is costing us jobs—for every one that is created, we're losing four—the fifth problem with this, and this is the final nail in the Green Energy Act coffin: It has broken international law. For the first time in Canadian history, a provincial policy has brought Canada into non-compliance at the World Trade Organization. The worst part of that is that this Liberal government knew since 2010, four years ago, that they were breaking the law.

I can only conclude that they were either incompetent or they were out to embarrass the federal government, which is not of their own political stripe. So here we are today. It is, according to my watch with the date on it, the 19th of March. They have known for four years that they were in non-compliance, and we have five days now to meet the deadline for compliance, March 24. We have that time to pass this through first reading, go through second reading and have third reading, but the general malaise by the Liberal government across the way is compromising our ability to comply.

So let me talk a little bit about what those repercussions will be. This is important for anybody listening at home. Breaking international law is a very big deal because there could be retaliation attached to that breaking

of the law. What could we be retaliated with? Let me think. When Japan and the European Union decided to take us to court over this at the World Trade Organization, with China and the United States being third-party intervenors, this is what could happen: a trade war could be launched on Ontario for some of our products, such as our beef, our automobiles or it could be our Niagara wine. We could be into a full-fledged trade war.

Don't take my word for it. Take the words of the international trade lawyers I've consulted with, like Cyndee Todgham Cherniak and Jon Johnson. These are very respected names in the international trade world, they are respected lawyers here in the city of Toronto, and they have counselled me, as well as other members of the Progressive Conservative caucus, on the pitfalls of not meeting compliance by March 24.

So as I stated before, I will be the only speaker on behalf of the Ontario Progressive Conservatives. We believe that the best way to deal with the compliance is to abolish the Green Energy Act in its entirety. However, recognizing that this Liberal government has put our nation in a very awkward position of almost starting an international trade war, we are going to allow the New Democrats and the Liberals to do what they do best, which is to vote together, to prop one another up and to enjoy the coalition they have had for the past number of years.

But I am going to maintain, as my Progressive Conservative colleagues have since the day this Green Energy Act was brought in, that it is not the right plan for the province of Ontario. The right plan for the province of Ontario is to rip up the Green Energy Act. It is to end the Green Energy Act. It is to stop the FIT program, to end the subsidies. It is to provide locally based decision-making. It is to have a moratorium until health and environmental impacts have been studied. It is to focus our energy policy once again on economic policy and it is to ensure that we are not breaking any environmental, international or health laws. That is the desire of the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus. When you have the highest industrial hydro rates in North America, you have to understand that the key and the centrepiece of their energy policy has failed, and that is this Green Energy Act.

Speaker, I've had the opportunity many times to address this assembly on this particular Green Energy Act. In fact, I would be remiss not to once again in this assembly provide a great deal of credit to my seatmate from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, who was the energy critic at the time it was first introduced. I'd also like to give credit to my colleague Vic Fedeli, who was the critic for the energy file previous to me, who wrote our white paper on affordable energy. He was critical on where we are going to go in the future.

Of course, we have to talk about Ms. Green Energy herself, the person who came to this assembly on day one fighting wind turbines in her community of Huron–Bruce, Lisa Thompson. She has been a vocal advocate for the people across this province, not just in her riding,

who are tired of the Green Energy Act. She comes here with a sense of purpose. She understands what their concerns are. She understands their plight.

In fact, it was Lisa Thompson who, a year ago almost this month, brought to this assembly the fact that this Liberal government was breaching and breaking international law. She told them a year ago they needed to comply. What took them so long? What took them 11 and a half months? Why did they drag their feet? Why are they costing Ontarians more money? Why are they trying to send more jobs out of this province? Why are they trying to embarrass the federal government? Lisa Thompson, John Yakabuski, Vic Fedeli, Tim Hudak, the rest of us—we want to know why. We want to understand from this Liberal government why their rigid ideology could plunge our province into an international trade war and cost us 300,000 manufacturing jobs. Why would they put hydro rates in this province to a point where people can't afford to pay their bills? Why would they do this? These are the questions the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus has, and we believe the only way to answer any of those questions is to rip up the Green Energy Act that was brought in by George Smitherman once and for all.

I'm proud that my leader, Tim Hudak, has travelled this province, has told business leaders, has told seniors, has told farmers, has told everybody who will listen that the only option in the next election to restore locally based decision-making and bring back sound economic-based policy for energy that will ensure that our farmland remains agricultural is Tim Hudak. I am proud to be on that team, Speaker, because I have, in my own community, the threat of a wind turbine development in North Gower.

I want to once again speak to the people I represent through Jane Wilson, the chair of the North Gower wind action committee. I want them to know back home that I am going to continue to fight for you. I am going to continue to stand up and oppose this Green Energy Act and I am going to continue to stand up in the Ontario Legislature to fight that wind turbine development in North Gower. We're going to continue to do it, and we're going to continue to use every available opportunity for debate to expose the problems with the Green Energy Act.

0920

We're going to continue to talk about that embarrassing \$20-billion number for 1.1% of our energy supply. We're going to continue to talk about the Auditor General's report that says that for every job they create, they lose four more as a result of the Green Energy Act and its high prices. We're going to continue to talk about those 80 municipalities across this wonderful province of ours who are opposed to wind turbine developments, who don't want them and want their local say restored. And we're going to continue to remind this assembly that Health Canada and the Waterloo Institute for Sustainable Energy are looking at this Green Energy Act and they are talking about its implications. They are studying its rami-

fications and they will report. These are the real challenges with the Green Energy Act, and, as I've stated on a number of occasions, the final nail in this Green Energy Act is that we are non-compliant with international trade law.

I understand that, from time to time, people in this assembly have differences of opinion, but the facts in opposing the Green Energy Act more than speak for themselves. Again, I suggest to you this, humbly: It is not just the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus who is saying this. It's effectively every rural municipality in this province. It's effectively every person who's lost their job because their company can't afford the high energy prices. It is effectively every senior whose old age security cheque is smaller than their hydro bill. We are speaking on behalf of those people.

I feel very confidently that we have made our case, so I will repeat this for the third and final time: We believe the best way to become compliant with the international trade law is to rip up the Green Energy Act. That said, we will not stand in the way of this province becoming compliant because, after all, we do not want to embarrass our federal government as this government has just done, and we do not want to plunge our province into an international trade war in which we will cost further jobs and more hardship on the wonderful people of this province.

So I submit to you, to the Liberals, do the right thing. Rip up the Green Energy Act. And if you're not prepared to do that, get this done right away. Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I have to admit that I like the member from Nepean–Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: But?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: But it doesn't prevent me from disagreeing with her, obviously. That's what I wanted to say.

She speaks about the Liberal Party having a rigid ideology on wind, which is an interesting concept to attach to the whole notion of wind. I would remind the member that the rigid ideology was committed by the former leader of the Conservative Party, who actually privatized a lot of the energy deals and hydro deals that gave away anywhere from \$600 million to \$1 billion to private companies to put in their own deep pockets, taking it away from men and women who desperately needed a little support. That is rigid ideology continued by my Liberal friends with whom every now and then we are in lockstep. They have kept that ideology rigidly in their hands, supporting the Mike Harris regime. That is ideology.

There's no doubt that we are subsidizing—we, Ontarians, are subsidizing private power initiated by the Mike Harris regime and continued by the Liberals. That's how we subsidize them, and they don't talk about that. They simply talk about wind and their obsession with wind. We agree with them that the Liberals have not done that very well, that we have overpaid in that regard and we've

not consulted communities very well. Because if they're on board, it's going to be okay; if they're not, it's going to be a problem. We agree with that, but we should be looking to the Quebec model because Quebecers have done this well in terms of negotiating great deals with Americans. That's the way we should be going, not the way this government has done it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Bob Delaney: Speaker, this bill is a very simple one. It asks the Legislature to repeal one section of the Electricity Act, 1998, and that one section deals with domestic content requirements for Ontario renewable wind projects. Repealing that one section accomplishes the goal of this bill.

The Progressive Conservative Party has said, and my colleague from Nepean–Carleton said very clearly, that they don't want to stand in the way of complying with the World Trade Organization ruling. So that's very easy: Stand up and ask for unanimous consent to pass this bill at second and third reading—it is a single section—and we're done. That's all there is to it. That's all there is to this bill.

Speaker, what this does is protect Ontario's investment in renewable energy, the direction that the rest of the world has been going in. Ontario is North America's leader in the development and deployment of clean, green, renewable energy.

I know they would like to throw it out. I know they'd like to go back to burning coal. I know they'd like to go back to the 20th century. I know they'd like to go back to exactly what they were doing before. But that's not what Ontarians want. That's not the direction that the world is going in.

What we've got here before the Legislature is a single, simple bill that asks the Legislature and its members, honourable members all, to repeal a single section of the Electricity Act, 1998. That single section, that one act, will bring Ontario into compliance with the World Trade Organization ruling.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's a pleasure to comment on the address by our energy critic, my colleague from Nepean–Carleton.

She raises some very, very good points. We, as legislators, come here and pass laws, and we expect that the people will abide by those laws. That is the responsibility of a citizen in an orderly community: to abide by the law.

But we have a government here that wantonly broke the law, broke the international trade laws, and knowingly did it.

Interjection: Shameful.

Mr. John Yakabuski: That is shameful. What kind of example does that set? And they've taken four years to even try to remedy that.

What are the implications of passing this new bill to bring us into compliance? We're going to stop embar-

rasing Canadians—not just the federal government, but every Canadian out there who believes that Canadians are law-abiding citizens, and then they have the government of the largest, most populous, wealthiest province in this country breaking international laws and doing so knowingly, thumbing their nose at international law.

What will be the result of this? Those so-called 50,000 jobs they promised, which have never materialized—they give incorrect information on a daily basis about how many jobs have been created in the so-called green energy business. Well, once we have to comply with international law, all the advantages they were giving to Ontario companies are gone. They're gone. So those jobs aren't going to be created. If those jobs aren't going to be created, yet we're paying triple the price for electricity that we paid in 2003, what was the point of this Green Energy Act, other than to line the pockets of Liberal friends and empty the pockets of Ontario citizens?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Peggy Sattler: Speaker, I want to congratulate the member from Nepean–Carleton on her comments. I always enjoy being in this Legislature and hearing her speak. One thing I truly admire about her is her absolute consistency in her content. Whenever she rises to speak, we always hear the same old messages, the messages about getting rid of green energy.

While we have some concerns about the Green Energy Act, and while we totally agree that electricity prices are out of control in this province—Ontarians can't afford a 42% increase; they can't afford the 40% increase in natural gas—Ontarians want renewable energy.

0930

I look at my own city of London's Community Energy Action Plan that was developed after an extensive process. Some of the key principles that were identified in that plan: start with conservation, focus on energy efficiency and good design, make use of free heat and free light, use renewable energy and make it local. These are the kinds of principles that Ontarians want to see reflected in energy policy, and these are the things that we should be focusing on.

I find it rather rich, frankly, that the Tories are so critical of the energy policy when it was Mike Harris and the PCs that started the province on the road to privatization that has gotten us into this mess.

So I agree that there is a need to respect our international trade obligations and support this legislation, but I don't agree with the member from Nepean–Carleton about the Green Energy Act.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Nepean–Carleton has two minutes.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to talk about the concerns of the people of the province of Ontario. During the months of January and February, my leader, Tim Hudak, asked me to travel the province on our affordable energy plan. I was able to speak to dozens of people in 23 or 25 ridings—I forget now. I had the opportunity to speak to business leaders,

to seniors and to municipal councils. What occurs to me is that the only plan that Ontarians are buying at the moment for energy prices and for a plan to move forward is the Ontario Progressive Conservative plan in our Affordable Energy white paper.

I must say, the cornerstone of making life more affordable for Ontarians is to ensure that they have affordable energy prices, and in order to do that, you have to get rid of the Green Energy Act. Anybody who tells you it's as simple as conservation also has a power plant in Mississauga and another in Oakville to sell you. I think that that completely debunks my good friends in the New Democrats.

And I think the Liberal record has spoken for itself over the past decade. I think it's been very clear that their energy policies have failed Ontarians. In fact, I just want to go through a few numbers. Numbers don't lie. These are the facts: The energy minister himself said it costs \$20 billion for 1.1% of wind energy. The Auditor General told us that for every job that is created in Ontario, four are lost because of the Green Energy Act and its prices. My colleague from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke was correct when he said that the numbers don't lie and that we are losing jobs—they promised 50,000 that never materialized. That's important.

The other issue is local democracy. Eighty municipalities in rural Ontario have said they do not want the Green Energy Act. We stand with them, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's a pleasure to rise today to talk about the state of our economy, the state of our environment and, frankly, how we need to be protecting jobs in this province.

Just to refresh people's memories as to why green energy is of consequence to this province and to this nation: We are facing a period of substantial and dramatic change in the world around us. Climate change has brought more extreme weather to Ontario; it has brought more extreme weather around the world. We went through the ice storm in December where people were left shivering in the dark for days and, in some cases, weeks on end. Increasing numbers of ice storms are one of the consequences of our changing climate.

In Toronto alone, we've seen three once-in-a-century storms in the first decade of this century. The climate is changing. Even current models show Thunder Bay having the climate of Toronto within the next 25 years and Toronto having the climate of northern Kentucky. That is what we are on track for with carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases that are already in our atmosphere.

Those changes will be profoundly disruptive to our lives. They will make for extraordinary tension and conflict in societies around the world.

At the same time, Speaker, the opportunity exists, just as it did at the beginning of the 20th century, to bring on board new technologies that will in fact open up tremendous economic opportunities. At the beginning of the 20th century, Ontario decided to build non-profit hydro-

electric facilities, and I have to say it was controversial. It was controversial because the private coal interests fought them tooth and nail. People in Ontario today don't know the history of that conflict, don't know that private interests not only tried to stir up opposition here in Ontario but went to leading financial centres in Europe to attack funding for Ontario Hydro at that time, because they could see where things were going. Ontario Hydro, domestic renewable power, had the potential to displace millions of dollars of investment in coal power. At that time, the business community in Ontario understood that a major competitive advantage came from having non-profit domestic energy. The ability to stop having to buy all that coal, which we were buying from Pennsylvania, and to generate our own power made for Ontario's industrial development. It allowed us to keep our money here in Ontario instead of having to ship it outside the province.

Right now we're facing another technological revolution in the electricity sector. It was hydro at the beginning of the 20th century; it will be wind and solar in the 21st century. That is simply the reality. There is a trillion-dollar market that is developing around the world. Leading industrial powers like Germany and China are investing heavily in renewable energy. They are developing the technologies that we are going to be moving forward on, that we need to move forward on.

Speaker, this province needs to be part of that technological revolution. It needs to have the jobs that flow from that technological revolution. It needs, as it did at the beginning of the 20th century, to develop the expertise that will allow us to export globally. And frankly, that is something that did happen at the beginning of the 20th century. What we learned developing renewable hydroelectric power in Ontario gave us the potential to implement our learnings in countries around the world. We can do the same with renewable energy.

Today we are speaking to the shortcomings in the strategy pursued by the Liberal government, and, frankly, their failure to put in place a local procurement process that was grounded in public ownership of power. We're addressing this issue today because unfortunately the Liberals decided to follow in the footsteps of the Mike Harris Conservatives before them and to privatize power generation in this province. Because the Liberals decided to follow that course of action in the development of renewable power, we face a challenge around local content provisions for renewable investments.

I want to say that not only has privatization endangered local manufacturing of renewable energy technologies, but it has also imposed a huge burden on the people of Ontario. I have seen no studies that have quantified how much people are paying in profits to private power companies. If you in fact take a look and gather as many annual reports as you can, Bruce energy generates around \$600 million a year in profits. There are a large number of other private generators owned by TransCanada, some Japanese companies, generating in Ontario and extracting roughly \$1 billion a year in profit

that in the 1990s Ontario ratepayers didn't have to pay. So if people are worried about higher prices, they should be opposing the privatization of the system. Unfortunately, to my right we have a party that is truly to the right and would like to privatize and drive up prices on people for everything. That is their approach.

0940

The fact that the Liberals did not use public methods, public power, to develop renewable energy has brought us into this dispute with the World Trade Organization. As of today—we'll see what they have to say tomorrow—the government has neither expressed any awareness of this reality—they haven't noted that it was their privatization strategy that has brought them into difficulties with the World Trade Organization—nor any desire to change the rules so that publicly owned generation will be able to take advantage of local procurement.

I had an opportunity to read the speeches of the minister and his parliamentary assistant when they did their leadoff roughly a week ago. I saw not a single word in their speeches about how to solve this problem by directing investment to public ownership of power generation. I looked at what the minister had to say. He said the bill that he presented, "if passed, makes modifications to the Electricity Act, 1998, that would enable Ontario to comply with the World Trade Organization ruling on domestic content provisions in the feed-in tariff or FIT renewable energy program." He goes on to speak for another 20 minutes, 25 minutes, but not a single word about alternative strategies to defend jobs in Ontario. Not a word, Speaker, not a word. He doesn't acknowledge that the core problem with the Liberal approach, both in terms of protecting prices and jobs in Ontario, and in terms of protecting Ontario from the World Trade Organization—he doesn't acknowledge that his privatization agenda has jeopardized this province. He spends a lot of time congratulating himself and his party about the electricity system but never talks about options for maintaining local content.

Happily, there are people who are thinking about alternatives. How do we protect local content and renewable generation? How do we protect jobs in Ontario while we develop a renewable energy system?

I have to say, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives commissioned a report recently called *Saving the Green Economy*. The groups supporting it—Blue Green Canada, the Canadian Union of Public Employees, the Council of Canadians and Unifor—brought on Scott Sinclair, the author of the study, who was a senior trade policy adviser with the government of British Columbia. This paper takes apart the government policy and the errors made by the Liberals in relying on a private power model of renewables development when there were and there are real alternatives to the course the Liberals have chosen. I'm going to quote from that study. The author talks about the decision of the final appeal board, the Appellate Body, that ruled when Canada appealed the initial decision of the World Trade Organization. He writes, "While the legitimacy of the Appellate Body's

narrow interpretation of the government procurement exclusion is highly questionable”—fair enough—“it is also true that the complexity of Ontario’s partially liberalized electricity system”—or, for normal people, partially privatized electricity system—“unnecessarily exposed the economic development aspects of the Green Energy Act to challenge. In particular, the decision to rely so heavily on subsidies to private power producers, while barring Ontario Power Generation from investing in non-hydro-electric renewables, increased the vulnerability to trade treaty litigation.”

I have no doubt for a moment that the government has hired lawyers, employs lawyers in its ministries, has looked at this from a variety of angles and understands that their core problem was the problem of private producers, not the problem of local content; that the government knew when it started that there was a potential risk and now knows, from the words of the World Trade Organization and the Appellate Body, that it’s the private procurement piece that puts Ontario jobs at risk. It knows and has not acted, has not come forward with a policy that would in fact protect those jobs and shift away from private ownership to public ownership.

I’ll quote again from this paper: “A feed-in tariff ... program provides above-market rates for different forms of renewable energy. To qualify, producers must meet local content requirements ... under which a minimum percentage of goods, services or labour must be sourced within Ontario. The premium rates paid for green energy encouraged new investment in renewable while local content quotas helped create thousands of new jobs in the province. Both were essential to gathering popular support for the act.”

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives is right: If you want to have support for a transition, you have to create and maintain manufacturing and construction jobs in this province so that people see a very visible benefit economically and, at the same time, they see a benefit environmentally.

The CCPA goes through the history of this dispute: “In 2013, responding to complaints by Japan and the European Union, the” World Trade Organization “dispute settlement authorities ruled that the act’s local content requirements were in conflict with international trade rules.”

He says here, “The WTO’s ruling was surprising to many, since government procurement policies are expressly exempted from the national treatment ... obligations of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.” Generally speaking, where governments are procuring, they have the freedom to procure locally. Many thought that that would be interpreted broadly.

“[T]his was the first case in the history of the” General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the World Trade Organization “where the dispute settlement authorities were asked to interpret this exclusion for public procurement.” It was the first time it had been ruled on—the first time.

“The WTO panel found that the” feed-in tariff “program did not qualify as an excluded procurement be-

cause, in its opinion, the energy purchased by the Ontario Power Authority was resold on commercial terms by the government of Ontario and other public hydro entities. The Appellate Body agreed that the program did not benefit from the GATT exemption for procurement but for narrower, more complicated reasons. Their decision hinged on the fact that under the” feed-in tariff “program, the product to which the discriminatory local content requirements applied was generation equipment, while the product actually purchased by the Ontario government was electricity. In the Appellate Body’s view, the domestic content quota could not be said to ‘govern’ the procurement of electricity, and therefore fell outside the scope of the exclusion.”

Speaker, it’s very clear from the decision that was made at the dispute resolution body and the Appellate Body that the problem with the Liberals’ approach is that they privatized the ownership of the generation equipment, and that with a different strategy—that is, applying feed-in tariffs to publicly owned generators, be they municipally owned, be they owned by school boards or hospitals—we would be able to maintain the local content rules and protect local jobs here in Ontario.

What will this bill do? We’ve had the parliamentary assistant stand up and speak to it earlier. It’s very simple: It ends the requirement for local content and renewable energy projects that are brought into being with feed-in tariff projects. So if you’ve got a solar array on a school, a hospital or a transit garage owned by a municipality, all public installations—if those installations are funded by the feed-in tariff program, then those bodies, schools, cities, hospitals and universities won’t be required to have local content in those generation installations, even though such installations would be exempt from World Trade Organization requirements.

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The Liberals have ignored the potential to protect local content requirements by simply saying, “There won’t be any for anyone,” which goes far beyond the ruling of the World Trade Organization and its Appellate Body; far beyond. What will this mean for procurement? Under the current regime, there is local content requirement. Solar panel assemblers, windmill builders have to use Ontario-made goods to a certain percentage. It has been said by the Liberals that they will export to the rest of the world, and frankly, when they get big enough they will and they should. But there’s every reason in the world to ensure that, here in Ontario, we give them a market that can be their base that they can build on. If you are assembling windmill towers in Windsor, assembling solar panels in London or developing windmill blades in Welland, all those jobs may be put at risk by the government’s action: its refusal to look at a creative solution, a public ownership solution, to the local content requirement.

Other countries with large markets and larger economies give a boost to their own manufacturers because they have those larger economies and larger markets. We need to boost our domestic manufacturers so that they can compete with those jurisdictions.

There is some lack of clarity around this bill, and that was not helped by the fairly content-free speech made by the Minister of Energy. He said what the bill was going to be, he talked about his wonders and those of past Liberal governments, but didn't say: Given that Ontario Power Generation can now develop renewable energy, will they be applying local content rules? No comment on that. If the Ontario Power Authority is going to be procuring renewable energy installations under a request for proposal rather than a feed-in tariff, will there be a local content provision in that case? I ask the government to address those questions. We need to know how much local content will be protected, how many local jobs will be protected and how many will be at risk as we go forward with the development of renewable energy.

A question that arises that the government should have asked: What are its alternatives? What can it do to ensure that jobs in Ontario stay in Ontario? I turn back to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. They write:

"The most straightforward option to preserve the local economic development component of the Green Energy Act, and to ensure that is implemented consistently with current international trade rules, is for Ontario to pursue its complementary renewable energy and economic development goals through more conventional public procurement models. In the case of renewable energy contracts, where a public entity acquires the generation equipment, the Ontario government would still be free under WTO rules and Ontario's current World Trade Organization "obligations to stipulate that all or any portion of that equipment be manufactured in Ontario...."

"Any renewable energy project owned by a municipality or a broader public sector entity remains free to apply local content requirements in its purchases. For example, so long as they retain ownership of the generating equipment, a hospital or university developing rooftop solar panel systems under the" feed-in tariff "program could apply preferences for local content in the supply of components. In fact, the key to reconciling the act's sustainable development thrust with" World Trade Organization "obligations is to pursue these job creation goals through more traditional public sector procurement policies...."

"The most straightforward option to preserve the local economic development component of the Green Energy Act, and to ensure that it is implemented consistently with current international trade rules, is for Ontario to pursue its complementary renewable energy and economic development goals through more conventional public procurement models. In fact, other jurisdictions in Europe, Asia, and Africa are also returning to public sector-led investment in renewable energy, as experience with liberalized electricity markets has failed" to deliver the investments that they need.

