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of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 11 September 2012

Mardi 11 septembre 2012

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 11 September 2012

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 11 septembre 2012

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

HEALTHY HOMES RENOVATION
TAX CREDIT ACT, 2012

LOI DE 2012 SUR LE CRÉDIT D'IMPÔT
POUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT DU LOGEMENT
AXÉ SUR LE BIEN-ÊTRE

Resuming the debate adjourned on September 6, 2012, on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 2, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to implement a healthy homes renovation tax credit / *Projet de loi 2, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2007 sur les impôts en vue de mettre en oeuvre le crédit d'impôt pour l'aménagement du logement axé sur le bien-être.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further debate?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I certainly understand that we're going to be debating the healthy homes renovation tax credit, but I would be remiss if, on the 11th anniversary of 9/11, we didn't acknowledge the amazing, heroic acts of both our American friends as well as many Canadians who were able to help out that day. I just wanted to say that we're thinking of you.

Bill 2, the healthy homes renovation tax credit: I'm happy to participate in the discussion. This bill, of course, was introduced on November 23 of last year. Almost 10 months later, we're still discussing this bill. Unfortunately, my concern with it is, it just seems to be another new bill, another additional program that the McGuinty Liberals are trying to tease Ontario voters with. I truly do not see it accomplishing the laudable goals that they make reference to. Part of it is just because the program, in my opinion, seems to be very flawed and very skewed to a very small percentage of people who will actually be able to access that.

Again, this is not a new program. We're seeing this time and time again where the government doesn't seem to understand that you cannot keep adding program after program, new spending after new spending, without actually looking at the other side of the balance and saying, "What do we need to re-jig? What do we need to remove in order to look at new programs?"

Subsequently, there are two primary problems that I see with Bill 2. The first, of course, is that it limits scarce taxpayer dollars to help a very, very small number of people, and I'll talk about that. Basically, it's because in order to qualify for the program, you have to spend a large chunk of your income first on the renovation to get a minute tax credit at the end. For the maximum return, a senior, or an individual with a disability, would have to spend \$10,000.

I know in my community the median income for a senior is about \$45,000. I think the average for an Ontario senior is \$45,000. If you look at individuals who have a disability, it is considerably less than that. So to assume that they would have the ability—indeed, the option—of spending up to \$10,000 for renovations to their homes—and we're making a big leap here, because I have questioned how many of them actually own homes when your income is sitting at \$45,000 or, on disability, even less. When you consider that the median income, as I say, is \$45,000 per senior, and for a single senior it's \$25,000, truly, how many of those individuals, of those households, are going to say, "Yes, I'm going to spend a quarter of my annual income, or almost half of my annual income," to get a renovation, and to get a paltry tax receipt, or tax break, at the end?

I ask the minister, through the Speaker: How many? I'd love to have this number. We have questions and answers at the end of our debate. How many seniors and households, individuals with a disability, do you truly anticipate will be able to take advantage of this program? I would argue that it's a very small number. In fact, it's outrageous, when you think about it.

What will happen is that people who need to make those renovations, who were planning to make those renovations, because they have a change in their health circumstances, because their family is able to step up and assist with perhaps a child or a sibling with a disability—they were going to make those renovations anyway. People don't put grab bars in their bathrooms because they want to; they put them in because they need to, because it is a necessity. In many cases, it's post a stroke or a fall, and a health professional has come in, done an assessment of the home and said, "This is what you need to do in order to bring your loved one home. You need to have that ramp. You need to have those grab bars. You need to make the following modifications." They're not waiting for Bill 2 to be passed. They want to bring their loved one home. So they're doing that if they have the ability to do it.

I know in my community, many times, service clubs and the United Way, individual agencies, are helping those residents make those modifications. In fact, Jack MacLaren, my colleague from Carleton–Mississippi Mills, was involved in such a program last December, where there was an individual who was essentially a bed-blocker in a hospital up in the Ottawa area, and he could not go home until a ramp was built. To his credit, Jack MacLaren got a group of individuals together—sorry, the MPP from Carleton–Mississippi Mills got a group of individuals together, got the lumber donated from a local business, and they built the ramp. Bless them. I’m pretty sure that they weren’t waiting for Bill 2 to be passed before they actually stepped up and got the work done.

0910

It’s just unfortunate that we have focused in on something that ultimately is not going to make a difference to seniors and to individuals with disabilities, because we all know there are lots of things that we could be focusing on. I’d love to have a discussion about additional home care, additional supports for people who are dealing with a sibling or a child who has a disability and wants to stay in the community, wants to stay in their home. Bill 2 isn’t going to do it. It’s not going to cover it off. It’s just an example where the McGuinty Liberals think a new program is a solution when in fact a new way of thinking is ultimately what we have to do.

I was listening yesterday during question period, and I must say I was kind of taken aback when the Premier, in responding to a question regarding economic development, economic motivation impetus—what we’re doing in Ontario—he talked about Bill 2. We were asking about what he was going to do about the job crisis in the province and he said, “... in order to help us create more jobs. We have a specific bill. It’s the healthy homes renovation tax credit, Speaker. It will support \$800 million in home renovation activity on an annual basis and create 10,500 new jobs every year. That’s a bill before this House right now.”

Really? We’re really trying to spin Bill 2 as an economic motivator in the province of Ontario? I can’t see it. I just can’t see it. It’s narrowed down to a small group of residents who were going to be doing that work anyway, because as I said before, we don’t put ramps and grab bars in unless we need them, unless there is a reason for it. So to say that Bill 2 is the economic motivator that the McGuinty Liberals are holding their hat on concerns me greatly.

