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Monday 15 April 2013

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Lundi 15 avril 2013

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 15 April 2013

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 15 avril 2013

The House met at 1030.

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

Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Rob Leone: I would like to take the opportunity to introduce Alanna Newman, who is the incoming Ontario PC Youth Association president and the president of the Scarborough–Guildwood PC Youth Association. I'd also like to introduce Stuart Clark, who is the presidential candidate for the Ontario PC Campus Association and president of the Queen's campus Conservatives. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's a delight to welcome Girls in Government on Girls in Government day today. We have teachers Ms. Kathryn Grant and Ms. Anne Daley; we have students Jacqueline Pinnington, Una Crawley, Christina Roberto, Harmony Campbell, Alexandra Lucchese, Eva Newhook, Caitlin Aspinall, Anna McAlpine, Sydney Duffy, Kate Armstrong, Safis Assadolha, Olivia Hui, Kathleen Evans and Eva Bonjour-Liss; and parent Nancy Evans. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I'm just thrilled to introduce Dianne McKenzie. She is executive director of Epilepsy Durham Region. She is here today to meet with myself and MPP Dickson, and I believe she's met with many other MPPs. She's a delight. She's very organized. She's just a fantastic advocate for her organization.

Mr. John O'Toole: It's my pleasure to introduce constituents from the great riding of Durham: Walter Stapleton and his granddaughter Rileigh Stapleton. Rileigh is a grade 7 student at Trinity College, who has expressed interest in my job in the future.

Hon. John Gerretsen: Speaker, it gives me great pleasure—sitting in the Speaker's gallery today is a former member of the provincial Parliament, Ken Keyes, who served here from 1985 to 1990. He was one of my predecessors as mayor of the city of Kingston and also one of my mentors who brought me into political life many, many years ago.

He is joined today by Yveta Tesar, who works with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care in Kingston. She wanted the chance to visit Queen's Park to view question period and have lunch with her MPP.

I'm very pleased to welcome you both, and I'm sure you will join me in that as well, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank the Attorney General for stepping on my task.

The member from Nepean–Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It is a pleasure to welcome to the assembly today my aunt and uncle, up from Nova Scotia to be part of the assembly. I won't make a comment on the favourite hockey team that they're going to watch tonight, but let's just say this: Go, Sens, go, and may the Leafs not make the playoffs yet again.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I have friends here from Algoma–Manitoulin. Today one of our pages, Callum Arnold, is captain. His proud grandparents George and Leona Arnold are here, along with his parents, Kimberly and Wayne Arnold, and the beautiful, young, little sister, Sarah Rose Arnold. Please welcome them.

Ms. Soo Wong: I'd like to welcome Fiona Su, who is my new assistant in the constituency office. Welcome, Fiona, to the House.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I would like to welcome the family of our page captain, Maddy Elliott. Maddy is a student in grade 7 at Laurelwood Public School in my riding of Kitchener–Waterloo. I'd like to congratulate her and welcome her family, who are here with us today for question period, in the members' gallery: Adam Elliott, Freja Elliott, Joe Elliott, Beverly Elliott, Shawna Elliott, Liam Kelly and Josie Chretien.

I would also like to recognize Constable Ralph Morales, who is up in the public gallery. He's Maddy's uncle.

We're all proud of you today, Maddy. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. The member from Newmarket–Aurora.

Mr. Frank Klees: On a point of order, Speaker: I believe the comment made by the member from Nepean–Carleton was offensive to all Maple Leafs fans, and I would ask that you have her withdraw that statement.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I haven't even tried, and I've lost control.

I'd like to thank the member from Newmarket–Aurora for setting us in the right tone.

In deference to the Attorney General, it is the Speaker's joy to introduce former members, and I'm going to actually duplicate that introduction by introducing Mr. Ken Keyes from Kingston and the Islands, in the 33rd and 34th Parliaments. Welcome to the Speaker's gallery of the House.

Also, today in the Speaker's gallery, we have, from the great riding of Brant, Kailyn Gadsby from Brantford and Rosemary Crawford from Paris, both recipients of the InterMune IPF Legacy Scholarship Program, living

with a debilitating disease. Joining them today are their family and friends: Susan Gadsby, Aaron Gadsby, Miranda Mabini, Carrie-Lyn MacNeil, Paul Crawford, Annette Crawford. And from InterMune Canada: Joel Bathe, Rod Elliot and Megan Boyle. Welcome to Queen's Park, and thank you for being here.

BOARD OF INTERNAL ECONOMY

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I have a feeling you're going to be saying sorry quite a bit today.

I beg to inform the House that, in accordance with section 87 of the Legislative Assembly Act, the name of the following person appointed to serve on the Board of Internal Economy has been communicated to me as chair of the Board of Internal Economy: Donna Cansfield, MPP, is appointed by the caucus of the government in the place of David Oraziotti, MPP.

1040

CORRECTION OF RECORD

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

Mr. Steve Clark: I would like to correct my record in a question on Thursday to Premier Wynne asking her to support the capacity to pay act. I quoted an Ottawa Sun editorial. What I said at the time was that the editorial said, "This bill should be supported by all parties. Stop" the madness. In fact, the editorial read, "This bill should be supported by all parties. Stop this nonsense."

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That is a point of order, and the member is very within his rights to correct his own record. Thank you.

It is now time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Peter Shurman: Thank you very much, Speaker, and good morning. My question is for the Minister of Finance. The people of Ontario, Minister, anxiously await a budget date. The hearings of the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs have concluded. The final report is being assembled and should be in the hands of the minister this week.

While having no confidence in this government, the PC Party does have a job to do on behalf of all Ontarians. Our job is to ensure that the McGuinty-Wynne government stays true to its word and provides a balanced budget on schedule—your schedule, 2017-18, because based on facts and figures we do not believe that you can or that you will.

Minister, you have refused to categorically state that you will balance the budget on time. I'd be very happy with a simple yes or no response. Will you meet that date and balance the budget, yes or no?

Hon. Charles Sousa: I am very proud of the outstanding work that's being done by all Ontarians, recognizing that for the last four years running we've beat our targets. We have conceded in achieving some outstanding results on behalf of our province. We are on target to balance our books by 2017-18 as planned, and we'll do it with or without the opposition. I hope you'll support us because what we plan forward is going to be the appropriate thing for all Ontarians in a balanced approach to ensure that no extreme initiatives are taken that would hinder that recovery, because we are on track to achieve a balanced budget by 2017-18.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Shurman: Minister, your response is laughable but it's not funny.

We in the opposition have dismantled and analyzed the figures. Speaker, we simply do not accept the possibility even remotely that Minister Sousa could possibly deliver a balanced budget in the McGuinty-Wynne government's stated time frame, and I'd like to send over a slide deck so that we can share with you the work that we've done.

Your wavering and refusal to be specific causes us and indeed the major credit agencies to worry. Ontario needs jobs creation and investment. Your hesitation and your coached media coyness tell us that you don't know how to balance the books. You've already dipped into the only savings you had from the past fiscal year to pay for your government's capitulation to the teachers' unions. Your cupboard is bare. What are you going to do about it?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Let's put this in perspective. We have 400,000 more net new jobs since the recession, the worst recession in history over the last 90 years, and we have achieved some outstanding success. We've now been able to bend our cost curve. We're implementing over 50% of Drummond's recommendations. We've taken on a report by Jobs and Prosperity and we're looking also at social reform to support those most vulnerable so that everybody can succeed, and we are doing it in a very, very collaborative way because that's the way to go.

What the opposition is suggesting is extreme measures, slash and burn, do away with those in need and ensure that what would end up happening is in fact even a worse recovery. What we need is to facilitate that recovery because it is a sensitive recovery, and we are on track because we've achieved those targets and more, and that's exactly what you're going to hear in our budget going forward—

Interjection.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Your slide deck I welcome. What I really—

Interjections.

Hon. Charles Sousa: —good solutions going forward.

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

Mr. Peter Shurman: We provided them. Frankly, Speaker, we're tired of the new minister practising his answer evasion skills on the media and now to the people of Ontario. Business as usual for your government is a disaster for our economy and for the people of Ontario. People are tired of these teasers. Just answer the questions, Minister. It's simple. How about the straight goods right now? When are you tabling your budget? Are you maintaining or breaking your promise to balance in 2017-18? What services are being cut, or, conversely, what taxes are being raised?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Let me be clear. We beat our targets four years running. We're going towards a balanced budget by 2017-18. We're working with Ontarians—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That'll do. Thank you.

Minister.

Hon. Charles Sousa: And to Rick Brennan's question, I guarantee that we are working towards every possibility to balance our budget by 2017-18, and we will do what's necessary to achieve that success.

We've incorporated a lot of recommendations from a lot of people around the province, because we have reached out to everyone as much as we can. Well over 600,000 people have been touched in terms of what it is we want. We've got input from a lot of people to make this a budget that speaks to the people of Ontario, and we will work towards that, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate all of the recommendations and input that has been made.

TEACHERS' COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is to the Premier. Last week, I asked you 11 questions and sent a letter asking to know the true cost of the secret OSSTF deal—still no details. It's common knowledge that the retirement gratuities alone cost \$63 million. This does not include the extended maternity benefits, nor does it include the attendance recognition.

Can you inform the House how much the enhanced maternity benefits and the attendance recognition will be used from your so-called savings?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Education.

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm very happy to report to the House that we do have an agreement with OSSTF. That agreement is in the process of being ratified as we speak, and I'm very optimistic that that agreement will be ratified.

What's really important about the agreement is that we will be able to move forward with our teachers, who are our front-line professionals—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Chatham, come to order. The member from Renfrew, come to order.

Hon. Liz Sandals: —in having a school system that is an absolutely excellent—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew, come to order. You were too busy yelling to hear me say "Order"—specifically to you, and the member from Chatham.

Hon. Liz Sandals: One of the things that we're particularly proud of is that because we have approached our teachers in a collegial manner, in fact we do have extra-curricular activities returned to our secondary schools.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Speaker, that is 12 questions, one letter and zero answers.

The Premier said last week—she acknowledged that she moved money around. She hasn't put the so-called savings into either front-line classrooms or paying down the deficit.

We know the retirement gratuities cost \$63 million alone. The OSSTF MOU and the ministry's own numbers suggest that the maternity benefits can be calculated to \$16 million, and the attendance recognition at \$35 million. That means the secret OSSTF deal is costing students, parents and school boards \$114 million at minimum, Speaker, and that's without opening the ETFO agreement or the "me-too" clauses.

When this is all said and done, you will be rearranging hundreds of millions of dollars in the education budget. So I ask you, what programs are going to be cut in order to be paying for this money-moving scheme in the Liberal government?

Hon. Liz Sandals: One of the things I find truly amazing is that the opposition finds it offensive if, working within our budget, we can find a way which makes the school boards happier and the unions happier and the government equally happier, and the kids getting extra-curriculars back—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Northumberland, come to order.

Hon. Liz Sandals: —I mean, I just find this amazing that making things work better is bad. I always thought making things work better was good. But what do you know? The opposition thinks making things work better is a bad thing.

I'm sorry, Speaker; I'm very confused by this.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: We think spending money you don't have is bad.

By the way, anybody who is counting: 13 questions, one letter and zero responses.

The OSSTF deal alone cost, at a minimum, \$114 million. The reopened deal with ETFO and the "me-too" clauses for OECTA and AEFO have not even been calculated yet.

You're trying to make the public and this assembly believe that this is not going to cost anything. I'm sorry, \$114 million comes at a price to our students.

1050

Laurel Broten and Dalton McGuinty said that they chose FDK and lower class sizes over enhanced teacher benefits. Your secret OSSTF deal chose sick-day cash payouts instead of class sizes and FDK. You can't have it both ways; or were Ms. Broten and Mr. McGuinty misleading this House, or are you?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. I would ask the member to withdraw.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Certainly, Speaker. Withdrawn.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): This is an opportune time to remind members that we do not use individuals' names. We identify them by their title or by their riding. And I will also remind members that I will be moving to the next question if the continuation of using unparliamentary language was just to simply get on the record and move forward.

Minister?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I would like to assure the parents and students of this province that we have made absolutely no changes to the roll-in of full-day kindergarten. That will continue exactly as planned, and we have not changed the class sizes. We still have the lower class sizes and all the staff that we chose to protect and the \$1.8 billion in savings that were announced in January. Those \$1.8 billion in savings still exist in March, in April and going forward. This new agreement is not costing taxpayers in Ontario one dollar more. The costing in January is the same as the overall costing in April. The savings from January are the same as the savings in April.

POWER PLANTS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier—

Interjection.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Perhaps Mr. Yakubuski would ask it for me.

Later today, the Auditor General is going to report on the cost of the cancelled power plant in the Mississauga situation. Whether that costs \$190 million or more, that's money that could have been spent on people's priorities.

Will the Premier apologize for wasting millions of dollars to save a few Liberal seats, which could have been used to get people working, to get the health care that they need, and to get life more affordable for everyday Ontarians?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The Auditor General will report today on the costs, and we welcome his report, but let's be clear: We listened to the residents of Oakville, we listened to the residents of Mississauga, and we relocated those gas plants. Not only that, as this House knows—every member in this House—all parties agreed that that was the action that needed to be taken. All parties now, I believe, have a responsibility to move forward, improve the siting of future energy projects and ensure that we get it right from the beginning.

I've been very clear that it is my wish that we had been able to make those decisions earlier and get it right

from the beginning. That's what we need to do now, but everyone in this House agreed that those gas plants needed to be relocated.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Everybody agreed that they didn't belong there. New Democrats said we wouldn't tear up contracts sight unseen. That's the reality, but the reality is also that there is \$190 million, at the very least, that the Liberals decided to spend or waste in order to save some of their own seats. That money could have been used to put 25,000 young people in this province to work with the NDP's First Start program. It could eliminate the wait-list in home care in this province, and could guarantee that people actually get the home care services that they need within a five-day wait. Instead, it was handed to a private power company in a cynical attempt by Liberals to hold on to power.

Will the Premier admit that it was wrong? Will she just admit that it was wrong for her government to put the needs of the Liberal Party ahead of these kinds of changes for Ontario's people?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I understand where the leader of the third party is coming from, except that she can't have it both ways. She can't say that, on one hand, she would relocate the plant and then say but she wouldn't rip up the contract. That's just not how it works. We made a commitment. All the parties made a commitment that they would relocate the gas plant. That's what they said all along. That was the promise that was made on both of these gas plants, and we followed through.

So I say to the leader of the third party, I wish it had been different. I wish we had made a decision earlier that would have meant that that money didn't have to be spent, Mr. Speaker. But once the decision was made—a decision on which we all agreed—then we had to go forward. We had to go through the process of relocating the plant, and that was the decision that was made.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, it's unfortunate that the Premier only likes to look at one little, tiny part of the puzzle. The bottom line is, this party over here, called the New Democratic Party, is the only party in this Legislature that does not support private power deals, whether they're in Oakville, whether they're in Mississauga, wherever they are.

Here are the facts, just to remind the Premier: The government signed a private power deal, and then not only did they scrap it but they hid the true cost of that decision from the public because it would help them win seats and hold on to power. People are tired of watching the government put the needs of the Liberal Party ahead of the needs of the people of Ontario. Is the Premier ready to say that this was wrong? Just say that it was wrong and that the government should not have done it and apologize.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I am quite in opposition to looking at this narrowly. I actually am trying to look at

the big picture, Mr. Speaker. I'm trying to put in place a process to go forward that will be better. I think that the upfront process—the communication with the communities—needs to be better so that we don't make decisions we have to backtrack on. The reality is that it's always going to cost more if you have to renegotiate a decision, if you have to backtrack on a decision. So let's get it right in the first place. That is my objective. The reality is that all the parties in this House agreed that the location of these two gas plants was not right. We followed through on our commitment to move the gas plant. That was our commitment to the people of Mississauga and the people of Oakville, and we followed through.

CANCER TREATMENT

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is to the Premier, Speaker. I've got say, though, that it's unfortunate that Liberal arrogance prevented them from making the right decision a long time ago. That's why we're in this mess.

Late last week, we learned that 26 more cancer patients received over-diluted chemotherapy drugs. Can the Premier tell us whether all affected patients have now been identified?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you for the question. I want to begin by expressing my deep sadness that this happened. I was in London on the weekend; of course, London has been very shaken by this change.

What I can tell you is that all of the hospitals have reviewed all of their files. They believe they have identified all patients who did receive these particular drugs, and those patients have been notified.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, people who undergo chemotherapy treatment and their loved ones are already facing some of the toughest chapters in their lives. The government failed to provide oversight to protect them and still can't answer some basic questions. When will the Premier and the government be able to tell us definitively that all affected patients have actually been identified?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, as the leader of the third party is well aware, we have pulled together all the partners who have something to contribute to understanding what went wrong here, because something did go wrong here. We owe it to patients to ensure that we understand what happened and that we take the steps to ensure that it never happens again. That work is well under way, Speaker. Dr. Thiessen was appointed just last week, and he is on this full-time, getting answers to the questions that patients and their loved ones and, indeed, all of us have.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, when families are struggling with something as frightening as cancer, they

need to know their government is ensuring that they're getting the best possible care they can get. Instead, they see key parts of their treatment outsourced, no oversight and no answers to basic questions like, "Did this actually affect me?"

This never should have happened, and the people need real answers, Speaker. Why won't the Premier let the Ontario Ombudsman look into this scandal and use his expertise to get to the answers that people actually deserve?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The leader of the third party identified a question that cancer patients have: "What does this mean for me?" That is the most important and first question that hospitals are working to answer. That is why they reached out to all affected patients, Speaker. They arranged for group sessions where people could come and ask their questions, and they've arranged for speedy access to individual meetings with with patients' oncologists.

1100

I can tell you that our hospitals have really demonstrated their commitment to patients through this chapter. They have worked tirelessly around the clock to ensure that the appropriate patients have been contacted and that they are getting answers to questions.

We still have questions, Speaker. That is why Dr. Thiessen and the working group are continuing to work very hard to get answers to questions.

CANCER TREATMENT

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, as you're aware, thousands of Ontario's most vulnerable patients—cancer patients—have been given diluted chemotherapy drugs. People across Ontario are wondering how this could have happened and are shaken by this breach in our health care system.

Today we'll be bringing forward a motion in the social policy committee for an investigation into how such a breach could have happened and how we can prevent it from ever happening again. Minister, will you and the other Liberal members be supporting our motion?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, just to correct the record, because I think facts are very important in this case: It is incorrect to say "thousands" of patients; it is correct to say "hundreds" of patients.

What I can tell you, though, is that I do understand the opposition will be bringing forward a motion. We certainly support an investigation. We have several investigations under way currently. Yes, we will support this, but we do need to get all of the players participating in this. We cannot have a narrow scope. It needs to have the full scope. Patients deserve answers to the whole question.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Again, just for the record: There is clear evidence that there are over 1,200 people who have been impacted by this.

Minister, this isn't the time for another backroom investigation conducted by Liberal appointees. Ontario

hospitals have been getting chemotherapy drugs from an unaccredited, unlicensed drug manufacturer. Thousands of people have been impacted by this oversight failure, and Ontarians deserve to have an open and transparent investigation into what happened. Most of all, they deserve this in a timely manner and not at a time that suits the Liberal government.

Minister, will you promise the families and individuals that have been impacted by this control failure, and support our motion for an open, transparent investigation?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: As I said in the first question, yes, we will support that. It's important, though, to expand to include others, like Health Canada, the College of Pharmacists and so on, in this mandate.

I must take serious objection, however, to the aspersions that were cast upon the character of Dr. Jake Thiessen. Dr. Thiessen is a highly regarded expert when it comes to cancer and when it comes to pharmacy. He is absolutely the right person for the job, and I would ask the member to withdraw her characterization—

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

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question is to the Premier. In 2010, this government made decisions that changed the auto insurance industry's profit margin in this province. They slashed accident benefits by 15%. These changes resulted in an annual savings of \$2 billion. Yet in the past two years, our premiums have gone up by 5%.

In this upcoming budget, will the government pass on the billions of dollars of savings to Ontario drivers in this province?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Thank you for the question from the opposition member, who has brought forward a recommendation, through a private member's bill, to address the issue of auto insurance in a gradual way, to reduce it over time. As noted, our government also introduced legislation in 2004 around the same issue.

We need to work collaboratively; we need to work together. I appreciate the input from the third party, unlike the opposition, who have criticized this budget process and have already said no to something they haven't even read.

I appreciate your consideration going forward. We will work together to try to find ways to reduce the rates so that all Ontarians can benefit from the work that we do collaboratively.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: On Friday, a desperate insurance industry released a report—a couple of studies—that magically made the profits, these billions of dollars, disappear. In this sleight-of-hand trick they accomplished by reducing and making all these profits disappear—they used different numbers than FSCO, the Ministry of Finance's own branch, uses.

Will this government reject this self-serving report and, for once, side in favour of the 9 million residents of Ontario and decide in favour of drivers here in this province? And will this government ensure that in the upcoming budget, the 15% reduction in auto insurance premiums is implemented within a year of the budget being passed and that the savings are passed on to drivers in Ontario?

Hon. Charles Sousa: As all members of this House know, we've implemented—we commissioned a report on the anti-fraud task force to find ways to get at the root causes of what's happening in the industry, to ensure that we reduce the costs of insurance that affect our premiums ultimately.

As we know, in Ontario we're paying up to 10 times more than they do in other provinces for treatment, so we've got to find ways to ensure that we get at those root causes, ensure that we eliminate some of the fraud that's happening and ensure that we protect all citizens.

So I will commit to providing some direction as to what we need to do in this budget, together with all members of this House, to benefit all Ontarians, and we will do just that in the upcoming budget.

NURSES

Ms. Soo Wong: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. We all know the vital role nurses play in the care of sick and injured Ontarians. I've spent many years working as a front-line health care worker, including being a registered nurse, and that experience made me keenly aware of the importance of good nursing care in improving the health of all Ontarians. It also made me very aware of the pressure nurses face day in and day out. Our population is aging, and their role is only growing more important and pressures are ongoing and more intense.

People in my riding of Scarborough—Agincourt and across the province will all depend on the care of hard-working nurses at some point in their lives. My constituents are concerned that their nurses' skills are not being fully utilized.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, can she please tell the House what the government is doing to ensure that nurses are able to do the best job they can?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I want to thank the member from Scarborough—Agincourt for this very important question. Ontario's nurses are the backbone of our health care system, and Ontario's nurses are the best nurses in the world.

We know that we need to get the most out of these skills and the knowledge that Ontario's nurses have. That's why I was delighted when, on Friday, the Premier announced to the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario a commitment to expand the types of services that nurses can perform to improve the care of their patients. We are working with the College of Nurses of Ontario to expand the scope of registered nurses and registered practical nurses in providing care. With these changes,

nurses will be able to dispense medications in certain circumstances.

This builds on increases we've made to the scope of practice for nurses, creating five new nursing roles like registered nurse surgical first assist, in which specially educated RNs work collaboratively with surgeons in the operating room.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Soo Wong: Minister, I know that the constituents of my riding will be happy to know that nurses will be able to provide a greater range of services to provide care to Ontarians when they need it.

I also know that our government ensured that there are more than 15,000 more nurses in the province today than there were in 2003. As more nurses are providing care in Ontario, it's also increasingly important to make sure nurses receive the support they need so they can continue to provide the quality care for their patients.

Through you, Speaker, to the minister, can she please tell us what else the government is doing to support nurses in Ontario?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I share the member from Scarborough–Agincourt's commitment to our nurses. We need Ontario to be the best province in Canada for nurses to provide care.

I'm proud of what our government has already done. We've made Ontario one of the first jurisdictions in the world to create a full-time job opportunity for new nursing graduates through a comprehensive orientation program. Some 14,000 new nursing graduates have benefited from a full-time opportunity through this nursing graduate program.

In 2007, we opened Canada's first nurse-practitioner-led clinic in Sudbury. This successful pilot has led to the opening of 26 nurse-practitioner-led clinics.

We know that nurses provide the best care when they're able to use their skills all the time. That's why I'm very pleased that we've increased the proportion of nurses working full time from under 50% to almost 70%, and we've invested \$40 million in a nursing retention fund to help retrain and retain nurses.

1110

POWER PLANTS

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question this morning is for the Premier. Premier, let's pick up where we left off on Thursday, when I exposed your deep involvement in the Oakville gas plant cancellation. Here's a July 29, 2011, document that provides instructions to the Minister of Energy from a cabinet meeting he attended. Clearly we were entitled to this document. It falls perfectly within the committee's guidelines.

Premier, you were aware of this document. It was tabled at a meeting where you sat in the chair, which is why you're in the hot seat again today.

Premier, do you deny intimate knowledge of the cost of the gas plant cancellations?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the government House leader will want to comment on the details of what happened at committee. But the document was provided to committee last week, after the committee passed a new document production motion requesting Cabinet Office documents. That is how the document proceeded.

But Mr. Speaker, I have been clear the decision was made—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. That one got me. The member from Renfrew apologized before I even finished standing up, so I thank you very much for bringing attention to yourself.

Carry on, Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I've been clear, Mr. Speaker, we listened to the residents of Oakville; we listened to the residents of Mississauga. We made a decision; we acted on that decision. It was a decision that was supported by everyone in this House.

I was a member of the government, I was part of the cabinet, and so I was part of implementing that decision and that meant that the document that I signed was part of that implementation of that decision.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Premier, all taxpayers really want to know is how much this Liberal gas plant scandal is going to cost and who ordered the documents to be withheld. Your Liberal government continues to stick to your \$40-million story for Oakville and your \$190-million story for Mississauga, yet we've had witness after witness swear under oath that the cost of these cancellations will top \$1 billion.

Now, Premier, you know the cost. We have these documents that prove you were intimately involved in the cabinet discussions on these settlements. Will you end the charade today, turn over all the documents we were entitled to half a year ago and tell us the full cost of your gas plant scandal?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: To the government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: I think in the series of questions that were asked today, there were two questions. One, who prevented the production of all the documents? Well, Mr. Speaker, that honourable member and his colleagues, both in the PC Party and the NDP, prevented all the documents from coming forward when government members put forward that motion. He raised his hand and voted against it.

The second question was about the Premier's knowledge, and I think it's important, Mr. Speaker, that we understand the Premier knew that all parties in this Legislature opposed both plants, and notwithstanding the best efforts of the leader of the New Democratic Party today to try to distance herself, let me share a quote here

from Mayor Hazel McCallion, when she told the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, “The impression that was certainly given beyond a doubt ... I think all parties would have cancelled it; there’s no question about it.”

Mr. Speaker, that is only one of many quotes showing the New Democratic Party was in full opposition to that plan.

CONDOMINIUM LEGISLATION

Mr. Rosario Marchese: My question, Speaker, is to the Minister of Consumer Services. Minister, for five years I’ve been proposing legislation to ensure condominium owners have recourse when faced with sub-standard conditions, rigged repair contracts or unfair fee increases.

Last year, the government finally launched a review of the Condominium Act, but the review is taking years to complete and it ignores many of the issues condo owners face, such as changing Tarion, changing the building code and the need to have an independent tribunal.

Why won’t the government take real action to protect condo owners now?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I’d like to thank the member from the third party for his question and his ongoing interest in and dedication to our review of the Condominium Act. As he said, we are in the process of reviewing this act right now, and I’m very pleased to report that the process is moving forward, on schedule and on time.

In fact, we had reports completed at the end of March, in our phase one, and stage two is under way. I met with the expert panel on condominium review just a few weeks ago, Speaker. They are on their way to completing their work. In stage three, a residents’ panel will be convened. And in the fall—the fall of this year, Speaker—the public will review and validate the action plan before it’s presented to the government. So we’re moving forward in a very open and democratic way, getting all input, taking all the issues that are identified and the opportunities.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Speaker, the pace of the review is about equal to that of a snail. Secondly, when I read the review—it misses three essential things that I’ve been fighting for for five long years: first, a tribunal where condo owners could go and get real protection and defend themselves against a tyrannical board, a bad developer or a bad or incompetent property manager; secondly, the building code changes that would make sure that people do not hear every noise that’s coming from the other unit; and three, a warranty program that protects consumers and not developers.

My question to you is: Will you guarantee that these very changes that I’ve been fighting for will be part of the recommendations you will be bringing forward?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: What I can guarantee is that all the input—all the discussions that have been brought forward by the public, by residents’ panels, by the expert panel—will indeed be considered. This is an open and democratic process.

In fact, I think I’ve already reported to the House, Speaker, but perhaps I could remind the member—I also appreciated that he sent his staff to a technical briefing that I offered specifically for all my opposition critics. Just to refresh the House’s memory, the top five issues affecting the condo community, as reported by all the stakeholders, are governance, dispute resolution, financial management, consumer protection and qualifications of condo managers. The additional issues that the member opposite is raising—very happy to consider them as part of the public review and as we move forward this year on a review of the Condominium Act. It’s important to modernize this act.