This government could have brought forward a bill written such that local content requirements were protected for publicly procured renewable energy and recognized that the WTO and its Appellate Body were currently going to block them from making such requirements for private producers, made that distinction and

focused its investments and efforts on publicly owned power. It could have done that and it didn't.

I think that the government needs to address that in the course of this debate. Why didn't they stand up for Ontario jobs? Why didn't they use creative application of law? Why didn't they use the protections already in place in international trade law to ensure that we in Ontario have the jobs protected that we need to protect? They have to answer for that. They have to answer for that.

They have pursued a privatization model from the time that they were elected in 2003. We have seen the fallout from that privatization model—we are very well aware of that—large profits that have gone to private companies that are a burden on the people of Ontario. We've gone through the two gas plant boondoggles, scandals, in which it was very clear from the government's own documents that when they found it politically damaging to proceed with those plants, the first warning they got from their bureaucrats was, "If you cancel, you are going to have to pay for the lost profits. You are going to have to pay for the lost profits."

When you go into the privatization of the power system, you assume huge risks. Your ability to redeploy assets, to change the direction of your investment is shaken. Your ability to move is bound. We have paid a lot for privatization, literally in dollars, and we have paid a lot in terms of jobs.

Will this government take another direction? That remains to be seen. Will they realize that what they have done in terms of responding to the WTO is profoundly problematic for jobs here in Ontario?

Many people have asked, "Why have energy prices, electricity prices, in particular, gone so high in Ontario?" I've talked about private energy, private profit that is siphoning about a billion dollars a year out of the pockets of Ontario ratepayers—industrial, residential, commercial—a huge amount of money. Exactly what the Liberals have done following the lead of the Conservatives.

The Conservatives, frankly, have just been Liberals in a hurry when it has come to this issue. They would love to privatize everything that's remaining—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It's the other way around.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Hey, it's the way they are. It's the way they are.

The other thing, Speaker, is that not only are we stuck with paying these high profits to these companies, but because there's so much money to be made in building generation assets in the nuclear and the gas field, they are constantly pressing for more, so now we have a huge oversupply of power.

We have said, and our researchers have produced the numbers showing that we spend a billion dollars a year for power that we sell for about \$300 million a year to New York, to Michigan, to whoever will take it at these bargain basement prices.

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We have a government that has been captured by private power interests. Frankly, the ratepayers, the people of this province who try to keep warm, who try to

keep the lights on, are paying the freight. They are stuck with that bill.

If you look at the history of this province, we developed the hydro resources of Ontario at the beginning of the 20th century that gave us a tremendous competitive advantage and gave us power at cost, something that for decades was a common heritage of this province and, frankly, commonly supported by parties in this province, because they understood the competitive advantage. In the 1950s and 1960, we started going into coal. In the late 1960s and 1970s, we started going into nuclear. When we got hit with the very high prices of nuclear in the 1990s, when Darlington came on and electricity prices went up about 25% in two years—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Do I have to say anything? You already had number 3—one more. Huron—Bruce, I've been watching you closely, too.

Continue.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Now there's a Speaker.

If you look at the history, we started running into very high-cost regimes for electricity as extraordinarily expensive nuclear power plants came online. In fact, that cost disruption, in the opinion of many, is what gave the Conservatives the bright idea—well, Margaret Thatcher probably figured in, as well, as an example for them—to start privatizing Ontario's hydro assets, its hydro system, in the late 1990s. We all know how that worked out. We all know that it led to soaring prices.

It also led to a realization on the part of the government that the nuclear assets it had were unsellable with the debt that was attached to them. There was a huge stranded debt because the power produced by the plants, if they were paying all their costs, would be way outside what the market would sustain, which is why on people's hydro bills they see a little line saying “debt retirement charge.” Many people wonder what that is. Well, that's paying for overruns on nuclear power plants.

Interjections.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Interesting. I hear heckling from someone over on the other side. In fact, Speaker, the Liberals were very enthusiastic nuclear cheerleaders and builders.

The debt arose from those investments that went way over budget, and the people of Ontario are paying it through their hydro bills on a daily basis. Any surplus from Ontario Power Generation, Hydro One flows that into paying for that stranded nuclear debt as well—an extraordinary expense for all of us.

The Liberals didn't learn from any of that, did not learn, continued to carry forward on privatization and, frankly, in this case, have made a decision apparently—maybe we'll see if it softens in the next little while—to choose private power generation over Ontario jobs. They have to take their pick.

Ontario wasn't the only province that had money problems with nuclear power. In Quebec, Gentilly-1 and Gentilly-2 nuclear power stations were built. Quebec paid for two nuclear power plants. Gentilly-1 was never

able to operate at full power and was shut down within a few years; it was unstable. So Quebec paid for two plants and got one. Recently, Quebec decided not to refurbish Gentilly-2, because it couldn't afford the power that would come from it. They actually had people who went to Point Lepreau and looked at how that refurbishment was done—the one in New Brunswick that went way over budget and years past completion time. They concluded that this was a very bad way to do a project.

Then they went to Wolsong, in Korea, to watch how the Koreans refurbished their Candu reactor. They thought that the Koreans had figured it out better than the folks in New Brunswick. They took all the lessons from Korea and Point Lepreau and put them into their planning, and their conclusion was that even with best practices, the cost of power was about three times the market value. They would have to subsidize that plant heavily for it to run, and so decided not to proceed.

We in Ontario have never reviewed, through an environmental assessment, any of the nuclear investments that we have made. We have not done that. We have not looked at the alternatives. We have not looked at the business case. We have not pursued what would be a very sensible course of action for this province.

In this province, if we are going to contain electricity prices, we have to, first of all, make our use of electricity as efficient as possible, and we don't do that.

A number of years ago, the Ontario Power Authority commissioned a study showing that it would be cost-effective to displace 23% of Ontario's load through investment in conservation and efficiency. We're talking there of costs equivalent to about three to six cents per kilowatt hour. That is the least expensive and, frankly, the most labour-intensive way, the most job-creating way, of providing us with new electricity, something that neither of these two parties is interested in—neither. They can, in the Liberal case, speak in favour of it and then make it a sideshow; in the Conservative case—again, they're Liberals in a hurry—they just simply wouldn't do it. All they want to do is buy more new nuclear power plants at extraordinary cost. That's the heart of their electricity strategy and, frankly, one that is completely unaffordable in this province.

Speaker, we are on the edge of very dramatic changes in electricity generation in the world. Distributed generation is starting to shake up power markets in a variety of places. Just recently, one of the largest utilities in Germany, RWE, declared a massive loss. In their declaration of that loss, they recognized they had gotten into renewables too late and that the market was changing around them.

We have to recognize that we are at a point of change in the electricity sector comparable to the change in the telecommunications sector when people went from land lines to mobile phones. Suddenly, fewer and fewer people were taking on land lines. More and more people were switching to mobile. It changed the environment within which telecommunications companies operate.

We are looking at similar developments in the energy field. Already now in Europe, there are 19 jurisdictions

where solar power is the same price as grid-based power. As that happens, more and more people just purchase their own electricity-generating equipment, install it and leave the grid behind, and that leaves a bigger and bigger hole for utility companies to deal with.

We here in Ontario need to ensure that we don't get caught in a trap where we have a huge amount of investment in generation and transmission that is undercut when the world moves on to another method of providing itself with electricity.

I'll bring myself back again, then, to this bill.

We in Ontario need to be in the industry. We need to be part of developing these new technologies. We need to not simply be consumers of technology from other jurisdictions, other countries, but we need to develop the manufacturing expertise here so that we can supply ourselves and so that we can export to the rest of the world.

There is definitely a synergy between manufacturing and research and development. If you don't have manufacturing, you don't have real-world opportunities to develop your new innovative products. If Ontario undermines its renewable energy manufacturing sector, then its ability to become a player in the development of new products is profoundly compromised.

This government needs to go back, look at its bill and tell this chamber how, with regard to public bodies procuring renewable generation, it will ensure that, where the WTO doesn't require a repeal of local content, we use local content. It needs to change its bill. It needs to ensure that public purchase and local requirements are maintained.

Speaker, this government needs to rethink its whole strategy. It would be to our advantage as a province to have them rethink the way that we deal with the WTO and rethink, frankly, how we deal with the whole electricity sector. Today, it's this bill and this item.

Speaker, I believe I've set out my arguments. I believe that the message is clear to the government. We only have a few minutes left, and I think I'll wrap up for the day.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I thank the member from Toronto–Danforth.

It's close enough to 10:15 that this House stands recessed until 10:30 this morning.

The House recessed from 1012 to 1030.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

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

Mr. Steve Clark: I'd like to correct my record. Last night in my late show with the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, I said there were more students applying to attend the Kemptville campus than there were who applied to the Ridgetown campus. What I meant to say was that 2014 applications increased at Kemptville, the campus that the University of Guelph is closing, while Ridgetown's decreased.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member has a point of order. It's always available for members to correct their own record.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Before I do introductions of guests, I just want to point out that, from my perspective and from my observation, there's a lot of people to introduce. So I'm going to remind you of one thing: Please just do the introductions and leave all the other stuff aside. I'll get through everyone today as best I can.

Mr. Michael Harris: I'll be quick, then. I'd like to welcome Kerry Hadad, CEO of Your Neighbourhood Credit Union in Kitchener. Welcome to Queen's Park.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It gives me great pleasure to introduce a fervent defender of medicare, obstetrician-gynecologist Dr. Larissa Tam, who is in the gallery today watching the proceedings. I admire her deeply. Thank you for being here, Dr. Tam.

M. Grant Crack: Il me fait un grand plaisir de souhaiter la bienvenue à tous mes amis qui sont ici aujourd'hui pour célébrer la journée de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

I'm very, very happy to welcome mayors and councillors across Glengarry–Prescott–Russell who are here today and the staff who are working so hard right now, as we speak, to prepare. I welcome everyone in this House to celebrate Glengarry–Prescott–Russell day with us in 247. It's great to have the warden, le président des Comtés unis, M. Jean Paul St. Pierre. Bienvenue, tout le monde.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'd like to welcome to the chamber Harry Joosten, Libro Credit Union; Jennifer Rowe, Meridian Credit Union; and Alena Thouin from Central 1 Credit Union. Welcome.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It is my great pleasure today to introduce to the House two good friends of mine; they actually live in Trinity–Spadina. Phyllis Amber is over here—Phyllis, give us a wave—and her husband, Arnold Amber, right here. They're very good friends.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'd like to introduce and welcome Antero Elo—he's the president of the Finnish Credit Union; his office is next to my constituency office—and as well, Robert Paterson, who is president of Alterna Savings. Welcome.

I want to recognize one of my constituents, Bonnie Booth, who is here with Toronto Community Housing's Close the Housing Gap campaign.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'd like to introduce a couple of guests of mine today: Roy Taylor and Ralph Mooney from my constituency. Welcome, guys.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's my privilege to introduce James Olson, chief administrative officer of First Ontario Credit Union, who is here at Queen's Park as part of the Central 1 Credit Union lobby day. James works at First Ontario's head office in Hamilton.

Mr. Bill Mauro: It's my pleasure to introduce to the House, from Thunder Bay, 17-year CEO of the Copperfin Credit Union and currently on the board of directors, Scott Kennedy. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I'd like to introduce Taras Pidzamecky, who is the CEO and general counsel for the Ukrainian Credit Union, which by the way is celebrating its 70th anniversary this year.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'd like to welcome the people that are here—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

Interjection.

Mr. Paul Miller: The new member from Hamilton East, I guess.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'll say it a third time: Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

Mr. Paul Miller: Thank you. I'd like to introduce two of my staffers from my constituency office, Todd White and Jason White. They're in the back behind your chair.

Also, I don't know if you're going to get to the minister, but there are three McMaster students here who are taking direction from my staff and learning.

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: This morning, I'd like to welcome Sean Gadon, the director of Toronto's Affordable Housing Office; Bud Purves, the chair of the Toronto Community Housing Corp., and the CEO, Eugene Jones; Domanique Grant, president of the Co-operative Housing Federation of Toronto; Harvey Cooper, the manager of government relations of CHF Canada-Ontario region; Ginny Adey, the manager of strategic planning and stakeholder relations at Toronto Community Housing; and Simone Swail, program manager of special initiatives, CMF Canada-Ontario region.

I also want to welcome all those in the public galleries from Toronto Community Housing and all social housing residents. I want to remind members to attend the reception this evening from 5 to 7 in room 228.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Ralph Luimes is here, the CEO of Haldimand-Norfolk Credit Union, in the great town of Caledonia.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'll try this again, Speaker. I want to welcome all the people who are here today for Close the Housing Gap day at Queen's Park, specifically Bonnie Booth, resident of Toronto Community Housing; Mary Aleimda, resident of Toronto Community Housing; Tom Clement, ED for the Co-operative Housing Federation of Toronto; Simone Swail, program manager, the Co-op Housing Federation of Canada; Nicholas Gazzard, executive director, Co-op Housing Federation of Canada; and everyone else who is here from Toronto Community Housing. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: On a point of order, Speaker: I believe we have unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear pins in recognition of Credit Unions of Ontario lobby day here at Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Consumer Services is requesting unanimous consent to wear the pins in honour of credit union day. Do we agree? Agreed.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm delighted to welcome Harry Joosten from Libro Financial, who's with us today. Welcome, Harry.

Also, from the sickle cell and thalassemia community we have Doreen Alexander, Dotty Nicholas, Lanre Tunji-Ajayi, Helen Zivras, Dr. Isaac Odame and Dr. Richard Ward all joining us in support of the member from Eglinton–Lawrence's private member's bill today.

Mr. Jim McDonell: I'd like to welcome Bonnie Booth from Toronto Community Housing; Sean Gadon, from Toronto Affordable Housing, Rahima Mulla, the vice-president of the CHF; and Dale Reagan and Diane Miles, both from the CHF. Welcome to Close the Housing Gap day.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: There are actually nine students here from McMaster with Professor White. I met with some of them this morning. I want to welcome them, and I hope they enjoy their experience today.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I also would like to welcome Harry Joosten from Libro Credit Union, and also Kelly Harris from Central 1.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I certainly also want to welcome my good friend Scott Kennedy, and introduce to the Legislature Ernie Remillard, president and CEO of Northern Lights Credit Union. Ernie, welcome; good to see you.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Mr. Speaker, we have a number of individuals here from Central 1 Credit Union. I want to welcome them to the Legislature and join with my colleagues in welcoming Kelly Harris, who heads up their government relations. Kelly worked for us for many years in the PC caucus. Don't hold that against him; he's a terrific guy and a great worker.

Mr. Mike Colle: I think we have unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear pins in recognition of Sickle Cell Awareness Day at Queen's Park today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Eglinton–Lawrence is seeking unanimous consent to wear pins in honour of sickle cell anemia awareness. Do we agree? Agreed.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm delighted to introduce the students behind me from Midorioka High School in Japan, who are visiting Centennial CVI in Guelph, which happens to be the school that my kids went to. So, welcome very much. The students are part of the Kakehashi exchange program, which means "bridge for tomorrow" and promotes mutual understanding among the students of Japan and Canada.

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Mr. Frank Klees: I'd like to extend a special invitation to Mr. Richard Senechal, who is the president and CEO of Duca Credit Union.

I also want to give special recognition to Mr. Larry Smith, who is the CEO of Pace Credit Union, as well as the CFO of that great organization, Mr. Phillip Smith.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I would also like to welcome all the members who are here for Close the Housing Gap.

Also, I would like to welcome Adrienne McKenzie, CEO of Victory Community Credit Union, located in the great riding of York South–Weston.

Mr. Phil McNeely: I'd like to welcome three special guests from the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators. They're right up at the top, here. Visiting us from Minnesota today are Great Lakes regional coordinators Senator Jane Krentz and Senator John Howe.

I would also like to welcome J.R. Tolbert, the executive director of the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators. They do great work. I invite all my colleagues to meet with the NCEL today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I'd like to welcome Mike Shepherd from first priority credit union in Milton, Georgetown and Acton. Welcome to the Legislature.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I would like to welcome Kevin Dorse, manager of advocacy for Credit Union Central of Canada, which is located in the great community of Ottawa Centre.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I'm pleased to welcome to Queen's Park today the Electricity Distributors Association. They're having a reception and all members are invited to attend early this evening.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Please help me welcome the grade 10 students from St. Augustine Catholic High School in Markham.

Hon. Mario Sergio: Speaker, no relation to the Minister of Energy, Bob Chiarelli: I'd like to welcome to the House David Chiarelli from York West, a retired teacher who has been serving our young kids for so many years. Welcome to the House.

Ms. Soo Wong: I'd like to welcome my friend and colleague from the city of Toronto Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I'd like to introduce Jennifer Rowe, chief marketing officer, Meridian Credit Union in St. Catharines, who is joining us today.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome Lori Gaudette. She's the CEO of the Oshawa Community Credit Union. Welcome, Lori. She's here, of course, with Credit Unions of Ontario.

If I may, I'd like to also acknowledge that visiting today are grade 5 students from St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Elementary School in my great riding of Pickering–Scarborough East. I'm looking forward to meeting them after question period.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: It's my pleasure to welcome my friends and former colleagues from the social housing sector who are here today for the Close the Housing Gap campaign. It's so wonderful to see you in the House.

I'd also like to welcome Jason Rodricks, who is a social entrepreneur and community advocate, who is also here.

Mr. Mike Colle: On Sickle Cell and Thalassemia Awareness Day, I'd like to welcome the president of the Thalassemia Foundation of Canada, Helen Ziavras,

who's here; the president of the Sickle Cell Awareness Group of Ontario, Lanre Tunji-Ajayi, who's here; Dr. Odame from SickKids hospital, who's here; and my good friend Sherman Moore who's here for Sickle Cell Awareness Day. Welcome.

Hon. Charles Sousa: It gives me great pleasure to introduce today in the Legislative Assembly members of Credit Unions of Ontario. They include Mr. Don Wright, president and CEO of Central 1 Credit Union; and Taras Pidzamecky, CEO and general counsel of the Ukrainian Credit Union.

We also have Rick Hoevenaars, EVP of finance and CFO of Libro Credit Union, and Kelly Harris, government relations regional director of Central 1 Credit Union. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Just in case we missed anyone, could we welcome everyone else who wasn't mentioned, please? Thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm glad the member from Windsor–Tecumseh picked up on what I used to do.

We welcome all our guests, and thank you for your patience. I appreciate that it does put some people on the waiting game.

I do have an important announcement to make before we get to question period and would seek every single member's attention.

FIRE DRILL

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I want to ask for the indulgence of the House, just for a few moments, to address the fire drill that was conducted in this building yesterday.

While I can appreciate that it may present an inconvenience to some, fire drills are an exercise in due diligence, ensuring compliance with fire regulations, something that I, as Speaker, am responsible for. It is an important safety exercise that is only effective if it is conducted at a time when occupancy and business are in the normal-to-peak range.

Having received the preliminary report of yesterday's drill, I was generally encouraged by the response and want to express sincere appreciation to the vast majority of occupants who participated.

However, I was also disappointed to learn that certain occupants, including some MPPs, declined to evacuate the building.

I cannot stress strongly enough that the purpose of these fire drills is to certify that the proper procedures are in place for your safety and the safety of all staff and visitors, so that all occupants—members and staff alike—are fully aware of the appropriate evacuation and re-entry procedures.

Non-compliance with an evacuation order, even during a drill, is a serious and, in my view, foolhardy infraction of fire safety guidelines. I would hope that members of provincial Parliament would offer some leadership in

this respect, and I trust that I can be assured of full co-operation in the next fire drill we do have.

I appreciate all of your activities. This does say something about us, and I thank you for it.

It is now time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is to the Premier. Premier, why are you unable to table a budget by March 31, the end of the fiscal year?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We are working on bringing a budget forward. I know the Leader of the Opposition knows that there's a lot of work involved in putting together a budget. We have been gathering information from people around the province—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. Another point to the member from Leeds–Grenville: You'll not talk while I'm standing. The Minister of Rural Affairs will come to order when she's answering. No comments.

Answer, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know the Leader of the Opposition knows that there is a lot of work that goes into putting a budget together, making sure that we gather information from people around the province, that we make the right policy decisions and that we put the right initiatives in the budget.

I know that the Leader of the Opposition remembers that when his party was in office, every single PC budget was tabled in May or June.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Thank you. The—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Order. I'm attempting to get order for your leader, and you're heckling.

Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: The Premier should obviously check the facts. In fact, I remember us bringing in a mini-budget—because we faced a jobs crisis in this province in November 1995—to actually balance the books and put people back to work in the province.

I understand now that the Premier says she won't have the budget by March 31, because it's a lot of work. The Premier says that it's a lot of work. But quite frankly, Premier, you've had a year to do so. If it's too much work for you, then I'm willing to take it on, my team is willing to take it on, and we're ready to bring in a turnaround plan to put people back to work in our province.

We're facing a jobs crisis in the province of Ontario. There are one million people out of work. We lost 3,000 manufacturing jobs again last month alone. Premier, stop the dithering. Stop the delay. You've got a job to do. Do

it. If you won't, we will. We need a turnaround plan in Ontario.

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Halton will come to order. If you want to see how quick I'm going to be, try it again.

1050

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: First of all, Mr. Speaker, let me just say that there is an enormous amount of work going on already in this province to make sure that people have opportunity. More than 8,000 young people have a placement and a job opportunity because of our youth jobs strategy. We are drawing business to the province; we are partnering with businesses to bring them to the province and help them to expand. That work is ongoing.

We are putting forward an aspirational, practical document, which our budget will be. We will introduce it in this House. We will bring it to this House, unlike the member opposite, whose budgets have been introduced outside of the House when they were in government.

This will not be a mini-budget. We are bringing forward a full-fledged budget, Mr. Speaker, and we will bring it forth in due course.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: I didn't think I'd find myself saying this, Speaker, but it makes you long for the days of Dalton McGuinty and Dwight Duncan, when they actually brought budgets in by March 31. You can't even hit that standard.

Premier, I don't think you understand. We've lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs in this province. Ontario desperately needs a government that will implement a turnaround plan immediately. In the Ontario PC Party, we have that plan. It's called the million jobs plan.

Today, we're tabling a motion in the House that you'll either call a budget by March 31 or, if you don't, then implement our jobs plan. But if you choose to do nothing, if you choose not to act at all, we want a confidence vote. Enough is enough. Let's get on with the job.

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, this is just another gimmick that the Leader of the Opposition is bringing forward. He knows full well that there is work ongoing to create opportunity in this province. He also knows that when his government was in office, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2003: May 7, May 6, May 5, May 4, May 2, May 9, June 17, May 22. That's his record, Mr. Speaker.

We're going to bring in an aspirational, practical budget that will create opportunity and security for this prov-

ince. We're not going to succumb to the gimmicks of a party that never did the same.

JOB CREATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, here's what I'm worried about: I think that you have no jobs plan. You have no turnaround plan. You seem to be running in circles and chasing your tails. That's not going to put a single person back to work in our province.

I met a small business owner named Scott when I was in Brantford last week. Scott is probably in his early thirties. He had nine employees—a small construction company. Often these small businesses are the backbone of communities like Brantford, Niagara and parts of Toronto. Scott said to me that before the Liberal government came in he had nine employees. Now, after tax increases, energy rate increases and more payroll taxes, he has no employees. I want to see Scott put nine people back to work, and even more. That's what my turnaround plan will do for our province. You have no plan.

Isn't it time to actually implement a turnaround plan to help Scott, to help his employees, and to put people back to work in the province of Ontario? Let's just get on with the job.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I appreciate the question, and I appreciate the concern, that finally individuals across the way are looking to provide for jobs. What they're looking at, however, is going back to glory days of smokestacks and low-value-added jobs, and you can't compete. You can't go back in time and try to give Scott an aspiration, more hope, more opportunity. You only do that by investing: investing in skills, investing in training, investing in infrastructure, investing in maintaining a dynamic business climate, things that the member opposite is not doing. Instead, he's gone to the Ford nation school of politics: only slogans, nothing substantive underneath.