In closing, I wanted to make a quick reference to the Drummond report. In it, it details Ontario’s fiscal situation. I know that the members on the other side don’t like to talk about the Drummond report, but the reality is, you did ask him to do it. You paid him to do it. He gave you hundreds of recommendations, and what I think you were doing was punting it down the road and saying, “We’ll deal with that later. We want to talk about that after the election. We’ll let Don Drummond and his committee look at this, review it,” and now you’ve completely ignored it.

In his report, one of the statements he made is that there is \$60 million in Liberal spending programs being introduced, and frankly I don’t buy the argument that Bill 2, with its nine or 10 pages, is the answer to Ontario’s job crisis. I can’t see it. I can’t see how you are justifying it as an economic bill. I’ll leave it at that.

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It’s always a pleasure to listen to the member from Dufferin–Caledon. Certainly she made some obvious points. Ours have been made. That is to say that this is going to affect very few seniors, and we’ve called on our friends across the aisle to actually come forward, once this plan is implemented, with how much money is actually spent, how much take-up there is, because our suspicion is that there will be very, very little.

Very few seniors can afford \$10,000. Very few seniors can even afford a few hundred dollars right now. Most of the seniors I know, who are struggling to stay in their homes, are doing so because of high energy costs and because they don’t have human help, human home care, people to come and do simple things like shopping or bathing or mowing the lawn. Those are the things that seniors need.

Remember that a vast majority of our seniors are struggling, and that in fact one in 10 senior women just about are living in poverty right now—one in 20 men. This is a terrible legacy for those who have built our province and our country. So there’s much more that could be done.

We’re not interested in holding up this bill. It’s a very small step, yes. Will it benefit a few people? Probably. They’re probably people who need it the least. But let’s get on with it, Madam Speaker. Let’s get this through, and let’s maybe hope that the government brings forward some meatier legislation, and I’m not talking about Bill 115.

I’ll leave it at that. We’re not putting up speakers for a reason. We want to get this House moving. We want to make this government work. Again, thanks to the member from Dufferin–Caledon. On with the show, I say.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments?

Ms. Tracy MacCharles: It is my pleasure to speak again to this bill, and I’m encouraged by the comments from the member from the third party about the need to get on with this bill. She’s right in one way, in that this is part of something. It’s part of a much bigger strategy about helping our seniors stay at home and helping them age at home with dignity and independence for those who choose to stay at home.

It absolutely will, Speaker, help create jobs through the renovations that seniors undertake under this bill. It does not require seniors to spend \$10,000. I want to clarify that for the member from Dufferin–Caledon. This bill covers renovations up to \$10,000, because some people, quite frankly, need more than a grab bar, and they will receive a bigger tax credit in that case. But for those

who need something smaller, they will have, of course, a smaller tax credit.

Speaker, as I said, this is part of a bigger strategy. We've recently announced more PSW care for people at home. That will primarily benefit seniors. We have an aging strategy in Ontario. We have more community supports in Ontario. So I think when we look at Bill 2, we have to look in the context of all the things we're doing to help those seniors who want to stay at home do that with grace, independence and dignity.

The member for Dufferin–Caledon questioned how many seniors own a home. This is about not just homeowners; this is about any tenant, any senior in their place of residence, being eligible for this credit. It's also important to emphasize that Bill 2 would allow people who own a home and have a senior at home, such as a parent or a grandparent, to claim the tax credit, so the application is much broader than what has been suggested here.

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: It's always a pleasure to follow our member from Dufferin–Caledon, and I tend to agree with her points that this Bill 2 has nothing to do with actually helping seniors and nothing to do with economic development.

Speaker, when I walked here into the front of the Legislature just the other day, I saw the graffiti that was on the statues out front. Now, thankfully our crew here are crackerjacks. The graffiti has been fixed within a couple of days. But it's more symbolic of the sentiment that's out there. People are disgruntled. They're unhappy. We have 600,000 men and women who woke up this morning without a job. We have 300,000 less manufacturing workers today than we had. Those are the issues that we need to be tackling.

This Bill 2 chips away at the fringes. It's more glow than show, Speaker. It does nothing—absolutely nothing—for the seniors. It does not do anything for the economy. Those 600,000 men and women with nothing to do this morning but go out and look for a job: Some of them have to come out here and express themselves, and I think that is the issue. The real core of the issue is that we have a disgruntled community. We have people who are fed up, who are tired of being unemployed, and this Bill 2 has absolutely no way to put those men and women to work. It does absolutely nothing to assist the seniors at all.

This bill should stop in its heels now. We should be finishing with this bill and moving on to the real core issues that are affecting society. That's what's happening out here, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton.

0920

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Madam Speaker, much has already been said about Bill 2: the weaknesses, the strengths. The underlying purpose to keep seniors in their home is, of course, a very important strategy and an

important issue to address, particularly when many seniors that I speak to want to be able to stay in their homes, want to be able to stay with their families. The fact that the renovation tax credit also assists loved ones who want to keep their parents in their home is a good thing. But the problem with the bill, like many people in this House have said, is that it doesn't cut to the heart of the problem. The root cause of many of our problems in this province is poverty, and we should address our remedies to poverty reduction.

The other area that I think is of paramount importance is an effective means of delivering health care and home care. The hospital-based model that we have been using to this point is not the most efficient mechanism to deliver care that would keep seniors in their home. So if we really want to address keeping seniors in their home, let's look at more community-based models like community health centres, additional funding for home care, additional funding for doctor visits at the home, nurse visits at the home. That way, we could really move towards a solution that truly puts seniors in their homes, living with dignity, and that addresses the issue directly. I think that's what we need to move towards.