WIRELESS SERVICES

Mr. Kim Craitor: My question is to the Minister of Rural Affairs. Minister, one of the major concerns in rural Ontario, which includes my riding of Niagara-on-the-Lake and Fort Erie: access to services and infrastructure. One area where this is particularly important is when it comes to Internet services. Businesses in my riding and across Ontario require stable, fast and reliable Internet connections in order to conduct important duties and expand to new markets. While broadband Internet is easily accessible in urban communities, rural communities have unique needs and challenges. I want to be assured that this government has taken those needs into consideration.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Could the minister please inform the House what is being done to increase access to broadband Internet services in Ontario?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank the member for Niagara Falls—the hard-working member for Niagara Falls—who does such a great job for his community.

Mr. Speaker, as you would know, in the 19th century, the transcontinental railway was a way to link community to community to community. In the 21st century, it’s broadband connectivity. So I want to let you know what we’re doing. Since 2003, our government has committed up to \$127 million for broadband expansion in rural Ontario. This investment will create jobs and connect our rural communities to the world. Since 2007, more than 250,000 rural Ontarians have had access to a high-speed network, and that number will grow to one million once all the projects are completed.

By working together, we’re strengthening rural communities and helping to ensure growth and prosperity for all Ontarians, regardless of where they live.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Question?

Mr. Kim Craitor: My question is again to the minister. I’m glad to hear that the new government has taken the needs of small rural municipalities seriously. I want to tell the minister that in my riding, we have benefitted from some of the investments you made reference to.

1120

All Ontarians appreciate the vital role high-speed broadband Internet plays in modern life. It allows fam-

ilies to stay connected; importantly, businesses to connect with the entire world; and communities to thrive.

Speaker, through you to the Minister of Rural Affairs: I heard some good news recently about broadband services. Could the minister share with the House and the people of Ontario the latest news on what this government has done to improve access to Internet services to rural communities across this province?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I want to thank the member for his supplementary. I want to indicate that last Friday, we went live in Northumberland county. I was joined by the very fine member Mr. Milligan, the member from Northumberland—Quinte West, and I was joined by his federal counterpart, Mr. Norlock. It was a great day for Northumberland county.

On Friday, I was honoured to attend the announcement marking the completion of the Northumberland local access zone of the Eastern Ontario Regional Network. Our government has committed up to \$55 million to expand high-speed broadband access in eastern Ontario. This announcement shows great progress. In total, the project aims to bring basic broadband access to 95% of households and businesses in eastern Ontario.

Working together, we can secure a prosperous future for families and businesses in eastern Ontario. It was a great day for everybody in Cobourg.

WASTE DIVERSION

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Minister, farmers were outraged after learning they would have to fork out thousands of dollars more every year to pay for massive new eco taxes in order to fund your government's tire-recycling monopoly. But then you got caught. You were called out by the Ontario PC Party and hard-working farmers across the province. So you went on damage control, looking for a way out. And what was your solution? Tinkering with the eco tax funding formula. Now, instead of a 2,000% increase, farmers will face a 1,000% increase, only to have the next 1,000% tacked on to the bill sometime next year.

Minister, does your eco tax policy change mean you remain committed to your failed tire tax program?

Hon. James J. Bradley: As an individual who is part of the party that brought in the flawed Waste Diversion Act in 2002, which everybody has been trying to work with since—and by the way, your leader was the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations at that time, so you might call him the godfather of eco taxes in this province, because he failed to protect the people of this province when that legislation was brought in.

I want to say I was pleased that the Ontario Tire Stewardship, which is independent of government, set up under legislation that you as a government brought in, sat down with the farmers and tried to come to a conclusion which would be beneficial to both and to find a formula that was reasonable.

But I think everybody in this House agrees that your flawed legislation has to be completely changed, and that

is the goal of our government: to change that legislation—

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

Mr. Michael Harris: Minister, you can play that blame game all you want, but Ontarians know the truth. Speaker, they had 10 years to amend the Waste Diversion Act and have done nothing—nothing. Instead, your government chose to use this piece of legislation to grow massive new—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): First of all, I might want to come to this side and say, “Stop heckling,” but I have to come to this side and say, “Stop heckling,” because I’m having trouble hearing the question.

Mr. Michael Harris: Speaker, their government chose to use this piece of legislation to grow massive new bureaucracy and develop excessive new taxation powers.

Last November, the PC Party called on you to end your eco tax programs, yet you chose not to act. Now there’s a growing chorus of voices, all telling you to dismantle your recycling monopolies—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Question?

Mr. Michael Harris: —which surprisingly now even include the Toronto Star. Everyone understands that these programs unfairly penalize consumers and unnecessarily restrain the ingenuity of the free market.

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

Mr. Michael Harris: So, Minister, I’m asking you today, will you—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You’ve got to get your timing down.

Minister of the Environment.

Hon. James J. Bradley: What I am going to commit to is undoing the damage that your government did when it brought in the Waste Diversion Act of Ontario. I recall, sitting at the table at the time—some here may remember this—was none other than your leader, who was Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations, and did nothing to protect the consumer.

But I do note that there has been a change, I think, in view by the opposition. I notice that we see now that the head of Waste Diversion Ontario is opposed to this. I notice that Rob Cook, as well, has said there’s no use tinkering with this act, which of course you established. He said that the act has to be completely revamped.

What I have said, to you and to others, is that we’re going to get rid of that Conservative act which has caused so many problems and enabled this situation to arise.

CANCER TREATMENT

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. My office continues to be contacted by constituents who are still uncertain of the safety of drugs administered in the hospital, and it’s no surprise why. Friday, we learned that

26 more patients were affected by the mis-dosing of chemotherapy drugs, and everyone is still confused about exactly who is responsible for ensuring the safety of all drugs brought into our hospitals. No clear answers are coming from the hospital, the drug companies, the regulators or the ministry.

Why has the minister allowed the confusion to continue for so long?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I think it's important to acknowledge that this is a tremendously difficult time for those cancer patients. They have all been contacted and they are meeting with their oncologists.

Neil Johnson, the vice-president of cancer care at London Health Sciences Centre, has said that his medical oncologists have reviewed the cases. They are confident that there is no causal link between the under-dosing and the deaths. He said, "I am saying it didn't contribute to the deaths."

What I can tell you is that we must get answers to questions. I wish there were simple answers. I wish someone would stand up and give us all the answers. The reality is, there are many layers of accountability. We must ensure that all of those partners who have a part of the responsibility are together. That's why we brought them all together, including Health Canada, which has a very important role to play in this to get answers to those questions.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: London residents are gravely concerned that the Minister of Health, who is also the local MPP to so many, has been so missing in action. She has been unable or unwilling to answer the most basic questions of oversight and seems to be more concerned with dodging responsibility than answering the questions of her constituents. For London residents like Barry, who was given the wrong dose and who will find out if he is cancer-free in the next two months, this confusion is unbearable, Minister.

Will the minister please do her job as both the MPP for her riding and the Minister of Health and allow the Ontario Ombudsman to do his job and get to the bottom of this?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I take my responsibility as Minister of Health of the province of Ontario very, very seriously. That's why we have pulled together all of the people and organizations that have accountability and ownership of this issue. It's very clear that something went wrong. Something went very wrong. We must collectively understand what happened and put in place those safeguards to ensure that this never happens again. That's why I've appointed Dr. Jake Thiessen to do a review of cancer drugs in the supply chain, because we must never allow this to happen again.

I was pleased that New Brunswick Premier David Alward, who of course has patients affected as well, has said, "I'm very pleased to see how quickly the government of Ontario has moved forward with a decision on the investigation."

We are moving quickly, but it's very important we get answers to questions and get those from experts.

1130

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: My question is for the minister responsible for women's issues. Minister, as you know, Sheridan polytechnic college, which shines brighter nationally and internationally, is located in my great riding of Mississauga-Brampton South. Colleges and universities are places of learning, growth and discovery.

We hope they are also places which are safe places for our students; however, these institutions are not immune from dangers such as sexual violence. Studies show that 15% to 25% of female students will experience sexual assault during their academic career.

Minister, will you please tell this House what our government is doing to protect our students while they are on campus?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: Thank you to the member for Mississauga-Brampton South for raising this important issue. Unfortunately, sexual violence is much too prevalent in the lives of far too many young women in our society. Our government and Ontario colleges and universities share a commitment to providing all post-secondary students with a safe and fulfilling learning environment. We do not tolerate sexual violence in our communities and we do not tolerate it on our campuses.

That's why, last year, we introduced a four-year Sexual Violence Action Plan which focuses on raising public awareness to prevent sexual violence, improving services for victims, and strengthening the criminal justice response. The action plan was based on input from 30 consultative meetings. As part of the action plan, we launched a resource guide, *Developing a Response to Sexual Violence: A Resource Guide for Ontario's Colleges and Universities*. We are providing it to our colleges and universities across the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I'm happy to hear about the vital resources we are providing to the campuses all across our province. It is very important for the campus community to be informed and educated. Sexual violence is unacceptable; however, education alone will not help reduce the frequency of sexual violence.

Minister, what are the practical tools which are available in the resource guide to help campuses to protect our students?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: The guide provides tools to develop policies and response protocols, including templates to help clearly communicate to campus communities about sexual violence prevention and response, a glossary of relevant terms, applicable legislation, and provincial services available to assist victims.

Speaker, there is always more to do. As our world continues to grow in an online community, we must acknowledge the need for new approaches to tackle online sexual harassment and violence and child pornography. That's why our government has now written twice to the federal justice minister seeking an amendment to

the Criminal Code on cyberbullying and the non-consensual distribution of intimate images. That's why, at our request, FPT officials are currently examining gaps in the Criminal Code.

We must also change the culture around the word "consent." Young people often do not fully understand consent and feel that consent can be implied unless there is a clear "no." This must change, Speaker. No one consents to being sexually assaulted. Consent must be unequivocal.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Toby Barrett: Speaker, a question to the Premier: When first elected leader, you promised almost daily to reform social assistance. You said that the Lankin-Sheikh report was "our government's report." This was the second report from your government. The Drummond commission recommended to cut bureaucracy and cut duplication that prevents recipients from getting a job.

What happened, Premier? Why the silence? What's going on here? Drummond, Lankin-Sheikh and our PC white paper all recommend consolidating Ontario Works and ODSP for efficiency, for cost effectiveness—jobs, for those on social assistance. What's the holdup?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I cannot resist; I am going to send the supplementary to the Minister of Community and Social Services because I know he'll want to talk about details. But I want to respond because I think it's terrific that the member opposite from this party is asking a question about social assistance. It shows a compassion that I think is really appropriate.

Mr. Speaker, I remain absolutely committed to beginning to implement the Lankin-Sheikh report. We've been very clear. As the Minister of Finance has said, this is part of the discussion that we're having in the run-up to the budget. We've been very, very clear. It's important to us that we get this right. It's very important to us that, as part of the economic growth and the economic plan of the province, everyone can take part, including people who have been marginalized and for whom the system has actually kept them out of the workforce. We are committed to moving ahead, Mr. Speaker, and I know the minister will want to speak to the details.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Toby Barrett: Back to the Premier, Speaker: Your reports, Premier, call for measures to help recipients get jobs. You've obviously done nothing. I mentioned that our official opposition published a white paper to cut bureaucracy and cut duplication, again, to help recipients get jobs. I received all-party support for a private member's bill to foster employment and permit disabled people to keep more of their own money. It passed second reading. That was three years ago. A few weeks ago, I introduced a private member's bill to cut waste through consolidation while protecting the distinct needs of people with disabilities.

What happened to you, Premier? What happened to your priority to reform social assistance? We have seen no action.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As I said, we are moving ahead. There are 108 recommendations, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Community and Social Services is talking to the folks on the front line. We have been clear that this is something that we are going to act on, and as the Minister of Finance has said, in the run-up to the budget we are preparing to implement the report.

But I really hope that this is an indication that the party opposite is actually going to read the budget and may actually be willing to support us because, Mr. Speaker, you will find, and I hope the member opposite will see in the budget, that there will be that common ground that they will be able to support. I agree with the member opposite: We need to make sure that everyone can take part in our economy and that the very systems that government sets up are not systems that keep people out of the workforce, but in fact support them to get into the workforce and keep them there. That's what we're going to be working on, and I hope the party opposite will read the budget and support us.

TOURISM

Ms. Sarah Campbell: To the Premier: In my riding of Kenora–Rainy River, tourism is a vital part of the economy. Last year this government closed all three of our travel information centres in favour of a travel app that doesn't work in the remote areas of my riding where tourists visit. Now we have signs dotting the highways in these same tourist areas that encourage travel to Manitoba over northwestern Ontario. And it's all at a time when our tourist operators are finding it increasingly difficult to get MTO approval to post their own highway signs along these same stretches of highway.

Speaker, can the Premier explain the strategy and provide statistics that prove that these changes are actually working for Ontarians?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you for the question. Speaker, times have changed, and we have to change with the times. We talk about tourism in the rural areas. It's important to understand we are in the information technology, and many, many people, many tourists, when they come to Ontario, will log on to the website. They will plan for their trip before they even leave their house. It's very important to understand that people are looking at the website. They use their email, and all that planning will be done before they really leave their house to come to Ontario. This is where we are going, and we are committed to enhance our portal. We are committed to strengthening the OTMPC for the portal service to the public.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Paul Miller: Again to the Premier: Speaker, the Ministry of Tourism claims to have a new strategy respecting travel information centres and tourism in northern Ontario. This strategy evades clear understanding. What we do know is that the OTICs have been

closed, and we do know that the ministry's travel app does not work.

Speaker, can the Premier tell us what the strategy is, or what it's supposed to be, and when are you going to do the right thing and fix it?

Hon. Michael Chan: Speaker, allow me to give you some numbers of last year. In 2012, tourism across Ontario increased. It increased in Niagara Falls, in the Toronto region, in the Ottawa area and in Thunder Bay.

Speaker, the tourism sector is a \$23-billion business, supporting 300,000 jobs.

We have to move on with technology. We have to move on with the website because people look at the website, plan their trip and come to Ontario.

VICTIMS OF CRIME

Mr. Steven Del Duca: My question today is for the Attorney General.

The week of April 21 to 27 is recognized across Canada as National Victims of Crime Awareness Week. During this time, we are all encouraged to raise awareness in our communities about victims of crime and reflect upon the extraordinary work of those who help them. The theme for this year's National Victims of Crime Awareness Week is: We All Have a Role.

Speaker, in advance of National Victims of Crime Awareness Week, can the Attorney General please inform the House on what role our government has played in victims' services?

Hon. John Gerretsen: Let me first of all thank the hard-working member from Vaughan for his question, because he has been working very hard since he has been here.

We all know that victims of crime play a much larger role in our whole administration of justice system than they ever did before. Over the last 10 years, this government has spent, of our tax dollars, over \$900 million to help victims of crime in the various services that we provide. For example, we spend \$21 million annually on the Victim/Witness Assistance Program, which provides information, assistance and support to victims and witnesses of violent crime during the criminal court process. We've also provided millions of dollars during that period of time to sexual assault and rape crisis centres, and they provide counselling, information and support services to survivors of sexual violence through community-based centres.

Speaker, these are just two examples as to how the money is being spent to make sure that the victims of crime are an integral part of our criminal justice system.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member from Kitchener-Conestoga has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of the Environment concerning eco taxes. This matter will be debated tomorrow at 6 p.m.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1142 to 1300.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: I would like to recognize two recipients of the InterMune IPF Legacy Scholarship program who are here with us today, Ms. Kailyn Gadsby and Ms. Rosemary Crawford.

For those of you who do not know, idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, or IPF for short, is a chronic progressive form of lung disease for which there is currently no known cure or cause. This fatal disease causes swelling and scarring of the air sacs and tissues between the cells of the lungs and affects approximately 5,000 to 8,000 people in Canada.

The IPF legacy scholarship program extends five one-time scholarships of \$2,500 to the students of family members living with IPF.

Kailyn Gadsby is with her family today in the chamber and is following in her mother's footsteps, working at the same agency as her mother did and with some of the same individuals.

Rosemary Crawford is another of the five recipients and is a first-year student at Conestoga College who is passionate about pursuing a career in nursing. Her father was recently diagnosed with IPF but strives to live his life to the fullest. Rosemary plans to continue to follow her father's legacy by working hard in her career and educating people about IPF.

I offer warm congratulations to both recipients of the IPF legacy scholarship, and would also like to remind everyone that on May 6, 2013, the Ontario Lung Association is having their lobby day here at Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm sure the member appreciates that I let him go over the time because the two people he introduced are from my riding. Thank you, member.

Mr. Bill Mauro: That's all it takes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's all it takes.

FOOD ASSISTANCE

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm proud to rise today to talk about the generosity and spirit of community in my wonderful riding of Essex. Two inspiring groups have taken it upon themselves to help feed the increasing numbers of families that are struggling to make ends meet by rescuing surplus produce from local suppliers that would otherwise end up on the compost heap.

Spearheaded by Tina Quiring and Vern Toews, the Southwestern Ontario Gleaners is an interdenominational group that has embarked on a project to dehydrate rescued food and package that food to be used for instant soups. This healthy food will be distributed through local

school lunch programs and food banks locally in Essex county.

The Gleaners have embarked on a fundraising campaign and have begun to develop their plan. They will need the help of our community, and I am confident they will find that help.

I would also like to mention Plentiful Harvest. Plentiful Harvest is a project supported by the Unemployed Help Centre, Windsor-Essex United Way and local labour groups. They have purchased a refrigerated truck to rescue and preserve food and have also opened a community kitchen to help those in need to prepare this food.

It is a great honour to stand in the Legislature today and thank these groups for identifying a need and rising to the challenge to meet that need.

YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

Ms. Helena Jaczek: This past Friday, April 12, Pathways for Children, Youth and Families of York Region held their first community night walk fundraiser in Richmond Hill to raise awareness of youth homelessness in York region.

Pathways has served my great riding of Oak Ridges–Markham and the rest of York region for over 20 years, delivering innovative support programs to improve the lives of homeless and at-risk youth and families. Delivering services in seven languages for over 1,200 families and over 1,800 youth each year, they estimate that there are 300 homeless youth in the York region every night.

For example, Megan came to Pathways in December 2012 when she was facing eviction, unable to work, was in a custody battle for her son, and was living with mental health and addictions issues. With help from a Pathways worker, Megan was able to find adequate housing in York region and enrolled in the Base 4 Success employment program. Megan is now working at her placement in a local retail store, where she is excelling. She has her own place, a job and shared custody of her son.

Thank you, Pathways for Children, Youth and Families of York Region, for raising your lanterns to guide the way home during the night walk, shining a light on the issue of youth homelessness in Oak Ridges–Markham and York region. Your work will help to achieve a fairer society in the province of Ontario.

DISASTER RELIEF

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Neighbour helping neighbour: That's what we saw in Perth–Wellington after the ice storm this past Friday. When that storm knocked out power, people made sure their neighbours were warm. They brought them food and water, and made sure they were okay.

Our municipality set up warming centres in churches and community centres. People could go to get warm, get clean water or recharge their cellphones. Officials took calls from concerned residents. They assessed the dam-

age and coordinated a response. They showed leadership, and we thank them for that.

I also want to thank the dedicated hydro crews, many from our area and many from other places. They worked long hours, and continue to work in some areas, to turn the lights back on.

On Friday afternoon, we received word that North Perth had declared a state of local emergency. It remains in effect. That same afternoon, we emailed the Premier and the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. We told them about the power outages, the safety hazards from fallen trees and hydro lines, and property damage. I asked them to respond promptly and favourably to any municipal request.

I want to thank the Minister of Community Safety for calling me. I gave her an update on the situation and asked for her support. I appreciate her concern for the people I represent. I also appreciate the interest shown by the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

In times of hardship, we see the character of our communities. In our public works crews, our municipalities and our neighbours, we saw once again that the character of our communities is strong.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. Michael Prue: I rise today to talk about an open letter that all members of the House received on Friday afternoon. The open letter was written by a constituent of someone—I'm not sure whom, because I believe the letter originated in Ottawa—talking about my Bill 49, which is an act to make sure that owners and managers of restaurants and other places cannot take any portion of an employee's tips.

The writer of the open letter to all MPPs talked about the scenario of dine and dash, and he was concerned about whether or not this will be covered under the ambit of my bill. He points out how serious this problem is, because he had to sign a document to continue working. This is a contract from his restaurant: "The bartender/server is responsible for the reimbursement of dine and dashes on your shift. Be aware of your guests at all times." What that means to a server or bartender is that if somebody eats and drinks and then leaves, they are responsible for it.

He wanted to know from my bill, and for other things, whether that would be covered. It's very clear that the law protects people, that their wages can't be taken, but it does allow for dine and dash to be taken away from an employee's tips. That's one of the things we need to do. We need to make sure the same scenario does not unfold in restaurants that unfolded in a gas station earlier this year when a man was killed running after someone who had stolen gas.

Gas and dash, dine and dash: They're both equally bad.

ALFREDO DeGASPERIS

Mr. Steven Del Duca: I rise today regarding a solemn occasion, the passing of Mr. Fred DeGasperi.

Mr. DeGasperis was a wonderful Ontarian and Canadian who will be greatly missed by his family, his friends, the land development and construction industry, and the seemingly endless list of charitable organizations he supported generously throughout his life.

Mr. DeGasperis came to Canada from Italy at the age of 18 in the 1950s. Like thousands of others, he came in search of opportunity and in search of a better life for himself and for those closest to him. Through hard work, determination and vision, he, along with his two brothers, built an extensive land development and construction empire that is known across our province and our country today as a leader in innovative community building. His efforts have helped thousands of families across the GTA and beyond realize their dream of owning a home, including those who live in Vellore Village in my riding of Vaughan.

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Mr. DeGasperis had an inherent talent for building physical infrastructure, but he was equally determined to enhance our social infrastructure. For example, the walls of hospitals here in downtown Toronto and in communities virtually right around the GTA include Mr. DeGasperis's name as an individual of unparalleled generosity. He was also a strong supporter of a multitude of other philanthropic and worthwhile causes.

My thoughts and prayers go out to his wife, his children, his grandchildren and his brothers and sisters. I know that Mr. DeGasperis will be missed by people across my riding of Vaughan and beyond. He truly was one of a kind. I stand today to pay tribute to him and his lasting contribution to Ontario.

PLANT CLOSURE

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Last week I was informed that Tender Tootsies, a factory in my riding that specializes in making Canadian-made shoes and boots, will soon be closing its doors for good. Tender Tootsies has been the major employer in the town of Glencoe for generations. They once employed 1,000 men and women. Recently, the company cut back to only 40 employees in an attempt to try to keep this important business alive.

I am deeply saddened by the loss of this iconic local business. They have a long history in my riding and have contributed greatly to our local community: an operation that began with a plant in Glencoe, had 470 employees in 1978, and in its prime grew to over 1,000 employees.

This story of the challenges that manufacturers are facing is one that can be heard right across this province. There are many examples of great men and women who have worked tirelessly to grow their business and contribute to the backbone of Ontario's economy. But it will all go to waste if the government of Ontario continues to fail Ontario businesses.

THUNDER BAY ECONOMY

Mr. Bill Mauro: I'm very pleased to stand today and talk about the economy of Thunder Bay, which has been

one of the best in the province for the last three or four years, with one of the lowest unemployment rates in the province for the last three or four years.

There's more good news on the way as we see the forestry sector beginning to rebound very seriously in my riding and all of northern Ontario. As an example, Resolute Forest Products has put on a third shift at their sawmill in Thunder Bay, and Resolute is completing a cogeneration project—about \$60 million that our government helped fund with about \$10 million—that is going to make that pulp and paper mill the lowest-cost operating pulp and paper mill in all of North America in the entire Resolute fleet.

Now, Speaker, there's even more good news. Resolute has very recently announced that they will be building a brand new \$50-million sawmill in my riding of Thunder Bay—Atikokan, in or near Atikokan, that will create 90 to 100 new jobs in the mill, plus about 150 in the woodlands operations to support the mill operation. That represents part of about \$170 million in capital investment by Resolute Forest Products over the last one and a half years.

As well, we will be seeing two new pellet mills come on stream very soon, directly connected to the conversion of the Atikokan coal plant from coal burning to biomass—a huge piece, a big job generator in our riding as well.

As I've mentioned, the economy of Thunder Bay continues to grow. It has been one of the best in Ontario for the last three or four years, and these announcements are only going to help to enhance that and further that: very good news for job seekers in the Thunder Bay—Atikokan riding.

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I rise today to share the concerns of Dufferin—Caledon residents that hydro rates are again being increased by approximately 3% on May 1. Unfortunately, hydro rates have now more than doubled since the Liberal government came to power in 2003.

The number one issue I encounter in my constituency office is the affordability of hydro for families, businesses and manufacturers in Dufferin—Caledon. That message was made clear to me at the recent Orangeville Lions Club Home and Garden Show. At this year's show, I received an overwhelming number of negative comments regarding the continuously increasing costs of hydro. The worst part of it is that the increases are not even reflective of the direct costs of hydro, but instead result from the Liberal government's appalling mismanagement of the energy file—mismanagement like the reckless gas plant cancellations and their stubborn pursuit of deeply flawed green energy experiments like the unsustainable feed-in tariff program.

I recently visited a manufacturer in my riding who shared with me how the high cost of hydro is impacting the decisions they make. This increase will further stifle his ability to reinvest in our community and to create new jobs, jobs that Ontario desperately needs.

Hydro rates have been steadily increasing because consumers are asked to pay for smart meters they never wanted, overpriced energy contracts they cannot afford, money-losing exports they cannot believe, and a debt retirement charge that has already been collected. Ontarians need and expect their power system to be efficient, sustainable and affordable.

NOTICES OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member from Haldimand-Norfolk has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Premier concerning social assistance. This matter will be debated tomorrow at 6 p.m.

Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member from Kenora-Rainy River has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport concerning the tourism strategy in northwestern Ontario. This matter will be debated tomorrow at 6 p.m.

SPECIAL REPORT, AUDITOR GENERAL

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Finally, I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table a special report from the Auditor General of Ontario entitled *Mississauga Power Plant Cancellation Costs*, dated April 2013.

PETITIONS

DOG OWNERSHIP

Mr. John O'Toole: These are petitions from my constituents, and I intend to stand up, as I am now, for them. This is from Amber Mowbray. She's from Bowmanville. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas aggressive dogs are found among many breeds or crossbreeds; and

"Breed-specific legislation and breed bans are not effective solutions to the problem of dog attacks; and

"The problems of dog attacks are best dealt with through comprehensive programs of education, training and legislation encouraging responsible ownership of all breeds;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to support Bill 60 (aka Hershey's bill) repealing provincial animal control legislation that is breed-specific and instead implement a comprehensive bite prevention strategy that encourages responsible ownership of all breeds."

I sign and support this on behalf of my constituents. Amongst them would be T. Callant and many others.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Bill Mauro: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas the NDP member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton has put forward a plan for auto insurance that would dramatically drive up rates for drivers throughout northern Ontario. According to one estimate, drivers in northwestern Ontario could expect to pay 38.8% more in insurance premiums if the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton's proposal is adopted;

"Whereas Mothers Against Drunk Driving Canada has said, 'In essence, the bill would force responsible drivers to subsidize the insurance premiums of dangerous drivers';

"Whereas the leader of the third party and the other NDP members of the Legislature have made it clear that they continue to support the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton's proposal for auto insurance reform;

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

"To make it clear that the Legislature does not support the member for Bramalea-Gore-Malton's proposal to change auto insurance in Ontario."

I support this petition. I'll put my signature to it and give it to Jack to present to the table. Thank you very much.

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the government of Ontario's newly created Ontario College of Trades is planning to hit hard-working tradespeople with membership fees that, if the college has its way, will add up to \$84 million a year; and

"Whereas the Ontario College of Trades has no clear benefit and no accountability as tradespeople already pay for licences and countless other fees to government; and

"Whereas Ontario has struggled for years to attract people to skilled trades and the planned tax grab will kill jobs, and drive people out of trades;

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

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

I will gladly sign this petition.

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CHILD CUSTODY

Mr. Kim Craitor: I'm pleased to introduce this petition, known as the grandparents' rights.

"Whereas the people of Ontario deserve and have the right to request an amendment to the Children's Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their grandparents as requested in Bill 48 put forward by" the MPP for Niagara Falls—that's me—

“Whereas currently, subsection 21(1) of the act provides that a parent of a child or any other person”—

Interjections.