Ontarians deserve better, and they are—when we table this budget, something for the future, something for them.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: The finance minister, who is not capable of bringing in a budget by the end of the fiscal year—he has had a year to do so—tells us he wants to give Scott an aspiration. I want to give Scott more contracts, more money and more employees on his payroll. That's the difference between you and me. You've got no plan.

Toby Barrett and I were there with Phil Gillies, our candidate in Brantford. Scott was not the only one around the table. They all have the same story to tell. Let me give you an example: Part of my million jobs plan is to reduce the red-tape burden, to take off the handcuffs. Bill 119 was one example. You want to increase payroll taxes across the province to put people out of work. I want to bring them down and give people better paycheques with more take-home pay. I've got a plan.

Minister, let me ask you this: If you have no plan by the end of the fiscal year, will you take ours, or will you

face a confidence vote? Enough is enough. We've got to get people back to work in our province.

Interjections.

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

Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: We talk about maintaining a dynamic business climate. We introduced reduction to red tape. We eventually introduced reduction in taxes. We did so just in the last session for 90% of businesses in this province—which they delayed, which we put forward.

But let me remind Scott and others out there what happened in 1996 with the Progressive Conservatives. They tabled a budget on May 7. What happened in 1997 with the Conservatives? They tabled a budget on May 6. In 1998, they tabled a budget on May 5. In 1999, they tabled a budget on May 4. In 2000, they tabled their budget on May 2. Oh, wait a minute; what happened in 2001? They tabled a budget on May 9. Better still, in 2002, the members over there tabled their budget on June 17.

We're going to table a budget on time and in an appropriate manner for the benefit of the long term. Stay tuned.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: You can say whatever you want to say about the PC government. It was clear where we stood. We did what we said we were going to do, and it was a time when people were actually working in the province of Ontario. We were booming. Taxes were low. Energy was under control. We led Canada—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I find myself in the unique position of trying to say to somebody who is heckling the member that your own members are being as loud and arguing back and forth. Let's just tone it down, please.

Wrap up, please.

Mr. Tim Hudak: We led North America in job creation.

All I've seen from you is dithering, delay and study after study after study. Now you're going to kick it down the road a couple more months. We need a turnaround plan now.

Minister, if you're not capable of doing it, I've got a team here that's capable of doing that. I want people to get back to work. Enough is enough. Let's get on with it.

Interjections.

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

Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Ontario has produced over 600,000 net new jobs. We're on track to produce even more as a result of the investments we're making, not the reckless cuts that are being proposed over there.

I'll give the Leader of the Opposition some credit. He is even more excessive and more reckless—and I give

Mike Harris some credit for doing what he said he would do. We will not do what they said they're going to do.

He's flip-flopping on that very issue as well. He wants to cut employment. He wants to destroy high-value jobs. He wants to ensure that he attacks working families. He has flip-flopped, and he is only doing gimmicks.

Ontarians deserve better, and we're going to continue to provide for high-value jobs. We're going to continue to stimulate economic growth. We're going to table a budget—

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

Hon. Charles Sousa: —that speaks to the needs of the people of Ontario and the fortunes of—

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

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. Two years ago, the Liberal government was forced to adopt the fairness tax on high-income earners. They had to be dragged, kicking and screaming, to do it, and they pledged that they would get rid of it as soon as they could. The government's current plan is to hand a million-dollar tax break to Ontario's highest-income earners within a couple of years.

Apparently, this was the plan yesterday, anyways. Can the Premier confirm that this is still the plan today?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As we've just been talking about and the Minister of Finance was saying, we are going to be introducing our budget. We are not going to talk about it in pieces here in the House. I'm not going to respond to a specific question when we haven't introduced the budget.

We will be bringing in the budget, and that budget will be aspirational. As the Minister of Finance has said, it will invest in the people of this province, in their skills. It will invest in infrastructure so that communities can grow. It will partner with business, and it will create a competitive business climate, as we have been doing, that will allow businesses to thrive. That is the work that we are doing. That is the budget that we will bring in.

As I have said, I'd be happy to have a conversation with the leader of the third party about the budget if she were interested. She has not so far responded to our request to have a meeting. I'd be happy to have that conversation if she'd like to, Mr. Speaker.

1100

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier has also committed to opening new corporate tax loopholes that will allow Ontario's wealthiest corporations to write off the HST on entertainment expenses and company cars. Now, apparently this was also the plan yesterday, Speaker. Can the Premier confirm that it's still the plan today?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, the leader of the third party is picking issues out of the air that are not based in what we are doing. They are not part of any kind of coherent plan. They're not part of any kind of coherent

narrative about what she believes the people of this province need. So if she wants to have a conversation about any of those things in context, about what we really are proposing or not proposing, I'd be happy to have that discussion with her. But I am not going to respond to hypothetical assertions by the leader of the third party, because it is not a productive way to have a discussion about the fiscal situation in Ontario.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Families are feeling squeezed in tough times, and they are looking for help. But they're having a hard time believing that the same Liberals that hiked their hydro bills, hit them with the HST and have scrambled to defend tax loopholes for the wealthy, massive CEO salary hikes and billion-dollar scandals, are actually going to, in any way, defend a beleaguered middle class.

The Premier says she wants to do things differently, but trying to raise gas taxes and the HST and then frantically scrambling in the other direction isn't the leadership that families need. Do the Liberals really think that this is good enough for the people of Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, let me address the issue of people who are struggling to make ends meet: I know that. The leader of the third party can, again, assert that my announcement and our commitment not to raise the HST and not to raise gas tax and not to raise income tax on middle classes—she can assert that that's because of something that she said. Nothing could be farther from the truth.

We have been working on putting together a transit fund to make sure that we have the revenue to invest in transit for some months. I made the announcement simply because the leader of the third party was causing mischief and fearmongering about what we were or were not going to do.

I've made it clear that we are not going to raise those taxes, but I've also made it clear that we understand that in addition to the 30% off tuition grant, in addition to the plans for, the programs for reducing electricity costs, we know that people need investment in transit in this province.

JOB CREATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, I think the Premier is protesting a bit too much. We have the list of NDP ideas. We just keep ticking them off.

The question is to the Premier. Earlier this month, the Premier said that she was shocked by the Chrysler decision to walk away from the discussions with the government about Ontario jobs. Like Chrysler, Cliffs Natural Resources also walked away from discussions with the government. Now, this was after the Liberals had promised thousands of jobs at a ribbon-cutting ceremony to announce a refinery in Capreol. Can the Premier report any progress on these two files, Speaker?

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm so pleased to hear from the third party, finally, some discussion about Chrysler, because during those negotiations when we were trying to encourage the investment to come here, they were absolutely silent on this investment. Fortunately, we had the great members, like the member for Windsor West, who was actively working on the ground with labour, with the employees, with Chrysler themselves, to land that important deal.

We're pleased that Chrysler did make a significant investment both in Windsor and in Brampton. We're working with them, and we're re-engaging them, hoping to land that longer-term investment. But we continued to make these investments, in Cisco in December, another important example: 3,700 jobs coming with the \$4-billion investment. To this day, I don't know where the NDP is on that investment or the other efforts that we're making to bring important investments to this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Gee, I guess my staff must have missed it in the inbox when I got invited to those negotiations, but I'll have them look.

Families are worried about their jobs and their future, and Liberal promises are not going to pay the bills, unless you're working in public relations for the government. The Premier is stubbornly sticking to a failing plan, while company after company seems to be walking away. Does the Premier think her plan is working?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Well, again, Mr. Speaker, I'm not quite sure where the leader of the third party is coming from, because we're making important investments in this province to the point where Ontario remains, in North America, the number one destination on a per capita basis for foreign direct investment, so I'm not sure what more the leader of the third party wants. Investment is coming to this province. I mentioned the Cisco investment—they've remained silent on that—and the Ford investment last September, which is securing nearly 3,000 jobs at the Oakville facility for a significant time to come.

We're continuing to work with our partners in business and investors overseas to make sure that these investments continue to come, and we're seeing results as well, with nearly 450,000 net new jobs created in this province since June 2009.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: For years the government has been defending the same old plans that have left Ontario's unemployment rate above the national average. The Liberals keep doing the same thing, but somehow expecting a different result to occur. That is why New Democrats are actually suggesting something new. A job creator tax credit rewards the companies that are putting people to work. It doesn't just create more dead money or reward companies that ship jobs out of Ontario.

Is the Premier ready to admit that what she's doing isn't working and it's time to look at some new ideas?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I wish the leader of the third party had listened to me yesterday—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Finance.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: —when I talked about the job creators tax plan. This isn't me speaking about it; this is actually the Obama administration, which abandoned a similar plan because a government report estimated that in the United States 92% of those hired under a similar program would have been hired anyway.

Our Ministry of Finance has looked at their plan as well, and we asked the Jobs and Prosperity Council to look at it. Of course, Jim Stanford from Unifor was a member of that council as well. They abandoned it, they rejected it, but our Ministry of Finance has estimated—because we're not just talking about net new jobs; you have to actually provide this to all new job creations in the province. It could cost more than \$2 billion a year to implement your plan. That's not good.

AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: My question is to the Minister of Agriculture and Food. Minister, I know from past experience that the minister is involved when the University of Guelph recommends closing Alfred and Kemptville agriculture colleges. When I was the minister and I was asked, I protected the Alfred and Kemptville colleges because I recognized their value.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: When Noble Villeneuve, the former member from Stormont–Dundas–Glengarry and East Grenville was Minister of Agriculture, he protected them, too.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of the Environment.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Minister, why didn't you?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Order. The member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan, come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, no, no. When I say stop, you stop. Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that my critic, the member opposite, understands that this is an issue that the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities has responsibility for. I also know that as the Minister of Agriculture and Food, I am very concerned that there are programs in place for young people to be able to get into the agriculture and food industry. It's extremely, extremely important to me.

I also know that the member opposite knows that the member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell has worked so that there is a partnership that has been created for the Alfred campus—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Simcoe North, come to order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —and he also knows that we are open to partnerships, understanding that the program is not closing—

Interjection.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —but that the venue is changing. We are open to partnerships so that there can be a local solution, and I think the member opposite knows that full well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Minister, operating Alfred and Kemptville colleges was one of the four conditions for Guelph in their enhanced agreement to operate, and that is an agreement with OMAFRA, your ministry.

An economic impact study of that partnership said that the campuses were crucial to the agricultural research science process and training development. Guelph is still getting the partnership funds, so if they are no longer required to operate the campuses, why did your government bargain that requirement away?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: To the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. The member from Nepean–Carleton will come to order. The member from Oxford will come to order. The Minister of Energy will come to order. I'm not happy to hear that.

Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

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Hon. Brad Duguid: It's not by accident that Ontario has one of the top three agri-food sectors anywhere in North America. It's because we have a champion as our Minister of Agriculture, and I would put her record in agriculture up with yours or your former colleagues' any day of the week.

Interjections.

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

Mr. Todd Smith: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And he's on the edge.

Carry on, please.

Hon. Brad Duguid: That being said, we understand the concerns being raised in eastern Ontario regarding the Kemptville campus. We understood the concerns being raised as well regarding the Alfred campus, and the member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell has worked very, very hard to ensure that the Alfred campus remains open. I want to thank him for that on behalf of the francophone students and youth. We'll continue to work with the members opposite—

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

GO TRANSIT

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Premier. Kitchener–Waterloo needs all-day, two-way GO service. We don't need empty Liberal promises. The Premier's announcement yesterday is neither all-day nor two-way. It's a couple of more trains in a couple of more years, still going one direction at one time, and it's another example of more promises and delays from this Liberal government.

Interjections.

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

Come to order. Minister of Education, come to order. If you guys haven't figured it out, I'm in the mood. I'm just waiting for the right moment.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Would you like to be the first?

Please finish.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It is not two-way and it is not all-day. It's another example of more promises and delays from this Liberal government. My question to the Premier: Why can't the good people of Kitchener–Waterloo get two-way, all-day GO service?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: That's exactly what the people of Kitchener–Waterloo are going to get, and the people of Guelph and all the stops in between. We are bringing two-way, full-day GO train service to Kitchener–Waterloo, and the investment that we are putting in place will create more than 33,000 net new jobs. So it's a double bonus. By the end of 2016, Metrolinx will add four additional trains, two in the morning and two in the afternoon, to serve the Kitchener station. That will add 1,000 additional daily passengers. We know that you have to take steps. You have to start on delivering this kind of service. This is a concrete proposal that we are going to be bringing forward in our budget.

What I think the people of Kitchener–Waterloo need to understand is that the member opposite is part of a party that has absolutely no plan for transit.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: No timeline and no funding means one thing: The Liberals have no plan to deliver two-way, all-day GO earlier than 2030. The cities of Kitchener, Waterloo and Guelph have been clear. They have called for all-day, two-way GO train service on the Kitchener line. But rather than listening, rather than investing and rather than creating 40,000 jobs, the Liberals are stalling and wasting even more time, just like the last Premier. This Liberal Premier will say anything to distract from their record of delivering nothing.

To the Premier, will she admit she has no idea when two-way, all-day GO will reach Kitchener–Waterloo?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I just finished giving the member opposite a date. I just finished saying that by the

end of 2016, those trains are going to be in place. The member opposite knows full well that we are acting on our commitment, as we have in the last few years. We've invested \$19.3 billion in public transit.

What is outrageous is that a member of the NDP—who has denigrated any plan we've had for transit, who has given us no support in terms of raising revenue and who has no plan for transit—would stand up when she knows full well that we're bringing full-day, two-way transit to Kitchener–Waterloo, and all she would do is criticize instead of bringing forward a plan that might actually help to move that plan forward.

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I find it absolutely fascinating that I hear complaints all the time from all three sides about one side being too loud, and then as soon as they start, the other side gets loud. How about if we all just tone it down?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, you don't get the last word; I do.

New question.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Recently—in fact, a few weeks ago—I was at an elementary school in Mississauga East–Cooksville. The name of that school is Metropolitan Andrei, and I was there to attend a parent council meeting.

What I heard from those moms that evening—and they were mostly moms—the hot topic of conversation was actually multiplication tables. What I heard those moms tell me is that they really want their kids to learn creative thinking and problem-solving, but they also want to make sure that their kids are learning their multiplication tables and math drills, the same way many of us in this Legislature did when we were in school.

I promised them that night that I would express their views to the Minister of Education, so I'm really pleased that today I'm able to ask this on their behalf, and for all parents in Mississauga East–Cooksville.

To the Minister of Education: What are we doing to ensure that our kids have the best of both worlds?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Thank you to the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville for the question. The member is quite right: Ontario's students are performing well in math. In fact, our results are above the OECD average, despite what the official opposition continues to say.

I'm proud of the gains that Ontario students have made, but I do know we can do better. As minister, I've heard from business and community leaders who tell me they are looking for graduates who know their math and who are also critical thinkers and problem-solvers, which is why we are committed to ensuring there is a balanced approach to math instruction between practice and

problem-solving, and not simply a one-dimensional back-to-the-basics approach like the Conservatives are proposing.

In fact, Ontario's curriculum is very consistent with Quebec's. We know that it's important for our students to be able to understand math concepts, know their facts and use them to solve problems.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Thank you, Minister, for that answer. In the last few months, the results for Ontario's EQAO assessments, as well as the international assessments from the OECD, have been released, and there's some really great news. It's reassuring to see that overall in Ontario, 71% of students are at the provincial standard, up from 54% when the Tories were in power. So we've done a really good job, and thank you, Minister, for that.

But there's always room for improvement. Can you tell this House what we are doing to further improve math scores in Ontario?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Thank you to the member. She's right: Ontario does have a lot to be proud of when we look at our student achievement, and that's thanks to the great educators we have in our system.

But we do have more work to do on math; we know that. So that's why we're investing \$4 million to create new learning opportunities in math for educators, including workshops in the summer, and incentives for teachers to take additional qualifications courses.

I know the party opposite believes that the way to raise math scores is to give merit pay for teachers who get the best math scores. You know what? We don't believe that will work, because we believe that the way to make kids learn better is to help teachers teach our students to build and apply their math scores. That's why we're investing in teachers and working with the College of Teachers and the faculties of education to improve math pedagogy.

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SCHOOL EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Mr. Rob Leone: My question is for the education minister. As your teachers' bargaining bill limps through committee, weighed down by dozens and dozens of hand-crafted union amendments, the Ontario PC caucus has made but one request to get this bill passed. We want you to ensure that sports teams, debate clubs and choir practices are not used as bargaining chips the next time the unions decide to hold them hostage.

The funny thing is, Minister, that you actually agree with us. As president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association, you supported that idea. We know this because in a 2001 brief to the government, your report stated, "A comprehensive co-instructional program is an essential part of the educational experience."

At that time, you actually listened to parents and students who told you how important co-instructional activities are to them.

Since the minister has had some time to think about this over the March break, does she agree with her position before or after she became a politician?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Actually, it's an absolutely consistent position. We totally believe that co-instructional activities are very, very important to creating a safe, supportive and nurturing school environment.

We know that when kids participate in activities beyond just curriculum, that helps them to succeed. For many children, it's those extra opportunities that actually present their attachment to school.

If he wants more evidence of my stand on that, if he'd look at all the reports made by the Safe Schools Action Team, which I also chaired, he would find that that is the same position.

What we don't agree with is that mandating these things and trying to legislate will actually solve the problem. Working with partners is what solves the problem, not trying to legislate—

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

Mr. Rob Leone: Minister, if you say something is essential, you will do whatever it takes to get the job done. On your government's watch, extracurricular activities were an afterthought, a bargaining chip. Parents and students remember that vividly.

The same February 7, 2001, brief suggests that we "remove co-instructional activities from the realm of selective service withdrawal (work-to-rule)."

Minister, there was a time when you stood with students and parents. I can't imagine what it would be like to work your whole life on behalf of students and to then turn your back the second the unions tell you what to do.

We hear enough empty rhetoric from that party, Mr. Speaker, and students deserve more than that. Will the minister stand by what she believes, stand with parents and students, and safeguard co-instructional activities in Ontario schools? Be the boss, Minister, and do your job.

Interjections.

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

Minister?

Hon. Liz Sandals: The difference between the member opposite and me is, as he just pointed out, I've been involved in the education system for a very long time—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex will withdraw.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I withdraw.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I got it. Relax. I challenge everybody to ratchet it down.

Minister?

Hon. Liz Sandals: What I know, because I was president of the school boards when they were the government, is that they chose to legislate. When they tried to legislate—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean–Carleton will come to order. The member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex will come to order. The member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry will come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Oh, yes, you did.

Wrap up, please.

Hon. Liz Sandals: We had eight years of chaos, precisely because they insisted that they could solve all the problems of volunteerism by legislating. It didn't work then; it won't work now. Partnership works. Fights don't work.

NURSES

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. Hundreds of nurses are outside today, urging this government to protect patient care. They are frustrated because more than 1,000 nursing positions have been cut since 2012 and Ontario is falling behind.

Given all that the government knows about the vital role that nurses play across our health care system, why does this government keep laying nurses off?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I welcome the question. I think it's an important opportunity to set the record right. We have 20,500 more nurses working in Ontario today than in 2003. Let me repeat that: 20,500 more nurses working now than in 2003. We have 4,000 more nurses working today than we did a year ago.

We believe in the role of nurses. We're expanding the scope of practice. We're investing in nurse practitioners in running clinics and working in very important roles throughout our health care system. I look forward to the supplementary, but the numbers speak for themselves. From the College of Nurses, we have seen an 18.4% increase in the number of nurses: 20,500 more nurses working today than 10 years ago.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: The minister also knows that Ontario has the second-lowest registered-nurse-to-person ratio in our entire country. We know that there is a direct link between patient outcomes and registered nurses' workloads, or, said the other way, when you cut nurses, you hurt patients. When will this government stop patting themselves on the back and address the problem that they are creating?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, let me repeat, because maybe—just maybe—the member opposite did not hear the first time: 20,500 more nurses working today than 10 years ago. In the last year, we have added 4,000 more nurses.

Yes, the health care system is undergoing a transformation. There are more nurses working in the community sector. That's a good thing. That's a good thing for patients; it's a good thing for our health care system.

We value tremendously the role that nurses play, and that's why we've continued to invest in more nurses working throughout our health care system.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Ms. Soo Wong: My question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Minister, you and I have an interest in helping Ontario's vulnerable youth. I'm pleased to acknowledge that this House finally passed Bill 53, which you and I brought forward, and we now can see May 14 proclaimed as Children and Youth in Care Day, a day each year that we can celebrate their accomplishments and, more importantly, raise awareness of the challenges that these youth often face. This is the right thing to do.

Minister, children with communication, developmental and physical disabilities face many challenges. In my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt, I've met with many constituents facing these challenges. As a member of the Select Committee on Developmental Services, I heard testimony from many families about their difficulties in accessing services for their children.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Can she please inform the House what our government is doing in addressing the concern of these families?

Hon. Teresa Piruzza: I'd like to thank the member from Scarborough—Agincourt for the question and, as well, congratulate her on the passage of Bill 53 earlier this week. That was great. Having brought it forward the first time and following up on it, I was quite pleased to see that pass, so congratulations to this House for passing that. I'd like to thank her and the Select Committee on Developmental Services on the work that they've done and the interim report that they've just brought forward, as well.

The current services that we provide to children and youth with special needs make a real difference, but we recognize that there is more to do. I know that the committee has heard from parents and families, just as I have as well.

I recently announced the new Ontario Special Needs Strategy. As part of this strategy, we will be introducing a new developmental screen to help identify risks to a child's development as early as possible. We will be hiring service coordinators to make planning for a child's care easier, and we will be integrating the delivery of rehabilitation supports to eliminate service gaps. We know that families have an interest in ensuring that we stay on track with these changes.

1130

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Soo Wong: Thank you to the minister for her response. I'm pleased to hear that we have brought forward a special needs strategy to make it easier for children and families to access supports.

In my riding, I often hear from families about the difficulty they face accessing services, and I'm pleased to hear that we're taking action.

I'm also impressed by the strength and commitment to caring for their children. I want to make sure that these initiatives help families as effectively as possible. These

initiatives need to include the feedback both from the families as well as the leading experts.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, can she also please share with the House how the Special Needs Strategy takes into consideration the advice of families as well as experts in the field?

Hon. Teresa Piruzza: Our new Special Needs Strategy incorporates the feedback that we have heard and certainly is reflected in the strategy. When I announced the strategy, I was at the York-Simcoe Children's Treatment Network. It really strikes a chord, and you really see the gratitude when you see parents in the audience with tears in their eyes, because they recognize we have listened, and we've brought forward a strong strategy.

So you've heard that we'll be assisting with the navigation. We'll be bringing forward a new developmental screen, hiring service coordinators, making it easier for families to navigate what is now a very complex system. But, as part of this strategy as well, we will be putting in place a committee to assist us with the implementation of this.

We will continue to focus our efforts. We will continue to listen to parents and experts as we implement to ensure that we have all children reaching their opportunities, and helping all children succeed.

GO TRANSIT

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is for the Premier. I have to admit it was a bit rich to hear your GO Transit reannouncement yesterday. You seem to have forgotten your government's long list of broken promises on infrastructure projects in Waterloo region, so let's review.

In 2007, you promised you'd build Highway 7; then you didn't. In 2010, you promised you'd build Highway 7; then you didn't. In 2012, you promised you'd build Highway 7, but you still haven't. And let's not forget: In 2010, you promised four eastbound and westbound GO trains between Kitchener and Toronto, but you cut that in half.

Premier, with such a long list of broken promises on infrastructure projects in Waterloo region, why should anyone in my community believe a word you now say?

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

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It was my pleasure to be in Kitchener—Waterloo yesterday, and to talk to the Cambridge and Kitchener—Waterloo chambers of commerce and to be able to talk about the investment that we are going to make in full-day, two-way GO service, Mr. Speaker. It was interesting, because there were business leaders and local politicians in the room. They are all very pleased that we are bringing this forward in our budget. They are very, very happy that this is what's happening.

I know that the member opposite knows—he might just have forgotten, but I think he knows—that there is

property being purchased along the corridor to deal with the Highway 7 expansion. I'm sure he just forgot that, but he knows that we're delivering on that commitment as well.