The bill itself has some positive points, but again, it goes too short in terms of really addressing the issue of keeping seniors in their homes.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Dufferin–Caledon has two minutes to respond.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Thank you to the members for Parkdale–High Park, Pickering–Scarborough East, Nipissing and Bramalea–Gore–Malton.

I did notice that the one Liberal member who commented did not give me the number that I'm looking for and, actually, the number that the member from Parkdale–High Park is also looking for, which is—you must have done the background. You must have done the studies. What percentage of seniors, what percentage of individuals who have a disability, is going to be able to tap into this program? I think it's a valid question. It's part of the debate that we should be having as we talk about the validity of the healthy homes renovation tax credit. I think it's unfortunate that they are glossing over that because even they understand that the percentage of people who are going to participate in the program is minuscule.

The Healthy Homes Renovation Tax Credit Act, Bill 2, has additional spending and no savings line. Once again, we are dealing with additional spending and no balance on what you are removing, what you need to wind down, what programs aren't working, aren't efficient. I would argue that within a year, you will find that Bill 2 is one of those not-working, inefficient pieces of legislation that in fact is going to be more about PR spin than actually assisting seniors and individuals who have a disability, who are going to make the renovations, who are needing to make the renovations to be able to continue to live in their family home.

I'll leave you with this: Once again, if this, Bill 2, is what we're going to talk about, is what you're going to

hang your hat on as an economic development bill, we are in a sad, sad situation in the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate? The member for Prince Edward–Hastings.

Mr. Todd Smith: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's great to speak today. I wish it was something a little more substantial that we were speaking about, but as we've already heard this morning, Bill 2 is not substantial by any means.

It is a privilege to get up and speak in the House. There have been a lot of great visionaries who have spoken in this Legislature, and every time I stand up, I think of those great visionaries and those leaders who made the tough decisions to move the province forward—people like Bill Davis, John Robarts and Mike Harris. And now we have this Premier—not quite in the same class, that's for sure.

This Premier has failed to ever meet the challenges of our times. Bill 2 is just part of this legislative agenda, this smokescreen, to make it appear that something is happening over there. It's all about politics; nothing to do with policy. There are 600,000 men and women who woke up in this province this morning who don't have a job to go to—600,000. Some 25,000 people, just last month—that's a town about the size of Owen Sound—lost their jobs. The numbers just came out a couple of days ago. So, does this government bring in a jobs plan? No. They bring in another fluffy little bill like Bill 2 that does nothing to solve the problem. Some 16.5% of people who are under 25 are youth; they're out of work today. These are stats that really send a message, or at least should send a message, to this Premier that it's time to start making some tough decisions in Ontario.

So, are we talking about reforming apprenticeships? We are on this side. But are they doing that over there? Absolutely not. We need to create some high-paying, really good jobs in the skilled trades. This is just a government that's feathering its nest with putting its buddies at the College of Trades. This government's running a \$15.3-billion deficit and it has doubled the debt in the last nine years. Are they tackling that? No. They're bringing out Bill 2, which is a fluffy piece of legislation that's not going to have any effect at all on our seniors, which I believe is what it's aimed at doing. We'll get a little bit further into who's going to benefit from Bill 2 a little bit later on, and it's nobody. There's nobody.

I don't know how many people paid attention over the last couple of weeks to United States politics, but we did have the Republican convention a couple of weeks ago. Last week we had the Democratic convention as well. So I'd like to take this moment to quote former Democratic President of the United States Bill Clinton. He's no raging right-winger—

Ms. Tracy MacCharles: On a point of order, Madam Speaker: With all due respect, I refer to section 23(b) of the standing orders that the speaker in debate should be adhering to the bill at hand. I'd appreciate consideration of that.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. I just remind the member to refer to the bill being debated.

Mr. Todd Smith: I'd be happy to do that. I just thought the members on the other side would be happy to hear a Bill Clinton quote. Can I give you the Bill Clinton quote? This is what Bill Clinton had to say last week. Bill Clinton said this: "We've got to deal with this big long-term debt problem or it will deal with us. It will gobble up a bigger and bigger percentage of the federal budget we'd rather spend on education and health care and science and technology. We've got to deal with it." Bill 2 does absolutely nothing to deal with the big debt problems in Ontario. So Bill Clinton gets it; this side of the House gets it; but unfortunately and it's quite shocking that that Premier over there doesn't get it.

I talked to a lot of seniors over the summer at different fairs and events that I was at, including one just the other night at Moira Place in Tweed. These are seniors who are on a fixed income. The average old-age security payment every month is \$540. The average Canadian pension plan payment every month is \$788. So you factor in property taxes or rent or food or gas or the biggest rising expenditure in the province of Ontario, thanks to the McGuinty government—electricity prices: How in the world are seniors expected to get the maximum out of this benefit? They have to spend \$10,000 that they don't have to try and get 15% back. Of course, there's the 13% HST that you would pay on that, so really we're talking about 2% here. That's all we're talking about when it comes to this bill: 2%. That's why they called it Bill 2, perhaps.