Mr. Kim Craitor: Just so you know, I’m being heckled about the grandparents’ rights bill; I just want to mention that to you, Mr. Speaker.

—“may apply to a court for certain orders respecting custody OF or access to the child. An amendment to that subsection specifies that a grandparent may apply for such an order; and

“Whereas currently subclause 24(2)(a)(i) of the act provides that where a court makes a determination relating to certain applications in respect of custody of or access to a child, the court shall consider, among other things, the love, affection and emotional ties between the child and each person entitled to or claiming custody of or access to the child. An amendment to that subclause specifies that this includes grandparents; and

“Whereas relationships between children and grandparents are a special bond that should be maintained;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Children’s Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children’s relationships with their grandparents.”

I’m extremely proud to sign this petition to show my support.

WORKPLACE INSURANCE

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas, beginning January 1, 2013, the WSIB was expanded to include groups of employers and principals who had previously been exempt from the WSIB and had private insurance; and

“Whereas this new financial burden does nothing to improve worker safety and only drives up the cost of doing business in Ontario; and

“Whereas the economy of Ontario is struggling and government must assist businesses in every way possible;

“We, the undersigned, do hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to repeal the statutory obligations created by Bill 119.”

I affix my signature in support.

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

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

“Whereas Agincourt is historically recognized as north Scarborough’s oldest and most well-established community; and

“Whereas the residents of the community of Scarborough–Agincourt share unique interests; and

“Whereas historically Agincourt’s electoral voice has always been found in an electoral district north of Ontario Highway 401; and

“Whereas communities, such as Scarborough–Agincourt, with historical significance should be protected and not divided; and

“Whereas the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Ontario has recently released proposals to redraw the federal riding map of Scarborough–Agincourt; and

“Whereas ‘community of interest’ is a mandated consideration of the federal Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act; and

“Whereas the original proposal from the commission included a unified Scarborough–Agincourt riding; and

“Whereas the commission’s report would inexplicably divide the Scarborough–Agincourt community; and

“Whereas the residents of Scarborough–Agincourt should not be divided and the electoral riding should remain, in its entirety” with its northern Scarborough neighbours;

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

“To call upon the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Ontario to recognize the historical and demographic context of the Scarborough–Agincourt community and to preserve riding boundaries that include a protected Scarborough–Agincourt community north of Ontario Highway 401.”

I will give this to Kamryn.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Parkdale–High Park, with an apology; I was distracted and didn’t see her start to get up. I will now recognize her out of rotation.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Many thanks, Mr. Speaker. That’s so sweet of you.

“Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas agencies that support individuals with a developmental disability and their families have for several years (beginning in 2010) faced a decline in provincial funding for programs that support people with developmental and other related disabilities; and

“Whereas because this level of provincial funding is far less than the rate of inflation and operational costs, and does not account for providing services to a growing and aging number of individuals with complex needs, developmental service agencies are being forced into deficit; and

“Whereas today over 30% of developmental service agencies are in deficit; and

“Whereas lowered provincial funding has resulted in agencies being forced to cut programs and services that enable people with a developmental disability to participate in their community and enjoy the best quality of life possible; and

“Whereas in some cases services once focused on community inclusion and quality of life for individuals have been reduced to a ‘custodial’ care arrangement; and

"Whereas lower provincial funding means a poorer quality of life for people with a developmental disability and their families and increasingly difficult working conditions for the direct care staff who support them; and

"Whereas there are thousands of people waiting for residential supports, day program supports and other programs province-wide;

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

"(1) To eliminate the deficits of developmental service agencies and provide adequate new funding to restore services and programs that have in effect been cut;

"(2) To protect existing services and supports by providing an overall increase in funding for agencies that is at least equal to inflationary costs that include among other operational costs, utilities, food and compensation increases to ensure staff retention;

"(3) To fund pay equity obligations for a predominantly female workforce;

"(4) To provide adequate new funding to agencies to ensure that the growing number of families on wait lists have access to accommodation supports and day supports and services."

I couldn't agree more. I'm going to sign it and give it to Madeline to be delivered to the table.

CATARACT SURGERY

Mr. Norm Miller: Mr. Speaker, I have more petitions to do with cataract surgeries, from Huntsville and Burk's Falls area.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the government of Ontario has identified cataract surgery to be a key health service for which it aims to reduce wait times under its Wait Time Strategy; and

"Whereas the current wait time for cataract surgery at Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare exceeds the provincial wait time and the provincial target under the Wait Time Strategy; and

"Whereas demand for health services like cataract surgery is expected to continue to rise with a growing retirement population;

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

"That the government of Ontario maintain adequate funding levels to Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare for cataract surgery procedures so that it may reduce wait times for cataract surgery."

Mr. Speaker, I sign this—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.

AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Good things grow in Ontario

"Whereas the agri-food industry is now, and has historically been, one of the primary economic drivers in Ontario; and

"Whereas the people of Ontario support local processors and producers in Ontario through purchasing and consuming locally grown and raised fruits, vegetables, meat and processed food products; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario, and the Premier of Ontario, support Ontario farmers and Ontario food producers by leading by example; and

"Whereas the province of Ontario celebrates local Ontario producers and processors and promotes the good things grown, harvested and made in Ontario;

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

"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario pass and enact, during spring of 2013, Bill 36, the Local Food Act."

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Hamilton Mountain.

Mr. Grant Crack: I support—

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

The member from Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound.

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

Mr. Bill Walker: "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; and

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

"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" McGuinty-Wynne "government only aggravate the looming skilled trades shortage in Ontario;

"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 support it, will sign my name, and send it with page Jack.

AIR-RAIL LINK

Mr. Jonah Schein: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas diesel trains are a health hazard for people who live near them;

"Whereas more toxic fumes will be created by the 400 daily trains than the car trips they are meant to replace;

"Whereas the planned air-rail link does not serve the communities through which it passes and will be priced beyond the reach of most commuters;

"Whereas all major cities in the world with train service between their downtown core and the airport use electric trains;

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

"That the province of Ontario stop building the air-rail link for diesel and move to electrify the route immediately;

"That the air-rail link be designed, operated and priced as an affordable transportation option between all points along its route."

Speaker, I support this petition. I'll sign my name to it and hand it to page Amina.

TIRE DISPOSAL

Mr. Toby Barrett: Speaker, I have petitions coming in from farm dealerships and construction dealerships across my riding, titled Stop the Tire Tax Hikes.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government has approved massive increases to Ontario Tire Stewardship's eco fees for farm and construction tires;

"Whereas Ontario imposes tire eco fees that are dramatically higher than those in other provinces;

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"Whereas other provincial governments either exempt agricultural tires from recycling programs or charge fees only up to \$75;

"Whereas Ontario's opposition has proposed a plan that holds manufacturers and importers of tires responsible for recycling;

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

"Suspend the hikes to Ontario Tire Stewardship's fees on farm and off-the-road tires pending proposals to lower costs."

I affix my signature.

AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

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

"Whereas the agri-food industry is now, and has historically been, one of the primary economic drivers in Ontario; and

"Whereas the people of Ontario support local processors and producers in Ontario through purchasing and consuming locally grown and raised fruits, vegetables, meat and processed food products; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario, and the Premier of Ontario, support Ontario farmers and Ontario food producers by leading by example; and

"Whereas the province of Ontario celebrates local Ontario producers and processors and promotes the good things grown, harvested and made in Ontario;

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

"That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario pass and enact, during spring of 2013, Bill 36, the Local Food Act."

I fully support this, and I give it to page Theodore.

ROAD SAFETY

Mr. Michael Harris: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the drivers of Ontario, lacking rules of the road for roundabouts in the province of Ontario;

"Whereas the absence of clear guidelines has caused confusion and uncertainty for drivers;

"Whereas the lack of standardized signage and rules for pedestrian right-of-way at crosswalks near roundabouts has led to personal injury;

"Whereas the lack of rules for signalling within a roundabout has caused numerous accidents and damage to vehicles;

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

"To immediately amend the Highway Traffic Act to clarify the use of crosswalks, and proper signalling for the entrance, traversing and exiting of vehicles from roundabouts."

I support this petition wholeheartedly, and I'll send it down with Callum to the table.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

AMBULANCE AMENDMENT ACT (AIR AMBULANCES), 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES AMBULANCES (SERVICES D'AMBULANCE AÉRIENS)

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 11, 2013, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 11, An Act to amend the Ambulance Act with respect to air ambulance services / Projet de loi 11, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les ambulances en ce qui concerne les services d'ambulance aériens.

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

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I very much appreciate the opportunity to speak today, and I look forward to discussing some aspects. It's nice to see the minister in attendance today.

We're dealing with Bill 11, and I'm sure there's been a lot of discussion about this. I know the government House leader will probably go into great detail about the amount of time spoken about this bill, but there are a number of aspects that I want to bring to light that probably weren't brought into a number of other debates in the past.

Obviously, the bill provides cabinet with the power to appoint provincial representatives to sit on boards of designated air ambulance providers, of which Ornge is one of the listed ones. There was a number of aspects in there that caused concerns, and I think one of the key areas was the weakness in the structure of the air ambulance situation. It doesn't address the oversight that should be given to the Ministry of Health to ensure that everything is done in regards to that.

In my own personal experience and my first time dealing with Ornge, I was just driving north on the highway just south of Kimmount—actually, my wife was driving—and, lo and behold, a motorcycle had pulled out in front of us, into ongoing traffic. What happened was, a truck pulled right into the oncoming traffic and had a head-on collision with the motorcycle.

We were the first on the scene. The driver of the truck couldn't believe what the individual had done. There was a female lying unconscious in the ditch, as well as a male who appeared to have a broken arm and broken leg and was bleeding profusely from underneath his jacket and his helmet. We took immediate control of the situation, called 911, and got a great response from the OPP at that particular time, and they flew in.

Upon arriving on the scene, the OPP immediately assessed the situation and called Ornge in. It was good to see the individuals come in. They did a great job landing in a local farmer's field, where they opened the field and proceeded to remove the individuals. By now the female had regained consciousness and seemed to be doing fairly well. Thankfully, I checked in later to find out that the individuals were doing great.

But there are many other aspects of Ornge that we don't hear about. It was great to see the individuals—the OPP showed great respect. I remember the OPP officer saying, "Our job is a great job," and he very much enjoyed it, but he thought the air ambulance was the coolest, that these individuals really did a great job and helped out.

But there are some other problems there that haven't been mentioned. There needs to be some oversight to ensure there's a coordinated effort between the land ambulance and the air ambulance. I know that many members have heard about the problems that have taken place locally in Oshawa; for example, delivery to the local Oshawa airport and then waiting. They waited and they waited and they waited. The local ambulance told me that in the time they were waiting, they would have been able to deliver the individual to the target hospital in Toronto.

The difficulty there was that while they were waiting—the air Ornge finally showed up and they proceeded on the flight, but they had waited so long that they ran out of medication for the individual on the plane and had to stop further in the region of Durham to get another supply of medication to assist the patient who was being transported to Toronto.

We need to ensure there's oversight over some of these things, making sure individuals are well taken care

of—it's in the best interests. I mean, coordinated effort between the two doesn't appear to be so, and I want to make sure this takes place in the future.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Simcoe–Grey, as a former minister, has certain experience in knowing how to manage these files. In his opening remarks, he spoke about the fact that what had taken place with this bill and the previous bill seemed very much like Groundhog Day. Some of the difficulty there is that in Groundhog Day, for those who recall, Bill Murray certainly matured into a different individual. He gained great capacity, he was able to change and to modify his ability to play the piano, do an ice sculpture and everything else, and was substantially different. So I don't necessarily agree with the member from Simcoe–Grey, in that what we're seeing once again is very much like Groundhog Day. There is no change, there is no maturation of what has taken place in the legislation to ensure that all those problem areas are taken care of.

Now, one of the other aspects I wanted to bring forward, Mr. Speaker, is that, very much as in Groundhog Day, we try to learn from our mistakes in how we move forward with this. I want to bring forward a different perspective on this legislation potentially and what has taken place in mistakes in the past. If you look at what took place with eHealth, we had an individual who came forward, and guess what? We had Minister Smitherman, who actually left the Legislature before anything was brought forward. Then what took place was that Minister Caplan came forward as Minister of Health during the eHealth scandal. I happened to sit on public accounts and, lo and behold, Minister Caplan had to step down.

Now we are learning that some things happened that we don't necessarily want to unfold in the same manner. What took place afterwards was something that I think the current government wants to make sure does not happen once again. If you look at the record of Mr. Caplan at that particular time, once he left cabinet, our understanding was that there was some assurance he would be placed back in; he was only temporarily removed. When other individuals came forward, moving into cabinet prior to him coming back, which never happened, I think he was rather upset with the system and the way the system failed that particular individual, at least the way that minister thought the system failed that individual.

What was the end result? The end result was that there were 13 new pieces of legislation, private members' bills introduced by that particular individual. I certainly think the government has learned, "You know something? When these sorts of things happen, we want to make sure it doesn't happen again in the same fashion." We want to make sure we deal with this issue without upsetting somebody or having these sorts of things. How you manage a file is something that government looks at.

Certainly what has taken place—and my perspective as well—is that we need a public perception that we're taking care of the problems in the legislation out there. We need to address this legislation. But quite frankly,

Mr. Speaker, when you look at the legislation, there was already protection in there. The minister had the ability to have somebody come in and do an assessment, very specifically under two sections. In two sections of the legislation there was the ability for the minister to step in. Let me see here; I could probably quote those. There were two other areas through the legislation. The minister through the performance agreement was one specific area. Article 15 of the original performance agreement gave the minister the ability to come forward and to review or enact to ensure that everything was taken care of, as well as the Independent Health Facilities Act. Between the Independent Health Facilities Act and article 15 of the performance agreement, the minister had clear ability to come forward and ensure that something was being done.

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If we're going to bring forward legislation that talks about making sure that everything is fixed and right, why would we bring forward legislation when there was already legislation in place that the minister didn't act upon? That causes us some concern. We want to make sure that it's just not a perception that we're going forward to minimize the impact or how it's unfolded at later dates on the Legislature and how individuals react—so that we're bringing forward legislation that's going to have some ability.

Some of the other key areas that have some strong concern are that the bill does not provide across-the-board protection for whistle-blowers. We want to make sure—and if there's any doubt in any way, shape or form, why would an individual come forward and say that they have problems with this or they want to be protected? If there's not clear and across-the-board protection, then individuals would have a reluctance to talk about those sorts of aspects.

In the same fashion that I spoke about the land ambulance and the air ambulance problems with Ornge, there's no coordinated effort of, who's in charge in handling what and how do you assess and how do you review to make sure that these things don't happen? Yes, as new systems come into place—but this one has been around for some time—there are going to be some growing pains, but I certainly believe that there needs to be some fashion that they can look at this and make sure that the two are coordinated and working quite effectively together.

The other aspect we spoke about is the clear concern of how we manage an issue that has come forward and is causing difficulty, as took place with eHealth. We had a minister resign, we had a minister leave, and we had a deputy minister step down. Now we have that same public accounts reviewing that. We're not getting the same response, quite frankly, because it could be the way that the individual who stepped down and still remained in the Legislature was in the Legislature.

We want to move forward with this legislation, Mr. Speaker, ensuring that it's in the best interests in providing adequate protections for individuals, for whistle-

blowers to come forward, and to make sure that when they speak, they are protected so that nothing can come back and haunt them at a later date.

That basically concludes a couple of the key points that are different from anything that I've heard in this Legislature. I just hope we can move forward with this legislation.

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

Mr. Jonah Schein: I listened with interest to the member from Oshawa's remarks. I was a fan of the movie *Groundhog Day* when I was a child, although I'm less a fan of the remake here in the Legislature. I found the original much funnier, and it had less repercussions for the people of Ontario, obviously.

At this point, I'm hoping that this debate is going to wind down. I know that the people in Davenport continue to ask when the budget is going to be released. I'd like to know that. We know that, finally, there has been a committee struck on this issue, after almost a year and a half where nobody was asked for their opinions about the budgeting parties for this government, but we have still not heard from this government when this budget will come down.

Nevertheless, we did hear from the People's Budget earlier today, and they set out some priorities that I think are important for people to hear. They went around and listened to people across Ontario. They said:

"(1) Austerity is failing the people in this province, particularly our most vulnerable citizens.

"(2) Ontarians want to live in a fair society.

"(3) Government can do a better job of supporting Ontarians to realize their full potential."

They recommend a number of things, from increasing the minimum wage to establishing an infrastructure fund, to implementing a fair taxation package. This is the kind of thing that makes good sense to me, and I think that the people are far in front of the government on this issue.

Speaker, rather than take up any more time here today on Bill 11, which has surely been debated to death, I would just like to say, please, let's get on with this, let's get to the budget, and let's see what happens next.

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: We had valuable input from the member from Oshawa, a member of the public accounts committee.

In fact, the public accounts committee is continuing their work. This debate is far from over. We're hearing from two Ornge executives on Wednesday: Bruce Farr, vice-president, operations, and Denise Polgar, patient advocate.

The member from Oshawa, the former Minister of Natural Resources—I spent time as a parliamentary assistant to natural resources. The province of Ontario does have a good handle on airplanes and helicopters, particularly in the north, and the businesses that have run that over many, many years. Our committee received a letter from the Ontario Air Transport Association,

December 23, 2011. They indicated that Ornge “is not underfunded; there has been a complete loss of accountability....” They feel that “firing a few key executives or ‘tightening up the performance agreement’ does not fix the fundamentally flawed system that the government has put in place.”

On a positive note, they have some recommendations:

“(1) That Ornge”—the name—“be changed to ‘Ontario Air Ambulance.’”

“(2) Ornge should not be in the ‘airline’ business. The supply and operation of fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters should [be] tendered in an open and competitive bidding process.

“(3) Ornge’s mandate must be limited to”: operating the dispatch centre; base hospital functions; training and certification of flight paramedics; administration of contracts for services with air carriers including ongoing inspections and audits; and that other related activities should be returned to the Ministry of Natural Resources’ provincial air service.

I’ll vote for that. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. Questions and comments? The member for Hamilton Mountain.

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think I’m happy to see the end of this debate coming very clear, and us being able to move this forward into committee, where we can make changes that we’ve been asking for. We were prorogued for four months when this bill came forward the first time. It’s before us again for a second time.

The first time this bill was being read, before prorogation, we were asking for the Ombudsman oversight. During the four months that we were prorogued nothing has changed in this bill that’s before us today again. So we’re hopeful that when we get to committee we will be able to convince the other people of this House that Ombudsman oversight for air ambulance is appropriate and move it forward.

I, like my colleague from Davenport, would love to be doing other things in this House. We’re looking forward to seeing a budget come from the government. We’re looking forward to digging down deep into that and seeing what it will be bringing for the people of our ridings. I know my riding is very excited to see that budget being tabled.

There are so many concerns happening across this province that the Ombudsman would be able to dig his teeth into. It’s really unfortunate that the government continues to wedge that oversight and that accountability and that investigation that could be used over and over again. We’ve heard how many scandals and how many issues that have been brought to life just in the short time that I have been here, and how many times have we been calling on him and he’s been completely shut out? So I’ll look forward to that happening. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): We have time for one last question or comment. I look to the minister responsible for seniors.

Hon. Mario Sergio: Thank you very much, Speaker.

I want to acknowledge the wonderful member from Thornhill, who is always present in the House and always doing wonderful input, especially during question period. I know that he will be supporting this piece of legislation as he himself and the members on his side are anxious to see that the bill proceeds so indeed we can do it better when it comes back to the House.

As the last speaker was saying, I think we’ve had 17, 18, 19 or 20 hours of debate. I think everyone has said what we all want to say. No one is running away from making sure that the bill will continue to have a consultation at the committee level. But this will not happen unless we get the bill out of the House and we send it to committee. I would say to all the members of the House, and especially those that will be sitting at the committee level, to pay attention indeed to the content of this particular bill. I think it does contain some good guidelines, good recommendations. If they wish to amend it and bring more recommendations, by all means, I think they should be dealt with, looked after, and debated at the committee level. When the bill comes back, I hope that, again, it will come back in such a form that all the members of the House can support it.

1350

Speaker, one of the main recommendations included in the bill as it is now is to deal exactly with some of the concerns the members have expressed in the House. This will not happen, Speaker—I know you agree—unless we get the bill out of here. Indeed, let’s bring it out into the open. Let’s debate it. We’ll leave it to the members of the committee to bring it back, bring it better, so we can support it and move along. I thank you for your time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our time for questions and comments, and so I return to the member for Oshawa.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I appreciate the comments from the member from Davenport, who mentioned again about Groundhog Day and Bill Murray and what has taken place there, but then went on to speak about the budget; the member from Haldimand–Norfolk, who’s also doing a great job on the public accounts committee and how the Ministry of Natural Resources should take over responsibility for the helicopters and the fixed-wing planes, to ensure that that fleet remains strong and continues on in the best interests, because there’s some definite oversight within that industry. The member from Hamilton Mountain spoke about moving forward, and the minister for seniors, as well, made some comments on that.

Some of the aspects, I think, were that we need to ensure that we move forward in a positive way and look at all the debate that has come forward; to ensure that the link between the ground and the air is taken care of; the whistle-blower protection, along with the other aspects that are there; and that legislation, when it comes forward, when it’s finalized, is acted on when there’s difficulties and problems.

Government is given the privilege and honour to represent the people. It’s who they bring to the table and

how they manage those files that dictates what is in the best interests of the province. Quite frankly, we've seen a number of things, whether it's power plants and eHealth and right here with Ornge, that have taken place.

To the government House leader, I just want to say one thing in closing: Finally, I was given the opportunity to speak, so as of now, now that I've had my opportunity to speak, I'm going to say that we're going to move forward now, and we're now moving to the next stage of this. We want to advance this to committee.

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

Ms. Matthews has moved second reading of Bill 11, An Act to amend the Ambulance Act with respect to air ambulance services.

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

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

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

I wish to inform the House that I have received a request for a deferral until tomorrow at the time of deferred votes, and it's signed by the chief government whip.

This vote will be deferred.

Second reading vote deferred.

NON-PROFIT HOUSING
CO-OPERATIVES STATUTE LAW
AMENDMENT ACT, 2013
LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE
LES COOPÉRATIVES DE LOGEMENT
SANS BUT LUCRATIF

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 20, 2013, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 14, An Act to amend the Co-operative Corporations Act and the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 in respect of non-profit housing co-operatives and to make consequential amendments to other Acts / *Projet de loi 14, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les sociétés coopératives et la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation en ce qui concerne les coopératives de logement sans but lucratif et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois.*

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): When we last debated this bill, we heard from the Minister of Labour. The minister is present in the House, so we now go to questions and comments with respect to the Minister of Labour's remarks from March 20. Questions and comments?

Mr. John Yakabuski: I can't recall the Minister of Labour's comments, but I'm sure they would have been suitably partisan. Myself, on the other hand—we don't deal in that respect. We're dealing with the bill here, the co-operative housing bill, and I want to thank Harvey Cooper and his folks for coming here once again.

They're like season ticketholders to the Ontario Legislature. They keep track of when the debate is going on and they faithfully attend, because it's an issue that is of significant interest to them, and they've shown that in their attendance here today and on all days that the debate has been going on in the House.

As we've talked about in the past on this bill, there are a couple of key provisions. It would allow the parties to settle these things outside of going to court, through a mediator, because we know those things can be very expensive. They can deal with disputes between landlords and tenants in co-operative housing facilities in a much more efficient manner than what is currently the case. Our party has consistently said during the debate that we would be supporting this legislation, but at the same time we wanted to give all members an opportunity to debate it to the full extent as well. We believe that we're on the way to that. We do have other members who do wish to speak to this bill, and we think we'll have an opportunity to hear from them today, as is their right. It is our decision as a caucus to allow them to exercise that right. We're looking forward to more debate today.

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

Mr. Jonah Schein: I welcome our guests back to the gallery. They've been here many days in the last few months, and I think I've spoken to this bill many times. As you know, I'm a big supporter of co-operative housing. It's something that we need more of. I support this bill in making things a bit easier for co-operative housing tenants, but as I said before, this is just a small piece in the puzzle when it comes to affordable housing in Ontario.

Just today, the Ontario Federation of Labour produced the People's Budget for Ontario. These are some of the statistics that they put out: They said that 40% of Ontarians—that's over 600,000 families—are struggling with incomes that are stagnant or declining and that Ontario's poverty rates are rising faster than in almost every other province. They said that between 1981 and 2010, Ontario had the second-highest increase in poverty in the country, and they said that with more than 152,000 Ontario households on wait-lists for assisted housing, Ontario has the worst record of all provinces on affordable housing investments. In 2009, Ontario spent \$64 per person on affordable housing, compared to the average among all provinces of \$115 per person. That source is attributed to Michael Shapcott of the Wellesley Institute.

It's clear that there's so much more that needs to be done when it comes to affordable housing. It's also clear that we've had full debate on this bill. We should put it into committee for a closer look. That's my recommendation here today.

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

Hon. John Milloy: I'm very pleased to stand and provide some comments on the speech that my colleague the Minister of Labour made the last time we met on this bill. I congratulate him for his insights into this very

important issue. Like every member of this Legislature, we have had at least one visit, if not multiple, visits from Harvey Cooper and his team, and we welcome Harvey here today.

I've certainly been a great proponent of co-operative housing in my community. I've had a chance to meet with those who operate and manage co-operative housing units, as well as actually visit the residences themselves and gain a better understanding of it. Of course, what this bill does is provide strengthening to the act and allow it to progress.

The wonderful thing about this bill—and again I give kudos to Mr. Cooper and his team—is that it has support from virtually every member of provincial Parliament who's here in this Legislature.

1400

On that note, I just want to pick up what was said by the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke when he talked about the right of every member to speak to a bill. Of course, I certainly recognize and respect that right, but I would also point out that, the way the standing orders have been developed in the traditions of this place, arguments are made through a vigorous debate. At the point when those arguments are exhausted, it usually moves on to the next phase. We just, thankfully, finished second reading on Bill 11, and I think devoted over 19 hours to debate. Particularly on a bill like this, which I think is very straightforward and has support on all sides of the House, I would certainly encourage those members who wish to speak to make the arguments, to put them, in a sense, on the floor of this House, and we can move this bill on to second reading as soon as possible.

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

Ms. Soo Wong: I rise today in support of Bill 14 and the fact that this is about protecting the tenants; but more importantly, Mr. Speaker, it's the right thing to do.

When you look at this bill, everybody across has said that they support this. The House leader just commented on the fact that we cannot continue to belabour this whole conversation here in the House when the real work, we know from past experience, was discussed in second reading prior to prorogation of the House.

At the end of the day, the community, the people of Ontario, want this bill. We know, from our conversation with Harvey Cooper and his dedicated members from co-op housing—they have asked us, and the community has asked us, to address this issue. Without further complicating it and further debate on this issue, let's go out and talk, through the committee, to fine-tune or improve what's been proposed by the minister. We need to recognize the fact that we cannot continue to have continuous debate like we just finished with the air ambulance legislation. More importantly, let's go do the committee work so that it can come back to the House for final reading.

I do recognize the member from Renfrew and his comment about having proper debate in the House, but at the end of the day, it does not get this bill passed. That's

what Ontarians have asked us to do: to have legislation to move forward, to protect everyone, both the tenants and the landlords. At the end of the day, we also have to recognize that Ontarians sent us here to get things done. Getting things done is not just having continuous conversation for the sake of hearing each other, but making sure legislation is being passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our questions and comments time. I return to the Minister of Labour.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker, for recognizing me and giving me the opportunity to respond to the comments of the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, the member from Davenport, the government House leader and the member from Scarborough–Agincourt.

For those of the members who can recall what I spoke about for 20 minutes when I spoke on this very important bill, Bill 14, I took the opportunity to support the bill because I think it's extremely important, and I'm very happy to hear that support exists across the Legislature. But I also spoke about the bill in terms of my community, where I have heard from many of my constituents who live in co-operative housing that this is going to improve the operation and administration of co-op housing in my community of Ottawa Centre.

In addition, I spoke about the 12 housing co-operatives that exist in my riding of Ottawa Centre, and I took some time going through every single one of them because I had the opportunity to work with them all and see how great places they are to live in, to grow a family, to build a community. I wanted to make sure that in the House we have a bit of an appreciation from a community like mine in Ottawa Centre as to the kind of excellent co-op housing that exists. Through this bill, we can help them improve them even further.

Lastly, I thank the Co-op Housing Association of Eastern Ontario, CHASEO, which is a vibrant organization in Ottawa which represents both English-speaking and French-speaking and operated co-op housing across eastern Ontario, and the incredible work that they're doing in providing co-op housing as a good alternative to affordable housing in our community.