So we brought the train to Kitchener–Waterloo. We're going to be bringing full-day, two-way GO service. We're going to be building the expansion of Highway 7. All of those promises have been made, and they're being implemented.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Harris: Back to the Premier: Let's review your GO Transit reannouncement from yesterday. You gave no price tag, you gave no specifics and you gave no time frame, yet you still want residents in Waterloo region to believe you.

Premier, you are the reason Kitchener doesn't already have full two-way GO service.

Interjections.

Mr. Michael Harris: No. Listen: In 2010, you were the transportation minister. You cancelled the project. Now, nearly four years later, you claim you want to undo your broken promise, but only after allowing another two years to pass.

Premier, do you really think it's fair to coerce the residents of Waterloo region into voting for you by promising the same GO Transit commitment that you cancelled nearly four years ago?

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, I remember very clearly being with the Minister of Government Services when we announced the GO train service to Kitchener–Waterloo. I remember very clearly the enthusiasm for that.

I know that, as I said, the business community and the elected officials yesterday were very pleased that by the end of 2016, Metrolinx expects to add four additional trains, two in the morning and two in the afternoon, to serve the Kitchener station, and that that is a concrete move forward to implementing full-day, two-way GO.

Since 2003, this government has invested \$19.3 billion in public transit, \$9.1 billion in GO Transit. Under the previous Conservative government, between 1999 and 2003, there was virtually no money invested in GO Transit. There was no expansion of service.

The fact is, we are listening to the concerns of people in this province. We know that integrated transportation systems are what is needed, and we are delivering those and we will continue to do that.

PAN AM GAMES

Mr. Paul Miller: My question is to the Premier. The people of Hamilton are increasingly alarmed about the Ministry of Transportation's proposal to close portions of the Burlington Skyway this summer. Ministry staff suggest that the closures will take place overnight on 18

weekends and affect the Toronto-bound traffic. The proposal suggests that closures will take place between this spring and the fall of 2016.

Has the ministry been told that the province is hosting the Pan/Parapan Am Games next summer and that the venues include Welland and Hamilton?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I appreciate the member's comments in regard to the Pan/Parapan American Games, something that's going to be a tremendous opportunity for tourism, attractions and, more importantly, infrastructure spending.

I understand the concerns you have in regard to transit and getting people around the greater Golden Horseshoe. It's a valid concern. It's one that we're addressing here with our Minister of Transportation as well as our minister responsible for security, ensuring that people in the province are safe and ensuring that we move people more appropriately and more effectively. That will require some amendments and some changes to some of the lanes and some of the closures in the meantime.

But it's going to be an investment in our future, and Ontarians are going to be proud of their athletes performing in the Pan Am Games. They're going to be proud that they're going to have venues, community centres, auditoriums and stadiums like never before. That is the legacy that's going to be left to this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Paul Miller: I don't know what that has got to do with the bridge. But anyways, not only will these closures have a significant impact on the citizens of greater Hamilton; they will negatively impact our tourism partners as well.

With concerns raised by city councillors in Hamilton about the rerouted traffic impact on our beach neighbourhood, which has an 80-year-old lift bridge, during the nighttime closures, there is also concern about the impact of the daytime closures, should winds reach 85 kilometres an hour at times on that bridge.

I don't recall any consultation with me or my staff or the city of Hamilton about this proposal. I'm gravely concerned about the impact on our citizens, our tourists and our Pan/Parapan Am Games participants.

Will the Premier step back from this proposal until full consultation takes place and real consideration is given to the impact on Hamiltonians, tourism, the Pan/Parapan Am Games and our Hamilton council?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Actually, I attended a number of the announcements in Hamilton when we introduced the refurbishing and the new stadium that's going to be going to Hamilton. The mayor was there and the council was there, and the member opposite was there as well, celebrating the infusion of capital and investment into Hamilton for the benefit of the people of Hamilton and for the people of Ontario.

Also, the council and the mayor, as of last week, have been consulted. They're looking at ways to alleviate traffic woes during that construction. Those consultations are being had.

I say to the member opposite, if he wishes to involve himself, by all means; you have friends in council. Be part of the solution. Enable us to make this happen. Working together, we can accomplish a lot.

I know you. I know you want to be part of this. I know you—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Oh, yes, you do.

Stop the clock. That is a perfect example of why you address the Chair, and it's why I would ask you, if you ask the question, to listen carefully to the answer instead of heckling.

I would ask and remind us all—except for the member who wants to give me some coaching; I don't want it right now—if you would all just simply follow the rules, everything would be fine. Thank you.

1140

FARM SAFETY

Ms. Helena Jaczek: My question is for the Minister of Agriculture and Food. Minister, my great riding of Oak Ridges–Markham is, as you know, partly rural and home to many farms. I know the farmers in my riding are very concerned about safe farming practices and workplace safety, so I was pleased to hear that the Canadian Federation of Agriculture named last week as Canadian Agricultural Safety Week. Although it is always good to see events that illustrate the importance of farm safety, we need to be sure that safe practice is actually used. Speaker, through you to the minister: What is the Ministry of Agriculture and Food doing to promote a safe workplace environment on the farm?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you to the member from Oak Ridges–Markham for her question. I know she is always concerned about these safety issues. I want to assure her that our government is committed to ensuring that all farm workers and producers are protected, that their health and safety is protected. In fact, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food has been working with Workplace Safety and Prevention Services for over 15 years. Our goal is to reduce the occurrence of workplace injuries and illness on Ontario farms, horticulture and landscape operations.

Canadian Agricultural Safety Week actually gives us an opportunity to reflect on the work we've done to improve our safety record, and working with rural affairs, there are a number of ongoing safety initiatives. We have agriculture safety days that focus on safety education and training for children and families. My ministry is pleased to work with Workplace Safety and Prevention Services with a transfer payment of \$120,000 a year. That's specifically intended to ensure that its programs and information are available to all families and to all farmers across the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Thank you, Minister, for that response. It's good to hear that the Ministry of Agriculture and Food is working so closely with Workplace Safety and Prevention Services and the Ministry of Rural Affairs to further ongoing farm safety initiatives. As we all know, agricultural work is often hazardous and can lead to serious workplace injuries. People in my riding work in the agricultural sector and face these inherent risks each and every day. I understand that in 2006 our government extended the Occupational Health and Safety Act to include farming operations for the first time ever. Speaker, through you to the minister: Can you tell my constituents what else our government is doing to protect the health and safety of Ontarians who work in our agricultural sector?

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

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I thank the member from Oak Ridges–Markham for the very timely question. We value the hard work that our farmers do every single day to make sure that local food comes to our table. The Ministry of Labour has 200 trained inspectors with expertise on issues inherent to health and safety. The Ministry of Labour will continue to conduct both reactive and proactive visits to farms across the province. To address and continuously improve farm safety in Ontario, the ministry works with the farming technical advisory committee. Among many targeted initiatives, the ministry has produced eight guidelines to help employers in the farming industry. Further, the ministry has included farming operations as a targeted sector for several blitzes, most recently in 2003, in our vulnerable, new and young worker blitz. We'll continue to value the work our farmers do and ensure that farming is safe in Ontario.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is to the Premier. Back in February, the Minister of Transportation addressed the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce about transit in the Hamilton region. Despite his well-documented preference for LRTs in Toronto, his comments that day were very subdued on whether your government would force LRTs on Hamilton. As you may know, two of your Liberal candidates in the area, Ivan Luksic and Javid Mirza, are strongly opposed to LRTs in Hamilton. I find it very interesting that the minister will take a stance on LRTs by any means in Toronto but has mixed opinions on them in Hamilton. My question is, Premier: Who is dictating the transit policy there, the Minister of Transportation or the candidates whose seats you want to win in the next election?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: If the question is, are we going to continue to invest in transit in the GTHA and beyond, are we going to invest in integrated transportation plans, yes, we are going to do that—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Oxford will come to order; Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, come to order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —which, I would just remark, stands in stark contrast to what the—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Leeds–Grenville, come to order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —opposition party has put forward, which is no plan to invest in transit, no support for developing integrated transportation plans.

On the issue of the particular modes of public transit, municipality by municipality, there are local discussions; there is no doubt about that. There are local discussions in Toronto, in Kitchener–Waterloo, in Ottawa and in Hamilton, and municipalities need to work to determine what is going to be the best mode for their own communities. That's why we work in partnership with municipalities as we make those investments.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Back to the Premier. Premier, you've just said it, and you and your minister both talk about respecting local decision-making, yet your government railroads municipalities at every turn.

I want to draw your attention to a letter I wrote to the minister on March 6 about the Niagara-GTA corridor. The mid-peninsula highway would bring thousands of jobs, alleviate congestion and enhance cross-border trade. Local bodies, including the municipality of Niagara, the city of Hamilton, the Burlington Chamber of Commerce and many more who represent the local interests you've been talking about, all strongly support this project. Yet the Minister of Transportation addressed the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce and he dismissed the project as ridiculous.

Premier, I have to ask, do you support your minister, and if so, why do you think local decision-making is important for LRTs in Hamilton, yet unimportant for projects that would unleash thousands of jobs in the Hamilton-Niagara region?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm happy to have a conversation about the mid-pen highway. There have been many, many opinions expressed. The ministry has recommended building a new highway connecting 406 near Welland to the QEW near Fort Erie. That recommendation has been done. The member opposite knows that there has been a more contentious discussion about a larger project.

But I do believe that local input is important. I also believe that making sure we make these investments is important. It's very interesting that the party that is advocating cutting and slashing and not investing in the province, that is talking about not investing in infrastructure and not investing in people and not investing in communities, all of a sudden has members who are asking questions about making investments that would cost millions of dollars.

The fact is, we are going to make those investments. We are going to work with communities, and that stands in stark contrast—

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

ARTS AND CULTURAL FUNDING

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is for the Premier. Madam Premier, each year for the past 26 years, hundreds of thousands of music lovers have descended on the Beach at Queen Street East for what has been described as “one of the 10 best jazz festivals in the world.” The Beaches Jazz Festival has grown bigger and better every year, and hundreds of local volunteers work with the director, Lido Chilleli, and his team to create this phenomenal event. Last year, 500,000 people attended.

For the past seven years, the festival has received funding from the Ministry of Tourism's Celebrate Ontario program. Can the Premier explain why this ministry and her minister have rejected their grant application for 2014?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I would be happy to have a discussion with the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. I don't have the details on this particular investment. But what I do know is that there are hundreds of events and festivals across the province that receive funding. Each year, the ministry looks at the applications and those decisions are made. I'm happy to get back to the member on the specifics of this particular issue.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Prue: It is true there are hundreds of applications made, but this is the largest jazz festival, by far, in the whole province. This festival generates \$65 million into the Toronto economy and over \$30 million of that right in the Beach area. The entertainment is free of charge. Classes and workshops are held for aspiring young musicians, and world-class entertainers appear on our doorstep that everyone can enjoy.

Speaker, I don't think the ministry or the Minister of Tourism has properly assessed this application. Will the Premier intervene?

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: As the Premier indicated, she will certainly look into this and get back to the member opposite, but it gives us the opportunity to talk about this highly competitive program, Celebrate Ontario, with the amazing success that it has.

I want to talk about its success in job creation: 22,000 jobs annually, each year. The funding the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport provides through Celebrate Ontario generates more than 22,000 jobs.

I don't know what the member opposite wants me to say. We're going to get back to him and look into it. Unfortunately, the minister responsible isn't here to respond directly. But this is an important program. Certainly in the Beaches it's a very important program that we have supported for a number of years. We will certainly get back to him on this issue.

REGIONAL CENTRES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I've got a question this morning for the Minister of Community and Social

Services. The members of this House all heard the heartfelt apology from the Premier to the former residents of the Huronia, Rideau and Southwestern regional centres when it was delivered in the Legislature on December 9, 2013.

Observers, myself included, applauded the Premier for her sincerity. We also commended the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of the third party for their impactful apologies as well. However, since then, we've not heard an update on other important aspects of this settlement for the former residents. One such requirement was that residents be provided access to their own case files should they desire them.

Speaker, through you to the minister: Would you inform this House as to what is the status of this key settlement?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I'd be delighted to respond to the excellent question. I'm pleased to share with the House that, in order to make it easier for former residents, the government is providing one-window access through the ministry's freedom-of-information unit.

Through this process, no requester of information is required to pay any fee. We brought in extra staff. We've already reviewed over 70,000 pages of documents.

To date, there have been 397 requests for personal records, and all have been met within the timeline prescribed, as per the agreement.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Labour on a point of order.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I just want to correct my record. In my response to the member from Oak Ridges–Markham, I said that our most recent blitz for vulnerable, new and young workers was in 2003. What I meant to say is that it was in 2013.

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

The House recessed from 1152 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Helena Jaczek: In the east members' gallery, I'd like to introduce Allan O'Dette, the president of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and a resident of the great riding of Oak Ridges–Markham.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome.

Mr. Mike Colle: I'd like to introduce a number of doctors and community volunteers who are here for Sickle Cell and Thalassemia Awareness Day: Lanre Tunji-Ajayi, Doreen Alexander, Helen Ziavras, Dr. Isaac Odame from SickKids, Dr. Rob Klaassen from Ottawa's children's hospital, Dr. Richard Ward from Toronto General Hospital, Dr. Jacob Pendergast from Toronto General Hospital, and Dr. Madeleine Verhovsek from St. Joe's hospital in Hamilton. Welcome to Queen's Park.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. John O'Toole: The residents in my riding of Durham opposed to the Clarington transformer project are being ignored by the Minister of the Environment. The residents formed the Enniskillen Environmental Association and contracted a world-renowned hydro-geologist, Dr. John Cherry, of the G360 group at Guelph university. The Enniskillen Environmental Association and Dr. John Cherry have brought forward substantial research indicating faults in Hydro One's class environmental assessment.

Minister Bradley and I met yesterday, and I shared with him and spoke with him for some time and gave him some correspondence that perhaps his staff did not provide to him. I'm asking the minister to respond to them directly.

Recently, the municipality of Clarington approved up to \$25,000 in funding for research on Hydro One's transformer site, because the municipality, along with Dr. Cherry, does not believe that sufficient scientific study has been conducted.

Now the region of Durham is requesting that the minister meet with the Enniskillen Environmental Association and Dr. Cherry to listen to their concerns, understand the research, and explain the reason for the approval of the project.

Minister, please do not avoid this issue. For far too long, I have been meeting with you and asking and requesting politely that you meet with the Enniskillen Environmental Association and Dr. Cherry before you allow the transfer station project to commence construction. It's important to establish the trust in protecting the environment.

LAURA HAMILTON

Ms. Catherine Fife: Every now and then, we have a unique opportunity in this House to stand up and share a personal story.

One of the positive things about winning the Kitchener–Waterloo by-election is that I've actually had an opportunity to spend more time with my own sister, who lives in Toronto. Over the last couple of years, Julie, my sister, has shared the remarkable and courageous journey of a young woman, her friend Laura Hamilton.

Laura recently succumbed to cancer, at the age of 34, but she didn't go out without a fight. Laura Hamilton was a superstar. She dedicated her life to children and youth through her passionate work at the YMCA of Western Ontario and through the three inspiring children's books she wrote under the guise of a stuffed lion named Roary, the proceeds of which go to support camp experience for children.

Laura touched the hearts of the people in her community and beyond. Her strength was put to the test many times in her young life, yet Laura always found the silver

lining. She continued to amaze everyone with the positivity and gratitude that she maintained throughout all the obstacles she had to face.

When her final test proved to be more than any lion could overcome, she persevered by staying true to her humour and love of life. By drawing strength from the love within her and around her, she overcame the boundaries set up by those who did not know her, including the doctors who unfairly predicted a quick death. Throughout her battle with cancer, Laura was fierce and courageous, but most importantly, she always stayed true to herself.

My sincere condolences go out to the family and friends of Laura. Thank you for sharing her with the world.

SICKLE CELL AND THALASSEMIA AWARENESS DAY

Mr. Mike Colle: As you know, Mr. Speaker, today is Sickle Cell and Thalassemia Awareness Day at Queen's Park. We've had doctors from all across the province here today and we've had volunteer advocates from Thalassemia Canada and the Sickle Cell Awareness Group of Ontario. The volunteers are all here today to remind us of this silent—secret, almost—disease and blood disorder which affects hundreds of thousands of our neighbours, and not enough is being done to help them. They suffer in silence. They go through horrendous pain because of the fact that we don't pay enough attention to this horrific disease that affects, again, many of our neighbours across Ontario. They're here today to let us all know that it's about time we paid more attention to helping people who suffer from this debilitating disease that makes life unbearable.

They've met with the Minister of Health today. They are meeting with many MPPs, who found the time, because they can no longer stand by and see their loved ones suffer day after day without proper attention being given to them.

We have great work being done by Dr. Pendergast, from down the street at Toronto General Hospital, and Dr. Ward, but we need more of these good doctors, like Dr. Odame. So let's wake up and take this disease on, head first.

BUSINESS CLIMATE

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Last Wednesday, I hosted a business round table in St. Marys. I would like to thank the members from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex and Huron-Bruce for attending and speaking to local businesses and community leaders in Perth-Wellington. The turnout was impressive, with around 50 participants sharing their thoughts. We discussed the strong work ethic, entrepreneurial spirit and support from the local business organizations we have in our area.

Business leaders were frustrated, however, with certain provincial policies and red tape. We heard that energy costs are a primary concern for many businesses.

They cannot afford their hydro bills. Participants spoke about the burden of red tape. They are tired of onerous legislation and the government's micromanaging. Concerns were raised regarding the shortage of workers in the skilled trades, with participants citing the College of Trades and its cost as obstacles for skilled trades workers.

As our area is underserved in regard to public transportation, regional transportation challenges were a topic of discussion. We need a better way to connect our local communities. It's now too difficult for many job seekers and employees to work outside their hometown.

It was noted that one of our greatest exports is our youth. Opportunities need to be created to connect business with youth and attract them to, and keep them in, our rural communities.

Overall, we had a very informative and open discussion, and I am pleased to share the feedback in the House today.

NIAGARA PENINSULA CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Ms. Cindy Forster: I stand here today in the Legislature to echo concerns of city and regional councillors, conservationists and residents of Niagara, as well as past and present members of the board of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, over recent actions of the NPCA.

Since January 2012, the NPCA has fired 20% of their staff, including many long-serving senior positions. Additionally, other major policy changes are taking place in a recent strategic plan that outlines their goals for the next four years. Concerns have been raised about the language in the plan and the shift towards the potential sale of NPCA land. In the plan, one of the key objectives is the "streamlined, efficient delivery of development approvals process," which clearly defines development as a priority. Further, I understand that a new committee has been struck to deal specifically with property acquisition and disposal, being comprised of many from the development community.

Under the mandate of the conservation authorities of Ontario, the NPCA is here to ensure that our rivers, lakes, and streams are properly safeguarded, managed and restored; to protect, manage and restore woodlands, wetlands and natural habitat; and to develop and maintain programs that will protect life and property from natural hazards.

Many are worried that the NPCA is diverting away from their mandate, and I stand here to raise awareness of this issue to ensure that the Minister of Natural Resources exercises his ministerial authority to ensure that the NPCA is operating as per their mandate and in accordance with ministry regulations and the Ontario Conservation Authority regulations.

TAMIL HERITAGE MONTH

Ms. Soo Wong: I would like to congratulate all members of the House for passing the bill proclaiming

January as Tamil Heritage Month. It was nice to see that celebrating the cultural diversity of our province can bring us all together.

1510

We can also be very proud of Ontario's multiculturalism. Tamil Canadians represent a growing and dynamic population in Ontario, with approximately 300,000 living in the GTA alone.

We are fortunate to have a strong Tamil population in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt, as they make many important contributions to our community's social, economic, political and cultural well-being. People like Vijayakumara Kurukkal, the priest at the Sri Varasiththi Vinaayagar Hindu Temple in Scarborough–Agincourt, make a difference. There are also community leaders like Kulaveerasingham Sellathurai, Stan Muthulingam, Dr. Pon Sivaji, Krishan Suntharalingam and Ganesan Sugumar that have helped make Scarborough so vibrant. There are also youth like Kirusaan and Rukshan, who are active volunteers with me and other members of the community.

January is an important month for Tamil Canadians. The Tamil harvest festival, Thai Pongal, as well as other Tamil artistic and cultural events all take place in January.

Heritage months are opportunities to improve cultural understanding through education and awareness. This is an important part of building an accepting and tolerant society that nurtures diversity.

I'm proud that this House passed the bill and proclaimed January as Tamil Heritage Month.

AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES

COLLÈGES AGRICOLES

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's my privilege and honour to rise today on behalf of those in eastern Ontario, particularly in Kemptville and Alfred, who oppose the closure of those two agricultural colleges. I'm requesting that the Liberal government reverse those closures, and I stand committed with my Progressive Conservative caucus colleagues from the eastern Ontario region in offering this suggestion to the Liberal government: Give us the same courtesy that they gave New Liskeard and allow a two-year moratorium.

Donnez-nous la même courtoisie que vous avez donnée à New Liskeard : permettre un moratoire de deux ans. With a two-year moratorium, Kemptville and Alfred can allow for new students. Avec un moratoire de deux ans, Kemptville et Alfred peuvent se permettre d'inscrire de nouveaux étudiants. Local communities in Kemptville and Alfred can work on new governance structures. Les communautés locales à Kemptville et Alfred peuvent travailler sur de nouvelles structures de gouvernance. And they can fight to retain their local assets. Et ils peuvent se battre pour conserver leurs actifs locaux.

Speaker, we believe that this is the best solution, and I urge the Liberals to adopt it. I urge them to support those

from Russell, Sarsfield, Vars and Casselman who have signed my petition asking for this two-year moratorium. Ceci est la meilleure solution. Donc, j'invite les libéraux à l'adopter.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Mr. Bob Delaney: As the weather finally, inexorably begins to warm up, we heat-deprived Canadians turn our thoughts to getting away or planning for the summer. I have some reminders for Ontarians planning to either travel outside Canada or to receive visitors from outside Canada.

If you are travelling, especially to the United States, even for just a day, make sure you have third-party health insurance. Check your homeowner's policy or your premium credit cards. Check your employer's coverage to see if you're covered for illness and health care if and when you travel outside Canada. If not, visit your bank, see the Canadian Automobile Association or call your insurance carrier about travel insurance. It's cheap, and not having it can bring financial ruin to your family if someone falls sick or is injured while travelling.

Similarly, be sure all your visitors from outside Canada are covered by travellers' health insurance issued in their country of origin, and remain covered from the day they leave their home until the day they disembark back home after their trip. Foreign nationals, even if they are related to you, are not covered by OHIP while visiting Ontario.

This is advice that Ontarians can't afford to ignore. Enjoy the warm weather, and have a good trip wherever it is you choose to go.

ELMIRA MAPLE SYRUP FESTIVAL

Mr. Michael Harris: I'm pleased to rise today to speak on behalf of the Elmira Maple Syrup Festival and announce that their volunteer appreciation night is taking place this Friday at Lions Hall in Elmira.

As many know, the Elmira Maple Syrup Festival is the largest of its kind, and this year they are celebrating their 50th anniversary. Many new events are planned, including a magic show, food truck festival and cooking demos from celebrity chefs.

Going to Elmira is a tradition for my family, as we always kick off springtime with a trip to the festival. We don't hesitate to try all the exciting foods, activities and events featured in Elmira during the first Saturday in April.

Of course, this event wouldn't continue to thrive without the tireless work of the more than 2,000 dedicated volunteers who make this event possible each and every year. They do everything from directing traffic to providing sugar-bush tours to running games and activities for thousands of excited children. Their selfless efforts are the reason people from my community and across the world travel to the township of Woolwich for this important festival. So I would like to take this time to thank all

the dedicated volunteers of the Elmira Maple Syrup Festival for making it 50 great years.

As a final note, I am issuing a warning to the rival Mother Flippers team in the pancake flipping relay contest. I, in fact, just dusted off a shelf in my office and look forward to putting that first-place trophy there after the competition.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I hope everyone will come out to Elmira for this year's 50th Elmira Maple Syrup Festival.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Ah, pancakes.