It is an insult to every senior on a fixed income in this province to pretend that this laughable excuse for a piece of legislation is actually going to help them. We're talking about the proverbial band-aid on the bullet hole here when it comes to Bill 2, and it's not going to help the fiscal situation in the province. We need real action on the economy, and we're simply not getting it. If we want to create jobs for contractors and subcontractor trades, then we have to reform the apprenticeship system. We've talked about that. It baffles me that the government can't seem to understand that the number of working plumbers, electricians, mechanics and millwrights is directly related to how many young people are apprenticing in those trades, and there are just not enough of them. That's why we want to expand the apprenticeship program, reduce the ratio, so we can get more skilled trades workers out there on the job. The average age of an electrician in Ontario is 65 years old, and I heard the other day that the average age of a stonemason is 73—73 years old; that's the average age of a stonemason.

0930

I was at a graduation ceremony in June at Moira Secondary School, and this young lad walked up onto the stage and went to the microphone—each of them would say what they were going to do next year, if they were going to university or college or whatever. He said he was going to go become a stonemason. I said, "Now, there's a kid who's got his act together because he's

guaranteed to get a job.” His name is Jake Anderson. I went over and introduced myself and said, “Good luck at school because you’re guaranteed to make a lot of money.” There’s just not enough of these people out there.

So here we are, anyway, debating Bill 2, which is a bill that we can’t afford, aimed at people who can’t afford it, and it’s attempting to create work for tradespeople whom we don’t even have. Let me think about that again. It’s a bill that’s going to spend money that we don’t have, aimed at people who can’t afford it, and creating jobs for tradespeople who don’t exist. Makes sense to me—sarcastic.

Mr. John Yakabuski: We got it, Todd.

Mr. Todd Smith: Thank you.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I know you’ve got to tell them.

Mr. Todd Smith: I just wanted Hansard to realize.

Anyway, this is a cheap and cynical ploy just to grab votes, and that’s what it’s all about.

Let’s get down to the brass tacks of this again. I think the last time I spoke to this at second reading, I called it the wealthy homes tax credit, not the healthy homes tax credit, and really it does only pertain to people who have money. How can you go out there, a senior these days, and spend \$10,000? They just don’t have it.

Ms. Tracy MacCharles: You don’t have to spend that amount.

Mr. Todd Smith: I realize you don’t have to spend it, but to get the maximum benefit, you have to spend \$10,000. Thank you for paying attention, though.

We’re talking about: You spend \$10,000, you’re going to get 15% back. You’ve got to pay 13% to the government for HST anyway, so we’re talking about 2% here. Then, of course, you figure in the tax compliance cost. I talk to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business quite often, and I was speaking with the CFIB when one of their member surveys came out. They were stating that the average small business owner spends between six and 10 hours a week dealing with regulations, the bulk of which is tax compliance. So, in addition to a bill that we can’t afford, aimed at people who can’t afford it, creating jobs for tradespeople who don’t exist, we’re now adding another layer of red tape to the system. That’s what’s happening with this bill.

Somewhere there’s someone sitting in a chair listening to this, and it makes sense to them. I worry that unfortunately it’s the guy in the Premier’s chair. It just doesn’t make any sense at all. We’ve got 600,000 Ontarians out of work; 25,000 of them—a town the size of Trenton—lost their jobs last month in Ontario. Small business confidence is at the lowest point in Ontario that it’s been in 14 months. The leaders of this province are gathered in this chamber right now. We’re not discussing how to put those 600,000 Ontarians back to work. We’re not talking about how we can improve the conditions for small business in Ontario. We’re talking about a 2% rebate—2%—on a home renovation bill that almost no one it’s targeted to will actually be able to afford. That’s what we’re talking about.

The province used to make tough decisions back in the good old days. Now, unfortunately, this government is shirking its tough decisions. This province used to have a vision, and unfortunately now it seems it fails to see beyond the end of its nose.

I look forward to the comments on my discussion on Bill 2 this morning. Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Questions and comments?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I’m happy to talk on the healthy homes renovation tax credit today. I actually was at an event on the weekend, and spoke to a senior. He approached me and he said that he and his wife live at home, and he’s having a very difficult time. He actually had a walker and he let me lift the walker. It was extremely heavy. I think I’m a healthy, middle-aged woman, and here I am, I couldn’t even lift this walker. It was maybe about, I’d say, 40 pounds. His concern was that he is having trouble lifting this walker up two steps to get into his home. So he said, “You know, Teresa, I would really appreciate if you could look into if there’s some kind of program to help me. I need a ramp. I need to build a ramp in my home so I can at least stay in my home longer.”

So the light went on, and I thought, “Gosh, I could tell him about the healthy homes renovation tax credit, but that’s not going to help him.” In his case, he’s a very low-income-earner senior. His wife is also very ill, and he’s looking after his granddaughter. So in those cases we’re talking about, this is a bill that’s going to help some people, and it’s a very small sum. It’s not going to help the seniors who are really in need, who have those economic challenges that they are facing day in and day out and are trying to stay at home.

I think if this bill was really intended to help all seniors with physical disabilities who can’t afford to remain in their homes, it should have been written differently. Thank you, Speaker. I just wanted to add that to the bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Peterborough.

Mr. Jeff Leal: Thank you very much, Speaker. It’s always a privilege for me to hear the remarks of my very learned friend from Prince Edward–Hastings and have the opportunity to chat about Bill 2.

I personally am a great admirer of Mr. Davis’s, but I remind everybody that, during his 14 years as Premier, he had 14 straight deficits.

Interjection: Fourteen.

Mr. Jeff Leal: That might be a fact that my learned friend from Prince Edward–Hastings didn’t acknowledge during that. That was 14 straight deficits.