Speaker, I echo the government House leader and the member from Scarborough–Agincourt: This is an important bill. Let's get this debate done with quickly, so that we can take this matter to committee and have it pass as quickly as possible to help our co-op housing across the province.

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

I recognize the government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, we wish the debate to continue.

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

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It is my pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill 14, the Non-profit Housing Co-operatives Statute Law Amendment Act. Before I begin, I would like to thank Minister Jeffrey for quickly reintroducing Bill 14. I would also like to thank the Premier—the former Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing—for introducing this bill last session. Back then it was called Bill 65, and many of the members of this House rose to speak to it.

It's a shame—such a shame—that this bill had to be reintroduced. At the time, Bill 65 had all-party support. It was a non-partisan bill that had to start all over again for the most partisan of reasons. A good number of other bills were sent back to square one, including my own private member's bill that was aimed at cutting through red tape and even helping Ontario business owners. The good people of Chatham–Kent–Essex sent me here to work for them, and that's exactly what I'm doing.

I would like to thank Harvey Cooper and his team at the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada. Harvey is the manager of government relations for the co-ops, and he appears to have the patience of a saint. Mr. Speaker, you can see the determination of these folks and just how much this bill means to them. They've been waiting for this piece of legislation since this government made a promise of it back in 2007.

I know that things move a little slowly here at Queen's Park, but this is shameful. Even after seeing the bill get killed at the hands of Dalton McGuinty's reckless prorogation, Mr. Cooper remains upbeat. He recently stated that he and the co-ops of Ontario “hope the bill can move quickly through second and third reading. As we know, the minority Legislature can be a tricky place and we will work with the parties to try to get quick passage of the legislation.” I hope he's right, and let's hope that more Liberal scandals don't get in the way of good, sensible legislation. As a party, we support the bill, but we have some concerns over amendments that were added to this bill.

Before discussing Bill 14, I feel it is important to highlight exactly what a co-op is. There are often misconceptions about co-ops, and many people are unaware of just how significant they are in the affordable housing mix. Housing co-operatives provide not-for-profit housing for their members. The members do not own equity in their housing. This means that if they move, their home is returned to the co-op to be offered to yet another individual or family that needs affordable income—sorry, an affordable home. They may need that, too. Because co-ops charge their members only enough to cover costs for repairs and reserves, they can offer housing that is often more affordable than rental prices elsewhere in the housing market.

Speaker, I don't know whether you're aware of this, but roughly 125,000 people live in more than 550 non-profit housing co-operatives across Ontario. Amazingly, there are co-ops in 95 of the province's 107 ridings. With

co-ops in so many ridings, this is not just an urban issue; it impacts many rural municipalities as well. In my riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex, there are, in fact, three co-ops in Chatham and another in the municipality of Leamington. Each of these residences has anywhere between 45 and 60 units. These are mainstays of the community, and provide a safe, welcoming community for residents to live and grow.

1410

The Clairvue co-op in the north end of Chatham, for example, has 60 units, and the members who live there are the ones responsible for running the co-op. Each member has a vote, and every year members elect a board of directors from the membership. This co-op is an important part of the community, and keeping it safe and vibrant is integral to the development of Chatham–Kent. It is an ongoing part of the town that includes Gregory Drive Public School, one of the top-rated public schools in our fair city. It also is across the street from the newly installed multi-million-dollar family splash pads at Kingston Park.

As you can see, this bill, by strengthening co-ops, will strengthen family life and community within Chatham–Kent.

Again, I would like to highlight that this issue is not simply an urban issue. This affects even rural ridings like my own. The court systems in Chatham–Kent–Essex are overburdened, like they are all over this province, and co-ops like the Mariner's co-op in Leamington need a quick and efficient way to settle internal disputes without backing up the courts. The Mariner's co-op is home to 50 residential units, and helping to pass this bill would give those residents the peace of mind they need. They need to know that their disputes will be, in fact, solved as efficiently as possible through the Landlord and Tenant Board, and not through the costly and time-consuming efforts of courts.

Beyond both the Clairvue and Mariner's co-ops, my riding is also proud to have the Nova Housing Co-op, located on Turquoise Court in Chatham, and the Labourview Housing Co-op on King Street. These groups are integral aspects of the community that need to be preserved. They provide affordable housing to the region at a better bang for the buck for Ontario taxpayers. These housing options provide affordable and secure options to members of the Chatham–Kent–Essex community.

Given that co-operative housing is such an important part of the non-profit housing mix in this province, and also in my riding, it's our job as legislators to make sure that the government is here to help and not hinder them. Bill 14 features some mechanisms that will make it easier for co-ops to function.

This bill would enact a simple change that stakeholders have been trying to see realized for many years. The residents of housing co-ops in this province are asking to be treated like any other tenant and have their cases heard by the Landlord and Tenant Board instead of waiting and paying large fees to have their disputes brought before the courts. At its core, this legislation makes sense.

It also, by the way, makes dollars and cents. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing estimated that the cost of resolving these co-op disputes in the courts is between \$3,000 and \$5,000 each. Further, they stated that the approximately 300 cases that are heard each year amount to annual legal costs to affected co-op members of about \$1 million. Now, \$1 million may not sound like much to the members—it certainly isn't as costly as a gas plant—but that's a lot of money.

These disputes, however, include rent arrears, late payment of rent, wilful damage, and illegal activity by tenants or interfering with other tenants' enjoyment of their property. These cases do not belong in the courts; they belong in the Landlord and Tenant Board. Let's get this bill to committee so we can get this logical and practical change made. We need to make every effort possible to relieve our overburdened court system. I'm sure that the Attorney General knows exactly how dire the situation is for our court system right here in the great province of Ontario. It is certainly a complex issue, but removing 300 cases a year will certainly help.

I'd like to take a moment and explain just how serious this situation is in our province. After all, what's the use of passing laws if we don't have a judicial system that can keep up?

In October of 2012, Justice Stephen Brown claimed that Ontario courthouses are "slipping further into a crisis situation" because of growing demands and limited resources. He made this statement in a written decision in which he stayed charges against a man accused of impaired driving because the case experienced too many delays in the court.

In addition to withdrawn or stayed cases, there is the matter of increased costs for the province that must be addressed.

I view our PC Party as the wallet watchers of Ontario, and any way that we can lower costs and minimize any liability on Ontario taxpayers—that's why I believe I've been put in this position in Chatham-Kent-Essex, to best represent the taxpayers there. All of us need to be thinking along the same lines.

There are also unnecessary costs when cases drag through the system. These delayed cases also swallow up precious court resources, from judges and lawyers to security and even courtroom staff. These inflated court costs certainly hurt the province, but they also hurt families in the co-ops.

This bill should already be law; however, the delay has cost co-op members potentially hundreds of thousands of dollars in unnecessary court costs as the rules the bill was intended to fix still remain in place. You would say, "Well, why is that?" I'd just like to remind those at home it had everything to do with the prorogation, and as a result of that it continues to cost. Now we're back, but this should have been settled back when it was first introduced.

This is their third attempt at passing this bill; I hope the third time is a charm. I remind the House that this promise was originally made back in—yes—2007. Now,

if my memory is correct, 2007 was, like, two elections ago, or just before two elections ago. That was two Speakers and a Premier ago. Can you believe it? A lot has changed in that time period.

What has remained unchanged is the unwavering commitment of folks like Harvey Cooper and the many housing co-op volunteers who have travelled to Queen's Park session after session trying to see this bill become a law.

Another element that has not changed is the support of the PC Party on this issue. I'd like to thank our municipal affairs and housing critic, Steve Clark, MPP for Leeds-Grenville and former mayor of Brockville, for providing a wealth of knowledge on this subject to our caucus. He works tirelessly for his constituents and is, in fact, an authority on the housing file.

The member from Leeds-Grenville did point out something troubling to me about this bill. The new bill contains an amendment to allow the Landlord and Tenant Board to waive the \$45 filing fee for low-income tenants. This may sound nice at first, but as legislators it's our duty to consider the unintended impacts of even the smallest amendment. It's my understanding that the fee would be returned to the tenant if they are successful at the board. Well, what we're concerned about is the potential for abuse to an already backlogged board. This amendment has the potential to harm both landlords and tenants, as their legitimate cases could be held up by nuisance complaints clogging the system. It will harm all involved as it will further hamper the Landlord and Tenant Board's ability to hear cases in a timely manner. Let's ensure that the mechanisms in place to resolve legitimate issues are there for those who really need them. No one wants to wait for many months or even years to resolve a housing issue.

If I were a resident in a co-op waiting for my case to be heard, for example a case where another tenant is interfering with my enjoyment of the property, I would not want to have to wait and wait for my dispute to be resolved. I would want closure on the issue so I could move forward.

1420

We're afraid that this tacked-on charge could do more harm than the government may have realized. This is a conversation that we need to have with the people from co-operative housing in Ontario. In a spirit of collaboration, let's talk about the ways we can reduce the barriers for people but also keep safeguards in place to avoid the potential for nuisance complaints from both sides, bogging down an already burdened Landlord and Tenant Board. Adding this amendment without consultation is not the right thing to do.

Let me state that there was absolutely no reason to amend the former bill in the first place. It had all-party support. The bill was well on its way to being passed, so why throw in unnecessary and unneeded amendments? It's not every day that the members of the third party opposition and I agree on something. It's even rarer that the government also supports such a bill. But why not re-

introduce the bill as it was when it had received all-party support? If we're going to start making changes to the Residential Tenancies Act and the Landlord and Tenant Board overall, I think it would be prudent to consult with stakeholders, landlords and tenants. If the government really wants to open up the Residential Tenancies Act, why not make some truly substantial changes? I'm sure we have all received calls from constituents who have had an issue with the Landlord and Tenant Board. It's far from being perfect and could surely stand to be improved. Let's consult with stakeholder groups who have had so many constructive things to say over this entire process.

At the end of the day, Bill 14 was not introduced exactly as it was in the previous session. While, as I outlined, I have some concerns over the finer points, I'm happy to support Bill 14 at second reading. But it's absolutely vital that this long-overdue bill finally becomes law. For the residents of Mariner's housing co-operative in Leamington, and for the Clairvue, Labourview and Nova housing co-operatives in the great, outstanding riding of Chatham-Kent-Essex, I support this bill. I hope that we can give them the peace of mind that their disputes will not force them into the messy court system. I believe that this is absolutely essential.

It's also essential that we make sure that there is a thorough review process in committee that will ensure that we craft a solid piece of legislation and leave nothing to chance. We must be accountable. That may be a word that the government may not fully understand, but we'll work together to ensure that collectively we will be accountable to the Ontarians who rely on the Landlord and Tenant Board by making sure it is there for them when called upon.

So let's be thoughtful. Let's be responsible. I truly believe that that's why each and every one of us is here: to make sure that every law we pass has the best interests of our constituents and all citizens of this great province in mind. We must make sure that this bill truly reflects the desires of those living in co-ops, from Chatham to Toronto to Thunder Bay. We owe it to the 125,000 Ontarians who live in this province's 550 non-profit housing co-ops to make sure that we get it right after all this time.

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

Mr. Paul Miller: First of all, I'd like to start off by thanking the co-op people for bearing through this, time and time again. I'm considering putting you in for the Order of Canada for all the time you've spent here. It's almost like we could get you a chair and you could be a member here, it's been so long and overdue for you.

This will be a quicker system, obviously, eliminating the court system, which always is bogged down at the best of times. It doesn't matter if it's criminal law; it doesn't matter if it's civic-municipal law. It's always bogged down. Months and months transpire between decisions, which should be quick and effective, especially if you're having a dispute in your living conditions, in the place you live.

It provides tenants with more timely decisions, which will obviously correct disputes which could be between tenants themselves. It could be between the buildings they live in, and it also could be between their boards. It could be between contractors who are doing work for the building. Whatever the decisions are, the problems they're having will be dealt with with people who are familiar with this. The board has dealt with this many times. Many, many years they've been there, and they're familiar with the ups and downs of co-ops or rental situations. Whatever they've been dealing with, they have the expertise to speed up the process.

Of course, we don't want to forget the legal costs that are involved sometimes that cost a fortune. These, obviously, will be diminished or may be almost non-existent, which is very important to any organization that's dealing with these types of situations.

Bill 14 is a good thing. It's long overdue. It appears that all parties are on board. In closing, all I can say is, let's get on with it, let's get it done and make Ontario a better place.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I came into politics through volunteer work in the affordable housing system. I'm pleased to join the debate today on behalf of the many co-op housing projects in my community. I'm going to name a few because I cannot recall every name, but I know that I have—when we were talking about the number of co-op providers, I thought that most of them are in my riding. I wanted to speak on behalf of the residents in co-op housing and the management on the boards of Brébeuf, LaSalle, Desloges, Giovanni, Beausoleil, and then I can go on about all those in Sandy Hill. I speak on behalf of them wanting this bill to pass.

Currently, disputes must go through the courts. We have heard that it's very costly and time-consuming. If passed, this bill will allow co-op boards to apply to the Landlord and Tenant Board to resolve their disputes at a cheaper price than when they go through the courts. This will make the resolution of disputes more efficient, cost-effective and transparent for co-op boards and their members.

I'm still asking the question: Why are we still debating it today? We've heard from the opposition that it takes time and "We want this bill to pass." If we want this bill to pass, let's send it to committee.

So I thank you for being here, because if you were not here, perhaps there would be a lot of opposition about Bill 14. But because you're here, they're all supporting it, so keep coming.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. Questions and comments?

Mr. Bill Walker: It's always a pleasure to follow my colleague from Chatham-Kent-Essex, who researches these items very well and articulates them extremely clearly.

I almost want to start off by saying maybe this bill should be renamed the "patience of Job act," in recognition of Harvey Cooper and his housing colleagues.

You know, it was 2007 when this was first brought here. Why is this not already enacted and serving the great people of Ontario who need it the most? It just baffles me, particularly when we look at it, that there's all-party support. Despite all of that, we're back here having another discussion. I think my colleague from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek—I got it right; I could be a Speaker someday. He has brought up again that if the Liberal Party didn't prorogue the House for four months, this could have again been enacted the last time and actually helping and benefiting the great people of Ontario.

I'm really pleased to see that it's getting it out of the court system, because our courts are backlogged to begin with. We need to be opening those up. It's less costly to go down this road, but I do have a major concern. There's nothing I can see in the act currently that will ensure there aren't nuisance complaints that are going to just actually inundate the board, and thus those people who really need a hearing won't get to the forefront and get their issues resolved.

1430

I agree with my colleague from Chatham–Kent–Essex that strengthening the family life in all communities is absolutely imperative. We're very supportive of that. But I think what we want to do with this legislation—like all legislation, it needs to be balanced. We should have consulted all stakeholders at the very first and not, as in many cases with the Liberals, run something out the door and then go, “Oh, jeez, we should have thought of that. Yeah, we'll come back.” Then we look like a hero because we've actually made it a more palatable piece of legislation.

Why can't we just get all three parties at the start like we've agreed, do this legislation the right way on behalf of the province of Ontario and the taxpayers, the people who are paying the freight and give us the privilege and pleasure to be here, and do things right? This could have been enacted in 2007. Let's get on with it.

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

Miss Monique Taylor: I would also like to welcome back Harvey and his co-op crew. They have definitely been diligent in trying to ensure that this bill passes through.

It is quite shameful that it has been before this House since 2007. This is important legislation that needs to go through to support the people of our province. It's unfortunate that it's here time and time and time again.

To speak to the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex and his concern about the changes to the legislation that would allow low-income families to have a waiver of the fees, that concerns me. We should be making sure that low-income people have the same abilities. They're having a hard enough time keeping the lights on and food in the fridge. When they're in tough times and they can't pay the rent and they are being evicted, they obviously need the extra help to be able to ensure that they have the ability to go to the Landlord and Tenant Board and be able to fight for their rights also.

I am happy to hear, though, that he and his party are looking forward to working together to make sure that we are getting legislation forward. I hope that counts when it comes to the budget and that they will be looking at the budget and seeing if there are good things in the budget for the people of this province and will be able to move some of that forward also.

I'm sure that the government would like to enact some of their ideas as well as they would ours. Hopefully, they're not as what we've seen come through when it comes to beating up on people of this province, and instead of a race to the bottom, we have a race to the top.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes the questions and comments. I return to the member for Chatham–Kent–Essex for his reply.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: First of all, I'd like to thank the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek—just an outstanding ice hockey referee; the Minister of Community Safety, whose riding is Ottawa–Vanier; the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound; and of course the member from Hamilton Mountain.

Back in our riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex, we do have, in fact, three co-ops in Chatham and one in Leamington. I know that they're looking forward to seeing this particular bill pass, the legislation.

Currently, it is costly. If we roll the clock back from when it was first introduced in 2007 to now, a lot of time and a lot of money has kind of been spent and wasted where it could have been better spent in other areas.

Again, I want to encourage members from all parties: Let's get it right this time. Let's approve this particular bill. Let's get it out of the courts and let's get it into the hands of the Landlord and Tenant Board. This is Bill 14. It was formerly Bill 65.

I do have some concerns about nuisance complaints that may in fact tie up the Landlord and Tenant Board. It may be something where, when we get it back into committee, we'll have an opportunity to perhaps tighten up some of those loose ends.

The member from Hamilton Mountain, though, did in fact comment about the budget. Of course, I would like to remind her that we won't be sitting on our hands this time when it comes to the budget. Just by virtue of her words, I'm wondering if the C-word—yes, Speaker, the coalition—is alive and well. We're wondering that as well.

But having said all of that, moving forward, we will be supporting Bill 14.

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

Mr. Michael Prue: It is indeed an honour to stand today to speak about this bill. I have tried to speak about it before and I will continue to speak about it until it eventually becomes law. With any luck, it will be long on its way by tonight. I promised the people who've been spoken about, many times, that hopefully by tonight we will have exhausted the number of people who actually want to speak to this and can send it to committee.

There are 550 co-ops in the province of Ontario and a great number of them are in my riding. When I talk to

people about the co-ops in my riding and the ones that I'm most familiar with—those being the ones from East York from the time when I was mayor—I always tell the same kind of stories about the families who live there and about the co-ops and how you can distinguish a co-op from an apartment building. How you can distinguish them is very simple. The co-op generally tends to be the one that has the nicest lawns, the best upkeep, the ones with the least problems, the ones where the residents are proud to live there, where there is maintenance and where the money is spent to maintain them at all times. That's how you can tell the co-ops from some of the rental units that you find in and around East York and Toronto.

For the families who live there, that is not just a place to live; that is their home. The pride of being part of an almost ownership is the same that you will find from people who own their own homes with the manicured lawns and with everything else, the people out there making sure that their place is a place that they're proud to bring people in, proud for people to come and visit them, and that's what a co-op is all about.

There was a time in this country, not very long ago, when new buildings, new places, rent-geared-to-income places, places that were affordable for families—20% to 25% of them were built by co-ops, and those co-ops that were set up did yeoman's service to the people of Ontario and the people of Canada in the development of new housing. Sadly, my understanding now is that this has fallen off to about 4% today. We've gone from 20% to 25% down to 4%. And you have to ask, why has all of this happened when we are screaming, when we have all these people out there who are looking for affordable housing, when we have 87,000 families on a wait-list, when we have 160,000 people who are looking for a decent place to live? How is it and why is it that a movement as fundamental as the co-op movement does not have the kind of say that they need to produce the kind of housing? I am absolutely positive that if they had the wherewithal to do it in terms of funding from governments, if they had the support that they need from all levels of government in this country, if they had investors who were willing to put money where the housing would do the most good and where we would be very proud of what was established there, with a true sense of neighbourhood and community, we would let the co-ops do it—absolutely, and everybody here knows that's probably true. I don't think there would be many doubters in this room that the co-ops could probably do it best.

I look back over my political career and I look back to what has actually happened here in terms of housing. It's really off the federal radar. In fact, the last minister who was totally responsible for housing in Canada was the Honourable Alan Redway, and he was the minister during the Mulroney years. Since then, although there are a repeated number of ministers over the years, it's only part of their job description. He was the last one who was dedicated only to housing. It's pretty sad what has

happened. It's pretty sad what happened in this province back in the 1990s—or late 1990s—when a new government came into power. I remember those icy words of Mike Harris when he said, “We're getting out of the housing business.”

I remember what happened when we got out of the housing business. I remember the co-ops that were being built in East York and the ones that were on the paper and the ones that were planned and the ones that a lot of money had been spent to make them all get ready to be built: They all just evaporated. They were gone. Those housing places—those decent places where people were going to live—were all gone, and I don't want us to try to make that mistake again.

1440

As was said earlier today, Ontario spends only about \$64 a person—about half the national average—on the building of decent affordable housing. That's not very much in the most populous and one of the richest provinces in Canada, and we can and should be spending a lot more. If we spent even the average of the other provinces, we would double the amount of money we're spending on housing; housing that is absolutely needed for the poorest among us, housing that is needed to revitalize our cities and towns, housing that will keep families together and lessen conflict. We're not doing that, and we should be doing that.

The other day, I had an opportunity to speak to people of the real estate association, OREA, and I told them that if we could solve the housing dilemma, we could solve many of the social ills of our community. We could help put an end to poverty if we had decent housing. We could help kids to learn better, so that they would continue in school, if their families had decent and affordable housing. We could make sure there was sufficient food if they weren't spending more than 50% of their money on rent, if they had decent housing. This is why everybody in this room, so far, has spoken in favour of the co-operative movement. It is probably the most economical way we could possibly have to build the kind of housing this province needs.

We need, though, to have a couple of other things—and I'm mindful of my time here. We need to have a housing plan with targets, so that we can meet those. It's not enough for a government to run, as this last government did several times ago, and say, “We're going to produce 20,000 units of affordable housing a year,” and then build only 16,000 over three, four or five years. That's not enough. If you're going to make the statement, you need to meet the targets.

We need to have capital available. Canada Mortgage and Housing in Ottawa is getting out of that. It's time that Ontario looked at whether or not capital might be made available to co-ops, church groups and others that want to come forward and build the kinds of housing we need.

We need to have inclusionary zoning. My colleague from Parkdale–High Park often talks about this and has put in bills about inclusionary zoning several times.

Where that is used in the United States, it's used to great effect. What you say is that municipalities can put inclusionary zoning in their official plan; therefore, anybody who comes forward and wants to build condominium units, apartment buildings or anything has to meet the inclusionary zoning, which allows for more affordable housing to be built. It doesn't cost anyone a dime. It doesn't cost the city money; it doesn't cost the province money. But it does ensure that when developers want to come forward and build, the inclusionary zoning bylaw kicks in and housing is built.

We need to have housing benefits. I heard, again from the OREA group the other day, that housing benefits are coming to an end and may not be renewed. And we're all waiting for this year's budget to see whether, in fact, that is true.

Those are the kinds of things we need to do. I listened to all the speakers today, and we know that this is the third attempt. I cast no aspersions on members of the government, but this is the third attempt. This is a very easy bill that can be passed quite simply, because I'm sure it's going to get all-party support at second reading to send it to committee. Based on what happens at committee, if there's a little bit of tweaking here and there, I'm sure it's going to get it as well for third reading later on. But I'm hoping as well that we can finish here today sometime around 6 o'clock before we go.

I don't know how many more people want to speak on it. I'm not advocating closure in any way, because all those members who need to speak or want to speak should be able to do so. But I think that sufficient has been said that all of us know what is likely to happen and all of us know the likely outcome at second reading. It behooves all of us not to make these good people wait longer.

My friend from Chatham-Kent-Essex talked about the amendment he is concerned about. I just want to go on record in my last 40 seconds to say that I think the amendment is a good thing. I think the amendment that has been put in from the last time will help those who are indigent. I think it will help those who are struggling. I think it will help single moms with kids who can't afford the money. And just like any court or tribunal can waive a fee, this court and tribunal ought to be allowed to waive the fee as well.

This causes me no great grief. But I am asking all of the members, don't bring these people back another day if we can possibly help it. Please, please make sure that it goes to committee and make sure that everything happens the way it's supposed to and that this bill finally becomes law.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Before I ask for questions and comments, I would like to draw members' attention to our guests in the Speaker's gallery. I want to welcome, on behalf of all members, a delegation from the government of Pakistan, led by Brigadier General Mahmood Sadiq, accompanied by Mr. Golo of the Pakistan consulate in Toronto. Welcome to the Ontario Legislature, and thank you for joining us today.

Questions and comments?

Mr. Bill Mauro: That's a tough act to follow. I do want to thank the member from Beaches-East York for his comments on this legislation.

Speaker, I have been here now going on 10 years. There are some members of the Legislature who have been here longer than me and others who have been here less time than me. But I don't know the history really well. I don't know if this particular reform has been introduced previous to our government or not. When you find and learn about the background of this particular issue, it does seem very simple and straightforward and makes sense. One is left to wonder why it has not happened quite some time ago.

For those who are following the issue on television, quite simply, what we're talking about is this; here's the distinction in the main piece of the legislation: Co-operative housing is governed by the Co-operative Corporations Act, Ministry of Finance legislation. This is sort of where the rubber hits the road: It's not the Residential Tenancies Act, as is the case for other tenancies. As a result, co-ops currently cannot make applications to the Landlord and Tenant Board in order to resolve their disputes related to eviction and other matters.

I don't mind saying I was a bit surprised by the costs that are associated; their only avenue of access right now is to the courts. According to the CHF, the Co-operative Housing Federation, the current court process can be time-consuming and expensive. Here's the piece: \$3,000 to \$5,000 per arrears eviction for the non-profit co-op housing providers. That is obviously a very significant cost. By making this change, obviously that will be something that will be significantly affected. That's why we think it's positive.

What I would simply say is that I listened to the member from Beaches-East York, and it's nice to hear we have assumed, presumed—or we're hopeful, rather, is probably the language, that the third party will support the legislation. I'm less certain of the members of the official opposition. I hope you're correct that, in fact, we do have their support as this legislation moves forward for second reading vote in the not-too-distant future. I guess we'll all know the answer to that very soon.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry.

Mr. Jim McDonell: I'm happy to rise today to address the comments made by the honourable member from Beaches-East York where he talks about the present legislation in front of us. It's interesting to hear the member opposite say that he's not sure how we'll vote. This is the third time this bill has come up. I think we've supported it twice already. The delay, the last one by the prorogation, is costing residents of Ontario literally tens of thousands of dollars and possibly up into hundreds of thousands.

The co-operatives are very important. I had a chance to meet with the Brookdale co-op group in Cornwall. It was interesting to note that their rent—after paying a very reasonable \$300 and change a month, they were

able to pay off their current debts. They're actually debt-free now. Their biggest problem is that most members in this co-op have been there for 20 or 30 years. They don't want to move out, and as they become elderly, they need renovations to accommodate seniors. So it's a good-news story.

We're certainly hoping that this legislation will pass. We wonder about just how interested the government is. As I say, this is the third time they've brought it up. It's timely legislation, something we need. We're looking at the need.

The member also talked about this group, once being 20% to 25% of the units being built, down around 4%. I guess it speaks a lot about the development in this province, whether it be manufacturing jobs or the building of non-profit housing units, something we're seeing leaving this province under this government.

I look forward to seeing this bill go through.

1450

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

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I congratulate my colleague from Beaches–East York on a very sensitive and knowledgeable presentation, which he does on a regular basis. He didn't just speak to the bill, but he spoke to so many other things that need to be addressed. He talked about the housing plan, the targets, the need for capital, inclusionary zoning and housing benefits, which people are worried about in the co-op sector.

These are the larger issues. It appears that all parties will be supporting this amendment and wanting to rush it through to committee hearings as quickly as possible. But some of the things that the member from Beaches–East York talked about are even more pressing, and that is that there are 150,000 people who are on a waiting list to get into affordable housing—which includes co-op housing. The majority of people obviously want to get into any kind of affordable housing that there is, be it non-profit, be it public housing, be it co-op. And it doesn't matter to poor people, who are finding it difficult in this economy to make ends meet—it doesn't matter where it is, as long as we're building it. The real problem is, we're not building any affordable housing that people need access to.

While we had the previous government, there was not one single public housing that was built. Under a Liberal regime, we haven't seen one single housing co-op being built—and this is one of the best forms of housing that we could have. Why? Because it houses people who are low-income and it houses people in the same place who are middle-class, folks who pay the market value. This is one of the best forms of living that we have. Rather than building more of this, we haven't done anything in the last 20 years.

It really is a depressing thing to think about. But with respect to this bill, let's get it passed right away.