I thank all members for their statements.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

PENSION BENEFITS AMENDMENT ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES RÉGIMES DE RETRAITE

Mr. Paul Miller moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 174, An Act to amend the Pension Benefits Act / Projet de loi 174, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les régimes de retraite.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Paul Miller: This bill amends the Pension Benefits Act to raise the amount guaranteed by the Pension Benefits Guarantee Fund from \$1,000 to \$2,500 per month.

SICKLE CELL AND THALASSEMIA CARE ONTARIO ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR TRAITEMENT DES AFFECTIONS DRÉPANOCYTAIRES ET DES THALASSÉMIES ONTARIO

Mr. Colle moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 175, An Act to establish Sickle Cell and Thalassemia Care Ontario and to proclaim Sickle Cell and Thalassemia Awareness Day / Projet de loi 175, Loi créant Traitement des affections drépanocytaires et des thalassémies Ontario et proclamant la Journée de sensibilisation aux affections drépanocytaires et aux thalassémies.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Mike Colle: If this bill is passed, it would create a comprehensive and coordinated approach to treating all people in Ontario, in every part of Ontario, equally if

they are afflicted with thalassemia or sickle cell. It would also, if passed, proclaim June 19 each year as Sickle Cell and Thalassemia Awareness Day in Ontario.

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BETTER BUSINESS CLIMATE ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 VISANT À INSTAURER UN CLIMAT PLUS PROPICE AUX AFFAIRES

Mr. Hoskins moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 176, An Act to enact the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, 2014 and the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, 2014 / Projet de loi 176, Loi édictant la Loi de 2014 sur l'obligation de faire rapport concernant la réduction des fardeaux administratifs et la Loi de 2014 sur les partenariats pour la création d'emplois et la croissance.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: No.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I heard a no.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

The ayes have it. Carried.

First reading agreed to.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I didn't think you would—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Oh, I hear everything you say.

The member for a short statement.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I will make my statement during ministerial statements.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

LA FRANCOPHONIE

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Je me lève cet après-midi avec fierté pour informer l'Assemblée législative que nous allons célébrer demain la Journée internationale de la Francophonie. Chaque année, les 77 états et gouvernements qui composent l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie à travers le monde célèbrent la langue française et les liens de solidarité qui les unissent.

Que ce soit comme membres ou observateurs, ces états ont tous en commun le profond désir de la promotion et de la préservation de la langue française au sein de leurs institutions publiques et communautaires. Pour ces états et gouvernements, la langue française est un outil stratégique qui permet le développement culturel, social et économique de leurs états.

I am proud of my government for the way it demonstrates, day in, day out, that it is fully committed to this mission by helping the Franco-Ontarian community thrive.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all my fellow MPPs and ministers for their support in ensuring our province's visibility in this illustrious international organization.

Le rayonnement de l'Ontario au sein de la Francophonie est de plus en plus marquant et c'est ce qu'on va célébrer demain partout dans la province. Le thème choisi pour les festivités cette année est « Place au talent ».

Chers collègues députés, l'Ontario ne pourrait mieux se positionner lorsqu'il s'agit du talent des francophones. Dans tous les secteurs d'activités, la communauté franco-ontarienne se distingue. Nos garderies et nos écoles françaises sont des institutions reconnues qui se taillent une place de choix dans le système d'éducation de l'Ontario et du monde entier, avec des résultats enviables.

Nos jeunes francophones possèdent des talents extraordinaires dans la musique, le théâtre, la danse, les nouveaux médias et les sports. Les personnes aînées francophones sont très actives et impliquées dans la société, ce qui en fait des personnes-ressources inestimables.

Et l'Ontario se place parmi les sociétés les plus accueillantes du monde entier envers ses immigrants. Nous avons toutes les raisons d'en être fiers.

Moreover, our immigration bill which is now in second reading includes steps to increase francophone immigration, and I am especially happy about this. In maintaining their francophone identity, newcomers strengthen the cultural diversity of Ontario, a province that values inclusion and difference.

Dear colleagues, our province acted decades ago on the belief that its francophone community would contribute to making Ontario stronger both socially and economically, and the years have proven that we were right. Francophones have answered the call and have taken charge of their future.

Comme le dit si bien le Secrétaire général de la Francophonie, Abdou Diouf, dans son message pour les célébrations, « La Francophonie, c'est avoir l'audace de penser que nous avons, ensemble, une emprise sur notre destinée commune. » Cette audace, je la constate ici chez les députés qui siègent à l'Assemblée législative et qui n'hésitent pas à prendre position pour les francophones.

Thanks to you, ladies and gentlemen, the bill making the French Language Services Commissioner an independent officer of the Legislature was adopted unanimously last December. Since January 1, the commissioner and his office report directly to the Legislative Assembly, a bold move that solidifies the commissioner's significant role in dealing with government departments and agencies.

Je vois cette même audace chez les jeunes qui ont milité avec tant de passion en faveur de l'éducation postsecondaire en français. Je la sens chez les parents qui continuent massivement à inscrire leurs enfants dans les écoles de langue française.

Oui, c'est ça l'audace qui caractérise les francophones en Ontario. C'est croire que la langue française est un gage de succès, d'avancement et de réussite dans ses études, dans son travail ou dans ses relations sociales.

L'Ontario a la chance unique d'influencer les débats qui touchent à la langue et la culture, grâce à la belle crédibilité que nous avons acquise au cours de ces années. Nous avons ce pouvoir parce que nous adhérons aux mêmes valeurs d'égalité et de justice que nous voulons voir mises en place ailleurs dans le monde.

On dit souvent que la plus grande justice consiste à donner la chance égale de réussir à tous. L'Ontario a créé une société juste et égalitaire qui fait « place au talent » de tous ses citoyens francophones et francophiles. C'est ce que nous célébrons cette semaine.

I invite members of the Legislature to join in the celebrations of French language and culture that will be taking place in their constituencies throughout the week. I would also remind members that in 2015 we will be commemorating the 400th anniversary of French presence in Ontario.

Pour ce faire, mon gouvernement a établi un plan qui permettra de mettre en lumière l'apport important des Franco-Ontariens à l'histoire, la culture et l'économie de la province. J'invite tous les Ontariens et Ontariennes à y participer, car ce sera une commémoration inclusive et ouverte sur le monde, une commémoration qui rendra hommage à l'histoire, mais qui projetera aussi la francophonie ontarienne dans l'avenir.

Bonnes célébrations et longue vie à la Francophonie.

BUSINESS CLIMATE

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Our government's economic plan to create jobs and grow the economy is focused on Ontario's greatest strengths: our people and our strategic partnerships. Today's proposed legislation is about those partnerships. It's about how we can work together with business and other partners to grow the economy, create more jobs and strengthen our business climate.

What does that mean? It means providing faster, smarter and more streamlined government services to businesses, and it means reducing the burden of regulatory, administrative and compliance activities. It's about finding a balance between regulations that are essential to protect the health and safety of our people, and those that are unnecessary burdens for business. Burdens are defined as costs such as time, money and resources that are imposed by regulatory, administrative and compliance rules. They can hinder business's productivity, innovation and overall economic growth.

We are committed to reducing unnecessary burdens on an ongoing basis, and making Ontario one of the few places in the world that measures and reports on the resulting time and financial savings to businesses. Not only does that help our businesses, especially by saving them time and money, but it makes Ontario a more attractive place to invest in the global economy.

We're pleased to be recognized as a Canadian leader in the reduction of unnecessary regulatory requirements by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. When we announced our intent to introduce this proposed legislation, the Canadian Federation of Independ-

ent Business applauded the changes. They said that Ontario will be joining “the best in class in regulatory reform.”

Since 2008, our Open for Business initiative to modernize government has eliminated 80,000 burdens, which represent 17% of all regulatory requirements, and we are making further improvements that will save businesses \$100 million over the next three years.

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Under the improved strategy, we will not only continue to identify unnecessary burdens, but we'll reduce and eliminate them, saving businesses even more time and money.

Today, we're introducing legislation that, if passed, would require our government to deliver an annual report highlighting burden-reduction initiatives that make a significant and measurable difference.

I'm proud of the work we are doing in collaboration with our business leaders and other stakeholders to help position Ontario as a global leader in reducing barriers to business.

The second kind of partnership—which is no less important, Mr. Speaker—that I want to talk about today is another perfect illustration of a partnership in action, a partnership that makes our province and its regions more competitive and that helps create jobs.

There are few better examples of effective partnerships than strong regional economic clusters. A cluster is defined as a specific geographic concentration of businesses, large and small, along with the institutions that support them. Think of the financial services cluster here in Toronto. It extends from banks to the stock exchange to accounting firms of all sizes, investors, business schools, pension plans and financial regulators.

Together, as the Toronto Region Board of Trade puts it, they collaborate to compete, and they have propelled Toronto to among the top financial hubs in the world, something Ontario is extremely proud to be part of.

The high-tech cluster in Waterloo is another example. It includes large firms like BlackBerry. It includes fast-growing firms like Open Text and Desire2Learn. It also includes offices of firms based elsewhere, like Google, Oracle and, recently, mobile payments company Square.

They are attracted there because of the pool of talent—and the concentration of firms attracts even more talent. That technology cluster supports the development of new, innovative start-ups that drive the industry forward. There's a strong partnership between post-secondary institutions like the University of Waterloo to keep that talent stream flowing. And a not-for-profit organization, Communitech, has been at the centre of building this cluster and making Ontario a global powerhouse in the tech sector.

Today's legislation, if passed, will bring that model to regions right across Ontario in a wide variety of sectors, and this legislation, if passed, would provide our government with a new tool to build partnerships with industry, academia, labour and all levels of government to identify and build up emerging clusters and to strengthen existing ones.

It would help us to formalize a process to work in partnership—always in partnership, because that's where clusters truly thrive—to develop strategic cluster plans, including established goals and coordinated actions to support the development of a specific cluster. Mandatory reviews of the plans would be required every five years to evaluate progress and ensure that these plans remain aligned with changing industry and economic trends.

So, whether it's reducing burdens to help improve our business climate and save businesses time and money or strengthening our regional economic clusters across the province, our government's economic plan will continue to get results and will continue to create jobs for today and tomorrow. How? By focusing on our greatest strengths: our people, and, as we're seeing today, our partnerships.

Mr. Speaker, before I conclude, I want to acknowledge the presence—and their hard work in helping us develop this legislation—in the gallery of Juan Gomez, from the Toronto Region Board of Trade, and Allan O'Dette, from the Ontario Chamber of Commerce.

DIETITIANS DAY

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Today is the fifth anniversary of National Dietitians Day, and it's an opportunity to recognize and thank Ontario's dietitians, who use their specialized knowledge in food and nutrition to improve our health.

Every year, the Dietitians of Canada and the thousands of dietitians working here in Ontario help promote healthy eating by celebrating Nutrition Month in March. This year, Nutrition Month is focusing on promoting healthy cooking skills by helping families prepare healthy, delicious meals that they can enjoy eating together. Registered dietitians across Ontario are organizing activities, including healthy cooking events, to help Ontarians create delicious and healthy meal choices.

The Dietitians of Canada even have a new app called Cookspiration, available at cookspiration.com, that encourages people to cook for themselves, by offering recipe options to suit different tastes, all with nutrition in mind.

Having the knowledge and skills to prepare meals at home is linked to a healthier diet, and that's important to maintain overall health. For children, helping to prepare meals sets them on the right path to making healthier food choices as they grow.

Any time we prepare food in our own homes, consume ready-to-eat foods or eat out in restaurants, we need the right information to make healthier food choices. That's why, last month, it was my pleasure to introduce new legislation, the Making Healthier Choices Act, which will, if passed, require restaurant chains, convenience stores, grocery stores and other food service establishments with 20 or more locations to post the number of calories in food and beverage items, including alcohol. This proposed legislation fulfills a commitment I made last October and takes further action on the first pillar of

our government's action plan for health care, keeping Ontario healthy.

With this legislation, we're taking another step to improve children's health by tackling the growing problem of childhood obesity. To get the best possible advice on how to achieve better health for our children, we appointed the Healthy Kids Panel. The expert panel heard from many parents who said that their lives are busier than ever, they're eating out more often and they need more help to make the healthy choice for their kids the easy choice every time.

One of the members of this panel was Phyllis Tanaka, a vice-president with Food and Consumer Products of Canada and a registered dietitian. I want to say thank you to Phyllis and to all of the panel members for their advice. They delivered an excellent report.

The Making Healthier Choices Act is the latest in a series of steps we've taken to implement the Healthy Kids Panel recommendations, and I would like to thank Ontario's dietitians for their support of our proposed legislation.

Registered dietitians work in many settings in Ontario. They bring evidence-based information about nutrition and food to consumers, clients and patients. Dietitians are members of health care teams who collaborate with other health care professionals, including doctors, nurses, pharmacists and social workers. Together, they manage nutrition for health promotion, disease prevention, and the treatment of acute and chronic diseases.

As regulated health professionals, the public can have confidence that registered dietitians have the training and skills to provide safe, ethical and competent care.

Dietitians also play a critical role in keeping people of all ages healthier and helping them avoid chronic conditions like diabetes. They translate the complex science of nutrition into practical solutions for healthy eating and disease prevention.

Dietitians can create personalized meal plans to improve weight and help control blood sugar to prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes. Their training also gives them the expertise to help pregnant moms, people seeking to control their blood pressure and those battling eating disorders, among others.

By preventing and managing chronic disease and promoting recovery, dietitians are also a cost-effective investment in the health care system.

I encourage all Ontarians looking for advice on healthier food choices to call or visit EatRight Ontario. EatRight Ontario is a great source of information, where you can ask nutrition-related questions and receive feedback by phone or email from a registered dietitian. Their website, eatrightontario.ca, has some great articles on food and nutrition, meal planning advice, healthy eating tips and recipes. You can even sign up to receive a newsletter on a monthly basis. EatRight Ontario is just one of the ways that dietitians are helping Ontarians to make healthier choices.

As we celebrate National Dietitians Day as part of nutrition month, let's applaud and thank Ontario's

dietitians for helping us make our province the best place in North America to grow up and grow old. I want our dietitians to know we're very proud of their contribution to the health of all of the people of Ontario.

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LA FRANCOPHONIE

M^{me} Gila Martow: Au nom de mon chef Tim Hudak, et du caucus progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario, je tiens à exprimer nos meilleurs souhaits à tous les francophones, en Ontario, au Canada et dans le monde, qui célèbrent la 44^e Journée internationale de la Francophonie. De Cornwall à Moonbeam, les communautés francophones de l'Ontario ont contribué de manière essentielle à la diversité culturelle, économique et politique de notre province.

La Journée internationale de la Francophonie est l'occasion de célébrer l'impact que la langue française et la culture francophone ont eu ici en Ontario et dans le monde. La communauté francophone de l'Ontario a joué, et continue de jouer, un rôle majeur dans le développement éducatif, institutionnel et technologique de notre province.

En nous joignant à ceux qui célèbrent cette journée à travers le monde, nous renouvelons notre engagement à apporter des contributions durables aux communautés francophones de l'Ontario et faire en sorte que la culture francophone de l'Ontario continue de prospérer pour toutes les générations à venir.

Je pense que je parle pour tout le monde ici quand je dis que nous sommes tous francophiles.

BUSINESS CLIMATE

Mrs. Jane McKenna: I'm pleased to briefly respond to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment.

Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC Party support improvements to this province's business climate, but the Better Business Climate Act is little more than window dressing.

A quick example, Speaker: If passed, this bill would require each ministry to eliminate at least one regulatory burden per year. Recall that Ontario Liberals axed the Red Tape Commission in 2003, but in the run-up to the 2011 election they had a convenient change of heart on red tape and tabled the Open for Business Act. Today's bill revisits that one.

In January, the minister boasted that the government had eliminated 80,000 regulatory burdens since 2008, hoping we would forget that the same claim was made by the previous minister in January 2012, that we'd forget that in March 2011, that minister's predecessor boasted of having axed 70,000 pieces of red tape since 2008, or that the former Premier promised a 25% reduction in red tape by 2011. Three years later, we're still at 17%.

Ontario's economy is facing serious challenges. Ontario's people deserve a government that is serious about the economy.

In conclusion, Speaker, this bill is nothing more than more red tape.

DIETITIANS DAY

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Speaker, the month of March is recognized across Canada as Nutrition Month, brought to us by the Dietitians of Canada and the thousands of dietitians working here in Ontario.

This year, Nutrition Month's message is designed to inspire Canadians to get back to cooking basics and to involve children and youth with meal preparations. In today's busy world, there is concern that fewer families have time to cook meals together, missing an important opportunity to transfer cooking skills to the next generation. Cooking meals from scratch has been shown to increase intake of vegetables, fruits and whole grains, which are the foundation of a healthy diet. We also know that children who are involved in preparing meals are more likely to make better food choices.

Nutrition Month activities are taking place in communities across the province, with registered dietitians promoting cooking events to help Ontarians create delicious and healthy meal choices.

Today, March 19, is also the fifth annual Dietitians Day.

By preventing and managing chronic diseases and promoting recovery, dietitians perform an important role in our health care system, and their Nutrition Month initiatives are just one example of their dedication to improving the health of all Ontarians.

BUSINESS CLIMATE

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure to respond to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade with regard to the Better Business Climate Act.

Clustering, one of the major themes of this act, or aligning skilled people, research institutions and corporate collaborations to build innovation ecosystems, is increasingly recognized as a significant opportunity to enhance economic growth. The idea focuses on increasing productivity through innovation instead of taking advantage of geography or circumstance to overcome input costs. It's a concept that was introduced by Michael Porter of the Harvard Business School and advanced more recently by such Canadian scholars as David Wolfe, David Robinson and Matthew Lucas.

Cluster development can help Ontario's tech sector, health science sector and manufacturing sector, among others.

I know well of the advantages that are gained by businesses operating in Kitchener–Waterloo in the tech sector especially. The proximity of innovative firms, of incredible universities and talented, trained young people has spurred the tech ecosystem we all talk so much about.

However, other regions in Canada have flourishing clusters and have been doing a great deal more to promote their clusters, supporting them through policy and

investment. For example, Quebec and especially the Montreal area have vibrant pharmaceutical and aerospace clusters. Ontario could do a lot more to promote the development of our own hubs.

In Ontario, though, I see a tremendous amount of potential in Kitchener–Waterloo's tech sector, in the financial services sector of Toronto, and in the development of an advanced manufacturing sector in Hamilton and London. But these clusters need a government that supports them.

I recognize the admirable intent of this bill. I have held numerous meetings with experts who have pointed out the importance of clustering, encouraging interaction, and building cross-sector networks.

I find it hopeful, actually, that part of this legislation focuses on reducing the regulations which many find excessive. Stakeholders I've met with have described the tangle of regulation as a significant hurdle to overcome.

In conclusion, I look forward to making this bill stronger, to making sure the province of Ontario has the resources they need, and working towards the goal of strengthening business in the province.

LA FRANCOPHONIE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Demain, on célébrera la Journée internationale de la Francophonie—quel beau moment pour célébrer nos acquis et planifier notre avenir.

Du côté des célébrations, bien, c'est sûr, mon projet de loi pour rendre le bureau du commissaire aux services en français indépendant a finalement vu jour au travers de la ministre déléguée aux services en français. Avec ce projet de loi, on assure la pérennité du commissaire aux services en français, et j'en suis très fière.

Cette année, également, les francophones et francophiles se sont motivés pour se tourner sérieusement vers le dossier d'une université franco-ontarienne. J'aimerais remercier Alain Dupuis et son équipe de la FESFO, qui a tenu des séances de consultation dans toutes les régions de notre province pour préparer les états généraux qui auront lieu au mois de septembre.

Je suis prête à dire que si l'Ontario avait eu une université francophone, les problèmes avec le collège d'Alfred, on ne les aurait pas vécus, et il ne serait pas dans la situation dans laquelle il se trouve en ce moment.

Je veux également, en cette journée, féliciter les six récipiendaires de l'Ordre de la Pléiade, nos nouveaux Chevaliers et Chevalières : Nicole Fortier, Élane Legault, Ronald Marion, Germaine Paquette, Paul-François Sylvestre et Denis Vaillancourt.

DIETITIANS DAY

M^{me} France Gélinas: It's also my pleasure to respond to the Minister of Health regarding national Dietitians Day, with March being Nutrition Month. This is their fifth anniversary.

We all understand the importance of nutrition to our health. People often say we are what we eat. This is

something that is important for the month of March, but it is important every day of the year. It is my pleasure to stand today to recognize the registered dietitians who are working in Ontario.

I'm also very happy that my calorie labelling bill has reached second reading. The bill will make it mandatory for restaurants to not only put the price on their menu boards but to also put the number of calories with every single menu item, and would mandate a check for high-sodium items.

For reasons unknown to me, the minister put forward a bill very similar to mine, but she did not include sodium. I will tell you that dietitians know that calories and sodium are directly linked to so many chronic diseases, whether you talk about hypertension, cardiovascular diseases, strokes and many more.

I would encourage everyone to have a look at what the dietitians of Ontario have put forward through Simply Cook and Enjoy! This is where you make nutritious meals.

VISITEURS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A point of order from the minister responsible for francophone affairs.

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Je voudrais présenter ici aujourd'hui, dans la galerie en nord avec nous, le maire du village de Casselman, Claude Levac; les conseillers municipaux Francyn Leblanc et Michel Desjardins; et puis le directeur général, Marc Chénier. Bienvenue à Queen's Park.

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PETITIONS

HYDRO RATES

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

"Whereas the cost of electricity in Ontario continues to escalate; and

"Whereas other charges associated with electricity, such as delivery, regulatory, global adjustment and debt retirement charges make electricity increasingly unaffordable; and

"Whereas these costs have imposed a significant hardship on ratepayers and driven industry and jobs out of Ontario;

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

"That the Premier and the Minister of Energy reduce the waste and duplication in Ontario's electricity sector and take other necessary steps to lower the cost of electricity so that Ontario's electricity prices are competitive with other jurisdictions."

I agree with this petition and will give it to page Milana.

OFF-ROAD VEHICLES

Mr. John Vanthof: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas a motion was introduced at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads 'that in the opinion of the House, the operation of off-road vehicles on highways under regulation 316/03 be changed to include side-by-side off-road vehicles, four-seat side-by-side vehicles, and two-up vehicles in order for them to be driven on highways under the same conditions as other off-road/all-terrain vehicles';

"Whereas this motion was passed on November 7, 2013, to amend the Highway Traffic Act 316/03;

"Whereas the economic benefits will have positive impacts on ATV clubs, ATV manufacturers, dealers and rental shops, and will boost revenues to communities promoting this outdoor activity;

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

"We call on the Ministry of Transportation to implement this regulation immediately."

I fully agree and will give this to page Urooj.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm pleased to present a petition on behalf of my constituents of Durham.

"Whereas Hydro One Networks Inc. (Hydro One) is proposing construction of a new transformer station on a 100-acre site in Clarington, near the Oshawa-Clarington boundary;

"Whereas the site is on the Oak Ridges moraine/greenbelt;

"Whereas concerns have been raised about the environmental impacts of this development, including harm to wildlife as well as contamination of ponds, streams and the underground water supply;

"Whereas sites zoned for industrial and/or commercial use are the best locations for large electricity transformer stations;

"Whereas most, if not all, residents do not agree this project is needed and that, if proven to be necessary, it could be best accommodated at alternative locations such as Cherrywood or Wesleyville;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, ask that the Ontario Legislature support the preservation of the Oak Ridges moraine, the greenbelt and the natural environment at this site. We also ask that the Ontario Legislature require the Clarington transformer station to be built at an alternative location zoned for an industrial facility and selected in accordance with the best planning principles."

I'm pleased to sign and support it and present it to Nusaybah.

GASOLINE PRICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that comes from a very nice lady in my riding, Mrs. Lois McRae, in Val Caron. It reads as follows:

"Whereas northern Ontario motorists continue to be subject to wild fluctuations in the price of gasoline; and

“Whereas the province could eliminate opportunistic price gouging and deliver fair, stable and predictable fuel prices; and

“Whereas five provinces and many US states already have some sort of gas-price regulation; and

“Whereas jurisdictions with gas-price regulation have seen an end to wild price fluctuations, a shrinking of price discrepancies between urban and rural communities and lower annualized gas prices;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to “mandate the Ontario Energy Board to monitor the price of gasoline across Ontario in order to reduce price volatility and unfair regional price differences while encouraging competition.”