Let me tell you, I had the opportunity to be with my friend in Stirling a couple of months ago. I was driving into Stirling and got to see Home Hardware; that’s right on the main street there in Stirling, along with Stirling Creamery—a great spot.

But when I was driving into Stirling on this day, I didn’t see the famous sign for Rob Ray. Rob Ray had a

very distinguished career in the National Hockey League and played for the Buffalo Sabres, but somehow I think they've taken the Rob Ray sign down.

But when you get into Stirling, there are a number of family-owned businesses that are in the hardware business. I took the opportunity to go into Home Hardware there, and I could see such things as grab bars, and I could see the anticipation of those great citizens in Stirling, Ontario. Once this bill is passed, Bill 2, they'll be running into Home Hardware and they'll be buying those things to renovate their houses to make sure that mom and dad can stay in those homes longer through the healthy homes renovation tax credit.

I know that's something my good friend from Prince Edward–Hastings just missed when he made his speech this morning. These are the kinds of things that will be helpful dramatically through this bill. It has been estimated that 380,000 seniors across the province of Ontario will take advantage of this. Those fine citizens in Stirling, Ontario, will benefit from this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: I did listen to the member from Prince Edward–Hastings, and I think he was right in his assessment and dismissiveness of this bill. When you look at it, he talked about the red tape and his business friends and the regulations that are in place.

I think I'll just draw a little bit more attention here. Why are they actually doing this? First of all, we know there's an aging population. Secondly, we know that they are not building one new long-term-care bed in Ontario.

What they're doing is, they're downloading all of the responsibility to the family. Then they're saying that for community care access centres there's no money. There are not enough hours for any of my constituents who are looking for care in the home.

This is the biggest shell game I've ever seen. The tragedy with seniors is told more wholesomely and fully in an article in the Toronto Star, which is usually very complimentary to the Liberals. Here's what it says: Ontario is the worst in Canada "when it comes to growing poverty [and] increasing income inequity." This article goes on to say—and the report is called *Falling Behind*. It's a real commentary on Ontario today. The article says: "It is time for Ontarians—including policy-makers—to face the disturbing facts about inequality in our province." It goes on to say that it's "growing poverty and cuts to social programs." I'm not making this up. This is the Toronto Star saying that Ontario today is one of the worst provinces in Canada when it comes to the amount and growing of poverty.

That's shameful. Who is most affected by this? Often it's seniors, our parents, the people who don't ever call on the government. They're the ones who built this country.

0940

They should be ashamed with Bill 2. It's nothing but something in the window to say they're addressing the issue of seniors and poverty in Ontario. It's shameful.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Madam Speaker, picking up on the comments of my colleague, I read the report as well, and there are some very startling issues if you look at what Ontario's position and the rest of Canada's is in terms of our ability to address the growing inequality, the growing poverty in our country. At one point we were leading the country, as a province, in terms of our investments in addressing inequality, and particularly "equality of opportunity." That was language that was used in the report: that to balance the equality of opportunity, investment needs to be made into various programs and services.

The hardest hit when it comes to poverty would be those who are most vulnerable. Those who are most vulnerable would be our two most vulnerable demographics, the young and the very old, because both face obstacles when it comes to care, accessing resources, employment—obviously, when you're very young, you can't even work. The very old face the very same issues of access to resources, ability to work. When you're on a fixed income, it's particularly troubling that the rising cost of living would impact you even more. That's obvious.

Again, looking at the perspective of seniors living in their homes, in the context of poverty and the context of how we address poverty reduction so that seniors can live in their home, this bill obviously doesn't address that. I think that's just a comment for us to reflect on so that we do come up with some bills, come up with some legislation that really addresses how we can address those who are facing poverty and their inability to face the rising cost of living.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Prince Edward–Hastings has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Todd Smith: Thanks to all who provided comments, as well.

The member from London–Fanshawe, speaking on the significance of more home care: Bill 2 doesn't provide increased home care for seniors.

I was up in the northern part of my riding just the other day for a 95th birthday. Gerald Trumble is his name, and it was in Gilmour, at the community centre. There were a number of seniors who were there, of course, and I was speaking with them. That is the biggest concern out there right now: "Are we going to be able to get the care that we want and need in our home?"

I was speaking with a woman named Irene, who has two steel knees. She was telling me about the fact that she can only get care for one and a half hours a week, and she can hardly even move around her house. The care just isn't there because the money is being wasted at the provincial level on boondoggles like Ornge and cancelling power plants for \$190 million so we can save four Liberal seats. The priorities are in the wrong place with this government.

I'd like to thank the member from Peterborough as well, and I can assure him that the Rob Ray sign is still there in Stirling. Matt Cooke's name is on it as well. Stirling, of course, is Hockeyville, and I know that the Home Hardware on West Front Street was happy for the plug this morning.

The member from Durham and the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton spoke about the gap that exists in the Toronto Star story, indicating that Ontario is the worst in Canada when it comes to growing poverty. Is the government doing anything to address this problem? Are the policy-makers doing anything over there to address this problem?

Ms. Tracy MacCharles: Yes.

Mr. Todd Smith: The member from Scarborough East says yes. This bill certainly does not do that. This bill is just about more spending, and it's about more window dressing to make it appear that the government is doing anything.

As I said earlier, Bill 2 is all about window dressing for this government. It does absolutely nothing to help seniors get the care that they need when they need it the most.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate? The member for Barrie.