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

Ms. Soo Wong: I too want to add my voice to the comments made by my colleague from Beaches–East

York. His comment earlier reminded each one of us why we are here. The fact that the new Bill 14 talks about the waiver fee that the opposition party does not support—this is a major concern, especially when we know that in every riding in this province, there is a vulnerable population. The proposed bill does address, does provide additional support with respect to low-income families and support, and that is the right thing to do.

I would challenge my colleagues opposite. At the end of the day, we have to ask, why are you here? If you're not here to support and recognize especially those who have low income and the vulnerable population, why are you here? You're not championing them. Who are you championing?

The other piece I wanted to remind everybody in the House is, we have spent over seven hours on this debate. The question has to be asked among each one of us here: Are we going to ask our colleagues at co-op housing, Harvey and his team, to come back—how many more times? We all agree this bill is ready to go to the committee. Let's do the right thing. Before we adjourn the House today, let's get it to committee—this is where the real refinement of the bill needs to be done, not in this Legislature—more importantly, to give assurances to the co-op housing partners that we are listening to you and we're willing to work with you.

Mr. Speaker, I can't emphasize it enough: Let's go to the committee. If we continue more debate, nothing is going to be done. We're going to come back here next week or another day this week to talk about this piece.

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

Mr. Michael Prue: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I thank the members from Thunder Bay–Atikokan, Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, Trinity–Spadina and Scarborough–Agincourt for their very kind comments. Unfortunately, for me, anyway, I was only given 10 minutes because I just made that cut where we went from a 20-minute debate to a 10-minute debate. There was so much more that I wanted to say.

But in a nutshell, I thank you for the comments that you made, and yes, we do need to act on this. This has been six years since the request was made and since the ideas were first floated in 2007. We've gone through an election since then, or maybe two. This is the third reading of the bill. We've had people come here day after day in eager anticipation that something is going to happen, and it needs to happen.

Oftentimes in this Legislature we talk, because there are 107 of us, and we want to get our viewpoints known. But I think the viewpoints of Ontarians are pretty well unanimous on this and certainly the viewpoint of the legislators in this building and in this room appears to be closing in on unanimity. There may be some small structural things that still need to be done, but the people of Ontario are in desperate need of housing, and if we can help the co-operative movement even in this small way, then we need to do it. But I think governments need

to start looking at the bigger picture. The bigger picture isn't just a dispute mechanism and how to make it easier and fairer for the tenants of the co-op movement. The bigger picture is how to build the housing that we so desperately need. When you see people who are homeless, when you see people who are under-housed, when you see people who are languishing on waiting lists for years and years, then I think all of us need to do something to make that better. One of the first steps is this bill. But in the budget that's coming next week or next month, please, please make sure that there's money for housing as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate? I'm pleased to recognize the minister responsible for seniors.

Hon. Mario Sergio: Thank you very much, Speaker. I myself have to shrink my two hours to 10 minutes because there is so much to say, but I can say that the end is near, finally, to my friends Harvey Cooper and Dale Reagan. My colleague from Beaches–East York said, “Don't bring them here anymore.” I think I'd like to see them here as often as possible. I think they are wonderful people. They've been down here many, many times. They don't mind coming to see us, but I have to say that it has been a delight working on this particular file for many years.

Harvey Cooper commented, when I saw him last time, “When we started to deal with this particular file here, you had lots of curly, dark hair.” It's been nine long years since we have been dealing with this particular file. It is here, it's almost the end and it will be good to see that we're moving with it.

The last time I was invited by the Co-operative Housing Federation to make a presentation at their conference, I was the parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for housing. I told them at the time, “Harvey, I will not come again. I will not come back, and don't invite me again, unless we deliver on this particular issue.”

We are here, and I'd like to welcome again into our chamber Harvey Cooper and Dale Reagan and guests from the Co-operative Housing Federation. Yes, finally we're getting there. We have to say that they represent a particular group in our province that is doing wonderful work—absolutely wonderful work—being providers of housing and accommodation. There is so much needed, especially for our middle- and lower-income people. They are doing tremendous work and we, as a government—

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Halton on a point of order.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I don't believe there's a quorum present.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I would ask the table to ascertain if there is a quorum present in the House.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): A quorum is not present.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

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

1500

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you. We return to the minister responsible for seniors.

Hon. Mario Sergio: Thank you very much, Speaker. This is part and parcel of the working of the House—that we have to understand, that we have to accept—but, Speaker, we have work to do. I think it's about time that we move on.

As I was saying before, I think we are at the end of this particular debate. I think it's got a wonderful flavour because the people from the co-op federations will be happy when finally we can see this bill being sent to committee, brought back, and move on with it. I was saying before that they have to be commended not only for being so forceful in seeing that we deal with their request, because of the work that they do, but it's on behalf of the people that they represent as well.

I think my colleague the member from Beaches–East York was trying to allude to the fact that there are some 550 co-ops in Ontario. They house some 44,000 households which contain some 125,000 people. And these are our residents; they are people who live in Ontario and they benefit from the various forms of housing. Co-op housing is one of those wonderful forms of tenure that houses people in much need of affordable housing.

The bill initially started in 2004, so it's not five or six years; it's some nine years ago that the bill started this long journey. It is unfortunate that it has taken so long, but I can see the end coming to an end. Soon, we will be able to deliver to the co-op people what they've been asking for for quite some time now.

The member from Essex–Kent has been mentioning that it would have been nice to have a consultation and stuff like that. I have to say, with all due respect to the member, he may not be aware, but a lot of consultation has taken place and there has been a lot of support for the various bills—for all of them, as a matter of fact: the one that was introduced in 2004, and the one in 2011, Bill 198; in 2012, Bill 65, and we had an extensive consultation prior to that. So we are in 2013 and still dealing with the bill.

Let me say that support came from a number of organizations as well, especially from the Advocacy Centre for Tenants of Ontario, which expressed support in the effort to propose reforms. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp., the Ontario Co-operative Association, the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association and the Housing Services Corp. also expressed support. As well, both the Conservatives and the NDP expressed support for the bill. I think today, more than ever, the support that we see in the House is stronger than ever.

I do have some co-op housing in my particular area, and I have to go back to 1979, when I first saw the first co-op building going up in my own area. At the time, I was a councillor with the wonderful then-city of North York. Those were the good old days. This is well before the so-called amalgamation, Speaker. You were here. I

remember you were here as well when we did amalgamate the city of Toronto. This was a wonderful form of housing, and I was anxious to see it going. I have to say, even today, every time I go by on Jane Street north of Sheppard and south of Finch Avenue, I take a look at that particular housing because there was some opposition to it from some of the local residents. Now I look at the building, and it's still a wonderful building. It is well kept; it's well maintained. It fits well with the neighbourhood. So, therefore, I am proud that I was able to have that particular housing in my area.

Speaker, why are we dealing with this particular bill? It's because of all forms of housing that have some difficulties, some problems. It has been very contentious; it has been very expensive; it has been very time-consuming for both sides, I would say—the occupants and the co-op federation as well—to deal with some of those issues.

What the bill does is amend both the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006, and the Co-operative Corporations Act as well. By doing so, some of the disputes—they are lengthy; they are expensive—instead of to the courts, will be moving to the Landlord and Tenant Board.

There are a number of examples as to why and how. For example, some of reasons: arrears; persistent late payments of rent; illegal behaviour; interfering with reasonable enjoyment; wilful damage, and so forth.

Others that are still being dealt with in the courts are, for example, violation of a no-pet provision, and failure to fulfill co-op members' dues, such as cutting the lawn or removing the snow.

The important thing is that we move some of the bigger issues into the Landlord and Tenant Act. I think some of the previous speakers have mentioned with respect to fees. I think the fees are based on those individual cases where the board may feel compelled to let go and abolish the fee.

All in all, this is a good piece of legislation—late, but it's here. The end is near, Speaker. I think I can see Harvey Cooper and Dale Reagan saying, “Finally, we're getting to the end,” and we are here today to debate this particular piece.

It has been said by previous speakers that they would still like to see some amendments. Yes, let's send it to committee and let's bring it back. Let's bring back a better bill than what it is. It's always better for the applicants when we can say not only have we approved it but we've approved a better bill. I hope that when we do, Speaker, we can present it to the House and approve it at that particular time.

My time is up, Speaker, and I thank you for your time.

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

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: The member talks about the bill being a little late. He's redefined “late.” This bill started in 2007, and this is its third or fourth time before the House—

Interjection: In 2004, Ted.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: In 2004, it started. It was an election promise, I think, in 2007. You've redefined “late.” It's late, late, late, late.

I guess there's something about this bill, because it did attract in a former member from Kingston and the Islands, and he has been studiously listening to the comments. He probably—I'm not sure. He never served in opposition—I don't believe you ever served in opposition—so he probably doesn't understand quorum calls, or he looks on quorum calls as a very bad thing, as governments do. But the government does have a quorum now, and it's important that the government does maintain that quorum. This is an important piece of legislation, and the government should be here to listen to it. I'm glad to see that the quorum is now present.

The member talks about this bill and all the good things it's going to do. I'm going to speak to the bill in a few minutes, and I think that there's another side to this bill. I think this bill needs some serious amendments in order to function and in order to accomplish the kinds of things that this bill is capable of doing. In many ways, the concept is a good concept.

The member thinks that it's going to operate just the way he would like it to operate. I'm sorry, but I think that the way it's currently construed, it's going to be quite a mess in the marketplace, and that's probably a bad thing. It can probably be straightened out fairly easily with a couple of amendments.

This government has been loath to allow amendments in most of their legislation. After four times of introduction, you'd think they'd get this one right, but I think they're still lacking in how this is going to work in the housing business.

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

1510

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure to stand up and speak to G14. I think I share some of the frustration of some of the other members in this House, when this has come before us before. I think that the good people from the co-op housing movement, who have been such strong advocates and voices for change in the province—I don't think they should have to keep coming back here to the House. Certainly, they've been patient, and they've been very vocal, as they should be, because there is room for improvement on the co-operative housing movement in the province of Ontario.

Just even during the by-election, I spent a lot of time in the existing co-ops that are in the Kitchener–Waterloo riding. Those are democratically organized housing situations. People have the democratic right to speak out and speak up for their rights within that setting. Quite honestly, they did a really good job during the by-election. They had some clear asks, and one of them, of course, has to do with their rights as tenants when they're in a situation to appeal.

But I also want to point out that there is a deficit on the maintenance of co-op housing in the province of Ontario. This is an investment that we have all made over

the years. Certainly, it slowed down a great deal in recent years, namely the last 10 to 15 years. That said, though, that investment needs to be protected and it needs to be upheld.

When I was walking around some of those units, you could see the wear and tear of years. So we need a serious conversation about how to strengthen the co-op movement, how to protect it and how to build it. When you are walking through a co-operative housing setting, you are very aware that the people in that setting are stronger because they're living in safe housing and they are supported by the community as a whole. So let's get this right.

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

Mr. Bill Mauro: I'm pleased to make a couple of minutes of remarks in response to the member from York West. I thank him for his comments.

Some of the other members who have spoken on the legislation have talked a little bit about their wish that there had been more money invested in this particular sector over the course of our eight or 10 years as government. It's important to mention, I think, that \$3 billion is not an insignificant amount of money to be invested over that period of time. That has brought some rebound, I would say, to this particular sector. It's not about throwing stones here this afternoon, but that \$3 billion, perhaps, to some who think it is too little, might not have appeared to be too little if in fact the period of time from 1995 to 2003 had seen some investment in the non-profit and social housing sector.

I've spoken on this bill a few times in the past and I've mentioned that I spent 15 years as a property manager in the social housing sector, and so I know a little bit about it. I remember very clearly being in my car with the radio on in 1995 when a very clearly articulated position was made by the government of the day that they were no longer going to be moving forward with these kinds of projects. So there was a large vacuum that had to be filled when we came to government in 2003. It wasn't easy. Not only did the government of the day in 1995 not want to build any more, but they also made a decision to spend money to cancel and get out of contracts that were already in the queue, where drawings had been drawn up, land had been purchased and the like.

Hon. Liz Sandals: They tried to do that in Guelph.

Mr. Bill Mauro: Yes, they did that in a few places; I remember very clearly. As I said, I was in the sector. So it was a very significant issue.

I'm only raising that in the context of this \$3 billion, to some people, seeming insignificant; I would say it's anything but. Perhaps it would have even looked more robust had there been investment in that eight-year period.

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

I'll return to the minister responsible for seniors.

Hon. Mario Sergio: Indeed, before they go, before they leave the House again, I would like to say to Harvey

Cooper and Dale that it's good to see you again here. As you can see, it's a process that is evolving; it's part of the democratic process. It has been a pleasure to have seen you over the years down here. They have been very persistent, Speaker, to make sure that indeed we bring this to a conclusion.

I'd like to say thanks to all the members who have joined in on the debate, from Halton, Kitchener-Waterloo, Thunder Bay-Atikokan and even all the other speakers who have spoken in support of this particular bill.

I know we're getting to the end of the debate, and the reason we are dealing with the bill is to indeed make sure that the changes that the co-op federation is looking for are to have a speedier system, a system that is more efficient and more manageable, a system that offers transparency for the federation and the tenants as well.

When we say that it's an expensive process, it's not only for the federation itself, but it's for those occupants, which sometimes may drag on for months and months and it's very expensive. Every case is between \$3,500 and \$5,000, and this can put a burden on all of them. When this happens, the situation in that particular building or housing accommodation tends to sour and things tend to get worse. So I hope that this will bring some much-sought-after relief to both the tenants and the federation.

I thank you, Speaker, and I thank the members for their time.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. Further debate?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I don't want for a moment to depreciate the importance of this bill. It's very important to a lot of people in Ontario. There are 125,000 Ontarians who live in 550 non-profit co-op housing, and it's important to them.

But this morning, there were almost 600,000 Ontarians who woke up without a job. This bill isn't going to put any of those 600,000 people back to work. Half the pulp and paper mills in northern Ontario are shut down, inoperative, because electricity prices have made life very difficult for them to operate. The agriculture industry has increased taxes with the eco taxes that have been slapped on them in excess of \$1,000 for huge, huge tractor tires—red tape. The horse racing industry has been devastated. We're not debating that. Companies are moving out of Ontario. Individuals are moving out of Ontario to western Canada in order to find jobs, and yet we're—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Yes. I have to ask the member for Halton how these remarks come back to Bill 14.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Okay. The member for Halton.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Yet here we are discussing Bill 14. Thank you, Speaker. I was just there. Here we are discussing Bill 14. As I said, there are 125,000 Ontarians in 550 non-profit housing units, and these people will

rely on this piece of legislation to maintain the way in which they enjoy their housing.

This is an important piece of legislation because it will change the cost of the complaint business from something in the order of \$3,000, maybe \$5,000, to take a complaint through the court system, down to \$45 for a filing fee, which will vastly change the way people conduct themselves within that co-op unit.

I think probably it's fairly obvious that when you change the price from \$3,000 to \$5,000 for a complaint down to \$45 for a complaint, you might just get a lot more complaints, and if that were to happen, the people who would be most affected are the tenants with legitimate concerns. A tenant with a legitimate concern will take forever to get that legitimate concern heard in front of the Landlord and Tenant Board. That's not fair. This government hasn't taken that into consideration in this bill, and that's the thing that has to be corrected with amendments.

1520

I don't believe the government is intending for this to happen, but that is exactly what's going to happen. When you reduce the price by that much, you're going to get a lot more complaints. Those complaints can't be heard on a timely basis, and that will tie up the Landlord and Tenant Board for months and months. That will make this piece of legislation very onerous on those tenants, especially on those tenants who have legitimate concerns about the way in which they live within the co-operative unit.

It could change the types of complaints that come before the board as well. You're going to get a lot more, shall we say, nuisance applicants who will be more willing to spend \$45 than they would be to spend the \$3,000 to \$5,000 of legal fees to go through the court system. That will have a very negative impact on tenants who have a legitimate concern to bring before the board.

Since 2004, this bill has been a priority for the co-op housing sector in Ontario. If they want to move these complaints out of the expensive court system into a tribunal system, that makes a great deal of sense. That's efficiency, it makes a great deal of sense, and it's something that we would be pleased to support.

As I say, the costs of settling it in the court system are extremely expensive, and the cost of settling it through the Landlord and Tenant Act will be much reduced, to the point where costs may not even be a factor when it comes to whether or not you're going to put in a complaint. It's estimated that this will save \$1 million annually by moving these cases to the Landlord and Tenant Board, and moving disputes out of the courts and into the board would make the resolution process much more efficient, cost-efficient and transparent for co-ops and their members, hopefully. Again, I have great concern that you're going to go from a high-cost system to a very low-cost system, and that is going to increase the volume significantly. I think that in the committee, this government and the members on that standing committee should look at this very carefully to ensure that the people of

Ontario, the tenants of Ontario, and the 125,000 Ontarians who live in co-operative housing are indeed getting the kind of service that this bill purports to give them.

I'm pleased to have two co-operative housings in my riding, one in Oakville and one in Burlington, and I can tell you they are marvellous organizations. On a cost-efficient basis, they provide a good place to live, a healthy place to live. They've got lots of services for the people who live there. Co-op community housing is something that is a good thing for the community to have and a good place for families to raise their children, in a co-operative atmosphere. Those are good places to raise families.

The kinds of things that the rent review board will look at are things like rent arrears, late payment for rent, wilful damage, illegal activities by tenants, interfering with other tenants' enjoyment of their property, such as noise, barbecues, those kinds of things. There are perhaps 300 cases heard every year in today's environment. I suspect that that 300 cases may increase significantly.

The things that can't be heard: I'm not sure why this would be, but it doesn't seem reasonable that the Landlord and Tenant Board wouldn't look at violations such as the no-pet provision or failure of a co-op member to perform his duties of clearing snow or cutting the lawn. I don't know how those duties would vary from the late payments, wilful damage, illegal activities etc. I think that perhaps the things the board would hear might also be expanded to allow the courts to be less active in this area.

Interruption.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: It's mine. It's a very bad thing. The former member from Kingston and the Islands didn't have a BlackBerry when he was here. It's a very bad thing when they go off, especially when you're speaking. Don't worry; I will get my BlackBerry back. Maybe the Sergeant-at-Arms will give it to me sometime in the near future.

Anyway, it's a bill that I think needs support. It's a bill that needs a few little adaptations to its conclusion to make it the successful bill I think it can be. I hope the government will be very supportive in making those amendments when this bill gets to committee.

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

Mr. Jonah Schein: I'm happy to speak to Bill 14 and to our friends in the co-operative housing movement. I do support the call of some of my colleagues who say, send your folks home, please. We've petitioned the assembly to give you the chance to go to your homes so that you don't have to sit and listen to this debate any longer.

But in case you haven't gotten the point at this time, we're absolutely supportive of co-operative housing. I used to live at the Esplanade in downtown Toronto. I remember that one of Michael Moore's movies years ago featured the Esplanade as one of the safest communities to live in. He walked and knocked on doors of some of the houses where I lived, and people had left their houses unlocked. He said this was symptomatic of Toronto and

Canada, where we have less crime than the United States. But he didn't quite realize that he was in a special community. He was in a co-operative housing community.

Speaker, it's clear that we support this particular bill. It's a small piece of the puzzle. The big puzzle here is the fact that housing in this city and this province is absolutely unaffordable. If you look at the studies of poverty in Toronto, it is focused outside the core. We are building a downtown core that is just for people who are either financially secure or somehow able to access a heck of a lot of credit, and that's unacceptable. It's not the kind of city I want to live in, and when I talk to constituents, it's not the kind of community they want to live in.

We have a government that has promised action on poverty reduction, and years later, we are absolutely stalled. I would like to know what members of the government say when constituents come into their office and talk about their precarious housing situations. When you have to turn around, as a constituency worker, and say, "There are 160,000 people ahead of you on the list for affordable housing," how is that acceptable? How is it that we don't have a real strategy in place here to build affordable housing in Ontario? Those are the questions I have today, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Bill Mauro: I'm pleased to have another couple of minutes to respond to the member from Halton. I thank him for his remarks.

He seemed to focus most of his 10 minutes on one particular item, that being his belief that by taking the appeals process from the court system and moving it to the landlord and tenant tribunal, we would end up with an avalanche of these sorts of issues before the Landlord and Tenant Board. I would say to him that we don't believe that will be the case. Of course, there is still an opportunity for people in co-operative housing to appeal decisions to their own board at the co-op to try to get some of this resolved before it ends up at the LTB. That has always been the case. That's not going to change.

Having said that, Speaker, why would the member oppose it, understanding, as he said in his own remarks, that right now if you're in a co-op situation your only recourse is to the courts and you have to pay \$3,000 to \$5,000 potentially—maybe less, maybe more—to try to have that situation resolved? How can you sit there and suggest for a second that it is okay to let this stand and be the only opportunity they have? If the member has a different suggestion, short of moving it to the LTB and out of the court system, that he thinks could land us in a place that would potentially address his concerns, I think we would all be interested in hearing it.

1530

This is, at some level, an access-to-justice issue as well, I would say. Why should somebody who is in a tenancy situation be faced with having to pay potentially \$3,000 to \$5,000 to have a wrong righted when somebody else in other tenancies in the province of Ontario

can go to the LTB? It's not that complicated, as I see it. As I said before, I'm not sure why it didn't happen before we became government or why, quite frankly, it's taken so long for us to get it through since we've been in government. But that's where we are now.

I know the member will have a couple of minutes to respond to the comments that he has heard from all of us. The member of the third party raised some questions as well and perhaps we'll get some answers in his two-minuter.

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

Mr. Bill Walker: It's always a pleasure to stand up and provide remarks to my esteemed colleague from Halton.

It's interesting, because one of the remarks that I picked up on is that he mentioned that the proposed dispute resolution system that will result as a matter of these changes will propose \$1 million in savings. I hope so; however, the actual numbers from the Liberals don't always add up.

In fact, I think there was a call coming in from the Auditor General. He just put out a report today, Speaker, and I think he wanted to let our esteemed colleague know that there was \$85 million more spent on this gas plant—that's never been built, by the way, nor produced a single kilowatt of power to help anybody in Ontario. I think he wanted to call and make sure he knew that, because just think of how many units could be provided for \$85 million, or the \$275 million that this whole plant cost at the end of the day without producing a kilowatt of power, Speaker. It's very interesting.

We need, as I said in my earlier communication, to be able to find some balance with this legislation. There's two sides to every story, as there always is. There are tenants; there are landlords. We need to ensure that both are consulted and not rush something out the door or out the gate like the horse racing fiasco that we've been facing, where they run it out the gate and then they try to come back and pretend they're going to save the whole industry. We need to always bring the thought process to the floor before we run these things out. We need to look at all sides of the legislation to ensure that it's going to serve all Ontarians' best interests.

The member from Thunder Bay referenced that he doesn't know why it's taken so long. Well, I'm not certain it's a real long time, 2007. It's kind of like the coal plants they've been going to close for the 10 years of their term and haven't got there yet. Maybe he could go back and ask his cabinet colleagues or the campaign team, perhaps, and maybe they could give him some inside answers, because I think that's where we're going to get the ones to the gas plants. And he can maybe then tell us when we can expect this legislation to go through.

We're relatively willing to support it with a lot of amendments in there so that it actually does serve the people that it's intended to.

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

Mr. Michael Prue: I listened intently, as I always do, to the member from Halton. He generally has a lot to say from his own perspective. But I want to compliment him today that his statements were very balanced. He was talking about the necessity of moving forward with this bill. He talked about some of the things he wanted to see. He got his jibes in, of course, about the government, as only he can do, and reminded them of their past failures.

I would hope, though, that in his two-minute opportunity at the end he will talk about not so much the failure of the government but the success or the potential success of this Legislature when we all appear to be united to act in concert on this particular bill. It would appear to me that if it does go to committee, and in all likelihood it will, that there will not be a great deal of tinkering done. This is a relatively minor bill that will only solve one of the problems that the co-ops are having, and that is the problem around adjudication. Where do you send problems? Do you send them to the courts or do you send them to a tribunal? Obviously, tribunals are always cheaper forms of justice, more accessible to those people who need them, tend to be faster, tend to be mediated and a number of other things. I ask him to consider that.

I feel some empathy for him as well. In my 12 years here I've only seen two or three members have their BlackBerry go off when they were speaking. I could tell he looked somewhat embarrassed but he need not be. It happens to all of us who bring our BlackBerrys into this place, one of the reasons that I have never, ever carried mine into this chamber in my life—and I hope I never do—because I wouldn't want that to happen to me. But good luck all the same. Get your BlackBerry back.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our time for questions and comments. I'll return to the member for Halton.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Yes, don't you love those BlackBerrys? Thank you to the member for Timiskaming-Cochrane for his comments, and the member from Thunder Bay-Atikokan. The member from Thunder Bay-Atikokan said that I'm opposed to this bill. I know, politically, that the Liberals would love it if we were opposed to this piece of legislation. We're not opposed to it. We support this piece of legislation—very firmly support it. It'll be good for the people that live in co-op housing.

We think it could be a better bill. If the Liberals are satisfied with a bill that's good enough, so be it; we think this bill could be better. With a few amendments, I think it could be an excellent bill, so I would encourage the members to look to the committee to make this a better bill than it is now. I think your former leader used to talk about how no one of us is as smart as all of us, and I think that's the whole point of bringing a bill out and having public discussion on it. I think you can always make a piece of legislation a little better, and that's what we're trying to do here, so we would look forward to that.

Of course, the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound was very astute. He realized that I was getting a phone

call from the Auditor General, and unfortunately I couldn't answer it, being engaged at the time.

The member for Beaches-East York, being a former mayor of East York, he's very astute in handling individuals and knowing how to be very discreet in his comments. Of course, in a minority government, strange things happen, and very often we're together with the NDP; the Conservatives and the NDP are working together in these minority situations, which, of course, is a very strange situation. The member for Beaches-East York talked about my comments, and I think he used the phrase "in his own perception." Of course that, being interpreted, would mean the totally opposite perception of what he might hold, but we might also—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Further debate. The member for Kitchener-Waterloo.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Boy, you see some strange things in this place sometimes, but actually, it's good to see the lesson about the BlackBerry. I've never seen that before, so it's good to note.

It is a pleasure to stand up and to speak about G14 and the co-op housing amendment. I think we have to go back in time and give some consideration. This is a reintroduction of G14 and to this amendment in particular, and I think we have to remember why we're revisiting it. Certainly, the House was prorogued on October 15, and that definitely set us back in time. It interrupted the work of this House; it interrupted fairly progressive pieces of—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I apologize to the member for Kitchener-Waterloo. I have been advised that the member for Kitchener-Waterloo has already spoken to this bill at second reading. We appreciate her interest in bringing more comments forward at this time, but perhaps at third reading we'll hear her next presentation, or in questions and comments.

Further debate?

Ms. Soo Wong: I will be sharing my time with the member from York South-Weston.

I rise today to speak on this very important piece of proposed legislation. I know every member in this House is concerned about affordable housing and accessible housing within our communities. Before I begin my remarks, besides recognizing Harvey Cooper, I wanted to recognize Simone Swail, because she also came to visit my riding of Scarborough-Agincourt, along with the residents in Bridletowne co-op. I also met with Bridle Manor Co-op housing—the residents in my riding of Scarborough-Agincourt.

Almost every speaker this afternoon focused on why this bill is necessary, but one thing I do want to echo is the fact that there is a certain section I know the opposition party does not support, with respect to the fee waiver protection—section 181.1. I just wanted to read the section of the bill; 181.1 states, "(1) The board may, in accordance with the rules, waive or defer all or part of a fee charged under section 181." I know the opposition members are concerned about these fee waivers, and we recognize the fact that this particular section was not in

the previous bill, Bill 65, because the minister is concerned about the low-income and vulnerable populations. If passed, the proposed legislation would authorize the Landlord and Tenant Board to waive or defer fees and charges in specific circumstances in accordance with its rules.

1540

The proposal also is consistent with the other type of cases in other tribunals in Ontario, Mr. Speaker. For example, the fee waiver program was implemented in Ontario courts in 2004, folks. So over 10 years ago we in Ontario already had fee waiver programs. So for the opposition party to say they are concerned about this section is inconsistent, because it already happens in other tribunals. A similar provision already exists in two other Ontario tribunals; for example, the Ontario Municipal Board since 1990, and the Assessment Review Board since 2006. So the fee waiver program that's been proposed in the Bill 14 will be consistent with other boards. Furthermore, the fee waivers are intended to help individuals with low income, so the allegation or suggestion of abuse is not accurate.

The other piece is that the Landlord and Tenant Board will be working in consultation with the Ministry of the Attorney General. They will set up criteria to determine what kind of fees will be waived, the eligibility, and it will mirror other programs that already exist, Mr. Speaker. So for the opposition party to say they do not support this particular section of the bill—they need to be reminded that other tribunals, other existing courts, already have this fee waiver.