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

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: I have a petition here that reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Health Canada has approved the use of Esbriet for patients with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF), a rare, progressive and fatal disease characterized by scarring of the lungs; and

“Whereas Esbriet, the first and only approved medication in Canada for the treatment of IPF, has been shown to slow disease progression and to decrease the decline in lung function; and

“Whereas the lack of public funding for Esbriet is especially devastating for seniors with IPF who rely exclusively on the provincial drug program for access to medications;

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

“Immediately provide Esbriet as a choice to patients with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis and their health care providers in Ontario through public funding.”

Mr. Speaker, I concur with this petition. I'll affix my name to it.

ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased to present this petition on behalf of Geri Sutts, from my riding of Essex, who suffers from idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Health Canada has approved the use of Esbriet for patients with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF), a rare, progressive and fatal disease characterized by scarring of the lungs; and

“Whereas Esbriet, the first and only approved medication in Canada for the treatment of IPF, has been shown to slow disease progression and to decrease the decline in lung function; and

“Whereas the lack of public funding for Esbriet is especially devastating for seniors with IPF who rely

exclusively on the provincial drug program for access to medications;

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

“Immediately provide Esbriet as a choice to patients with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis and their health care providers in Ontario through public funding.”

I will affix my name to this petition and send it to the Clerks' table through Callista.

PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

Mr. John O'Toole: “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,” confident in 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 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” to pay for therapy;

“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 practices” in Ontario.

I'm pleased to sign and support it and present it to Simon, one of the new pages here at Queen's Park.

TENANT PROTECTION

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's my pleasure to present this petition on behalf of the Renters Educating and Networking Together.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas escalating rental costs are making Ontario less affordable and leaving many tenants financially insecure or falling into poverty;

“Whereas tenants living in residential apartments and condominiums built after 1991 are not protected within the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA) by rent control guidelines, nor are they protected from other arbitrary changes to their rent which currently cannot be appealed to the Landlord and Tenant Board;

“Whereas this has created an unfair two-tier system of tenant protection in Ontario, where some tenants have no protection from large and arbitrary increases;

“Whereas removing these simple exemption loopholes in the RTA law will help protect tenants and help make housing more affordable and secure for thousands of Ontarians;

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

“That the province of Ontario acts to protect all tenants in Ontario and immediately move to ensure that all Ontario tenants living in buildings, mobile home parks and land-lease communities are covered by the rent control guidelines in the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006.”

It’s my pleasure to affix my signature and give this to page Justin.

MINIMUM WAGE

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a petition addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly.

“Whereas the Ontario government has raised minimum wage by 50% since 2003 and will increase it to \$11, the highest provincial minimum wage in Canada, on June 1;

“Whereas both families and businesses in Ontario deserve a fair and predictable approach to setting the minimum wage;

“Whereas indexing minimum wage to CPI is supported by business, labour and anti-poverty groups from across Ontario as the best way to achieve that;

“Whereas indexing ensures minimum wage keeps pace with the cost of living, providing fairness for workers and their families and predictability for businesses to plan and stay competitive;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario pass and enact, as soon as possible, Bill 165, Fair Minimum Wage Act, 2014.”

I fully support the petition, Mr. Speaker. I will give my petition to page Mustfah.

1600

AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES

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

“Whereas the University of Guelph’s Kemptville and Alfred campuses are two of Ontario’s outstanding post-secondary agricultural schools; and

“Whereas these campuses have delivered specialized and high-quality programs to generations of students from agricultural communities across eastern Ontario and the future success of the region’s agri-food industry depends on continuing this strong partnership; and

“Whereas regional campuses like those in Kemptville and Alfred ensure the agri-food industry has access to the knowledge, research and innovation that are critical for Ontario to remain competitive in this rapidly changing sector;

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

“That Premier Wynne in her dual capacity as Minister of Agriculture and Food act immediately to reverse the University of Guelph’s short-sighted and unacceptable decision to close its Kemptville and Alfred campuses.”

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

CHARITABLE GAMING

Mr. John O’Toole: I’m pleased to present another petition on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham. It reads as follows:

“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.”

One of the key signatures here is Anna Strike from Bowmanville. She has been a tireless worker for over 40 years in our hospitals in the community. I’m pleased to sign and support this and present it to Kathryn, one of the new pages here.

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

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

“Whereas Ontario’s tradespeople are subject to stifling regulation and are compelled to pay membership fees to the unaccountable College of Trades;

“Whereas these fees are a tax grab that drives down the wages of skilled tradespeople;

“Whereas Ontario desperately needs a plan to solve our critical shortage of skilled tradespeople by encouraging our youth to enter the trades and attracting new tradespeople; and

“Whereas the latest policies from the Wynne government only aggravate the looming skilled trades shortage in Ontario;

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

“To immediately disband the College of Trades, cease imposing needless membership fees, and enact policies to attract young Ontarians into skilled trade careers.”

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

USE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads as follows:

“Whereas virtually all Legislatures in Canada have fully embraced digital technologies;

“Whereas digital communications are now essential for members of Parliament to conduct their business, correspond with constituents, respond to stakeholders, stay in touch with staff, store data and information securely, keep ahead of the news cycle, and to remain current;

“Whereas progressive record-keeping relies on cloud technology, remote access, real-time updates, multiple-point data entry, and broadband, wireless and satellite technologies;

“Whereas there is more to full exploitation of technology than having email;

“Whereas the Legislative Assembly of Ontario has been considering the value, utility and usage of digital devices within the legislative precinct and within the chamber of Parliament itself for several months;

“Whereas this consideration of digital empowerment of members continues to be unresolved, on hold, under consideration and the subject of repeated temporizing correspondence between decision-makers and interested parties;

“We, the undersigned, respectfully request all various decision-makers of the assembly and government to fully embrace digital technologies, empower members, acquire the optimal devices, maximize the many technology offerings and orchestrate a much-needed modernization of the conduct of parliamentary business for the eventual benefit of the people of Ontario....”

In agreement whereof, Speaker, I affix my signature and send it to you via page Isabella.

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 March 5, 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 Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): When we last debated this, I believe the member from Northumberland–Quinte West had six minutes left.

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: Mr. Speaker, it's been a week since we last spoke on Bill 141, so I just want to back-track a little bit and touch on a few of the points I was trying to impress upon my esteemed colleagues here at Queen's Park.

I was going through Bill 141 itself, and looking at and highlighting some concerns that I had. I specifically wondered—the section here on page 3, “Infrastructure Planning Principles,” and then it says, “Principles,” outlines what the government and every broader public sector entity shall consider when looking at the principles here.

I want to skip down to number 4. I find it rather interesting. It says here, “Infrastructure planning and investment should ensure the continued provision of core public services, such as health care and education.” I think that's extremely important, because obviously health care and education are paramount on the minds of a lot of Ontarians, not to mention jobs and the job crisis we're currently facing.

To that point, I find that this current government under Premier Wynne—what they're saying is that they are still investing monies in health care, but what we've actually witnessed in my riding of Northumberland–Quinte West is the loss of three RNs at Northumberland Hills Hospital, and the closure of the lab at Trenton Memorial Hospital and the laying off of two and a half staff there. So I'm having difficulties trying to accept what this government says is a principle foundation of health care and education.

I also want to make a point that our fine member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound has made in this House numerous times: That community raised over \$12 million to go toward the building of the Markdale Hospital over 10 years ago, which this government promised that community was going to get; \$12 million raised by the fine people in Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound up in the Markdale area, and some of those individuals who donated and helped fundraise that money have since passed on. That's how long it has taken this Liberal government to move on building the kind of infrastructure that's required in rural Ontario.

As well, moving on to some of the other points I wanted to get to, again under “Principles,” section 9, “Infrastructure planning and investment should minimize the impact of infrastructure on the environment and respect and help maintain ecological and biological diversity, and infrastructure should be designed to be resilient to the effects of climate change.”

Mr. Speaker, again I have some grave concerns with this Liberal government when it comes to saying one thing—they want to protect the environment, and they proclaim to the fine people of our great province that

they are the champions of the environment, that they care about the environment, environment is number one. Well, I have the privilege of being geographically located on part of the Oak Ridges moraine, which was deemed under Premier Harris and recognized as significant for the aquifers, the water that many of the people here in the Toronto area and the outlying hinterlands heading to the east here use for their drinking water. But this government wants to put up industrial wind turbines on a protected area. In fact, there are endangered species on the Oak Ridges moraine that are going to be hugely impacted by these decisions. I do have some reservations when it comes to this government saying that they care about the environment and yet they turn around and implement such policies as this, disregarding the concerns of people in the area.

1610

I touched on last time, as well, the leadership and the great visionaries of this province from years gone by. I talked briefly about Premier Leslie Frost. When Premier Frost built the 401 miles and miles above Eglinton, which is where the city boundary actually ended at that time, people were wondering, pondering why he would build this highway so far away from the downtown area. As you know, Mr. Speaker, now it's next to impossible to traverse down that corridor about this time of day.

So we do need some vision from leaders, and Tim Hudak has that vision. Tim and the PC caucus, we have been very clear when it comes to gridlock, infrastructure and what needs to happen. We truly believe that, obviously, gridlock in the Toronto area is a major concern, and it does have detrimental impacts to revenue flows to the province and the provincial coffers. We have outlined this. We have been saying this right from day one, that Tim Hudak and the PC Party have a plan to get Ontario back working, and infrastructure is going to be key to that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased to follow my friend the member from Northumberland–Quinte West. I always appreciate his comments and his insight on all the matters before the House. I do question, however, his correlation between the great Leslie Frost and his vision on infrastructure in this province and the vision of Tim Hudak, the leader of the PC Party of today, because I can assure you—through, I guess, the concept of this bill, in that it deals with alternate financing programs, P3s, in the province of Ontario—that Leslie Frost wasn't looking to dismantle traditional financing projects in the province. They made public investments in public infrastructure, knowing that the value on that dollar was maintained in this jurisdiction, knowing they had a responsibility to provide oversight for the quality of the projects and a responsibility to manage them effectively as a strategic asset in the province, not simply to outsource, privatize and sell off valuable measures of infrastructure. So I certainly question the correlation between the great Leslie Frost and Tim Hudak, who I have not heard propose one measure of public financing. I simply have

heard a focus on solely outsourcing, privatizing and deregulating any aspect of governance in this province.

It's important that we talk about this bill and about the impact that P3s have had on financing projects in health care, infrastructure and education, because they have added a tremendous burden not only to the finances of the project but also to subcontractors, who feel the pressures of multinationals that waver from the basic principles of traditional financing programs.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: It's interesting that the member opposite in the official opposition raises this issue of Leslie Frost. Leslie Frost spent 2% of the province's GDP on infrastructure. In today's dollars, that was \$14 billion. It's interesting because, up until Premier McGuinty, he was the last Premier who did that. This government, in 40 years, is the first government to get back to 2% of GDP, which we are, and we built that over—for five years. This is not a political shot, because there were Liberal and NDP and Conservative governments between now and Leslie Frost.

I have a question for the members opposite. Will the New Democrats and will the Conservatives support a continued infrastructure spend of \$14 billion? We will do that, Mr. Speaker. Why will we do that? We will do that for one reason: because every \$1.50 that we spend on infrastructure brings us back \$7 in net new taxes through economic growth. Infrastructure is the single most important—I'm hoping that the new generation of Conservatives and the new generation of New Democrats are like the new generation of Liberals, that they're committed to a minimum 2% GDP growth.

The other thing that we're talking about is that we have committed an apprenticeship program because right now, according to the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters association, between now and 2016, there will be 800,000 skilled jobs in the next 24 months that need to be filled. When the opposition talks about a million jobs, that's actually worse than the job creation rate the government currently has, because right now, according to the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters association, we have 800,000 jobs. What's the challenge? We don't have the right skilled workforce, so we're going to take that \$14 billion and require apprenticeships—to create thousands of apprenticeships to get the skills so that we can get those young people into those jobs.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Well, you almost missed it.

The member from Nepean–Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's a pleasure to commend my colleague from Northumberland–Quinte West when we're talking about transportation infrastructure, and I also appreciate your indulgence in allowing me to get back to my seat.

My colleague has been, I think, a tremendous advocate in this assembly for his constituents, and I think most

members here would agree. He has raised quite a substantial number of issues with respect to the 401 and the road maintenance issues there and the infrastructure challenges we have.

Earlier today, my colleagues and I met with the ORBA organization, the Ontario Road Builders' Association, and talked about some of the challenges that we have here in the province of Ontario. Many of us that do have to take the 401 to work each week, from parts of eastern Ontario or southwestern Ontario—we talk about these issues.

Later on this afternoon, I will have an opportunity to speak directly to the bill and I'll have that opportunity—I believe we're in 10-minute rotations.

I must say that the issue of infrastructure planning and the issue of infrastructure funding are all very critical to us. I actually sat in this assembly before the minister did, and what I remember from his government is that they came with a commitment. Mr. Hillier may remember this, and Mr. Hardeman. They came and said, "Whatever we have in terms of a surplus, we'll give back to municipalities." Remember that? They said they'd give it back in terms of infrastructure funding and transportation. No sooner did they make that commitment, than they started posting massive deficits.

Now that tells me, Speaker, that we have to be very careful, very careful in how we make these commitments to municipalities and, in particular, our constituents. In order to ensure that there is funding available, we have to think about how we can sustain that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's once again an honour to be able to rise and spend a few moments following the member from Northumberland–Quinte West. He focused a lot on his riding, and I'm going to focus a lot on mine in reference to this bill.

I had the opportunity to listen to the leadoff speech from the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure in talking about the beautiful architectural buildings around Toronto, and it inspired me. On my way home, driving on Highway 11, I realized that some of the most beautiful architectural buildings in my riding are train stations: Cobalt, Temagami and several others. They are no longer train stations. Many times, they've been downloaded to the municipalities, but they're beautiful buildings.

1620

Then I was thinking, as I was thinking about this—and this bill is called the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act—that for the last two years people in my riding have been living in chaos because this government announced that they couldn't even afford to keep a railroad track in my riding and that the buses were going to be sold, and, now, that our telecommunications system was also on the block. While we're talking about infrastructure for jobs and prosperity, how can we have jobs and prosperity in northeastern Ontario without a railroad, without public transportation and without communications services, which were public—which are public?

That's my question, because for two years northerners have been wondering what is going to become of them. People have been unwilling to invest because we have been worried about losing our public infrastructure. I'd like to get that on the record.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Northumberland–Quinte West has two minutes.

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: I want to thank my colleagues for their comments here today.

There's one thing I would like to point out. The Minister of Transportation talks about investment in infrastructure, but you'll know that throughout Ontario the 401 and the 400-series highways have come under new contracts. Just for example, in my stretch of the 401 we went from 17 plows down to nine; we had four sand and salt depots, and we're down to two depots—all in the name of cutbacks by this minister and this government.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: You outsourced it. Are you that illiterate?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The Minister of Transportation will retract that little comment.

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: We've had huge numbers of collisions and closures on the 401 this year, the likes of which I've never seen. I have not seen—

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. Continue. Sorry.

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We've seen more accidents on my stretch of the 401 in Northumberland than I can recall in 43 years of being there, and it's quite disturbing. For a savings of \$800,000 just for my portion of the stretch of the 401 that's being serviced, we've had numerous closures of the 401 that cost the province and businesses in this province millions of dollars an hour. When the 401 is shut down, it costs this province and businesses millions of dollars. So the money that this government hasn't invested in providing that service is paramount.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: You outsourced it. Why are you complaining?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Minister of Transportation.

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: With that, I would just want to put on the record that the cutbacks this government has made for the plowing services is inadequate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I am now—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Would you like to read this?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: No, I'm all right.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thanks very much.

Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings and announce that there has been more than six and a half hours of debate on the motion for second reading of this bill. This bill debate will therefore be deemed adjourned unless the government House leader specifies otherwise.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Mr. Speaker, the government would like the debate to continue.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. Further debate? The member for Beaches–East York.

Mr. Michael Prue: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Am I correct that I have 20 minutes? It usually goes down to 10 minutes at this point.

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Prue: After seven hours, okay; not six and a half. Thank you so much. So I do have 20 minutes.

This bill is a very strange bill. This bill is a bill that the government is bringing forward to have 10-year cycles. Now, we all know in this place that governments are elected on four-year cycles, so I had to start wondering why you want a 10-year cyclical plan when you have a government that's responsible for four years. The only thing I could think of, to start off, is that you want to bind future governments, whether it's yourselves—if you're lucky enough as a government to be re-elected—or some future government so that there is no wiggle room for what they want to do with a new mandate and a new direction.

Let's start from that; let's discuss this for a second. This is a 10-year plan in order to set a direction not only for the government in power, but the government to come. I find this strange as well, because when you look through the body of the bill, the minister responsible doesn't have to stand in the House until three years after the bill comes into effect in order to announce what the plan is, and then has to renew it every five years thereafter. If this were to pass and we were to have an election, then three years from the date, I guess, of the passage of this bill, we'd have another government. And then that government may or may not be able, within those three years, to set out the 10-year plan. But if they do, they will make the announcement and then it will not be reviewed for five years. I was trying to do all the math. The permutations and combinations here are quite amazing. It's not only this government today trying to set out what they're going to do, but it maybe won't even be the next one or the one after that that actually gets to set the five-year plan.

I'm thinking, wow, what kind of a bill is this? What is being proposed here? I have to tell you, I think this is pretty much an empty shell of a bill, when you start from that perspective of, when does it actually kick in? When does the minister actually get to do what he or she needs to do in order to set up the 10-year plan and who is it binding? If it's not binding on their own government but it is binding on a future government, I think all of parliamentary tradition says that that cannot be the case, because no future government can be bound by the actions of one before.

Now, if it's setting up a 10-year plan for the sake of setting up a 10-year plan, so that we can look ahead and see what, at this stage in the evolution of Ontario, needs to be done, I don't really have too many problems with that, if that's all it is. Because, having been a former mayor, we used to have a 10-year plan in East York. We

had a 10-year plan because we looked at all of the roads and the sewer systems and the infrastructure and those things that would have to be replaced, and we had a logical way of setting out which roads would be prepared in each year's budgetary cycle and which would likely be repaired or renewed or rebuilt, or sometimes brand new ones built, within the three years, as it was then, of the council's mandate. I don't have a problem with that, if that's what this is. But that's not what I see here, and that's clearly not what the legislation says. It says that the plan will be announced three years after the coming into force of the act and then will be renewed each five years. If it's renewed for five years, it's beyond the mandate of that government and even beyond the mandate of the next one. So we start from that.

This is a bill that I think is being put forward as a government action that is likely to placate some of the construction stakeholders. They need to know, they want to know and, I think, in many cases, economically have to know where the money is going to be spent so that they can buy the equipment and hire people and know whether or not they're likely to get government contracts or what ones might be available. If you're going to start buying multimillion-dollar pieces of machinery to pave roads or to construct edifices or to dig ditches or to build subways, clearly you need to know those kind of things. I think that's what the bill has intended. It's not intended so much for the government or for taxpayers, but more so for the construction industry that is seeking some kind of assurance that there is an ongoing commitment to the projects to be built.

I understand the government needs to make long-term plans, and I'm appreciative of the fact that the bill says that the government must be mindful of demographics. If you're mindful of demographics, you need to know some very unpleasant truths. You need to know that the cities in southern Ontario are expanding at a fairly rapid rate, particularly in the Toronto area and the GTHA, but also in some of the areas around it: Kitchener-Waterloo, Guelph, Ottawa. Some of the cities of Ontario are expanding at a pretty fast rate. If you look at those demographics—and I think the best way to look at those is in the new changes to the federal riding boundaries—you can see where the population is growing in Canada and where it's starting to decline.

1630

If this bill comes into effect, I am slightly worried—and I would seek assurances, perhaps from the minister, if he chooses to make comments at the end of my speech—that this is not going to badly affect places in rural and northern Ontario which, for the last three or four census data figures, have had population declines.

My friend from Timiskaming, when he spoke a few minutes ago in his two-minute hit, talked about the railway edifices in his particular towns in his riding, and the railway and buses and the communications network, which seems to be, as we're talking about this, being dismantled. I have to state, Mr. Speaker, that if you're looking at the demographics, that's exactly what is going

to happen. If the government is committed to building in those places where the populations will grow and increase, then quite conceivably most of those will be built in southern Ontario, particularly in that corridor around Toronto, Hamilton and down into Niagara, with perhaps some going to Ottawa as well, because those are the places of all the big population growth.

It says in the body of the bill another thing which I appreciate as a former mayor and municipal councillor: that we are going to work with municipalities. Municipalities are probably the group that is best able to tell this government or even, indeed, the federal government—any government—exactly where the money should be spent. Municipalities have a very good handle—a far better handle than we do here in the province, or the federal government does—on where infrastructure money needs to be spent, because they're on the ground. They are the body that is closest to not only that infrastructure but to the people.

Having worked there, I will tell you that every single municipality has engineering departments. They have people who can tell you the lifetime of the roads, the bridges, the sewers and anything else that has to be built. So whenever the governments—our government and the government in Ottawa—come forward and somehow they find some money and they want to partner with the municipalities, it is always the municipalities that come forward and announce what the projects are. It's not the federal or provincial government that comes forward and says, "We have money for you, but you must build a bridge there." It's the reverse. It's the municipalities that say, "If you're going to give us money, this is where it needs to be spent, because we have studied all of this and we know full well where the best bang for the buck is going to come for us." It may be just replacing a water treatment plant. Many northern communities are having a hard time meeting the regulations, post-Walkerton. It may be all of those things.

I'm glad that there's something written in here about the municipalities. I think we need to and have to not only continue to work with municipalities but give them even more leverage and more say on where the money is spent. If we are going to be committed to doing the infrastructure in a correct manner, we have to have the municipalities decide what they want, rather than us imposing upon the municipalities some kind of great provincial scheme.

I look sometimes with some dismay on great provincial schemes. I watched as Metrolinx unfolded and came up with plans on how they were going to pay for subways or not have subways, and how they were looking at where the money was going to come from or not come from. Even this government wasn't willing to look at the plans that they had because this was more a provincial plan than a municipal plan, because it involved many municipalities. I understand that. It involved many municipalities. The plan they came up was not acceptable to this government, so they went out and they hired Anne Golden and a few people to come up with a different

plan. Anne Golden and a few other people came up with a different plan. Now that plan, too, has been rejected.

I don't know how the infrastructure is going to be built. I'm breathless in watching what is going to happen: whether there will be a subway in Scarborough or not a subway; whether there's going to be an LRT line in Scarborough or not an LRT; whether there are going to be relief lines in Toronto or no relief lines.

I think the same thing is unfolding across this entire province. In every single city and municipality, they are wondering what's going to happen to theirs, too, because when the government in its wisdom determines what is going to happen, invariably the municipalities are not listened to to the extent that they should be. The bill provides for it, and I hope that there is a change in attitude, because we cannot and should not be wasting the amounts of time that we have in these past couple of years debating things like whether a subway is necessary in Scarborough or not. If we have money to burn, I think we should build it.

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Prue: Yes. I mean, everybody wants a subway. I want a subway.

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Prue: Everybody wants a subway, but when you can run a subway with only three stops and have to raise an additional billion dollars in money, does that make sense? Does it make sense to the taxpayers, and all of the taxpayers in Ontario, when you can build the same LRT, have 11 stops and not have to raise the extra billion dollars through tax money? Maybe that makes more sense too.

But in the end, the government of Ontario has to be very careful to work with municipalities. I know that Toronto has flip-flopped so many times here, it's hard to blame anybody. It is. It's hard, but mostly it works.

Okay. We've got some other things here. The bill is going to talk about apprentices, and I think this is a good thing, but it doesn't prescribe how many apprentices are going to be used in the projects and the ratio of apprentices that are going to be used. It is important that we use these infrastructure projects not just to build the things that we need here in the province, but to train a future generation in how to accomplish this.