Mr. Rod Jackson: Speaker, thanks for the opportunity to rise and speak again to the House about issues that affect seniors in Ontario. The topic is especially important, given that seniors make up 14.6% of our population. This percentage, by anybody's estimation, is going to skyrocket in the coming years. Thus, determining efficient, cost-effective ways of ensuring well-being to our seniors and to alleviate the financial stresses that they see and they face now and in the future is a worthwhile and necessary cause, certainly.

Yet by pursuing Bill 2, the healthy homeowners act, the Liberal government downplays the seriousness of the well-being of our senior citizens by producing a bill that is just window dressing masquerading as an initiative that serves Ontario's seniors. I'll tell you this: There are a lot of storefronts in downtown Barrie that could use some window dressing—

Interjection: Right across Ontario.

Mr. Rod Jackson: —and right across Ontario. In reality, it only helps a wealthy few who don't need it and ignores most of the real issues that seniors actually are facing today.

I've called this the "wealthy homes tax credit" before, for good reason. Let's be honest: These are tough economic times in Ontario; the Premier pointed that out yesterday himself. So I'm sure that most seniors who hear about the possibility of Bill 2 becoming law think, "Hey, I could really use a \$1,500 tax rebate"—that is, until they realize that to get the full, maximum benefit of it, they need to spend \$10,000 and it has to be on home renovations focused solely on mobility, functionality and accessibility, to receive that credit.

Given that the median income for seniors for this rebate is \$25,000 a year for singles, they would have to

spend half their income to receive a measly \$1,500 maximum at the end of their tax credit. That seems like a lot to ask.

When I've talked to seniors in Barrie, they say that they need their entire income for the everyday necessities of life, and there's little left over for expensive house renovations. Most of us don't have a lot left over for expensive home renovations, never mind people on a fixed income.

It would seem that there's only a small percentage of wealthy seniors who have the means to shell out \$10,000 or more for the home renovations—focused solely on things such as mobility, functionality and accessibility—needed to make this tax credit worthwhile.

This bill excludes most of Ontario's senior population, as other speakers have mentioned. We don't really know the true number of the people that it actually affects—namely, those with an average or lesser income, who could use financial assistance the most—in favour of only helping the wealthy, who need it the least and have the means to make those renovations, regardless of a tax credit.

Why are the Liberals planning on spending \$60 million by March, if this bill passes, on something that only helps those who probably don't even really need it? It sounds like more of the same ways that the government became known for, the waste that has put us on the path to a \$30-billion deficit if we don't take action now.

Some of my Liberal colleagues have argued that a bill that helps some is good enough, and that the fact that this bill may not help most seniors is not a good reason to oppose it. I disagree. It is exactly this "good enough" philosophy or mediocrity that has brought Ontario into this tough position of having to cut a giant deficit. Ontarians deserve and want value for their tax dollars, not a half-hearted, feel-good attempt to fix social issues by simply throwing money at them.

This bill seems to exemplify why our health care system is one of the most expensive in the world and yet ranks below our peers in quality. Among OECD countries, Canada is second from the bottom only to the United States, and even they exceed us in some measures. Ontario deserves better. Bill 2 is not good enough.

Let's face it: Thanks to hardships such as ongoing tax hikes—despite this Liberal government's promises not to raise taxes, I might add—and rapidly rising energy costs—not aided by this government's misguided focus on green energy experimentation such as wind farms—seniors are facing a rising cost of living every single day. This is not going to get any better if we continue down this path, spiralling towards a \$30-billion deficit. Bill 2 only slaps a band-aid on a wound that needs stitches.

It's easy to agree that we are all 100% for supporting the well-being of Ontario's seniors; that's obvious. To suggest otherwise is ridiculous. But let's make sure that we're all actually helping seniors—all of them, not just a few of them, not just the wealthy seniors. Beyond the obvious fact that most seniors could not even afford the necessary renovations to receive the tax credit, even if

they have the money, the tax credit does not apply to some of the things that seniors need most for living. This tax break doesn't cover important things like walking devices or wheelchairs, or general repairs like roofing, plumbing or electricity, or services such as snow removal. You know how many calls I get from seniors looking for options for snow removal because they can't afford to clear their driveways for an ambulance to pull in, in case of emergency?

These are financial costs of everyday life in Ontario. These are the types of burdens that seniors have been telling me they actually need help with, and these are the costs that we should be focusing on. After all, what's the point of having wider hallways for your wheelchair if you can't afford to buy one in the first place? What's the point of spending half your yearly income on a wheel-in shower if you can't afford your hydro bill?

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If we truly focused on helping seniors, we would be debating bills that target the high costs of energy; ways to make our health care system more efficient; ways to provide more beds for a seniors' home; and providing the resources to enable better home care—just to name a few—not spending months of valuable time debating a costly, ineffective and wasteful bill that does little to address the true stresses that seniors face on a day-to-day basis in Ontario.

This seems to me like another example of mismanagement and irresponsibility on the part of this government—the same mismanagement that allowed eHealth, Ornge and even the upcoming ARL, that is spiraling out of control; the same as the looming \$30-billion deficit that is before us.

Mr. John O'Toole: What's the ARL?

Mr. Rod Jackson: The ARL is the air-rail link.

Mr. John O'Toole: Oh, yes.

Mr. Rod Jackson: Yes.

Let me take a moment to speak about the cost of this bill, or rather, \$60 million by March alone, not to mention that the program has not been costed out for yearly expenses. Bill 2 may produce some expensive surprises at the end of the year.

There's also no mention of where this funding for this bill would come from—sort of an important point when this government is running a huge debt. Usually, you figure that stuff out before you spend it, not after you spend it.