The other piece why I as a member of this House support the bill is because of the efficiency, the cost-effectiveness and the transparency. Because at the end of the day we're all here for one purpose: to support, to protect and to help Ontarians across Ontario.

My riding of Scarborough–Agincourt is not the only riding with co-operative housing. I know, having grown up in downtown Toronto—I grew up with many good friends and had played with classmates at Bain Co-op, one of the oldest co-ops in the city; and I had the pleasure of representing that area when I was a young school board trustee.

At the end of the day, we're all here for one purpose: to improve and protect Ontario, and in this particular case to help to streamline and help the dispute mechanism, and not to further burden the court system on this particular matter.

I'm going to turn my remaining time to the member from York South–Weston.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I'm very pleased to rise and to express and add my support for Bill 14, the Non-profit Housing Co-operatives Statute Law Amendment Act, 2013. We've been talking about this bill for a long time, and I can't wait for it to become law, like many of us here.

The passage of this bill is extremely important to a good number of my constituents who live in co-ops. As we've heard from many of the other members here in the

House, this bill would make tenure dispute resolution for co-op residents more efficient, cost-effective and transparent.

I think that this needs to be passed into law as soon as possible to make a difference—a real difference—for many residents of the co-op complexes across our province. It would help many people across our province, and in my riding of York South–Weston, a riding that shares quite a long history with co-ops.

Actually, the first co-op building in the city of Toronto was right in York South–Weston. That first co-operative complex was and is known as Beech Hall. In the 1970s, the Toronto borough of York had decided to phase out the seniors' residence called Beech Hall. That was a subsidized complex for seniors, and they wanted to make way for a new development. The residents were all in their eighties and their nineties and they were asked to vacate the premises. The seniors didn't want to leave their homes. They really had a determined struggle to save their homes, with their politicians at the time. The history has been documented in a documentary, *The Battle of Beech Hall*, which I encourage you to watch sometime. It's quite entertaining to see how these seniors were determined and fought the establishment at the time to save their home. It became a real political hot issue, and you had politicians in favour of the new development and politicians that were lined up against that. I recall, I believe, a young councillor at the time, John Nunziata, sort of placing himself in front of the bulldozers that were going to demolish the homes. It was quite the story at the time.

Needless to say, the residents were able to save their homes. Beech Hall is alive and well in the riding of York South–Weston. I know that the residents of this complex and the others that live in co-ops in my riding would really benefit from this bill passing into law. We want to see this happen as soon as possible, because it will make a difference.

Co-operative housing, as you know, plays a really important role in affordable housing in the province of Ontario, and there are certain ridings such as mine where that is important to a great number of people. It's only fair that residents of co-ops would have most of the same protections and benefits available to landlords and tenants, including the access to mediation services. As you know, right now most disputes go through the courts, and that is costly; it's very time-consuming. Most of the time, the residents that live in a co-op don't even have those means. I'm also pleased that now the proposed legislation would allow the LTB to waive or defer the fees that it charges in specific circumstances and in accordance with its rules.

I can only say that this proposal would bring consistency to how these types of cases are treated at other Ontario tribunals, such as the Ontario Municipal Board, as well as in the courts.

I'm very pleased that our government is supporting the co-op sector. I do want to mention, in particular, Harvey Cooper, who I've met with many times. I want to com-

mend all of you for being here today and for advocating in favour of the co-ops, and the residents especially. It's the people that are important; it's not the buildings, as we know. We're here for the people, to make a difference in their lives, to improve their life. That is our role as politicians, but we also have to thank you for bringing certain particulars to our attention and to sort of heed the way to the changes that are needed.

I want to reiterate my support for this bill. I can't wait for it to be passed into law, and I hope that with the help of all my colleagues here, we can do that in a very expedient frame of time.

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

Mr. Jim McDonnell: I'm pleased to rise to offer comments on the two members from Scarborough–Agincourt and York South–Weston.

It's interesting. We're sitting here talking about a government promise made in the 2003 election, and after 10 years, we're seeing some action on it. I'm not sure how serious they are. We've seen it three times already, and it's now the third time we're seeing it, so it's coming back. This is a bill that generally has support from all three parties, so it just makes you wonder if they'll get the will to get this finally through.

We have to remember that co-operative housing is a very important component. It has the potential to solve or to be part of a solution that can look after some of the costly housing options that are in this province.

As I said previously, there's a co-operative housing group in my riding that affords very affordable housing to the residents, to the point that it's fully subscribed and they're looking now at making it more senior-accessible, as the tenants are getting older and interested in not moving out.

1550

We want to make sure we do this right, though. We're looking at saving the residents money on a dispute resolution. But you must remember that the landlords in this case are actually the tenants themselves. It is a co-operative so you want to make sure that it's not only an economic solution but it's actually a solution that works. We're looking at increasing the number of complaints because of the drop in price substantially. We want to make sure the resolution—the tribunal actually has the resources to hear the complaints in a timely manner. We're waiting to see, actually, as we move through committee to make some of these changes that are important.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: Two minutes? I'm good for two minutes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's a pleasure to get up and talk about G14. I could talk for about 10 minutes or 20 minutes for affordable housing and for co-op, because it's such an important issue. Housing—safe, affordable housing—is one of the key factors in a strong economy. It's a key factor in social justice; it's a key factor in the safety of our communities.

As I said already, this is a reintroduction. Prorogation interrupted the original piece of legislation, but we're back at it. I think, actually, the very fact that we all agree this is needed—this dispute resolution process needs to be clarified and needs attention. I would agree with the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan that this actually is a matter of access to justice, and it's been a long time coming.

I think if you look back, for the last nine years, the co-operative housing sector has been lobbying the provincial government to move co-op evictions out of the courts and use the existing infrastructure of the tribunal system used by other non-profit housing providers and private landlords. This has been a long time coming. I don't think there's anybody who is going to dispute that. And certainly, I think this debate gives us all an opportunity to talk about the need for real targets on the affordable housing portfolio. I definitely think that municipalities that have weighed in as well, both at AMO and FCM, on the need for housing infrastructure investment—this is a long-standing issue at that level, as well. I look forward to touching on some other key areas as the afternoon progresses.

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

Hon. Mario Sergio: Just a few comments on the submission by the members from Scarborough–Agincourt and York South–Weston, two champions of the people they represent. I know both areas, Scarborough–Agincourt and York South–Weston. I know these two particular areas very well. I know the extremely important work and dedication they bring to those two communities as the elected members.

I share with them sometimes, when we are in a very jovial mood, and we say who has got what in a particular area. I have a hard time convincing them that I have the most seniors and more rental units of any other area in Metro Toronto. I have to defend myself because the member from Scarborough–Agincourt and member from York South–Weston say, "No, we have the largest number of seniors and low-income people." So I know the kind of work they do day in and day out, and I'm very pleased to see that they are supporting this bill today.

We have heard that the bill should be receiving some more amendments. We welcome some more amendments when the bill travels to the committee level. The fact that we started to deal with this bill in 2004 doesn't mean that we have to be prisoners of the past and not continue to act on it. I think we are almost there.

The people representing all the co-op federations are anxious to see that this bill comes to an end. It's very important to them. It's important to the residents of all co-operative housing in our province, and we have a lot of them. There are some 125,000 people who are being accommodated by this particular form of housing, and I think that it's wonderful to see that it's done, Speaker. I thank you for your time.

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

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'm interested in listening to the debate that's gone on so far. I was very disappointed that the member for Kitchener–Waterloo didn't get to speak longer but apparently those are the rules of the House. I was looking forward to doing a hit on the member from Kitchener–Waterloo; however, that's not going to happen.

How long do we have to bring a bill back before it gets passed?

Interjection: Once, twice, sold.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Sold. Was it two or three times? I don't know.

In 2004, this was first introduced—just incredible. But I guess when you have a government that's embroiled in turmoil for 10 years it's difficult to get these things through. Because you have to debate scandals, you have to debate Ornge, you have to debate—now we're into gas plants—so it's just incredible how slow this process has been. I'm sure it is important to the people of Ontario and it's important to our parties because we all agree on this thing. We all agree on this thing. Now this government has been more concerned with putting people out of work than getting on with this type of legislation. I look at the horse racing industry and how that's going downhill, and it was supported by our socialist friends to the left here.

Let's get this thing passed. Let's get on with some important legislation and see if we can get Ontario back to work. That's really what I'm interested in. I'm interested in my riding in rural Ontario and to get industry going back there, and get this province cooking on all eight cylinders, which it hasn't been doing for quite a few years now.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Scarborough–Agincourt has two minutes to respond.

Ms. Soo Wong: I want to thank the members from York South–Weston, Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, Kitchener–Waterloo, the minister responsible for seniors and Perth–Wellington.

Mr. Speaker, the core of this Bill 14 focuses on dispute resolution. Yes, we recognize across Ontario the issue of affordable housing. The affordable housing issue cannot be done singly in the province of Ontario; we need to do it in partnership with our federal partners as well as our municipal partners.

The reason why this bill is before the House is because we have expressed concern and commitment—it sounds like, from all three parties—to help move along dealing with the whole issue of dispute resolution.

So I'm very, very pleased to add my voice, and hopefully today before we adjourn the House we will bring this particular piece of proposed legislation to a committee so that committee's work can be further enhanced in going through clause-by-clause to improve the bill.

I know every member of this House does support, somehow, dealing with the issue of fee waivers. As much as the opposition party does not agree, the fee waiver is not a concern for them but the reality is every riding has low-income residents, and we need to find every way to support them. The fact that we already have tribunals that

have been supported with regard to fee waivers, so to say that in this particular legislation the fee waiver is not important and that you will not support that section of the bill, is not accurate. We need to encourage everyone that before we adjourn today to bring this entire bill to committee so that the good folks from co-op housing do not have to come back how many times, how many months? Let's move on and let's get this work done.

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

Mr. Bill Walker: Many people in the House, and definitely many people at home, may not know that I'm an amateur auctioneer. You know, it's customary when you're getting near the end of selling an item that you typically say, "Going once, going twice" and you drop the hammer and say, "Sold."

In this case, the "going once" was 2007. The "going twice" was last session just before the Liberals prorogued this House for four long months so that nothing got done. And today, Speaker, we're here debating it again. I'm hopeful that we can get to the "sold" and move this one off the docket. We've got to get it off the docket, Speaker. We need to be talking about other things that are very important. This one is important, but it could have been done. There were three parties; all agreed the last time. Why are we continuing to bring this back to the House to debate it yet again when all three parties are agreeing? Speaker, I think it's because they don't really want to talk about the boondoggles of their 10-year tenure, things like the gas plants, things like eHealth, things like the billions of dollars that aren't going to front-line health care, to cancer research and treatment, to schools—

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Expensive energy.

1600

Mr. Bill Walker: Yes, expensive energy is another one of those boondoggles that we continually fight.

Speaker, it's shameful that we've had to come back and do this all over again when it could truly be there. It's shameful because we're not serving the people who truly need it. Those people who need co-op housing are being left in the lurch because this government chooses not to move legislation through when they could. They chose very specifically to prorogue this House when this legislation could have been passed and expedited through.

I almost want to say that this one should be called the patience of Job act, because it has been since 2007—

Interjection: The 2003 election.

Mr. Bill Walker: It was a 2003 election promise; you're correct.

And we don't want to get on to the health tax—"I will not raise taxes. I will not raise the health care tax. I will not waste money on gas plants"—but I digress.

The question I ask is, why has it taken so long to get this bill rolling? The Liberals are the only group that can answer that in this House. Perhaps they've been sidetracked, but that doesn't matter. If they had the will, they still could have moved this through the House. We again have all-party support. We want to ensure that this

legislation goes through, because they're purporting their numbers—and I know it's tough to believe a Liberal number. They could purport, Speaker—a new Speaker. Congratulations, Mr. Garfield.

They purport a million-dollar savings, just in the litigation costs that could be saved. The Auditor General brought out a report today that brought up an \$85-million different answer, compared to a number that they put out, Speaker—so I'm hopeful that in this case, it will. But I think at the end of the day, what we want to ensure is if there truly is a million dollars saved, it goes back into housing, co-op housing; not into paying more lawyers to defend their gas plant scandals—because we're already hearing about \$600-an-hour lawyers to try to defend them in that boondoggle.

We need to ensure that we move this forward as quickly as we can. We want those disputes to get outside of the courts so that those truly needy people can get their issues in front of the courts. But we also need balance in this bill. We need to ensure that everyone is consulted. The tenants need to have their say, the landlords need to have their say so that it's balanced legislation, so that we're truly serving all of the people of Ontario.

The concern—and there's no detail in yet another one of the bills that they've put in front of us—is about how we will actually manage potential nuisance claims, because now what they've opened up the door to is, anyone who's disgruntled can virtually run through the door and hold up those courts, which again negates the people who truly do have big issues that need to be resolved and things that are going to impact their lives right off the bat. So we need to ensure that that happens.

Landlords like my constituent Ron Steffler in the great riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound struggle to collect back rent and to evict bad tenants. That's not fair because, in essence, someone who's not prepared to agree to the terms and conditions and honour those—Speaker, that's just not right. It's a fundamental tenet of what we in Ontario believe in. You sign an agreement; you hold on to that agreement.

In this case, what we need to ensure is that someone like Mr. Steffler and his wife, who have owned a small seven-unit apartment for 12 years, home to mostly senior residents, which they've run with very little problem until recently—one of their newer tenants owes six months in back rent.

Mr. Steffler writes:

“We followed the letter of law with his notice to move out, but we are now being told that we have to spend more money to have him evicted ... and pay a lawyer to do paperwork for us. We are told that we have to carry him at our expense until he is evicted. How fair is that?” They've done everything right.

“Please do not tell us to take him to Small Claims Court because that system does not work here in Ontario. Just another thing that should be looked at and changes made.

“Minister, where are our rights as landlords? This is a seniors' building and yes, we should have known better than to [allow this tenant in].

“Why do we have no rights? We work hard to give our senior tenants everything they need, and now they are threatening to move out because of this [one bad tenant].” That's not right either, Speaker.

“Why do we have to keep spending money to have this [bad tenant] removed? We own this building and yet we have no rights. We do all the repairs and pay all the bills and yet we have no rights. When will this minister look into this matter and make changes to also protect the landlords?

“We keep losing our seniors to low-cost housing that the taxes from this apartment help to run and yet we cannot qualify to have one or two of our units available for low-cost housing. None of the previous ministers hear our plea ... or perhaps they just don't care!

“Please look into the Landlord and Tenant Act and make necessary changes to help us.

“Thank you for any help that you can give.”

Speaker, as I said earlier, it needs balance. You need both sides to come to the table and ensure that it's going to serve both sides of this matter. You need tenants who are going to respect and uphold the law of the land and honour an agreement that they've signed and you need the tenants to have the ability to hold them to that. You need tenants that can hold the landlord if they're not providing the proper services to them as well.

The Ainslie Wood co-op in the great riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound was built in the late 1980s. This was the decade when most of the co-op construction was happening across Canada. Interestingly, this building wave coincided with the wave of baby boomers who were moving into adulthood and beginning to raise families. The homes in the Ainslie Wood Housing Co-Op in Owen Sound are a little more comfortable, thanks to the federal government's economic stimulus program—\$384,000 from the \$1 billion announced for the social housing renovation and retrofit fund was spent on new siding and replacement windows at the 32 units to make them more energy-efficient. They're going to need that energy efficiency because under that Liberal government, energy rates will be 5% more, and they'll triple over their 10-year tenure. It's unbelievable and it's certainly unfair to those people that are in places like co-op housing and can't afford these exorbitant and continually increasing rates.

The complex also includes a small playground and a community garden. We need to support these kinds of programs, but we need to do it in a fair and balanced manner. Again, if I can go back to my earlier comments, this could have already been enacted and could already be helping those people who have the need in co-op housing. Yet, we sit here today and we continue to debate, ad nauseam, almost, on this bill. I think again it really is so that they don't have to dispute the real issues that they've created in this province and where they take us.

This bill was introduced by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Kathleen Wynne, who is now our Premier. However, it fell victim to Dalton McGuinty's prorogation. You would have thought that this Premier,

since she introduced it, would have stepped up and said to her cabinet and to her caucus, "We're expediting this. This needs to get enacted and it needs to do it without any of this frivolous debate. Let's move on from this." But it didn't happen.

The delay has caused co-op members potentially hundreds of thousands of dollars in unnecessary court costs as the rules the bill was intended to fix remain in place. So, if they're so concerned about all these needs of the people in lineups, why aren't they expediting this? Why is this not moving through? Why are they purposely bringing it back here to have to be debated for the entire course? They have the ability, as you know, that they could have expedited this and had it already into place.

Contrary to the Premier's stated desire to work with the opposition, this new bill contains an unnecessary amendment that will open the floodgates to potentially nuisance applications to the Landlord and Tenant Board, causing turmoil in a system that's already horrendously backlogged. This amendment will harm both landlords and tenants as it will further hamper the Landlord and Tenant Board's ability to hear cases in a timely manner.

We need to ensure that these pieces of legislation are brought to the table and that they're thought well out before. If they'd have consulted us—there are a number of issues that I'm dealing with in my riding—one, most recently, the commercial native fishing agreement. They've rammed it out, with no consultation from anyone else in the room—any stakeholders. They've done this with the horse racing agreement. They've done this with the Green Energy Act. We're supposed to—the 107 of us—work on behalf of all the collective population of Ontario. If they'd just let us into the room, we would gladly work with them. We would gladly come to the table and offer differing points of view so that there could actually be good legislation tabled and we wouldn't have to be continually coming back and re-addressing everything and spending all of this time in waste and duplication of effort. Just think of all the money that could be going to co-op housing if we just did things the right way the first time, if we weren't creating boondoggles that we had to hire high-priced lawyers for, if we weren't spending a third of our budget almost on the debt financing cost over their 10-year tenure of spend, spend, spend. Just think of the co-op housing. Just think of the hospitals we could have. Think of the cancer care we could have. Think of the front-line resources for our teachers and our greatest asset, our students, those pages that sit in front of you, Speaker, who deserve better. They deserve more.

This is a bill that is necessary; absolutely. With some amendments, I believe our caucus is prepared to certainly support it, but it does need amendments. We should have done it for the first time back in 2007 and it should have already been out of here.

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: I want to welcome our guests here again today from the co-op housing federation. I'm sorry that you need to be here again.

The bill that we were going to be debating today changed about three times in the last 24 hours. When I got here this morning, it was okay. So it's the second reading or third reading, and I hope I don't have to speak to it again for an hour.

1610

This is a small change in the way that evictions are dealt with in the courts. We've been talking about this bill probably for 18 or 19 hours now. It's an important issue, certainly to the tenants and to the co-op housing federation, because it's going to save a whole lot of money in going through the courts. But I think that we really should move along and get this passed, and then we should start dealing with the real issues of housing in this province: the fact that there are almost 200,000 files, people, families sitting on a wait-list, the fact that we need to have bills introduced to deal with vacancy decontrol and inclusionary zoning, sustainable funding and multi-year funding.

I did a round table last week in Kitchener—or in London, sorry. I met with 13 or 14 people from various areas of housing. They shared the fact that the funding isn't sustainable—it isn't for a long enough period of time for them to plan—and that there needs to be a lot more flexibility in the funding model, because we cannot use a cookie-cutter approach to housing programs that meet the needs of each community. So they certainly asked me to bring that back to the government when they're getting into their budget and dealing with housing programs that will be coming forward for the next fiscal year.

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

Hon. Mario Sergio: Just a few comments on the remarks by the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound: Of course, those are his remarks. I totally don't agree with them, but they are his remarks, and we have to respect that.

I think we are dealing with a bill that, if finally approved, will go a long way in solving some of the problems that co-op housing and their residents, tenants, have been dealing with for a long time. It has taken a long time, Speaker. But as I said before, we should not be prisoners of the past. I think we should move on, look ahead and see how we can alleviate some of the difficulties that are existing presently.

When we speak about housing, let me say that I've been here perhaps longer than most members, and I have to say that I have been very fortunate to have been a PA to two or three ministers responsible for housing, and I know what it has gone through with this government and past governments and also in dealing with the federal government. We should not—absolutely not, Speaker—as individual members of this House, let the federal government go scot-free when it comes to this important sector in our society, such as housing, when they threaten time after time to get completely out of supporting housing. As we all know very well in this House, Speaker, this is such an important area in our social life here that

we cannot support it, either locally, municipally, provincially or federally, unless there is some help from all sides.

So I do hope that in our submission, Speaker, we could always keep this present: that housing is one of those very important aspects in our society, and it needs co-operation from all levels of government as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Thank you, Speaker, for allowing me to speak. The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, as one of the comments I heard, is a great auctioneer. I’ve seen him in action, and he’s typically—I think we’re going to have to move him east there. There will be a job in the east, as we look for new jobs.

As I said before, it’s interesting to hear about the urgency to pass this bill, a bill that was a promise in 2003. It’s the fourth time it’s coming before us. I don’t see a lot of interest today; I don’t see quorum here again. We called quorum once, and we can’t get enough people from the government to even listen to the comments that are being made. I guess they’re all out putting a spin on the Auditor General’s report today, which talked about how, even though they knew the cost was more than what they were telling the public, they clearly stuck to their guns and followed through on the—I can’t say the word “misleading,” but not being forthright with some of the information coming through. This is money that we’re seeing the people of Ontario having to pay—hard-earned tax money squandered. We see legal advice being ignored. I guess it’s hard to get an agreement with somebody when the cost looks like it’s around \$7 million and the government hands you \$15 million. It would be hard to say no to something like that, but maybe it shows some of the negotiating skills this government actually has, or maybe just what they feel about taxpayers’ money. They’re willing to pay double what the guy is asking to get a quick deal.

It’s time to start putting some of the issues before this province that people really care about. As an auctioneer might say, “Going, going, gone.” Just take the deal and be happy with it.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: When we look back at some of the comments that have been mentioned today—the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound points out that he is an auctioneer. Quite honestly, that explains a lot on several levels, but the comments around working together to hold the federal government to account for their true lack of leadership on the housing portfolio—I think this is something we should all take a leadership role in.

Perhaps that’s one of the good things about this debate. In some respects, we’re getting up and we’ve made a lot of the same comments before. But I think we have to actually approach the issue of affordable housing and look at it through an economic lens, look at it through a social justice lens and certainly through an access-to-justice lens. I think when we look at what this

actual amendment will do—because I do think it is important, when you are having a debate, that you should actually talk about what the amendment is actually about.

The court system—and this is why we’re here today—is so expensive for co-op members who, in most cases, need to use a lawyer, and if they don’t qualify for legal aid, they likely won’t have the financial resources to contest an eviction. The tribunal system would be much fairer to members facing eviction. Cases would be decided faster, and the member would only be evicted if the landlord or the tenant board found that the facts justified an eviction.

The context is that for nine years the co-op housing movement has been asking for some action. This amendment actually does something good, so let’s work together to make it stronger.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our time for questions and comments. We return to the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

Mr. Bill Walker: I’d like to thank all those that spoke, especially the member from Kitchener–Waterloo. I would like to get a bit more detail on the first comment she made, but we know this is question period, not answer period, so we’ll do that on a sidebar. I think she’s getting her 10 minutes in, and it’s ironic, because I wanted to hit on her and she ended up hitting on me, so we’ll just leave it there for now.

I thank the member from Welland, and I’m resolute with her on this issue: She does not want to have this discussion ongoing over and over and over again—talk about Groundhog Day. Without a shadow of a doubt, none of us want to be here talking about this; this could already be in there.

I appreciate the remarks of the minister responsible for seniors. I think the greatest thing he could do is help the actual seniors he’s representing; he could expedite this through. He tried to make a bit of a slam at our federal colleagues, but I have to say that they put \$384,000 into my riding to actually help with co-op housing. I’m not certain what he can stand up and say they have done on behalf of seniors and co-op housing in my riding, other than wait and make sure we come back three times for this bill.

The member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry—a very astute man in his remarks—brings something to light: The Liberals talk about wanting to do this with urgency. It’s a failed election promise from 2003. Then they brought it to the floor in 2004 and couldn’t get the job done. What is going on here? Are they incompetent, or are they just not wanting to do it? We have to ask that question. They brought it back last year, but then things got a little bit grey; there was a bit of vapour in the air, I think, and they decided to prorogue the House.

They could have had this all done and through, helping people in co-op housing, but they choose not to do it because they don’t want us debating things in this House like the gas plant fiasco, the eHealth boondoggle, the Ornge scandal and the Green Energy Act that’s an

absolutely abysmal experiment. They're trying to spin the AG's report today; he's come out already and said how much money has been wasted. We can't afford any more of this Liberal nonsense.

1620

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

Ms. Sarah Campbell: It's a pleasure to stand and speak on this bill. Bill 14 amends the Residential Tenancies Act and Co-operative Corporations Act to move certain co-op tenure disputes—like arrears, late rent payments and willful damage—from the courts to the Landlord and Tenant Board. I recognize that affordable housing is an issue that's faced by people all across this province, and co-operative housing is a very small subsection of that issue. It's a major concern in the GTA and southern Ontario, but it's not so much of an issue where I live in northwestern Ontario. Part of my job as the member for Kenora–Rainy River is to bring the perspective of Kenora–Rainy River to this debate, so what I will be focusing on are some of the shortcomings of this bill.

Some of the issues that this bill really doesn't affect are: access to affordable housing, the hidden costs associated with affordable housing such as hydro, some of the renovations to houses that are owned by the working poor, First Nations access to housing, and homelessness funding. These are all really big issues in Kenora–Rainy River.

When it comes to the lack of affordable housing, we—and when I say “we,” I mean the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs—recently held some pre-budget consultation meetings in Thunder Bay. At that one meeting—it's singular—there were a number of presenters who came and brought some of the stories and issues that are being faced by people in the northwest. One of the issues that was raised is that there have been no new houses built—affordable housing, subsidized housing—in Thunder Bay in the last 20 years. Right now, their waiting list is at 1,420, and that is for a population of about 110,000 people. If you can imagine, 26% of the people who are on that waiting list are on the urgent wait-list, and those are people who are in dire need of affordable housing right now. This bill doesn't do anything to help those people. I venture to say that this is probably the single biggest issue for those families and those individuals who are on that waiting list. When you don't have access to safe and affordable housing, it makes it very difficult to pull yourself out of poverty. It's difficult to get a job and to maintain that job, and this bill doesn't do anything to help those folks.

The other thing that this bill doesn't do is help with the hidden costs that are associated with affordable housing. As I mentioned, in the northwest probably the single biggest cost associated with affordable housing is that of our electricity rates. It's not uncommon for people who are on social assistance or people who are the beneficiaries of the maximum subsidy for subsidized housing to pay about \$85 rent per month, but it's also not

uncommon for those people who are paying \$85 a month rent to pay upwards of \$1,000 a month for their hydro bill. How does that balance out? How is that any real savings? When you look at it in other communities across Ontario, they might be paying \$1,000 for their rent, but they're only paying about \$85 for their electricity bill.

The other thing I need to mention about that is, in the northwest, electricity is an essential. Not surprisingly, it's colder in the northwest. When I come down to Toronto to participate in the House proceedings, I often joke that it's t-shirt weather down here. That's because I'm used to a colder climate at home, where in the winter it's anywhere between minus 20 to minus 45. So it's a joke that it's the tropics down here.

Interjection.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Yes, but we don't get a break on our hydro. Like I said, that's why there are a lot of people who are paying about \$1,000 a month.

The other thing is, for the subsidized housing that we do have, a lot of it was built quickly, it was built cheaply and it was built a number of years ago—30 or 40 years ago. We have units that are poorly insulated. We have units that are heated with electric heat. Again, it's no surprise that those electricity bills are so high.

The other thing I'd like to talk about that this bill doesn't cover is, as I said, the hidden costs associated—or I should say, some of the costs that are associated with houses that are owned by the working poor. This is something that I've seen firsthand.

There was one woman who came to me, probably about three years ago now, when I worked for the former MPP. She was a woman who worked at Tim Hortons. She worked every single day. I believe she walked across town to go to her job. She had the misfortune of having her furnace die in the middle of winter. She had a tremendously difficult time trying to access the funds that were necessary to fix this furnace. She had to rely on space heaters. She lived in a mobile home, and so this was obviously a huge safety risk, but also she had to rely on the one program that really existed out there to help her, and that was the CMHC one. She found that she made about—I think it was \$300 more than what the cut-off was. She made just over \$20,000. This is a woman who, as I said, got up every day, she worked, she did everything that she could to take care of herself, but it still wasn't enough. And this bill doesn't do anything to help those people who are struggling.