Times are difficult. Trying to bring people from around the world who have different qualifications and suddenly saying, "You're a lathe operator" or "You're a bricklayer" or whatever is involved—it is more important that our youth get that opportunity for the skilled trades, and that when we are building a project we do exactly like some of the other provinces do, and mandate that there is no way that that project can be built unless a number of people are trained in the new field. And the projects have to be of sufficient length and duration that somebody can actually start learning the electrical trade, finish the training and become a journeyman by the end of it, without having to say that, halfway through the project, "The project's over. You're gone. Good luck finding somewhere else to journey or apprentice with."

We need to make sure, when we're building these big projects that last three, four or five years, that people are allowed to come in at the beginning, and they're allowed to take all of their training, pass and get a licence at the end of it. That is absolutely essential, and I hope—although it's not in here—that the government will do this kind of thing in the regulations.

We're also looking here at the ministerial authority. I always look at that, in every single bill. The ministerial authority in this bill is probably the widest open I have ever seen in any bill in my 13 years in this Legislature. Perhaps the minister, who's listening here right now, can explain why the minister, or any future minister, requires the kind of authority that is vested in this bill. It virtually allows unlimited authority to one person in the future to prescribe, to un prescribe, to make regulations, to do everything under this bill, because as I said earlier, much of this bill is a hollow shell. It's an empty shell, but the ministerial regulatory authority that is being granted here is pretty much open, and perhaps that's the intent.

I want to talk here a little bit—because I've only got a little over four minutes left—about—

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Prue: Okay. What is also perturbing to me in this bill is that this appears to be a vehicle that will allow for continuation, or perhaps even an increase, in the number of P3 models taking place here in Ontario. I am no fan of the P3 model. I think that the auditor, when he came forward to this Legislature and told us how much extra we spent using a P3 model to build a hospital in Brampton, pretty well had it right: Unless it can be shown, and shown clearly, that the P3 model is going to save the taxpayers money, then we ought not to be doing it.

1640

I don't see that contained within the body of the bill. I see all kinds of words that are going to encourage us to go into contractual agreements with people who are coming here and who want to build. God bless them; they want to build. But they don't want to build for nothing. They want to build for a profit. God bless them. They should be making a profit. But should they be making the profit on the backs of the taxpayers of Ontario when we can do it ourselves for the same or less cost?

Certainly, we know in this province—and the example in the Brampton hospital is the key one—that where this has been studied around the world, in the United States and particularly in Great Britain and in other places in Canada, the P3 model has been found to be wanting. We know that all of the auditors and political scientists and people who study this have looked and have seen that it doesn't really save the taxpayer any money at all.

In Canada, we have the argument—and this government has said it several times; I've heard them—that you're looking for value for money. I'm not sure that the way that this is gauged, the way it's looked at, is applicable.

We know that scholarly journals—I rely most often on the one prepared by U of T professors Matti Siemiatycki

and Naeem Farooqi. They wrote a very scholarly work in the *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 2012. They looked at 28 P3 models in Ontario and in Canada, and they couldn't find value for money in any of them. They couldn't. They could not find that it was actually saving the taxpayer any money.

Was it built a little faster? Yes, probably it was. It was probably built faster because people were willing to take some minimal risk and put it on the table and governments were willing to debenture it for years and years and years. But in the end nobody can say that 20, 25 or 30 years from now, when that debenture is all paid off, when the whole thing and the mortgage is all paid off, we got a better deal than had we built it ourselves. I have yet to see a single scholarly work that has identified one project in this province that can actually meet that.

If that's what this bill is about, I'm somewhat sceptical, and I wait to hear perhaps some comments from the minister whether or not the bill is intended to increase the number of P3s and what guarantee we have in this province that the P3s will actually give value for money or will actually save the taxpayers money. If it's not going to save the taxpayers money, I am sceptical because my own training as a councillor and as a mayor showed that whenever we contracted out things as simple as garbage, in the end it costs more money to contract them out than it did to keep them in-house. Please—I'm sceptical—just show me how it's going to save money, and we'll talk. But if it's not going to save money, I don't want to see the body of this bill pass and then the regulations allow for something that I don't think is all that good.

In the end, the government ends up with the ultimate risk, even in a P3. Here in this province the best example of that was the gas plants. The signed document was with private companies. When the government walked away from that signed contract, we had to pay over \$1 billion for those two signed contracts. Had we been building those things ourselves, it would have never cost anywhere near that amount of money. So there are risks involved, and we should know it.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for my 20 minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I just want to back up a little bit here about how we pay for infrastructure, because this does lock us into a 10-year budget. It takes planning documents and turns them into budgets. It allows for a depoliticized process.

The member asked a few questions. He says that we have a number of plans. The Metrolinx funding plan for the Big Move was rejected by your party. You said you couldn't support it. The Golden report came forward. Your party leader said that you couldn't support most of the content for that. You say you're pro-transit and want to make these infrastructure investments. We're committed to 2% of GDP, which is why I asked you if you were there.

Now my friend from Beaches–East York, who I have a great deal of respect for and am very fond of, has said

he doesn't like P3s. Right now, there is a high-speed rail system around London. It's called High Speed 1. It is owned by the teachers' pension fund—100% of Ontario teachers. All the high-speed rapid rail systems are owned. It's a P3. They have an equity position. We have this—can't support new revenue; can't, apparently, find savings—but the entire pension fund. So why isn't OMERS, why aren't teachers' pension funds owning and allowing us to build high-speed rail here—the only model you can do that. Matti Siemiatycki, who I have huge regard for and his research paper—as Roger Martin's—isn't opposed to P3. It actually makes very valid criticisms of what has been our practice, suggests improvements and argues that we should maintain a P3 program. So if the member opposite has read that, help me, because we would like to sincerely work with your party to find some bridge whereby a number of us who view this as a shared progressive view can find a way to fund this together.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I find it interesting in this chamber from time to time, particularly the dialogue that takes place between the New Democrats and the Liberals. It's like they disagree on everything. They're fighting all the time. It's like that married couple that can't agree on anything, but the one thing they do agree on is that they are not getting a divorce. So here they are. It's "No, you guys do this wrong" and "You guys never did this" and "You don't support this" and "You voted against this" and then—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): A point of order, the Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I don't think the member is speaking to the bill. Not even close.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I believe that he was doing a comparative analysis, and it's within the guidelines.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Yes, thank you very much. The minister will have his opportunity.

But the one thing that always seems to happen, and that's why it reminds me of that scenario, is that they're going to fight like cats and dogs, but then, when the day of decision comes—

Mr. Rob Leone: The day of reckoning.

Mr. John Yakabuski: —the day of reckoning, when it is time to vote on a budget, what happens is that the New Democrats will either sit on their hands, avoid the place or they'll find a reason to somehow support the government and prop it up through another cycle. All I'm saying, folks, is that if you cannot get along, just end the relationship and give Ontarians what they want—an election—so they'll decide what's going to be the infrastructure plan for the next five or 10 or 20 years. Don't worry about what the minister is saying. Don't worry about what the New Democrats are saying. Let's go to the people. Maybe if we got a budget, then we could—maybe they will actually vote against this budget, who

knows? But we first have to get a budget. So when you guys get a budget, let's have a chat.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thanks very much. I'm not quite sure how much that related to what we were discussing, but that's fine.

The member from Kitchener–Waterloo.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's always a pleasure to comment on the reaction that the member from Beaches–East York brings to this Legislature. It's a lot of experience, and I think he delved into this piece of legislation very effectively.

I do want to remind, though, the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke that even sometimes dysfunctional marriages can be very productive. Children are born of dysfunctional marriages, and results can be attained, as we have proven already through two budget sessions. Some of those concessions that we have received through the last two budget sessions have actually benefited the people of this province. There are always two sides to a discussion. You have accomplished nothing and almost relegated yourself to complete and utter irrelevance.

That said, with regard to G141, I think in particular what I would like to comment on is the P3 conversation, because the alternative financing plan that has been shopped around—a lot of things have been shopped around. A lot of things have been ridden out and then backedpedalled on, and I think that the P3 discussion is a very important one. It's also important to remember that a number of the Auditor General reports have found significant failures to transfer risk in P3 projects. The key question in Ontario is not whether the risk has been transferred but at what cost? In other words, is the estimated risk premium paid to the private partner a real and accurate cost? There have been inconsistencies. I'm not sure we've got this alternative financing plan and P3 plan nailed down yet.

1650

I think the member from Beaches–East York brings a valid concern to the way this legislation is crafted. As usual, there are lots of weaknesses in the legislation, and of course it's part of our job to point them out. But it's also our job to make it better, and that's what we stay focused on. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member for Etobicoke North.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Of course I support my honourable colleague Glen Murray, the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, with regard to Bill 141.

It's with some trepidation that I speak in front of the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, Speaker, because as you may remember, his brother was in fact my debating coach in high school. But to continue his marital/spousal analogy, the first victims of any kind of spousal breakup are, of course, the children, and by extension of the analogy, the people of Ontario. I think that in this situation, in a minority Legislature, we are obligated to work together, to process ideas—yes, to have, as you said, the nasty arguments that may in fact

allow tempers to flare—but at the end of the day, that is called democracy.

Speaker, there are of course, as you know, a number of different points in this bill, whether it's skills training and apprenticeship or promoting design and excellence. I would simply say that our own expenditure of \$14 billion on infrastructure on an annual basis for approximately the last decade or so demands that we professionalize it, that we bring forward more apprenticeships who will be fully aware of all the different aspects, for example, of architectural design.

I remember attending a conference—I think it was a cityscape conference—and being struck by the phrase the “built environment” that must take into account not merely its functionality but, if I may say, Speaker, it's got to soothe the soul or bring the spirit into concrete. Because at the end of the day, as a health practitioner, the environment affects so many things, whether it's our physical fitness, opportunities to walk our calories off and simply maintain an environment that's relatively stress-free—I might even say, as was mentioned earlier, to beautify the place. All of these aspects, I think, are incorporated within Bill 141.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Beaches–East York, two minutes.

Mr. Michael Prue: It's always a pleasure to listen to some of the comments. I thank the Minister of Transportation; the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, who never ceases to amaze me with his humour; the member from Kitchener–Waterloo; and the member from Etobicoke North.

I've only got two minutes, but I'd like to thank the member from Kitchener–Waterloo for commenting so positively on what I had to say.

The member from Renfrew, of course, in his own inimitable style, is funny—I never likened what we do in here to some kind of divorce. Also, the member from Etobicoke pointed out the people who ultimately get hurt in a divorce.

I want to leave most of my time for the Minister of Transportation. He made some kind of comment I have heard in this House before, which I often find bizarre, that somehow New Democrats aren't pro-transit enough. I find that very strange.

I was not part of the government between 1990 and 1995. I was a mayor in those days, through most of that. I remember going to Metro council, and I remember voting on the four subway lines that that government was trying to put in. I remember voting for each and every one of them, and I remember what came after when, one by one, they were chopped out by the incoming Progressive Conservative government of Mike Harris.

I don't remember New Democrats not being in favour of transit, and I've never heard a single one of my colleagues in this Legislature, in caucus or anywhere else ever speak against transit. I don't know where this is made up; I don't know where it comes from.

Interjection: Where's the money?

Mr. Michael Prue: The question is always: Where do we get the money? We're still waiting for the govern-

ment to tell us where you anticipate getting the money to build what we all want.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. Further debate.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's my pleasure to join the debate with my colleagues this afternoon on Bill 141 and to discuss how we are going to bring infrastructure into our province, how we're going to pay for it, how we are going to plan for it, and how we are going to sustain the jobs we have now and then grow them for the future.

I'd first like to say, on behalf of the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus, we obviously support the principles for the need for long-term planning and infrastructure. I say this also as the Ontario Progressive Conservative energy critic. Infrastructure with respect to our energy sector is critical. The infrastructure investments should be prioritized. I think we all would agree that it should be dealt with on a specified list of criteria. For example, we do have challenges in many of our communities. They have to be prioritized. In Ottawa alone, for example, we have an over \$1-billion deficit on our existing infrastructure, a \$1-billion deficit that's required to upgrade that. So yes, it's important to have priorities not on just what is needed in the future to build, but also how we protect and sustain the infrastructure we've already got.

It's also important that we should know the current state of all government-owned infrastructure assets. I would view infrastructure assets as a school or a hospital; I would view that as a roadway; I would view that as our energy infrastructure. I think that it's imperative that we have that information. Otherwise, it is going to be impossible to plan for its upkeep, its upgrade and any possible changes or new builds.

Finally, we also agree with the principle that the government should publish, at minimum, a 10-year plan that would set out the anticipated infrastructure needs and a strategy to meet those needs, and I say that with this current backdrop. I think it's really important to bring this into context.

I've been here now long enough to remember they brought in Infrastructure Ontario to do just this. So I think this bill, in many respects, suggests that there has been a failure on behalf of Infrastructure Ontario and previous ministers of this government to do what they had set out to do over a decade ago.

I also want to take issue with the title of the bill: An Act to enact the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act. I can't tell you how many pieces of legislation have come into this House, this assembly, to talk about jobs and prosperity. In fact, what we have seen, Speaker, is the opposite has occurred. We have actually lost jobs in Ontario despite all of these jobs and prosperity acts that they continually bring in. One that comes to mind is the Green Energy and Green Economy Act, which promised us 50,000 new jobs in Ontario through infrastructure in wind and solar. Instead, what we have seen is we have lost jobs. The Auditor General said that for every job that we create, we lose four as a result of it. So in fact the

50,000 jobs that were promised as a result of the Green Energy and Green Economy Act have never materialized. In fact, that bill has had a reverse effect on jobs.

I also look at the HST legislation. I had the opportunity, before the last election, to be the revenue critic for the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus, and I fought that HST tooth and nail. In fact, my colleague Randy Hillier, who is here today, actually launched a sit-in with our former colleague Bill Murdoch to oppose that new tax. When we opposed that new tax, we also brought in 500,000 amendments to one single bill. The Liberals invoked closure, they stopped it, but they did that because they said they could create 200,000 new manufacturing jobs. Speaker, since the HST has been brought into Ontario in a non-revenue-neutral fashion, we have lost even more jobs in the province. We are now at a 300,000-person job loss in the province of Ontario.

So they brought in the green energy act, which was also the green economy act, and promised 50,000 jobs that never materialized. They brought in the HST for more jobs and infrastructure that never materialized.

They also promised, as I stated earlier in my debate, through questions and comments, with the member from Northumberland–Quinte West, that they would continue sustainable funding to municipalities; that when they were in surplus, they would give the rest of the money to municipalities to upgrade their infrastructure or build new infrastructure. Shortly after that, they made every municipality in Ontario very happy, but then ended up in deficit financing, so there wasn't any money for those municipalities, which creates a problem. It was less than honest with the people of the province when they offered that commitment that they knew they could not keep because they were entering into deficit financing territory.

1700

I think, again, when we go back to An Act to enact the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, it sounds nice. It sounds like they're trying to do things. I've just suggested that there are four principles that we can agree on, which are:

- long-term planning for infrastructure;

- infrastructure investments which are prioritized based on a list which we thought Infrastructure Ontario was already doing;

- that we should know the current state of all government-owned infrastructure assets—that's the only way we're going to be able to plan; one would have thought that Infrastructure Ontario would have been doing that as well; and

- that the government should publish, at a minimum, 10-year plans to set out anticipated infrastructure needs. We've got to do that with our municipalities. We've got to do that with our hospitals and our school boards. That's the best way to do this.

As I say, we actually still have crumbling infrastructure in the province of Ontario today, and those assets are \$1 billion alone in the city of Ottawa. We have assets of a billion dollars with the Ottawa-Carleton District School

Board. We've actually got to understand what that price tag will be and then we have to consider how we're going to finance it. That's what I want to talk about for the remainder of my time.

In the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus, we have discussed a number of options on how we would continue to fund things.

Earlier today, I had an opportunity to meet with my leader as well as the Electricity Distributors Association. We talked about how, when we assume government very shortly from now, we're going to monetize some of the assets at Hydro One and at the OPG. That is how we believe we can help break the gridlock in communities like Ottawa, Toronto, in the Kitchener-Waterloo area and in London. We would actually make that our priority: assets that Ontario doesn't need that could be run by another company or other shareholders and have value there to fund those transportation and transit initiatives that we need and those infrastructure initiatives that we need.

Secondly, we have led the way in Ontario—starting, of course, with the previous Conservative administration, and I will give credit where it is due with the current Liberal government—on P3 initiatives. I think it has worked well. I think of one—I'm sure that the Minister of Community Safety will agree—the Royal Ottawa Hospital, the way that that was built with a lot of public money. I think of Roger's House in Ottawa, which was built for children's palliative care, with the great assistance of the Ottawa Senators. I think there are opportunities out there that we need to explore.

Our colleague, the critic for education, is here in the assembly as I speak, and we talk openly about expanding that into education so that we could allow our school boards to work with municipalities or other educational institutions in order to build schools so that we can actually continually fund them and ensure that we're doing two things: We're upgrading those facilities in urban areas that have been old and need repair, like in Broadview, in Ottawa, or in suburban communities like mine in Barrhaven, where we need new schools because 10 years ago they were farmers' fields. There are tens of thousands of people who are now in those communities, populated with young families. We have to think about these types of ideas and how we're going to fund all of these new projects, and understand that we cannot just do it alone. We are going to need community partners. The best way to do that, in my opinion, is through P3s, but not only that way.

We should also consider the assets that we have which we don't need that can contribute to supporting those new initiatives, new infrastructure, and of course, those new roads, bridges, schools and hospitals that we so desperately need in a growing province of Ontario—particularly in light of the deficit financing that we find ourselves in, and that debt that we have seen triple over the last decade under the leadership of, first, Dalton McGuinty and now Kathleen Wynne.

Again, it is an honour and a privilege, as always, to stand in my place and have a debate on some of the key

and important issues of the day. As I mentioned, we do have some criticisms of the bill and of the way the government has handled them, but there are a lot of opportunities that I think can be had with legislation like this. There are many principles with which we agree.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's once again an honour to be able to rise in this House and to follow the member from Nepean–Carleton. She made a lot of good points. Quite simply, the need for long-term planning in the government—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: This is the second time one of your colleagues said something nice about me.

Mr. John Vanthof: But it's very important. There are a lot of basic principles that people would just expect from government, like long-term planning.

Before I came here, I was on the local hospital board, and they didn't need this bill to do long-term planning, because they needed a new roof, and they were planning for the new roof. It wasn't the planning part that was missing; it was where to get the money. That was missing. It's things like that. And I'm going to come back to it. It's one of my favourite subjects.

We're talking about long-term infrastructure planning, yet two years ago, when this government decided to dump the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission, which is our long-term infrastructure, there was no planning at all. According to the Auditor General, they didn't even bother consulting anyone when they made that announcement. So, it's not only saying you're going to plan; it's actually demonstrating that there's planning involved.

On our side here, in this corner, especially in my corner of the world, we really wonder if the current government is planning for the whole province, because we need that infrastructure, not just for people, but to move products. A lot of the riches of this province come from our part of the province, and to just say we're going to dump the infrastructure is a complete and total lack of planning.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Hon. Jeff Leal: Indeed, I think the member from Nepean–Carleton certainly contributed to the debate this afternoon. We're having an opportunity to talk about planning for infrastructure.

I was a city councillor in the great city of Peterborough from 1985 until the fall of 2003, when I was elected to the Legislature. Of course, during my municipal career—as you did, Mr. Speaker—you would always develop five-year capital plans in the municipality and you would allocate resources.

I remember a very controversial issue in Peterborough that I supported was the introduction of a sewer surcharge to make sure that you had dollars each year to expand and improve your waste water treatment plant. That was controversial, but it did provide for those dollars to keep renewing something that is very essential to one's community.

Certainly, I have been working with ROMA and AMO to come up with an approach for a permanent infrastructure program to make sure that municipalities, rural municipalities, smaller municipalities, have the opportunity to get funding each and every year to attack those asset management plans which we provide resources to, to make that happen. Someone said we should model it like the gas tax that was brought in by the Honourable Paul Martin when he was finance minister, which provided a revenue stream each and every year for municipalities to address their management plan.

But I just want to touch upon green energy for a moment. About a month ago, I had the opportunity to meet with Elyse Allan, who is the president of GE Canada. She was touring the Peterborough plant along with the mayor of Peterborough, and Elyse Allan indicated to me that at any time she would like to meet with the caucuses of the opposition and the third party to talk about how GE is anticipating \$1 billion in sales in Canada and Ontario in renewable energy. In fact, in Peterborough today, they have developed an innovator which takes DC from solar to convert it to AC so people can use that energy.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. Questions and comments? Well, we have two standing up. Which one is speaking? The member from Durham.

Mr. John O'Toole: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I apologize.

I listened carefully to the member from Nepean–Carleton. Now, the member from Nepean–Carleton speaks very passionately, and her two critic files have been on the human infrastructure side when she was education critic, and now the energy critic, which is the physical infrastructure. She knows of what she speaks. A lack of plan and a lack of vision are really inherent in this plan.

1710

How does this apply to me? Well, I look at my riding of Durham and I see, for instance, the lack of infrastructure there. They promised the 407 would be done in 2015-16, and they cancelled it. So they are great at promising things; very poor at delivering those promises. It's tragic.

Another part: Then they came forward with the big Metrolinx plan. The big Metrolinx plan is a \$50-billion, unfunded vision. The Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure is here. He knows that they promised and then cancelled the 407.

Interjection: We did not. That's not true.

Mr. John O'Toole: Look, take two minutes on my remarks and try and rebut them, because it's not there and you promised it would be. In fact, Jeff Leal, the member from Peterborough, had his picture taken before the last election on the future site of the 407. That sign will fall down before it's even built.

The other part of it too: They promised transit systems in Durham. It is tragic. They promised that there would be rail transit to Clarington. It won't be there for 2020, if then, because they put in an infrastructure piece that isn't there—it's not funded—which is a bridge across the 401.

I don't trust this government. They promise things and deliver nothing.

Look at the health care system. Look at the educational system. Look at the entire—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. Questions and comments.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased to rise again on Bill 141, Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, which I think is an attempt on behalf of the government to pay homage to our federal cousins and the quite elaborate titles of their bills, which ultimately prove to be nothing more than window dressing as well as a massive expenditure on advertising, as we've seen with the jobs and prosperity act or whatever the Harper regime has done.

I want to focus on the P3 aspect of the bill because I believe that the impetus for the bill has come from a real concern from our construction sector about the government's reliance on P3s and particularly bundling of government projects through either service centres or other infrastructure projects. What it ultimately does is privatize the profits made on infrastructure projects and socialize the costs and the risks.

That's no more evident than what we see in the Windsor-Essex parkway, the Herb Gray Parkway, the plan to ultimately link a new bridge to Detroit and that vital economy there. We see a Spanish company that has really applied a massive amount of downward pressure on local contractors, crushed them under burdens of contractual obligations, in some instances, having to sign a 900-page document just to get the ability to bid and then have their bid overturned and undercut. This is nothing more than a reliance on outsourced, private financing regimes that don't actually benefit the folks who are paying for these projects, who are Ontarians. We would hope that the government would see a different light and return to a more traditional method of financing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Nepean–Carleton has two minutes.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Again, it's my pleasure to respond to my colleagues. I appreciate the contributions of the members from Timiskaming–Cochrane, from Essex and the Minister of Rural Affairs. I want to give particular thanks to my colleague from Durham for his charitable remarks. I would also like to say thank you to him for discussing the two portfolios I've recently had, currently with energy and the second one, education. We come here and we're not only critics in a shadow cabinet; we also are local MPPs and we represent constituencies that we're all very proud of.

That's why I wanted to take what time I have remaining to discuss three infrastructure requirements I have in my community and why I think we have to start thinking, through our school boards—

Interjections.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: —that we have to plan and make sure that we have the finances in order to do that. I think specifically of—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I really love it. You guys are the biggest problem for talking when your people are talking. Even the member was pointing, and then, of course, you encouraged it. It was lovely. Can we move on now?

I'm sorry I took up some of your time, but these things happen when your members speak. Go ahead.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): You're finished?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Yes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. Further debate?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'm pleased to join the debate on Bill 141, the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act. The title is somewhat misleading, I would say, but I'm going to cover a few issues and a few concerns that we have with it.