These two things seem to be both odd and irresponsible, given the extensive reforms necessary to keep our province afloat and our finances afloat, as dictated in the recent Drummond report. Remember the Drummond report?

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: I do.

Mr. Rod Jackson: That's good.

By the way, given that Mr. Drummond was given \$1,500 a day for his work, you'd think this government would take the suggestions of their dear, well-compensated friend maybe just a little bit more seriously.

If we continue down this road, we'll not only be neglecting the well-being of seniors today, but we will be ill-equipped to help the quickly aging population of middle-class Ontarians who are concerned about the adequacy of their retirement income and their levels of coverage. With a growing number of seniors, it is not only important that we find ways to alleviate excess financial strains but that we get it right. We can't afford not to, and this bill certainly cannot afford not to get it right.

Right now, most middle-income Ontarians are not saving enough to guarantee a decent income and quality of life into retirement. Given the tough reality of the economy that Ontarians face, it means that Ontarians will continue to have little money left over to save for retirement in the future.

Just recently, I visited a few retirement homes. They now have a new tax, or fee, or whatever you'd like to call it today—\$10 a month. They're already complaining about 10 extra dollars, because they can't increase their income. They're on a fixed income. You can't keep squeezing these people. You've got to actually help them where it means something.

I feel like it would be impossible to justify this expensive bill to ordinary Ontarians who are just wondering why we seem to be spending enormous amounts of money giving tax breaks to the rich, who could afford to benefit from this bill, when they are worried about putting food on their table, keeping their kids in university and how they're even supposed to save enough for retirement when their job may be on the line; nor could I justify the healthy homeowners act to a caregiver who supports an elderly parent living at home and is worried about how he or she will be able to pay the hydro bill and fix that leaky plumbing in the basement. He or she can't afford the \$10,000 in renovations that would do nothing to increase the value of their house. It seems ridiculous to say, "Well, she could spend less and still get a break."

Let's be honest: A 15% tax credit on even a \$500 investment is only a paltry \$75, not even enough to get groceries for a month—

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: It might fill your car.

Mr. Rod Jackson: It might fill your car, yes.

Enough is enough. Ontarians want and deserve better. It's time that this government starts addressing the real issues at hand. Stop giving window dressing to real problems. Let's talk about stimulating the economy and getting our spending back on track. It's time for this government to remember that value and quality matter and pay off in the long run.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Parkdale-High Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I listened to the member from Barrie. He made some important points. Certainly, if anybody read that report on the state of Ontario, we would be shocked to discover that we are 10th out of 10 in just about every marker in terms of economic or ethical health, I would say, because any province that's willing to tolerate the levels of poverty and joblessness we are needs to give its head a shake.

We hear from across the aisle that the government has been doing something about this. Well, Madam Speaker, they've had nine years—nine years—only one of which has been a minority government. The rest has been a majority government. They could have done anything they wanted to do legislatively, and yet, nine years later, we are in this situation in Ontario.

And seniors play a part in that, because many of our seniors live in poverty. Let me tell you that the two reasons that seniors have to leave their homes have nothing to do with this tax credit. (1) It's that they can't afford their energy bills or their property taxes, and those are significant; or (2) that they need human help in the home. To the member who says, "Well, it's not just about the \$10,000 that you put in; you can actually spend less and get a tax credit," quite frankly, putting grab bars around a bathtub is not the reason seniors can stay in their homes or have to leave their homes. That's proven. Not only that, but if you look at Quebec, who did it better, you can actually get the money up front for doing some necessary renovations. This doesn't even kick in until tax time, so you have to put the money up front, and seniors don't have any money to put up front. They barely have money, many of them, to pay the rent, pay the mortgage and pay for food. He's absolutely right. This is window-dressing. However, here's our point in the New Democratic Party: It helps a few; very few.

We say, let's move on. We're trying to make this government work. We want to move this legislation through so we can get to what we really need, we hope.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments?

Mrs. Teresa Piruzza: It gives me great pleasure to speak today to this tax credit in support of seniors. I've heard from seniors in my riding who want to stay in their homes. We know that one of the greatest reasons for senior hospital visits is falls, falls that could be avoided by grab bars, by lifts, by specific medical supplies.

This is but one support that will assist seniors. Let's look at some of the supports that we've provided: energy and property tax credits, personal income tax cuts, an Ontario sales tax credit, property tax grants and improvements to home care services. These are all elements of our Aging at Home strategy, a strategy that contains a number of elements to help seniors stay healthy and to live with dignity and independence in the comfort of their own homes.

I was a member of the committee that reviewed this bill, where delegations came forward from seniors' groups, from suppliers, from contractors, all of whom are supportive and want to see this move forward. I was there when delegations were aghast with the holdups that were taking place at committee over this bill.

We heard from the March of Dimes of Canada, who said that this was a needed complementary tool; from CARP, who polled their membership, over half of whom indicated they would use this tax credit; from the Alzheimer Society, who told us that they congratulated the government for taking a step forward in helping

seniors, that this responded directly to the concerns they hear from caregivers. We heard from the Ontario Home Builders' Association, who called it a tremendous opportunity; Motion Specialties, who indicated that this would be a welcome program. For all the comments against this bill that we're not providing enough, I say again: At least this government has a strategy. Through various elements outlined above, we are helping thousands of our seniors throughout the province.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Northumberland—Quinte West.