The other thing that this bill doesn't cover: It doesn't help First Nations people who, in the north, are struggling to access even just basic housing. About a year ago, we heard about the problems that are experienced by the people who live in the community of Attawapiskat. One of the things I've been trying to communicate to people is that Attawapiskat isn't a unique situation. I have 22 remote First Nation communities in my riding and I've got about 22 Attawapiskats. These are communities that are far removed. The only way into the community is by plane. There is a very short winter road season when the communities do try to bring in the resources, but still,

there's just so much need. We've got overcrowding. We've got houses in the more northern part of my riding, where the temperatures can dip below minus 50, that don't have doors. They have tarps for doors. They don't have windows. You have, as I said, multiple families living in one residence. It's completely inhumane. We have an opportunity to address some of these issues and we're not. We're not addressing these issues.

The last issue I wanted to talk about that isn't covered by this bill is homelessness funding. In the last provincial budget, there was a decision to combine homelessness with housing, so the funding for emergency shelters is now coming through housing instead of Ontario Works. And in the Kenora district, the money that they received was divided into three separate homelessness shelters. There was Sioux Lookout's Out of the Cold shelter, the Red Lake shelter and the Kenora shelter.

In Sioux Lookout's case, they received \$87,000, and this is down from receiving \$102,000 in per diems in 2012. This is a shortfall of \$15,000. The other shortfall is, there was an HPI grant. At the height of it, they received \$40,000, but last year they received \$30,000. This year, they've only received \$26,000. So again, this is a shortfall of \$15,000. They have a total operating shortfall of \$30,000. And again, in Sioux Lookout, 99% of the clients are aboriginal, so there's a lot of need.

I'm under no illusion that there are endless amounts of money out there. I know that there isn't. But it's about making strategic investments because the people of our province are the future of our province, and we need to make sure that everybody has a level playing field and everybody is able to contribute and live their lives to the fullest extent. I would like to see us move our focus, shift our focus, to make these investments in people, because I know that people get that much back and more. It's just a matter of shifting those priorities. It's a matter of not spending money on all of these scandals. I know we can do it. We do have the power to solve our problems.

1630

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

M. Phil McNeely: Je suis content d'avoir la chance aujourd'hui de parler sur la Loi modifiant la Loi sur les sociétés coopératives et la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation en ce qui concerne les coopératives de logement sans but lucratif et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois. C'est le projet de loi 14.

J'ai parlé en anglais il y a quelques semaines en support de la loi. Je pense que c'est très important. Je suis content d'avoir la Fédération de l'habitation coopérative du Canada ici, M. Dale Reagan, M. Harvey Cooper et d'autres personnes qui sont ici pour supporter la loi.

On est prêt à la passer. On est prêt à faciliter d'avoir la loi en place. C'est le temps d'arrêter de parler comme la loi est si importante, mais on voit qu'il n'y a rien de fait. On continue de parler et continue de parler.

C'est très important pour bâtir des maisons abordables en Ontario. C'est quelque chose qu'on devrait supporter. C'est quelque chose qui devrait passer ici à la Chambre, aller en comité et être loi.

Alors, c'est le temps de finir de parler sur ça. Si les oppositions sont en faveur de la loi, on devrait la passer. On devrait faire les démarches nécessaires pour qu'eux autres puissent continuer le bon ouvrage qu'ils font en Ontario avec les habitations coopératives.

Alors, on devrait être ensemble, on devrait tous supporter ça. On devrait passer la loi et arrêter de parler de tous les efforts à faire. Si c'est important pour vous, à l'opposition, c'est important pour nous autres. C'est très important au monde qui sont ici depuis quelque jours et qui voient en l'acte quelque chose qui peut servir beaucoup de monde avec des habitations coopératives au Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Simcoe North.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm pleased to make a few comments on the member from Kenora-Rainy River and her comments on Bill 14. I think one of the things that was really important, if you listened carefully to her comments, is the fact that she actually mentioned the difference, and one size doesn't fit all here in the province of Ontario. I know I've been in her riding a few times and I understand that—I think she mentioned in her comments that there were something like 22 remote First Nations in that particular riding. The riding is bigger than a lot of European countries. In fact, I understand it's bigger than Labrador and Newfoundland combined, that riding itself. So it's a huge job being the representative there.

But when you talk about things like housing, I mean, it's so remote from what other people expect in affordable housing or co-operative housing. I can't imagine there being a co-operative housing project in any one of the 22 remote First Nations communities.

So she brings her comments, and maybe this would go through the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, though, but these are the kinds of things that you always have to kind of weigh in on. When this bill goes off to committee in a couple of days' time or whenever we finish debating it, it will be interesting to see if we can get some of those comments back. In the end, it's all Ontario. It all fits into our planning and our affordable housing.

We heard some comments today about the federal government. I know there's pressure on the federal government to have a national housing strategy. Overall, I think it's important that we always keep in mind what we see in the GTA or maybe in southern Ontario or central Ontario is not really what fits all of the province.

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: I want to thank the member from Kenora-Rainy River as well for highlighting the challenges that she faces in that riding and that her constituents face.

I had an opportunity in January to go to Thunder Bay. I haven't spent a lot of time in the north, but it was minus 48 the day that I was in Thunder Bay, and I had to go and buy—coming from southern Niagara—boots, a toque and some gloves. I was very ill-prepared for the weather

there. Housing, hydro and heat—those issues are of great importance to people who live in the north.

The vacancy rate, I was told when I was there in Thunder Bay, was less than 1%. Although there were some jobs on the books—some manufacturing; some of the industries had some jobs—there was nowhere for anybody to live once they got there. So it is a big problem for them.

I was told by people at the round table on housing that there's a great need there for more detox beds in their community, that many people with substance abuse problems are recycling through the hospital and then back out into the community. Because there isn't enough housing and there are no housing supports available to assist them if they even are able to achieve housing, it really is just a continual recycling. As she said, with the population of 10,000, to have 1,400 on a wait-list—that's 14% of her population waiting for housing in that area. So the need is very great.

Programs that worked aren't necessarily continued, and that was one of the messages I heard as well: Don't fix what isn't broken. The community start-up benefits and the discretionary funding benefits were actually working for that community, but with the cuts to them, they're now at a loss.

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

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Ça me fait toujours plaisir de me lever et de parler au sujet des coopératives d'habitation.

I was reflecting on who is living in co-op housing in my area. Sometimes it's seniors. We have a few co-op housing where seniors live there. We have, around Ottawa U and La Cité collégiale, some co-ops where students live. We have students who are wealthy, but we have students also who are not wealthy. They're a great addition to the co-op housing area in my riding.

I have also a large community of Inuit in my riding. We have a few co-ops where the Inuit are living. They are beautiful and they're built in accordance to their needs. I also have different groups of First Nations in my riding. We have the beautiful Wabano Centre. So we have co-ops for First Nations. We have co-ops for young families. Often they use the co-op to help them to save money to buy their first home.

Co-op housing, for me, is the best model for affordable housing. It's a model where people do act like it was their own home, and there is a great deal of friendship, support—they support each other—and also they collaborate to do the different tasks of the co-op housing complex.

Again, I hope that we will stop talking about it and redirect it to the committee for progress.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member from Kenora–Rainy River has two minutes to respond.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Thank you, Speaker. I'd like to thank the members of this House who took the time to respond to my comments that I made in the House.

I wanted to just kind of wrap up with saying this: Since January, when Premier Wynne was elected, we've

heard a lot of talk about how we now have a social justice Premier. But I'm wondering—and I know that the people of my riding are wondering—where's the vision? Where are the goals and the plans? We're seeing these bills so far that are just regurgitated from the last session. Where's the action? I'm not trying to be unduly hard on the Premier, but we live in hard times, and we are looking to this government for help.

1640

From the people who I've talked to, from one end of Kenora–Rainy River to the other end—the whole 350,000 square kilometres—I can tell you that the people in the north have been doing without for a long time. But they also recognize that we live in difficult times, that money is tight and that we all have to make sacrifices. I hear that from people, but at the end of the day, we still have needs too.

We need to see action on these very fundamental needs, and the biggest thing that we could get some help with, when it comes to housing, is help with electricity. There needs to be a recognition that in this province, electricity, especially in the north, is as basic and as fundamental as having a roof over your head, having water and having food. That is the area where we need the biggest change, the biggest shift, because I am seeing seniors who have decent pensions but they just can't afford to heat their houses anymore.

We really need some movement on there, and we need the Premier to live up to the promise of being a social justice Premier.

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

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm pleased to rise today and speak a little on Bill 14, an Act to amend the Co-operative Corporations Act and the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 in respect of non-profit housing co-operatives and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

I'm going to be quite honest with you, Mr. Speaker: I don't know a lot about this act. It's not my critic's portfolio, but it ties in to my critic's portfolio a lot.

I'm looking at some of the things that have come out from the government, and their news release, when they released it—“Strengthening Co-op Housing Protections: New Ontario Government Remains Committed to Streamlining Dispute Resolution”—and a lot of other comments around it as well.

But I'm a little shocked at the words “new Ontario government.” I'm not sure where that actually comes from. If you prorogue the House for four months, then you're a new government?

I would look at it as a little bit different. I would look at it as the same old group of people, the same old worn-out bunch of people that are tired. We've seen today, with the Mississauga power plant—I've got the report in my hands. I'm not sure what it cost in the end, but it looks like about \$85 million—taxpayer dollars—were used to prop up—

Mr. Norm Miller: Extra.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: —extra dollars were used to close the plant, and that's taxpayer dollars.

I wanted to go back—I'm not going to pick on the government any more than that. I really wanted to talk about housing in general. It all boils into what I think we on this side of the House believe are the most fundamental, basic things we need. We talk continually about how the best social program is a job; that is the one thing. When you have 600,000 people that are not working in Ontario, that's why we talk so much about job creation and economic development in that area—whatever we can do to create jobs, because any time you get a person with a job, the first thing they want to do is they want to get really good or more decent housing.

I can tell you, Speaker, each and every year I have pre-budget consultations in my riding. We never get to have a standing committee on the Legislative Assembly come to Simcoe county, even, so we have our own pre-budget meetings and we actually talk. We get groups of people in, the same as you would at a standing committee, and they get 10 minutes, and we always listen to the concerns of the people in the riding. I do it at each end of the riding, one in Orillia and one in Midland.

I can tell you, Speaker, that the biggest issue every year—in fact, it's growing every year—is affordable housing and homelessness. This year was the worst ever. I think I had a total of 40 deputations in the two different hearings—maybe 25 or 26 the one day, and 14 or 15 the next day, in Midland—and each and every time it came down to affordable housing.

We have a number of groups that are looking to expand their programs in our community. I think of a shelter in Midland now wanting to add their second co-operative unit. The first one was basically built with private sector money, and now they're looking at provincial and federal help on the next phase. I'm not sure when that's going to happen, but certainly they're out there doing their very best.

We have another project that right now is run out of Knox Presbyterian Church in Midland. It's called Out of the Cold. I'm just amazed at how many people they serve there, almost on a nightly basis. Twenty or 30 people from somewhere in the county—maybe as far away as Mr. Miller's riding—will come for a night just to have shelter. In the Orillia end of the riding, I have the same kind of problems with people looking for decent shelter and some type of affordable housing.

So it's something that, as parliamentarians, whether we have our budget and we have these fancy bills—I think this is the third time this bill has been introduced; that's the impression I'm under. You know what? We really and truly have to pay special attention to affordable housing and those who just do not have everything. Now, we'll find it in different ways. I know from our perspective that we're looking at job creation and economic development; trying to get basic jobs and getting people to have their own affordable housing.

But it's amazing: One of things I'm really surprised at is how we pass one bill, and it's supposed to be, you know, what everybody wants, and the folks are here today who are very supportive of this bill. But then we do

other things in this House that will drive the price of housing up.

I think no further than the debate here of my opposition day motion on the College of Trades. That is going to drive the cost of housing up. I don't know what you have to say to people to get them to understand that. When you add more and more enforcement, more and more permits, memberships, etc., the price of housing goes up. The College of Trades is even impacting Habitat for Humanity. They may not be able to use volunteers on the job. When I look at that, when I look at what's happening, I'm thinking, why are we so determined to pass one piece of legislation and make it an emergency, and on the other hand ignore an opposition day motion like what I had last week?

You know, everyone thinks it's fine, the College of Trades is great. There are 91 people working there now. They're going to hire 150 enforcement cops. Another new level of bureaucracy that is completely not needed in the province of Ontario, but it will drive the price of all housing up, whether it's a high-rise condominium project, regular housing, co-operative housing. They're all going to have an impact on housing because of one new bureaucracy. Whether it's 1% or 2% or 10%, they all cost a lot of money.

We look at affordable housing. The people in the audience can say for sure that there's really no such thing as constructing affordable housing. It costs so much per square foot: the lumber, the drywall, the paint, the foundations—whatever it may be—all costs so much per square foot. Whether you put in an expensive cabinet—obviously, in some homes, the kitchens are much more expensive, and you can have a more affordable type, but in the end, it costs a lot of money to do any kind of housing, and it's a challenge for any government.

There's one thing I also want to say. All these programs we've brought out over the years, whether it was the federal government or the provincial government—and our party was as bad as any of them—with any of the projects we were involved in, there was always the concern, why does it take so long for the approvals? My God, you know, you'll start a program and you'll see an announcement made—say, a budget announcement—and you won't see any construction on a particular project for three or four years minimum. I've got a number of those in my riding; I can think of a couple in particular.

I want to pay a special thank you to Ken McMullen, who ran a seniors' project in Orillia. I thought Mr. McMullen was going to have a stroke or coronary with the worry he went through and the work he did on that particular project. It was years of worry and concern, but he finally made it through. He got the proper people, and now it's a huge success. But I didn't think it needed to be that complex. It seemed that that project started out as something that made so much common sense—he had a building, the money was there—but by the time all the different consultants and architects and approval authorities made it through, it drove the price of the project up. But second of all, it was the timing. The people who

originally thought they would move into that particular unit—a lot of them never did. Some of them who originally wanted to move into that particular unit because it was seniors' affordable housing actually passed on.

1650

The list goes on and on. I've only got a couple more minutes here, but I did want to say that what's really important here is that for us as politicians, whether you're in the government, the opposition or the third party, housing is a top priority. How you get there is a matter of what the policies of the particular party are. We on this side of the House, you know what we think. We think the more we can do for job creation—streamlining red tape to create jobs—that's the way we're going to get more people with jobs. That's the way they're actually going to end up with housing of their own. Other people look at it in different ways. I just think overall, as a Legislature, we can't turn our backs on people either. We have to be determined to create those jobs. Where those jobs come from, I don't know, but as I look at some of the people I've met over the past year from all across the province in different communities as I've travelled with the College of Trades stuff, you know what? I think there's a lot of wonderful people in Ontario. There's a lot of people who just want that first chance to do anything, a lot of young people particularly. They don't want to be finding their opportunities out in British Columbia or Newfoundland or whatever; they want to find their home right here in Ontario and get good, affordable housing and a good lifestyle for themselves and their families right here in their province.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's actually a pleasure to comment on this bill—

Interjection: Again.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Yes, again. I'll get to 10 minutes eventually.

Just to follow the member from Simcoe North, I appreciate the fact that—and I think we're in agreement, actually, on a number of issues. Affordable housing—safe, stable, secure housing—is a key factor in getting the economy back on track and getting people back to work.

The issue, though, which is of interest to me is that people who don't have housing have a very hard time getting work. Just before Christmas, I was at an anti-poverty meeting and I was talking to a young woman, 35, who actually said to me point blank, "I cannot apply for a job because I don't have an address," and an employer looks at her very differently than they would if she had a resumé with a solid address and contact information. That's why organizations like the Working Centre in Kitchener-Waterloo are so powerful. It actually gives some stability—an address, an email and a phone line to actually try to apply for work.

I actually commend the member from Simcoe North for doing your own pre-budget committee. I've been on the finance committee this year; what an interesting

experience it's been. I can tell you, we went to Windsor, Timmins, Thunder Bay, Ottawa, two sessions here, and then I went back to my own riding and I got a robocall from the finance minister saying, "Why don't you come to this town hall?" You can imagine my surprise. I know it's because I'm new that some of these things are surprising, but it was definitely—I'm not the only one in the committee that finds this year—first of all, we don't even have a budget date, right? How can you really engage in a truly consultative process when you don't have a date?

Housing—a key issue from an economic development perspective. I look forward to commenting further later.

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

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to join the debate this afternoon on Bill 14. It appears that people have a lot to say about it, and that's good, I think, because it allows people to express their opinions.

Some of the opinions I've heard so far in this debate I agree with very strongly, and others I may not be so fond of. But if you take the political philosophy out of this, I think what you see is a bill that's very practical. It's a bill that enables a sector of our economy that provides housing from the non-profit sector—it allows them to operate more efficiently. It allows some legislative changes to take place, that would make sure that the system, when disputes do arise—and disputes arise in a number of areas of our economy, and in housing and social services as well over the years—it gives the co-op sector the ability to deal with those in a much more efficient way, in a much more cost-effective way and in a very open way, for those people who are members of the co-op.

It seems to me that all three parties should be in favour of this bill and it seems to me that we should be moving to a vote on it very quickly, but it appears that some people still want to talk about it. But it's going to allow co-operative boards to apply to the Landlord and Tenant Board to resolve tenure disputes that are currently provided for under the RTA, the Residential Tenancies Act. That seems to me to be a very practical step forward, Mr. Speaker. It's going to make, as I said, the system a lot more efficient than it is today. It's going to free up some funds for the co-op itself. It's more cost-effective if there's money to be spent on repairs or if there's money to be spent on other areas in the co-op projects, and certainly they'll have those funds available because they're not having to spend it in the way they are today.

I suggest we move ahead on this; that we all say what we've got to say, move it on to the committee and then pass it, and it's done with.

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I too am very pleased to rise and speak to the comments that were shared just earlier by our member from Simcoe North. Actually, I really admire this member for the effort he takes to understand the issues, talk to constituents, to make it real and to

challenge the nonsense that happens day in and day out in this House. Some of the nonsense is related to that whole concept that he drew our attention to, the fact that the Wynne Liberal government is trying to portray themselves as a new government. Meanwhile, we're debating today Bill 14, which is actually a very old bill. What's new is old again and what's old is new again. It's just an endless cycle of spinning wheels or spinning, if you will, instead of addressing concerns that really need to be spoken about in this House.

Let's talk about folks needing a hands-up in co-operative housing. We all can agree, and we've heard this from every single member in this House debating this issue, that affordability is really, really important. As I said, people are looking for a hand up, but instead this Wynne Liberal government seems to have a heavy hand that keeps pushing people down. On one side, they're talking about affordable housing, and on the other side, they're bringing through policy and bringing through regulation that is making living in Ontario next to impossible.

I just want to share with you an example. Energy bills are going through the roof. The most regular calls I get in my constituency offices are from constituents that are having trouble meeting day-to-day bills. Just today, I found it quite interesting that in the Auditor General's report, he talks about the cancellation of gas plant costs being covered by global adjustment charges that are recovered on ratepayers' monthly electricity bills.

This government can't have it both ways, and, Speaker, we need to get this passed so we can address the real issues.

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: Back in 2009, I think it was, the Auditor General talked about the role of government and the lack of affordable housing here in the province. He talked about the lack of access; the lack of staff, from the ministry point of view, to monitor and move it along; the lack of a provincial strategy to ensure that there were enough numbers of affordable housing units in the province and that those units were actually well maintained and repaired. That was four years ago, and we still haven't made great strides between 2009 and 2013 to have better access to affordable housing units.

We all know that when we have people in safe, well-maintained housing units, it actually improves people's health. It reduces hospital visits and hospital costs. It actually reduces the need for shelters and some need for food banks. It reduces correctional costs. It reduces policing costs. So if we funnelled some of those dollars that we're spending in all of those areas into building some more housing and spending some more money on affordable housing support programs, we probably would save money at the end of the day.

1700

A large percentage of inmates who are in our correctional facilities in this province have mental health issues, and they probably wouldn't have found themselves in

prison had they had an affordable housing unit available to them and had the actual supportive housing model in place so that when they had issues, they were dealt with at the time. Unfortunately, that hasn't been happening. The funding is actually being reduced year over year. So I think we need to move to the Housing First model, and we'll see some great results here.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time for questions and comments for this round.

I return to the member for Simcoe North for his reply.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I want to thank the members from Kitchener-Waterloo, Oakville, Huron-Bruce and Welland for their comments today.

I just want to sum up with what I said earlier, which is that we believe strongly that housing is of huge importance to the people in Ontario, but what gets them to that housing is good employment and a good job opportunity and something that's secure for the future.

I think the member for Welland summed it up well when she mentioned that when someone has their own residence how important that is to their self-esteem, to their mental health, to their physical health; having that confidence that you can afford to have that rent or that mortgage paid every month and that you're on solid ground and you can move forward. So many people who have done that in the past have moved on to really, really great things in the future, and they've set the example for their children as well.

Obviously, having this legislation improved is an important part of the picture. But what's really important, I think, more than anything, is that we look at the whole picture and make sure we concentrate on good employment opportunities for people, getting rid of red tape, getting rid of bureaucracy at whatever level we can, so that we can focus on people getting a job which they can go to each and every week, come back with a decent paycheque and be able to build homes, buy homes, rent homes and buy cars etc., and increase their self-esteem and be more important and better taxpayers for the province of Ontario.

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

Mr. Norm Miller: It's my pleasure to have an opportunity to speak to Bill 14, An Act to amend the Co-operative Corporations Act and the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 in respect of non-profit housing co-operatives and to make consequential amendments to other Acts.

Mr. Speaker, the bill amends the Co-operative Corporations Act and the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006, and makes consequential amendments to the Energy Consumer Protection Act, 2010, and the Ontario Clean Energy Benefit Act, 2010. The key thing that it does is it really puts into place the rules that apply for tenants of a regular rental situation and for people who use co-ops.

Most of the amendments are for the purpose of creating a procedure in the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006, for non-profit housing co-operatives to regain possession of a member unit occupied by a person after

his or her membership and occupancy rights in the co-operative terminate or expire. Currently, non-profit housing co-operatives can regain possession of a member unit only by obtaining a writ of possession from the Superior Court of Justice. That's a very expensive process, so obviously moving it into a process where it would be—the Landlord and Tenant Act is the place it should be. Certainly, the ministry estimated the cost of resolving these co-op disputes in the courts at \$3,000 to \$5,000 each and pegged the annual legal cost to co-op members of approximately 300 cases heard every year in the courts at about \$1 million.

As we've heard, all parties are supportive of this. It has been a long process getting to this point. Of course, the Legislature was prorogued, which ended the process the last time this bill was debated in the Legislature.

I understand that there have been some minor changes made since the last time it was introduced—not necessarily positive. The \$45 fee could be waived now. The new bill contains an amendment to allow the Landlord and Tenant Board to waive the \$45 filing fee for low-income tenants, although it doesn't really describe what low-income tenants are. It sounds good, but the concern is that it's already a busy process, and it may end up making it busier. You may have nuisance complaints, so that would tie up the Landlord and Tenant Board so that those who have legitimate concerns won't be able to get before it. That is the concern with that particular amendment.

My riding is Parry Sound–Muskoka, and perhaps our visitors can tell me if there are any co-ops in my riding. There is, in fact; I know of at least one, and that is in Gravenhurst. Bethune Housing Co-operative in Gravenhurst has 31 units. They are wheelchair-accessible. That's the one I'm aware of. I'll wait for our neighbours to send me a note with any others that they know of in my riding, but that's the one that I'm aware of in my riding.

I will say, though, that there's certainly a great need, especially for affordable housing, in Parry Sound–Muskoka. We do have a lot of various types of non-profit housing. We have the Parry Sound local housing corporation, the Parry Sound District Housing Corp.; they have some 209 units that are rent-geared-income units. Of course, there are seven First Nations in Parry Sound–Muskoka as well, so there's a couple of federal not-for-profit organizations: the Georgian Bay Native Non-Profit, and Fell Homes, which is in Burk's Falls, is also providing accommodation.

On the Muskoka side of the riding, certainly, the Muskoka District Community Services provides a lot of housing.

But I should get on the record that Graydon Smith, the mayor of Bracebridge, wouldn't be happy with me having the opportunity to speak if I didn't bring up one of his biggest issues, and that is that for the economic development programs that can help an area grow and have jobs and have income so you can afford housing, Muskoka seems to be in a big black hole. That is, the government has created these new economic develop-

ment regions; they have one covering most of Ontario. Of course, Muskoka used to be in the north, then the current government in 2003 decided that it would no longer be in the north for provincial programs. All of a sudden, Muskoka no longer had access to the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp. Since then, the government has created a southwest development corporation, and they've created an eastern development corporation. For some reason, as I say, Muskoka is in this black hole.

If it's fair for everybody else, I would simply say it's not fair for Muskoka to be in this black hole, because if you look at statistics like average income, for example—people think of Muskoka as being million-dollar cottages and the home of wealthy folks who come up to the lake, but the reality is that for year-round residents, average incomes are actually significantly below the provincial average. In fact, when you compare it to the eleven northern ridings, we're the 10th-lowest annual average income.

As I say, Graydon Smith, the mayor of Bracebridge, would want me to make that point, because that's probably the biggest issue. Every time I see him, he brings up that he doesn't think it's fair. I would agree with him that it's not fair that Muskoka is in this black hole.

I should mention that I've had people come to me about this emergency shelter fund, money that the district of Muskoka, through its programs, gives for people that are about to be evicted. I had some of the agencies come to me and say that the government played with the numbers a little bit and has essentially reduced the funding for the emergency shelter fund while claiming they've put it in other places, but that is causing some problems in my area.

1710

We have a very strong Habitat for Humanity on the Muskoka side that's been doing a lot of builds around Bracebridge, Huntsville and Gravenhurst. They've recently opened a new ReStore in Huntsville; there's also one in Bracebridge and there's a brand new Parry Sound wing of Habitat for Humanity that's just getting going. I'm very pleased that that's happening because they do a great job of creating new and affordable housing; as well, a great organization, and I try to get out to their events whenever possible.

I just recently travelled with the finance committee up to Thunder Bay, and there a number of the presenters made a point of talking about the need for affordable housing, certainly, and the need for shelter beds as well in that part of the world, which is quite a unique part of the world with just a huge geographic area, huge challenges, a very large First Nations population, aboriginal population, as well.

I'd also like to get on the record that we have some other new projects going on in the riding, including a brand new initiative in Parry Sound–Muskoka to create a men's residence, because right now there's no men's residence or men's shelter. There's a new project called Blue Skies Men's Residence that is being headed up by Heather LeClerc, and I know George Sopher on the Parry Sound side of the riding has been a strong advocate in

trying to create a men's residence. It would be geared to income. They're just at the stage of trying to raise money for that. In fact, I think they have raised some money towards it and are hoping to get it built in late 2013-14.

We've had some other very successful projects, most recently in Huntsville. Chrysalis, a shelter for women, was opened with tremendous support. We also have Esprit Place in Parry Sound, which started up in 1986. I was actually there for their 25th anniversary. Chrysalis, as I say, is in Huntsville. Muskoka Interval House and those organizations are managed by Joy McCormack, at Muskoka Women's Advocacy Group.

There's a lot going on but also a tremendous need, and certainly I see co-ops as being part of the mix. We look forward to having more than just one in the riding of Parry Sound-Muskoka. I'm sure that they fill a need and can do a great job in providing housing.

I see I'm pretty much out of time, Mr. Speaker, but I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak to this bill and hope that this time it finishes off the full process and, of course, goes to committee and gets some recommendations from the public and then gets back here for third reading and passed.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's my pleasure to be here commenting on the remarks of my colleague. I want to note the presence of Dale Reagan, Harvey Cooper, Simone Swail and, a bit earlier, Judith Collins, a constituent of mine, all here in a very long-term task, a task showing great resilience and tenacity to try to get this legislation forward.

Speaker, as you're well aware, this legislation will allow housing co-operatives to avail themselves of lower-cost tribunals and processes to deal with evictions, something that, frankly, is to the advantage of housing co-ops because it allows them to contain their costs, and to the advantage of the province because we want affordable housing to be successful.

It's been very clear, listening to members of the government, members of the opposition and my colleagues, that we are all prepared to go to committee on this. We are all ready to hear those presentations and hear those submissions and make whatever amendments are necessary. I'm sure there will be amendments—that's just the way bills and legislation are—so that this can be put in place.