I just want to reflect on what's in the bill first: All broader public sector entities “must consider a specified list of infrastructure planning principles when making decisions” related to infrastructure. These principles include things like, one, taking a “long-term view.” That makes sense. Two, “decision-makers should take into account the needs of Ontarians by being mindful of ... demographic and economic trends in Ontario.” That makes sense. We're referring to these two recommendations as a use-your-brain clause. But these principles should already underlie all infrastructure planning as it stands in the province of Ontario right now.

“The Minister of Infrastructure must periodically develop a” 10-year “infrastructure plan” providing “a description of the government's anticipated infrastructure needs ... and a strategy to meet those needs. Each long-term infrastructure plan must be made public.” There have been issues around transparency, so we're pleased to see that there's at least an effort to make any planning very public and very open.

“The government must consider a specified list of criteria when evaluating and prioritizing proposed projects for the construction of infrastructure assets.” Criteria should include whether the project fits in the municipal plans.

This is, actually, a very interesting point, because in Waterloo region the municipality has been planning infrastructure—they've done a five-year plan and then a longer-term infrastructure plan and planning for growth. In the Places to Grow Act, they were highlighted as one of the areas in Ontario which should have intensification. So they planned accordingly, and they did extensive consultation, and they planned for intensification in their core, to try to prevent some of those extra costs of infrastructure that we can't afford: the roads and the sewers for the additional subdivisions that we're not sure that we do need.

The recommendation came out that we would only develop around, I think it was, 88 acres. That was challenged at the OMB by some interests who want to

expand growth—really, for me, it's unsustainable growth. The OMB came back and ruled that the municipality must expand their growth plans to over 1,000 acres.

There is a huge disparity between what the municipality planned for and consulted about, and then the OMB—ironically, in many respects—overruled the provincial policy, the provincial government. So that disconnect is an issue.

I think that it makes it very difficult for municipalities to plan financially in a responsible way, and I want to highlight that as an issue, because there are some long-standing issues with the Ontario Municipal Board. We have very clearly articulated them on this side of the House: that they are unelected and they should not be undermining, one, provincial policies like the Places to Grow Act and, two, municipalities, who are duly elected by the citizens of those communities and are tasked with planning in a very responsible way.

I do want to give an example of why long-term planning is needed, though. This morning I asked a question of the Premier on the announcement that was made in Kitchener-Waterloo yesterday. The press release was on two-way, all-day GO. I took exception to that. It certainly prompted, I would think, a very strong response from the Premier this morning, because what she said she was going to be giving to Waterloo region yesterday—two-way, all-day—is not the reality of what is actually going to be happening by 2016, 2020 or 2030, for that matter.

I think that there is a need for a 10-year strategy. I think that that plan needs to be open. We in the NDP caucus share the concerns that projects like this can be just used as political footballs—just to review that project.

I just wanted to commend the city of Kitchener and the city of Waterloo and the respective businesses that have come forward with a strategy. They've made a business case for strategic investment in the innovative regional economies, strategic infrastructure for GO Transit, two-way, all day. When I say two-way, all day, I just want to be sure that everybody understands. It means that not only can commuters from Kitchener-Waterloo or commuters from Guelph or Milton get to Toronto in a reasonable amount of time, but it also means that people who are in Toronto can actually get to one of the strongest economic engines outside of Toronto, which is Kitchener-Waterloo. That is the fundamental difference.

1720

Just to clarify, my issue and the question that I brought to the floor of the Legislature this morning has to do with the integrity of that announcement yesterday, because it is not two-way, all day. Two-way means that people can get to Kitchener-Waterloo and people from Kitchener-Waterloo can get to Toronto, and that is just not the case. It just isn't. It doesn't matter how many press releases and how many ribbons are cut; as it stands right now, that plan is not a reality.

But there is a strong investment. Our leader, Andrea Horwath, met with the mayors and representatives from

Guelph, Kitchener and Waterloo. We met with Communitech; we met with the insurance industries. We have fully explored their plan, and it does make a lot of sense. In fact, the business case for this kind of strategic investment of upgrading the lines and creating this infrastructure—which is sustainable, which actually would work for commuters because it would be faster. It would meet the needs of commuters. This is the thing about public transit: It will not be successful if it takes two and a half hours to get from Kitchener-Waterloo to Toronto. People just will not opt for it.

I want to commend the mayor of Kitchener. The counterpoint was that people would come back and say, "But the highways are faster." But really—I think, so far, they've been tracking the 401; actually, it was shut down 13 times this year.

We do need to refocus our attention on a sustainable transit plan, and quite honestly, it has come from the business sector. It should be incorporated into a 10-year strategy that is fully costed out. We know where the revenue streams can come from.

I want to give you one good stat that indicates how important it is and why it is a good investment. The net employment growth from this investment—let me back up. The tech clusters in Kitchener, Waterloo and Toronto employ 205,000 people, second in North America only to the Silicon Valley corridor between San Francisco and San Jose. The major difference is that the Silicon Valley's commuter systems are more advanced, more modernized, and they were built into the economic plan of that area.

Ontario suffers from lower urbanization, which leads to lower productivity. The net employment growth from this investment, if we move ahead with this project, which New Democrats want to do and will be planning for, is estimated at 37,000 jobs, which would generate \$2.5 billion in income and \$542 million in personal income taxes annually, measured in 2013 dollars. What you have here is basically a business case for this kind of investment.

As leaders in Kitchener-Waterloo—business and public leaders—this project literally, through job creation, through income tax revenue, almost pays for itself. You just need the leadership to come to the table and make the commitment. If Bill 141 in any way, shape or form would guarantee that to happen—I do not see it, but it doesn't mean that it can't happen. I think we have to put our collective interests, our shared interests to see a more prosperous Ontario, and that obviously means an infrastructure and transit strategy which connects economic clusters and hubs and ensures that not only people, but goods and services are transferred between those clusters.

We are absolutely committed to making sure this happens. It will be costed out. Whenever the election happens, whenever that platform does come out, you will see it there. You will see leadership from the NDP on the transit file and on the infrastructure file: You have my guarantee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I want to commend the member from Kitchener–Waterloo because I agreed with about 99% of what she said, and I appreciate that.

I want to get to the point, though, because right now, for the first time in 40 years, if what you said is true, and I believe it's so, we have enough members in this House—because I would agree with you; I endorse the plan and am working right now, as we bring our budget forward—to have a few historic moments where there could be a stable majority of MPPs here to do these kinds of things because the Big Move now is not just a discussion document, it's a \$50-billion investment. I want to say to the member opposite, because I agree with her, that we are now about \$20 billion into it of already expended money. So we're about six years into a 25-year funding program, and we've already committed or spent \$20 billion that we can't take back. The Kitchener–Waterloo LRT is a big part of it.

I want to just address this because—the contrast between our friends in the NDP, whom I have never had an issue with—the arguments are there, it's how do you pay for it? We need to work together. We have had two reports. As transportation minister, I'm working on another set of funding options. But if we're actually serious, and I'll take it that you're serious, I'm hoping that in the next few weeks we can come to an understanding about a set of funding tools. If we can't, then it's simply rhetoric.

To the member from Durham who spoke earlier, I just figured out one way we could pay for it. The 407 extension is half built. It's out there. We have billions of dollars committed. The land is bought, but apparently the member for Durham says it doesn't exist. Maybe the members over there who actually understand that we're spending billions of dollars, we could just cancel that project because he doesn't—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you.
Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you.
Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The minister had to get his last sentence in, didn't he? When I stand, you sit. That's how it works. Thank you.

The member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Thank you very much, Speaker. When I was reading this legislation, I have to say that I had to take more than a few grains of salt to help digest it.

What I notice during this debate is that nobody's mentioned that there's already a 10-year build plan in Ontario. We've had it for a long time. The minister hasn't mentioned it. There is a 10-year plan and there has been for quite some time. So why have we got this new piece of legislation to have and announce that we've got a new 10-year plan? Of course, this plan goes along with all the other plans that we have—the northern growth

plan and the smart growth plan. We're going to have to have some planners in the infrastructure ministry to plan the planners, I guess, or to plan the plans so they know which ones they ought to be putting forward.

I'd like to know from the minister today—seeing that he's here—is the real motivation for this new legislation that when the Liberals want to change the plan, they won't be allowed to change the plan?

I'm thinking about things like the gas plants. If the gas plants were in the plan and an election came along, could they alter the plan or would they not be able to? Is this now going to prevent the Liberals from going around and altering the plan when a by-election comes along or when a general election comes along?

That's why I really had to take a little bit of salt with this new plan, because it's just the same as every other Liberal plan: Around and around and around the little Energizer bunny plans go, but the results are always the same.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Prue: Before I comment on my friend from Kitchener–Waterloo, I just want to welcome back the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington—I had to put them all in the right order there. His contribution to this House is enormous, and we've missed him for a while, but thank you for coming back and lightening up the place again.

1730

To my colleague from Kitchener–Waterloo, she made some very good points, and I think we need to reflect on them. The first one is her question today in the House about two-way, all day. The question is a real one because it isn't just bringing people to Toronto in the morning to work here all day and go home at night—and, yes, you can put on some extra cars to bring more people from Kitchener–Waterloo and Guelph, and then send them back at night—the question is also whether you're going to take people from Toronto and have them go in the morning to Kitchener–Waterloo or Guelph to work in the sector there. That's the important thing. This cannot be Toronto-centric. And I say that as someone from Toronto. It needs to move two ways. I think she's made a good point today.

She also talked about the 10-year strategic plan that Kitchener–Waterloo has put forward. I think that that municipality has shown very strong municipal strength in doing what they have done in putting forward a cogent and coherent plan, and asking the government to follow it.

Then she closed out by talking about the need to build transit and the question of how business is going to be involved. She made a promise at the end—I think one that, perhaps, surprised the minister opposite. But she made a promise, and I think we need to say as New Democrats that the question isn't whether we have the transit; the question is who is going to pay for it. That is the ultimate question, and it needs to be answered.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: It gives me great pleasure to stand up today and support Bill 141.

As a former municipal councillor, it was our practice to plan in advance and to have a five- or 10-year plan for our infrastructure, and that's the best way to keep your infrastructure—roads, sewers and all the municipal infrastructure—in good working condition. I'm glad that the minister is bringing this legislation, and it's very specific in the legislation that this has to be done.

Another matter in the bill that I wanted to speak about is promoting design excellence in public works—do we ever need that. When you travel the world and you see what is being done in other countries, and you come back and everything that you see is stone, it's dull and grey and it has no real design in it, I think we need to put the accent on, we need to have contests across the province to make sure that when we build something, even a road or a bridge, that there is some design in it and that it's something that we can be proud of and show the world.

I am very impressed that in this bill we will promote that. I am sure we have very smart architects and artists that will be able to help us in this endeavour.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Kitchener–Waterloo: two minutes.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I want to thank the Minister of Infrastructure; the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington—welcome back; the member from Beaches–East York; and the Minister of Community Safety.

It is interesting because the infrastructure piece ties almost everything together in this province—sometimes literally. It pulls in the energy file. It pulls in the education file, as the member from Nepean–Carleton pointed out. It is an economic driver for the province of Ontario. It also connects the environment.

I think when the minister across from here says that we need to also plan for design, I think we also have to plan for safety, and safety has been an issue. A number of construction groups such as CDAO and affiliate groups—Ontario Road Builders' Association—believe that there are problems with the infrastructure project bundling and the recent use of alternative finance projects as administered by Infrastructure Ontario. I just want to say that we do share those concerns. It isn't just about the infrastructure piece looking pretty; it's about it actually being safe and functional and lasting.

I was just reviewing the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs—clearly I need to get a life—and there was a group that came to see us, and they made a really good point about the quality of the procurement process for the products that we are building our infrastructure with. There is room for improvement on that file as well.

The work is cut out for us on infrastructure. I know that the minister understands this. I'm not sure that Bill 141 is the be-all and end-all, but clearly, through the consultation that we have seen, we are committed to actually trying to make it better, as always.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mrs. Julia Munro: I rise today to speak to Bill 141, the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act. The government has put this bill forward as an attempt to address the infrastructure investment need in Ontario. One of the things that I want to just pick out to speak about in this bill is the principles that are advanced in this proposed legislation.

The first one is the need for long-term planning for infrastructure. I don't disagree with that, but when I look at some of the obstacles and the kinds of things that go on in terms of planning—years and years and years before you can put a shovel in the ground—I'm wondering if that is a part of the need for long-term planning, because we need to have some efficiencies in that long-term planning as well.

The second principle is that infrastructure investments should be prioritized based on a specific list of criteria. It shocks me to think that that hasn't been done before, that it isn't just part of the annual kind of process that any ministry would normally go through.

Third is that we should know the current state of all government-owned infrastructure assets. Again, it's hard to believe that this, along with the list of criteria for prioritizing, wouldn't also be part and parcel of the regular business of the ministry.

Finally: that the government should publish, at a minimum, a 10-year plan setting out the anticipated infrastructure needs, with a strategy to meet those needs.

While those are all credible ideas, I just find it passing strange that it isn't something that we would assume a government would do.

Other speakers have noted about the publishing of a 10-year plan in terms of the cycle of a particular government, but when you look at some of the crumbling infrastructure that we have in this province, it makes me think that obviously these requirements, these principles, are in fact necessary.

The role of the private sector as a partner is certainly a very important part of any kind of infrastructure undertaking. I think of the impetus to job creation that infrastructure provides. I think of the competitive nature of a procurement policy set out so you get the best possible for the most efficient use of the money. There's also an opportunity to look at these infrastructure projects as a way of a building being built through investment in things like—the large investors, such as the public sector, like teachers, and those major funders who in fact are investing overseas when we could use the capital at home.

1740

There are a few other points that I think are important to look at. It might be an obvious opportunity for something like the pooled registered pension plans that, through my private member's bill, this government used or included in its last year's budget. These are innovative ways to look at this. Certainly there's no harm in strengthening that relationship between infrastructure and investment. I think, with more time, I would be able to talk about the importance of that relationship.

But when I read this bill and particularly look at its principles, it can't help but force me to look back over history. You know, 300 years ago kings figured out that to put up a king's highway was a direct economic benefit, that the opportunity to have goods and people able to travel, to expand commerce, was absolutely paramount to the economic well-being not only of the king and his government, but obviously his subjects as well.

And 150 years ago, we had the vision of our first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, to join the colonies with a railway, since obviously we'd moved on from the king's highways, but we do still have them. The vision of that kind of infrastructure was, again, something that he saw.

If we go to the last century, the 1950s, the 1960s, the 1970s, we see the 400-series highways having been built and the Toronto subway having been built, but if we look in the immediate past, we have a yawning hole. For decades, highways and roadways have been over capacity. In my riding, for instance, a road like Woodbine Avenue that's been the same for 50 years, exceeded its ability decades ago. It was over capacity.

In 1989, the 404 came to Newmarket; 25 years later, we still do not have an extension opened. Some 40 years ago, the corner of the property that my husband and I own had an MTO marker put on it as an indicator that the 404 might follow that route—that's 42 years ago. Almost the same age is the Bradford bypass.

So, when I just take a look at the kinds of investments and the timeline that we're looking at, I think that this notion that this government is going to find itself able to work within 10-year time frames would be quite astonishing, given the kind of problems that we have today.

I want to finish my time for remarks to quote from a letter I received today that just seemed to be appropriate for the bill we're discussing. This comes from the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario, which has just released a report, and it's entitled *Are Ontario's Municipal Class Environmental Assessments Worth the Added Time and Costs?* They go on to talk about the fact that relatively straightforward works such as road widenings, intersection improvements, bridge replacements, sewage system upgrades and even bicycle lanes are taking an unacceptably long time to go through the municipal class EA process. Unfortunately, they say it now takes 26 months on average to go through the process, compared to 19 months just a few years ago. In fact, both the complexity and cost to complete background studies have risen dramatically.

This letter goes on to explain some of the costs and the pitfalls and the way in which more efficient management of these projects could be done.

It strikes me that what this bill does is actually very little. It's a bill for planning. It isn't something that really requires legislation, but it sets out in legislative language something that should be simply the ministerial document on which they would operate as providing good government. I know that "good government" isn't a term we hear very often, but being able to provide our citizens with appropriate infrastructure instead of crumbling

infrastructure, instead of infrastructure that's just a dream for 40 years at a time—it seems amazing to me that this requires legislation. But we'll say that we will be supporting this bill. We will look forward to, hopefully, a more invigorated process of providing the infrastructure so badly needed in this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Michael Prue): Questions and comments.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased to rise again on Bill 141. I'm going to just take the opportunity to point to one aspect of the bill that I'd love some clarification on from the minister. It specifically looks at the appropriation of apprentices: that the government must require that a certain number of apprentices be employed in the construction or maintenance of infrastructure projects. The number would be prescribed in legislation. To me, that seems to counter the actual College of Trades, which sets mandatory standards for apprentices.

At the outset of the minister's discussion, he said that this bill intends to depoliticize infrastructure projects in the province of Ontario. But by the same token, now it will be the government that dictates how many apprentices will be allocated or required on various infrastructure projects. I need clarification on that, Minister, because I believe that the apprenticeship program across the province should be depoliticized and should be outside of the mandate of the ministry. I think that it is important for industry and labour and other groups to come to a data-driven, science-based dialogue around what apprenticeship ratios are, as well as the compulsory aspect to our trades. But I am concerned that this is just thrown in there to make it look like we're going to teach more apprentices using these vital government-funded infrastructure projects. We already will have to do that anyway under the College of Trades and the regulations provided. What is it? Which one is it? I hope that the minister can clarify that for me.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I'll buy my friend from Essex a coffee, because that's a longer conversation, but I appreciate the sincerity of his question.

I just want to deal with the member from Simcoe North, because I was a little confused by what she was saying. We, right now, are spending \$14 billion a year on infrastructure. The last time that happened was in the late 1960s under the Drew and Frost governments. She's quite correct; there was a drought. From 1973 to 2004, we spent less than a quarter of a per cent of GDP, or never more than \$3 billion.

Under the last years of the Harris and Eves government, the entire infrastructure spend in Ontario—entire—was \$1.4 billion. Today, we spend \$2.9 billion alone on highways and \$14 billion on infrastructure. The level of spending we've had for about the last six or seven years hasn't been seen since the Drew and Frost years. I would ask the member from Simcoe North, when she inquires—80% of the time, in that 40-year period when almost nothing was getting built, they were Conservative governments. To be fair to her, it wasn't just Conservative

governments; there were Liberal and NDP governments in that period of time that never got more than \$3 billion or \$4 billion. In a non-partisan way, the reason we have this problem is that 80% of what's built out there was built before 1973, and it's all getting old and falling apart now.

1750

In the 40 years since, there wasn't a party in power that spent more than 3%—\$1.4 billion. The federal government is still a problem. We will spend 14 billion new dollars on infrastructure. The federal government is going to spend 73 million net new dollars next year in Ontario. That's it. Provincial government, \$14 billion; municipalities, \$7 billion; the federal government, \$73 million.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: It's a pleasure for me to rise and speak to the member from York-Simcoe's comments. I was reading this bill and there are some interesting sections to it in the infrastructure planning principles. Maybe some of these things the government has put in here to remind themselves that they should follow certain principles when they're dealing with this act.

One of them is, "Infrastructure planning and investment should take a long-term view"—I agree with that—"and decision-makers should take into account the needs of Ontarians by being mindful of, among other things, demographic and economic trends in Ontario." I would agree with that.

However, I think back to 2010—this was brought up by the member from Kitchener-Conestoga today—and the Premier's promise on GO train service in Kitchener-Waterloo. She promised that 10 years ago. She said that they were going to do this 10 years ago when she was Minister of Transportation—

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Ten years ago—

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'm sorry, four years ago; 2010. Anyway, I thank you for that correction.

What I see in some of these sections here is a good base to start on. However, can we trust this government to even carry on with some of those things? That's what I see with this bill. The good intentions are there; however, as we see from the past record of this government, who knows if it's going to happen?

In section 5, it says "Infrastructure planning and investment should promote economic competitiveness"—the Green Energy Act has really failed on that.

Anyway, I would hope the minister responsible for this can—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mr. John Vanthof: Once again, it's an honour to be able to stand up to Bill 141 and add another couple of minutes, following on the comments from the member from York-Simcoe.

The basic parameters of this—who would be against good planning? That's not the problem we're facing here. One of my Conservative colleagues mentioned the northern growth plan. That's a plan for 25 years for

northern Ontario. It was developed a few years ago. Whenever something good happens, we hear from the governing side, "That's the northern growth plan." I'm going to harp on this one today. When the ONTC was divested or tried to be divested of, although transportation was a big part of the northern growth plan, that was nowhere in the northern growth plan.

Part of this is that the people should be consulted; stakeholders should be consulted. Once again, it makes perfect sense—except when the ONTC announcement was made, who was consulted in northern Ontario? No one. That's not me saying that; that's the Auditor General.

Once again, it's great to be discussing this and, yes, we should work on plans, but at the end of the day, you have to follow through after you've done the consultation, not just talk about how great a plan this is going to be or how great a plan the last one was and then, "Oh, we're going to come up with a new plan just to look good"—

Interjection: Just because.

Mr. John Vanthof:—"just because."

That is the hurdle that we've all got to get over. We have to get over the planning stage and get to the doing stage.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from York-Simcoe has two minutes.

Mrs. Julia Munro: Thank you to the member from Essex, the Minister of Transportation, the members from Perth-Wellington and Timiskaming-Cochrane.

I think the member for Timiskaming-Cochrane summed it up when he suggested that, obviously, none of us is opposed to planning, but we have some concerns about the doing. When you look at decisions and prioritizing and things like that that have been done, it demonstrates the lack of being able to follow through.

The minister had a number of statistics on the actual amounts of money that have been used. We have to be very careful because over a period of time the value of that changes in terms of its percentage. Actually, when you look at the percentage over about four decades, it is all in a fairly small range. I have seen those percentages. I don't have them with me right now, but I just know that it's a fairly narrow frame that they were used in.

The point of many of the speakers is the fact that we desperately need planning, but it has to be based on a process where in fact everyone can see wisdom. When you look at the construction letter that I read from, the time it takes—and that's before the shovels are in the ground. When you look at some of the problems, like prompt payment, there's a lot of work to do on infrastructure in this province.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It being four minutes to 6, this House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1756.

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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
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
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	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	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	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	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	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Attorney General / Procureur général
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Holyday, Douglas C. (PC)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment / Ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et de l'Emploi
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Rural Affairs / Ministre des Affaires rurales
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonnell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Milligan, Rob E. (PC)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Piruzza, Hon. / L'hon. Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Agriculture and Food / Ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Première ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

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Mike Colle, Joe Dickson
Rob Leone, Amrit Mangat
Taras Natyshak, Jerry J. Ouellette
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Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Catherine Fife, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Douglas C. Holyday, Mitzie Hunter
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Sarah Campbell, Donna H. Cansfield
Grant Crack, Dipika Damerla
John Fraser, Michael Harris
Peggy Sattler, Laurie Scott
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permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

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Bob Delaney, Frank Klees
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Rob E. Milligan, Shafiq Qadri
Jonah Schein
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permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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Bas Balkissoon, Grant Crack
Vic Dhillon, Garfield Dunlop
Cindy Forster, Lisa MacLeod
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha
Todd Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

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France Gélinas, Helena Jaczek
Bill Mauro, Phil McNeely
Norm Miller, John O'Toole
Jagmeet Singh
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: John Vanthof
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John Fraser, Monte Kwinter
Jane McKenna, Rick Nicholls
Peter Tabuns, John Vanthof
Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Ted Chudleigh
Bas Balkissoon, Ted Chudleigh
Mike Colle, Vic Dhillon
Cheri DiNovo, Ernie Hardeman
Rod Jackson, Helena Jaczek
Paul Miller
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Select Committee on Developmental Services / Comité spécial
des services aux personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle**

Chair / Présidente: Laura Albanese
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott
Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon
Cheri DiNovo, Christine Elliott
Mitzie Hunter, Rod Jackson
Sylvia Jones, Monique Taylor
Soo Wong
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