As you're well aware, Speaker, we had a chance to debate this bill very thoroughly before the government was shut down, before the Legislature was shut down by Dalton McGuinty. We have now gone through a second round of thorough debate. I'd ask every party in this chamber to support taking this through to committee. I think we've said what we need to say. Now we need to go forward and actually have a decision. I urge all parties to support a vote on this and movement to committee as soon as possible.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm pleased to recognize the Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I just want to applaud the words of the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka. I know that area quite well, being a homeowner up there. Bracebridge is one of the most beautiful spots in all of Ontario, whether it's north or south or east or west. Whatever category it falls into, it is a gorgeous place, and I know the member knows that.

Resilience and tenacity would describe what the co-op movement is basically all about. When you see the kind of wonderful work that Habitat for Humanity and the ReStore centre are doing up in the honourable member's riding, you can only smile with admiration. I agree with the member, who observed that it's time to get this into committee so we can get going on it. I'll sit down if you promise to have a vote right away to do that. We'd be keen to see that happen.

The member opposite mentioned First Nations and the concept of affordable housing. I think one of the real joys of co-operative housing is that it has the potential, in fact, to be affordable housing. A lot of people who build homes don't build them to be necessarily affordable or even to the specific needs of the population that may, in fact, be housed. Add to that the fact that some levels of government have been known to abandon housing entirely; it would sure be nice to have a federal partner when it comes to this sort of thing or to not be down-loading housing and such.

I think there's great potential in the co-operative movement. I've been involved with the co-operative movement, housing in particular, for many years. I applaud the tenacity and the resilience of the group and look forward, like others, to getting this into committee.

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

Mr. Jim McDonell: It's an honour to rise in response to the member from Parry Sound-Muskoka, and it was nice to hear about the beauty of the riding. I've had the opportunity to drive through it a number of times in my former work, and it is breathtaking, the highways through the mountains and the vast forests up there. It's a huge tourist area and a big part of Ontario. It's nice to get the chance to go through there, and often we don't get enough chances to go through areas of Ontario that are truly beautiful.

They talked about co-operative housing really being affordable housing, and I think that's a good point. I think that we're looking at trying to help out a lot of the needy people in this province. Co-operative housing is a great way of doing it because you have a landlord, which is the tenants themselves, that has an interest in keeping the property up. As I said, in talking with housing co-operatives in our area in Stormont, Dundas and South Glengarry, they're looking at ways of improving the system even more and talked about rents in the \$300 range. Really, in this day and age, to have one of the premium locations in the city of Cornwall—that rent level would be something very affordable for many people, to the point where people stay well into their senior years. They're looking for help so that they can

actually stay there when they can no longer look after themselves without some help.

There are lots of areas where this government can look forward to helping out people, and this is one, and they have all-party support. It's the fourth attempt to put this through, so let's see it go through. I think that it's something that has been needed. Possibly some changes will be done in committee, but I think we have all-party support to move ahead on this.

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

Ms. Sarah Campbell: As many people in this House have said this afternoon, this is a bill that, however small, is a step in the right direction. It's something that many of us agree we should just kind of get on with already, that we should bring it to committee. We can move this forward. It's an issue of fairness for people who are living in co-ops that they should be able to have affordable access to justice, because having something being affordable is really a matter of whether or not it is accessible.

When I spoke earlier, I said that in Kenora–Rainy River, we don't, to my knowledge, have any co-ops. I'm looking to the guests in the gallery, who would be, it seems to me, agreeing with me. I just wanted to double-check that.

The affordable housing that we have is managed by one of the DSSABs—the district social services administration boards. They have a real challenge in providing subsidized housing to people in all areas. I have over 70 communities in my riding. The community that has the largest population is Kenora. It has a population of about 16,000. So it's really difficult to redistribute, especially when you're talking about physical infrastructure.

There does need to be more done to help this particular DSSAB, the Kenora District Services Board, to be able to acquire and maintain the buildings, because these buildings—they inherited them in the late 1990s. They weren't necessarily in tip-top shape; they weren't brand new units. Some of the challenges that they have are, when people move out of areas, there's no longer a need in that area—for instance, in Minaki. So we need to make some of those changes. We need to provide them with the supports that they need.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes our time for questions and comments, so I return to the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka for his two-minute response.

Mr. Norm Miller: Thank you to the members from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry and Toronto–Danforth, the Minister of Community and Social Services and the member from Kenora–Rainy River for their comments.

I had wanted, in my speech, to get in some comments to do with the Landlord and Tenant Board, particularly from the landlord perspective and of small landlords, of which I have a lot in my riding. I seem to get a lot of landlords contacting me, very unhappy with nightmare

situations where it's bad tenants that have damaged the apartment and they can't evict them.

I was going to complete one letter as a good example of the many letters I've had, but I'll just read a little bit of it—the conclusion at the end of a long letter:

“There is a lot of media regarding the lack of housing in Muskoka. I would like to suggest that if Muskoka continues to be underserved with only one hearing per month and then a sheriff that can't be scheduled for 28 days after a request is made, why would your constituents want to risk renting to families with low income in Muskoka?”

“As an employee in human services, I have heard about these types of horror stories from landlords, so I know that I am not the only landlord that has experienced this hardship.”

Mr. Speaker, the letter—that's just the conclusion of it, but it illustrates that all is not perfect with the Landlord and Tenant Board. As I say, I've had many, many, many constituents contact me about it and go through their very specific situation and how it doesn't seem to work very efficiently. So I would simply say that I know this bill now uses this system for co-ops and that maybe it needs to be looked at and improved a little bit.

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

Mr. Toby Barrett: I appreciate the opportunity to continue debate on Bill 14. The short title: the Non-profit Housing Co-operatives Statute Law Amendment Act. I won't go into the long title; we've heard that several times this afternoon.

We're also looking at amendments to the Residential Tenancies Act and the Co-operative Corporations Act. Much of it, very simply, would move co-op eviction applications and other disputes from the courts to the Landlord and Tenant Board. We have heard, Speaker, that, under the Co-operative Corporations Act, the co-ops must apply to the courts to resolve disputes, not the board. Again, as has been explained this afternoon, this can be time-consuming and can be more expensive than it should be, not only for co-op providers but for residents and everyone involved.

The proposed legislation—we've been debating this for some time now. Someone indicated this goes back to 2007. I really question why this has been dragged on so long.

Under the bill, co-ops would be able to apply to the Landlord and Tenant Board to resolve evictions and other things resulting from disputes. It seems to me this would be obviously much more efficient and would help reduce the financial burden on co-ops and members of co-ops. It also streamlines the internal dispute resolution process in non-profit co-ops to clarify that hearings before the board and also that rates are determined—nothing wrong with this—on the merits of the case.

I would add that, barring any other measures, the board is the most appropriate venue for these kinds of housing disputes. We know of the disputes: arrears in rent, late payment, willful damage, illegal activity by

tenants, tenants interfering with other tenants' enjoyment of their property. This all sounds very familiar to me. I was a landlord for 12 years. I've also been a tenant for many, many years.

Clearly, there's obviously a need, as we've heard during debate. There's something like 125,000 people in Ontario who live in non-profit housing co-ops. There's something like 550 co-ops in the province. I don't think any of them are in my riding of Haldimand-Norfolk. I'm not aware of having any dealings with co-ops, but I can appreciate that there is a need where they exist. I have a number of condo corporations. I know I've certainly dealt with condo organizations in the Dunnville and Simcoe areas having problems and concerns with the county in each case, not getting the municipal services they feel are warranted—garbage collection, for example—and, in lieu of that, requesting a reduction in their taxes. Again, this has been going on for a number of years, certainly in Dunnville.

I do hear from landlords in my constituency office with respect to bad tenants. Again, there's some unfairness there, in my view. Landlords are concerned that tenants can get legal help and landlords can't, for example—concerns that tenants are able to drag out hearings.

I know our housing critic, Mr. Clark, made reference to similar concerns. He made reference to a landlord named Ted. This is from Ted: "Not many have the time, the patience or the resources to litigate these matters. It is the opinion of this landlord that the system, which has seen benefits over the years, has to be simplified, the process more friendly.... One has no idea until they experience this bureaucracy from a person with no idea of where to start, the frustration of where to turn or what to do now. To go to the tribunal to be turned away because of an incorrect process, incorrect form served, to hear that the tenant has access to duty counsel, while the landlord has no support." That's the end of the quote from Ted.

Ted, like many landlords, is asking why government cannot look at some of these obvious problems that exist and come up with something a little more streamlined, something a little more fair, something a little simpler, something that works for both sides—and again, that's what the Landlord and Tenant Board was set up for in the first place. This legislation will help somewhat, but we do see a system that does get bogged down in procedural matters. It gets bogged down in bureaucratic delays that in many cases only perpetuate the original complaint.

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There's another issue I want to address in my role as critic of social services with respect to low-income housing. I do hear this a lot—I see this, door-knocking, actually—where so many low-income facilities, many of them, in my view, when they were established in our riding, were set up for seniors, for example. In many cases, drug dealers have moved in. We know this is obviously the case in this city. I don't think there's anybody here who doesn't know that bullets are flying in

Toronto. They're very serious concerns for seniors and a threat to their safety. All they ask for—and they are dependent somewhat on government assistance—is a safe, livable place to call home. I think that's a shame that some of that has regrettably gotten out of control.

Nuisance hearings, again, something that backlogs through the system: I don't know whether this legislation is going to address that or not. That's bad news not only for landlords, but those tenants themselves who have legitimate cases before the board that everybody wants to see resolved in a timely manner.

We know there are going to be further amendments which will go before committee. Again, it's too bad much of this has been delayed. This proposed bill should have been law a while ago. I mean, how many hundreds of thousands of dollars in unnecessary court costs have been racked up for that reason?

Something that comes to mind: This coming Wednesday is the funeral for Margaret Thatcher. One of her more significant initiatives—this goes back to the late 1970s. Thatcher introduced legislation to implement the right to buy with respect to council houses in Britain, and many of them did. So many became homeowners under Margaret Thatcher's Housing Act of 1980. The sale price of a council house was based on its market valuation, but also included a discount to reflect the rents paid by tenants to encourage them to take up. The Thatcher legislation gave council tenants the right to buy their council house at a discounted value, again depending on how long they'd been living in the house, with the proviso that if they did sell the house before a minimum period had expired, they would have to pay back a proportion of the discount.

These sales were a very attractive deal for tenants. Hundreds of thousands of homes were sold, and as I said, this policy was considered one of the major achievements of the Thatcher era. Proceeds of the sales were paid to local authorities. They used this to pay down their debt. As I recall, I think there was something like a million council houses sold under that program.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments? The member for Kitchener-Waterloo.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Bill Walker: We're going to get to that 10 minutes if we keep it up.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I will. I will get to 10 minutes eventually—although we really shouldn't have to do this, because when the member from Lanark-Frontenac mentioned that we're bogged down, that really is an understatement. When you are resurrecting the memory and the legacy of Margaret Thatcher on housing, we know that we should be officially done right here, right now. This vote needs to happen. We need to get this done, because that means that you have fully and completely and utterly run out of material, right? We have been in this House debating this and discussing this for hours and hours and hours. I mean, this is incredible. This needs to go to a vote.

We need to get this done because there are people waiting. For instance, the wait-list for social housing has

swelled to over 157,000 households. It's a 26% increase since 2007. Toronto's affordable housing wait-list, as of January 2013, was 87,000 households or over 160,000 women, men and children, an increase of 6% since January 2012. And these numbers are generally focused on the GTA.

My colleague from Kenora–Rainy River raises the issue of First Nations housing, and my colleague from Welland has raised the issues of shelters and women who actually need secure, stable housing, and yet, hours and hours discussing this.

This needs to move forward. That's all I got to say on it. That's all I'm going to say on it until it comes to third reading.

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

Mr. Bill Mauro: Speaker, if I could just do a short aside. I just found out about the bombings at the Boston Marathon. I had some very good friends, as part of the running community in Thunder Bay, who were qualified and were attending there today. I'm just hoping that somebody will hear this and give me a call and let me know that at least one very close friend is fine and safe and on his way home.

Speaker, on this particular issue, I've spoken a number of times on this particular bill. I haven't spoken a lot about the federal government involved in the housing that we're able to provide in the province of Ontario. I do want to give a nod. Even though it is diminished funding, I understand that the federal budget did contain funding for housing in the province of Ontario. I know it has been a declining amount over the last number of years, but there were a number of us who were concerned that it might be one of those line items in the federal budget that, perhaps, disappeared altogether. There's been some examples of this in the past. I think we all remember the child care money about four or five years ago, \$63 million that we found about a week before the budget and have funded for the last four or five years. We've managed to fill the void. I'm thankful that at the federal level there's been at least some money coming. Other members have talked about \$3 billion since 2003 not being enough. Hopefully this will enable us to continue to do a bit of good work.

Also, I should mention that the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka, in his remarks, talked about shelter beds in Thunder Bay. He visited Thunder Bay a short time ago. I'm happy to let the member know that not long ago, my colleague Michael Gravelle and I were proud to be part of an announcement where there will be 22 expanded mental health and addiction beds in the city of Thunder Bay, as well as other initiatives in that regard. I just thought, seeing as he raised it, I'd have an opportunity to mention that as well.

At the end of the day, as I've mentioned previously, it's an access-to-justice issue. We feel very strongly about this. We're not sure why it hasn't happened quite some time ago but we're very pleased to see it moving forward. By the sounds of things it has the support of the

other two parties in the Legislature and we're thankful for that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions or comments.

Mr. Bill Walker: It's always a pleasure to have my colleague from Norfolk speak. He takes this very seriously. He's been involved in social services for many years. He's a very caring individual who is always bringing to our caucus table the need to ensure that those needy have the rightful services that they so do need.

And, you know, when he brings up Margaret Thatcher, I think what he's bringing up is someone who actually stood up and made very difficult decisions, but for the betterment of her country and all of the people that the UK deals with. At the end of the day, many leaders stood up and acknowledged what a profound impact she had. I think it's a credit to my colleague that he would actually give her credit for that, because it's easy to make the easy decisions. It's not easy to make those decisions that sometimes are more difficult. It pains me at times to hear some of the other members of the other parties that discredit him and people like Margaret Thatcher who gave of their whole life to be able to support the people who are needy. If they hadn't made strong decisions at that time, there would have been a lot more homelessness, a lot more people that wouldn't have had any of the services that they've come to depend upon.

Right now, this debate we're having here, the money that we've wasted in these debates and waiting for these debates to continue: think about the people who could have had more housing had it been implemented back in 2004 when it started. Think of how many people could be housed if we were to have the \$85 million that the Liberals have wasted on the Mississauga gas plant and the purported billion dollars that are going to be wasted on the Oakville gas plant. Think about the billion-dollar boondoggle that has already happened and what we could have done with that money. So this affordable housing, co-op housing—we could have had a lot more if we had had that.

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We need to always be looking that we're here to serve those people—all the people of Ontario but particularly those less fortunate. We care. We do hold out hope that the government and the third party will support initiatives that are going to help those less fortunate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): We have time for one last question or comment, and I look to the member for Toronto–Danforth.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I've heard extensively from the opposition on this matter. I do have to note that when they came to power as a government in the mid-1990s, they acted quickly and sharply to make sure no more housing was built for people of lower incomes, without a doubt.

But I say to them today that they could actually, with the time available, take a good step forward and allow us to conclude this debate on this bill, which they've said on

numerous occasions, can actually be wrapped up. They feel it is one they can support; it could go to committee. There's no need to talk this one out, Mr. Speaker. There's no need to spend more hours of time in this chamber on this debate. The government has made it very clear they support the bill; they brought it forward. Numerous speeches made by members of the opposition—it's very clear they support the bill. It's very clear from our seats there's no problem with going forward.

What's needed is a recognition that second reading has been well and truly done. This one's cooked. It is well cooked. Now, having gone through that process of heating and singeing, it is ready to be served at committee, where people can actually get a chance to speak from the public, put forward their positions, be heard, where all parties can bring forward any amendments that they feel are necessary and allow this government, this chamber, and the people in co-op housing to get on with business.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): We return to the member for Haldimand–Norfolk, who has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I do appreciate the feedback from, certainly, members from the third party. We do have to think beyond this bill. We all recognize that it is somewhat limited in scope. The need exists for clean, affordable housing, and I do ask members present to look at options. Look at that private sector rental market, private sector ownership. It should not be discounted. I'd like to think, and we should look into this, that the rent-to-own program for many subsidized housing tenants would be worth looking at.

My constit office is in the town of Simcoe. The second floor of these shops in downtown Simcoe is vacant. It's not doing well. So many people that come into our office are living up there, and there has to be perhaps another look at tax incentives for the owners, the landlords, that have those buildings to make better use of that vacant stock. Whether we explore right to buy—it obviously has worked in other jurisdictions at discounted prices now.

Margaret Thatcher I don't think ever lived in subsidized housing. She did live above the store; she was a shopkeeper's daughter. Jack Layton lived in subsidized housing, as I recall. But again with a—

Mr. Peter Tabuns: May I say, Speaker, that is a load of crap. And you, member, should know what really went on, and you should withdraw those remarks. That was fixed-income housing—

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I ask the members to come to order. Take a seat; please take your seat.

I have to ask the member for Toronto–Danforth, first, to withdraw his inflammatory remark.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Withdrawn.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I will ask the member for Haldimand–Norfolk to withdraw.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I withdraw, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much.

I now wish to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business, such that Ms. Wong assumes ballot item number 23 and Ms. Damerla assumes ballot item number 29.

Further debate?

Mr. Jim McDonell: It's an honour to get up and speak on this bill. I've heard many comments that it's time to move on, but we also have a responsibility as members of the House to speak on the bills and to propose amendments and changes that we think are important or to discuss the importance of a particular bill.

In this case here, it was a promise from the 2003 election by this government, so we're happy to see them finally getting to a point where we think that, possibly, they will move ahead with this bill. It's the fourth time they've brought it up and for many reasons that I wasn't a part of—except for the last one, when the House was prorogued—there was always some reason that it was not called for royal assent. I guess we're expecting now that that may change and we'll see something different.

It was interesting to hear the comments of a few minutes ago, because we have a lot of powers here, but one thing that we can't do is change history. I think that was what was said by the member that talked about some of the history that has gone on and some of the people that have benefited from social housing.

Our social housing coalition came in from our city of Cornwall, and they talked about the benefits and their wish to see this program extended where they actually could get more social housing units. They had 100 units in their complex and a waiting list of 90 people looking to get into these social housing units. The main reason behind it is because it was so affordable. They were looking at rents in the \$300 range, and I think that this should be seen as an opportunity by this House to look at ways of making housing more affordable. This not-for-profit housing is maybe something that we should be looking for.

They were looking for some help; it was actually so attractive that their tenants were long-term tenants, there from the beginning, looking at making some changes that would allow them to stay into their senior years, and wondering about the availability of grants that would allow them to put handicapped washrooms in and the like—whether they could benefit from this program where they would receive 15% back on the unit. Of course, we looked into that, but Doyle Campbell from that group was a great volunteer, and I guess the housing units generally are there because of the work by the volunteer group.

We know that although this sector was at one time about 20% to 25% of the new units in this province, it now is down around 4%. It's something we should look at, to try to bring it up and try to bring up some of the housing numbers, because I believe that this is just a

result of some of the failed policies we've seen with this government, where they've driven up housing costs by driving up energy costs. We saw the Auditor General talk about some of the costs of the Mississauga plant today, costs that will have to be passed on to the ratepayers and, in the end, end up driving up the cost of housing, whether it be construction or actually living.

It's interesting to know that a government that professes to be so much in the know could be so far wrong with the costs of those cancellations. I guess we sit now waiting for the costs of the Oakville plant, wondering if the experts that we've heard that put the costs up over \$800 million—we'll see who's right. This government, I think, is talking—around \$40 million was the cost. You can imagine how that drives up the cost of business and makes housing unaffordable. It makes seniors in my riding talk about making some tough choices: whether they can afford to pay for hydro or pay for food. I think that it's time that this government start looking at some of the issues that are really affecting the people of this province.

We're looking at 600,000—or, I guess, 650,000 people now, after 58,000 more jobs were lost last month—looking for employment in this province. It's higher than the national average for the last 75 months. You hear that stat, a stat from Stats Canada—and I haven't heard anybody argue that it's wrong—but I keep hearing numbers that this government has done better than any other jurisdiction in North America—

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Mr. Bill Walker: Overachieving. It's definitely overachieving.

Mr. Jim McDonell: —overachieving—but I guess we aren't seeing the results. I don't know where the numbers—I guess you can believe the government here or you can believe Stats Canada. I know where I'm believing, because I hear people in my riding running into issues, and I know we're not as badly off as many other ridings in this province.

It's time that we started working for the people. We've heard many issues, promises being made. This is one promise that, after 10 years, looks like it's going to be held. Co-operative housing has a real purpose in this province.

There are some amendments. We see an amendment here that was brought forth, that may make life not so easy for the boards. These boards are made up by the tenants themselves, the co-operatives. We want to make sure that we move the dispute mechanism over to the rental tribunal, but that we make it so that it's actually workable. We hear of long wait times now, and if we add enough complaints to the current board, then we just extend the limits by months and years. We're not really helping out the people that need help; we're just making it much harder.

This government—we have to look at making some tough choices. We haven't seen that. We see people in this province that are looking for work. We see high energy costs, high property taxes. We talk about

promises. I've heard of people that have been waiting for hospitals since 2003. The word in the last election was, "Vote for us or you won't get your hospital." But I think people are starting to wonder just—the credibility of this government. There are promises made three or four times, and they're still not seeing them followed. I guess it tends to be maybe a trait, after you see things go through time and time again.

We see the Green Energy Act and the Auditor General's report, talking about decisions made there, where a business case had not been done to look at the effect of such a failed program on the number of jobs lost.

The cost of electricity: We see companies leaving this province, looking for lower costs, like Xstrata out of Timmins, where they moved 500 or 600 jobs to Quebec, just because it's cheaper to do business there. This last year alone, we've seen three or four large companies leaving this province.

I think the people of Ontario are starting to demand, at least in my riding, changes—changes to a government that will look out for the people and not itself. Certainly, that was reinforced last October, the day after Thanksgiving, when we came back and we were all surprised by not only the prorogation but also the resignation by the Premier at that time. We see a new Premier in this office who talks about following in the same—I guess what they call "proud history." I've got people in my riding that may call that something different. They see it as a government that's clinging to power and willing to make any promise or make any decision at any cost.

Likely, you know, we're still waiting to hear the June report from the Auditor General. Probably that decision alone will cost \$1 billion, and that's not talking about the \$200 million we spend every year trying to get rid of excess power. It's just a failed program that needs to be looked at.

So we look at an act here, or legislation, which was previously brought up and died in the House when it was prorogued last October. I think everybody's talking about the need to put this through. I hope to hear from some of the other members of the party and see what their opinions of it are. So far, I haven't heard any negative comments on it, so I'm thinking it will move to committee, where we'll be able to look at some of the issues and make sure that it's really going to serve the purpose that it needs to.

In the end, I think we're looking for more reasons for people to build co-operative housing. It's a great solution to look after a lot of people who are needy in this province. But to do that, we've got to get rid of some of the red tape that stops groups from moving ahead on this. We want to make sure that the governance of them is encouraging. People in this province will start building again and, through that, creating jobs. Projects such as the College of Trades, which contractors in my riding say are killing jobs—the union members I talk to are upset with it because they just see it as another tax. It's time to stop the tax.

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

Ms. Sarah Campbell: You know, the longer we discuss this bill, the more I struggle to come up with something to contribute. I think that's really because up until we first debated this bill in the last session, I didn't know what co-op housing was—never even heard of it. As I said earlier, in Kenora–Rainy River we don't have any co-op housing, so it isn't really that much of a surprise that I'd never really heard about it.

As I mentioned earlier, though, and I mentioned at length, in Kenora–Rainy River we do have another set of issues related to affordable housing. This government and this Premier claim to know and care about the challenges that we face in northwestern Ontario, but I challenge this government to do something about the biggest issue related to affordability of housing in the north, and that is to bring down our electricity rates. As I said, this government claims to understand the issues and challenges that we face. I'd like to see those words put into action.

It's a little frustrating to talk about a bill that's supposedly supposed to affect all of Ontario and to have northwestern Ontario, yet again, not affected by this. I'd like to see what this province, what the government is going to do to make things a little bit fairer, to recognize that the environment that we live in is fundamentally different than the environment that exists in southern Ontario.

I see a lot of glazed-over faces on the other side, on the government side, but really, it is something that we can do. This isn't the first time that we've heard about high electricity prices, certainly not from me. You've heard it for years from my predecessor. You hear it from people across the north. What is this government going to do to make life more affordable for people living in the north?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa–Orléans.

Mr. Phil McNeely: I'm pleased to respond to the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, one of my neighbours, I think—one of our boundaries.

I'd just like to say, we talk about jobs and we see some ads from the federal government that they're very proud that since the 2008 recession Canada has recovered—I think it's 750,000 jobs, something like that. They're bragging about it. If you look at the details, Ontario has had about half of those jobs—almost half of those jobs. So Ontario is punching above its weight when it comes to new jobs after the terrible recession. I just wanted to mention that. You should be bragging about our job record the same as Harper is bragging about his.

I just have some facts, and they've probably been repeated in this House a long time. I think I should speak like the member for Toronto—is it Toronto–Danforth? Yes. It's time we get over talking about this bill and get it done so these people can go out and do their work.

One of the big advantages, of course, is that the average cost of an eviction—it lasts only six months—is \$3,000 to \$5,000. The cost of those evictions is one of the big parts we're dealing with in this bill. When some-

body is not a proper member of the co-op, it certainly gets a lot of those things.

There are 44,000 households representing 125,000 people in co-op housing. I remember going with Jim Watson, when he was Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and looking at the options for housing. This is one of the big ones then.

Let's get over all this talking. Let's send it to committee. Let's get this bill passed.

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

Mr. Bill Walker: It's an absolute pleasure to be able to speak to this bill today, Speaker.

My colleague from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry is bang on as always. He started his talk off with how this is an election promise that goes back to 2003 with the Liberals and they still haven't fulfilled it. I don't even want to go down the list of the others that they have—you know, eHealth: "We will not raise your health taxes." Speaker, I don't want to go there. I want to talk about what he was talking about in the second part. He talked about the wait times that are continually there for co-op housing and the people who are in those wait times who continually hurt and are not afforded the luxury of having that co-op housing because of this.

He talked about the high energy costs. He talked about high property taxes. Just today, the Auditor General brought out a study that shows that the Liberals once again spent \$85 million more than what they said they would. We shouldn't have trusted them all the way along, but that's \$85 million that could have gone to those people in co-op housing.

Mr. Jim McDonnell: Is that 40%?

Mr. Bill Walker: That is over 40%. They could have had more houses built, and people could have had the opportunity to be in one of those houses.

My colleague from Haldimand–Norfolk talked about Margaret Thatcher and tough decisions. She made those tough decisions in a time and a period to ensure that those less fortunate would actually have more. Today, in this province, the third-largest amount we spend in our budget is to service the debt that that government has run up. They've doubled the debt in eight years. Just think if all that money to service that debt had been going into co-op housing, into people who want more, who need more, who deserve more.

It's shameful that they continue to spend at the rate they do. It's shameful that this bill has been brought back three times and has still not been enacted to help those people who they purport to care about. It's unbelievable that we do this. We had prorogation thrown in there and wasted four months.

What we really need to do is come together. Let's get this bill passed with some amendments to help those less fortunate.

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

I'll return to the member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

Mr. Jim McDonell: I want to thank the members from Kenora–Rainy River, Ottawa–Orléans and Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound for their comments.

The member from Kenora–Rainy River talked about not having co-operative housing in her riding, and that's unfortunate, because it is a great alternative and something that I think has worked out in many areas. She talked about her priority, which I think is the priority of everybody on this side: trying to bring down the electrical rates. But that's going to be tough to do. We're seeing 20-year contracts put out for power projects that we don't need, paid at higher rates than should be paid. We borrowed billions of dollars to pay for these projects, and as I say, we don't need them.

Then there's the green energy benefit—borrowing more money. Little reason that MacLean's magazine, in their—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I am compelled to ask the member to tell me how this relates back to Bill 14.

Mr. Jim McDonell: I'm making comments to our member from Kenora–Rainy River, talking about electrical rates. MacLean's magazine talked about “most likely to default” on our debts in Ontario.

I look forward to moving ahead to the committee on this bill. I think there are some needed changes on it. It is a place where we can possibly encourage more housing units and save some money, something that I don't think we've seen on the other side there. We've seen an urgency to waste money, and this is a place where we're not wasting money. So I think it's time to move ahead.

Interjections.

Mr. Jim McDonell: It's interesting to hear the comments here, because I think it's time to move ahead and look after the people of Ontario and not themselves.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1804.

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