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: Again, I've spoken to this bill before, but my esteemed colleague from Barrie makes some very good points, that, again, this is just window dressing, and this government has become very good at dressing up the windows. It's almost like Christmas, and you're a little kid walking by the store and you see all the great little things that Home Hardware has to offer, but even though there are great items in the Home Hardware, both in Stirling—and I would also suggest there is a great Home Hardware in Campbellford, on Grand Road. My esteemed colleague from Peterborough might want to check it out. It's a new facility, and it's great to have them in town. They do wonderful things.

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But getting to the point of what this bill actually does for seniors: Again, the NDP and ourselves make some very strong points that the individuals who are going to actually access this benefit already have the money to invest in home renovation so that they can stay in their homes. It sounds good. I mean, I truly believe that this government's intentions were there to do the right thing, but as we've seen over and over again, this government doesn't think through the process and doesn't think about the actual impact it is going to have.

Again, when I was door-knocking, and when I'm out in my riding even to this day, Madam Speaker, seniors on fixed incomes cannot afford to even stay in their homes because of the skyrocketing price of utilities. So this bill is nothing more than window dressing.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member from Hamilton East—Stoney Creek.

Mr. Paul Miller: I also agree with my colleague from the opposition that this is another half-measure bill brought forward by the Liberals: \$10,000—who can afford \$10,000 with seniors?

Madam Speaker, 20% of the people in my riding live below the poverty level; they can't even pay their hydro bill. These are the people who live in terrible conditions, housing that requires more insulation, houses that need new windows, things like this. They can't afford that.

I don't know where this government thinks that this is going to be beneficial. It's only going to be beneficial to maybe the upper middle class or even higher. They can afford—who can afford to borrow \$10,000 in the first place to get the work done?

If you borrow the \$10,000, then you've got to pay the tradespeople to put it in, and they're going to charge HST on their services. It eliminates the whole process.

Then they say, “Well, you don’t have to spend \$10,000. You can spend \$2,000 on something for your home.” What kind of benefit are you going to get on \$2,000 after you pay HST and you borrow the money to do it? There are very small, small savings.

It reminds me of the bill they brought forward for sports. They’re going to give every family \$50 a year or \$100, depending on the sport. I could sharpen my skates maybe five or six times when I played hockey for \$50. What is that going to do? I mean, it’s almost an insult. If you really want to help somebody, maybe help them with their cost of signing up to play, their registration fees, if you’re going to do something. Take the HST off of that.

But the things they’re doing are just to please the public, to make it look like they’re helping seniors, like they’re helping children. They’re doing all these things. It’s just a fog screen they’re putting forward. These things are ineffective. They’re small. They’re Timbits, if you want to call it that way. I hope the public is not buying it and that they understand that this is another ruse by the Liberal government.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Barrie has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Rod Jackson: Thank you for the comments from my colleagues. There’s one thing that’s certainly clear, and it’s that it’s time to get serious about this stuff. This is a half measure, clearly, that doesn’t really do what it says it’s going to do. It doesn’t benefit seniors in any wholesome, fulsome way to stay in their homes.

The things that are kicking seniors out of their homes are the fact that they can’t afford their insurance, they can’t afford the roofing, they can’t afford their property taxes, they can’t afford the upkeep of their property. They can’t afford the roofing; they can’t afford the average things that all of us pay for in our homes. What does this do to help them with that?

What about people who, when I go to their homes, they tell me about how—I tell this story a lot, but it’s really telling—they actually have their finances out of jars? They have a jar for the food and a jar for their heating and a jar for their rent and a jar for whatever else. When one of those jars runs out, they’ve got to go into the next jar. That means they’re sacrificing something, something like their rent that month, something like their food that month. They’re sacrificing something. What about helping them?

What about helping the seniors that are actually in homes who have already been kicked out of their homes? You’re actually charging them \$10 a month on a whole different subject. So you’re actually taking money from them, too. Is that to pay for this? I don’t know.

These are the people, my mom and dad, your mom and dad, and some of these people sitting here in this room, like the member from Durham perhaps, who have a real concern about where this is going. We need to take care of this growing number of seniors in our province, and we’re not doing it in a real fulsome, wholesome way.

If you really want to get serious and you really want to help them and you really want to make a difference, do

something about it. Don’t put window dressing on it. Actually stand up, take a stand and do something to help these people stay in their homes.

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

Mr. John O’Toole: To put things in context, today is September 11, and the member from Dufferin–Caledon, in her opening remarks, reminded each of us how important today is in terms of protecting democracy.

Isn’t it ironic that today we’re also going to vote on Bill 115, which is expunging rights of teachers, some of whom are here today? I think that this speaks very loudly to Premier McGuinty. This bill number 2 is an example—and I’m going to use some of the terms that have been used by people here. It’s a bill of half measures, it’s a bill of window dressing, and it’s a bill—some people say it’s a lot to do about nothing.

The real issue here—

Interjections.

Mr. John O’Toole: See how they’ve come alive now. They haven’t said a word this morning—not a word this morning—and now, all of a sudden, they’ve been engaged. It’s so sad when you think of it—of the real goals and what the plan here is of this government. It is tragic now that they’re barracking over there.

I’ll put it in a broader context. Here’s what the bill is. Listen up, and you’ll actually learn something that’s actually true.

This bill number 2 is a healthy homes tax credit. Here’s what’s really happening: They have not built one single long-term-care bed, so there’s nowhere for seniors to go.

Interjections.

Mr. John O’Toole: When you have your time, you can explain all that you did.

The next thing they did, Madam Speaker, was, they actually started to regulate. They had a regulation to govern retirement homes. Now here’s the issue as well.

Interjection.

Mr. John O’Toole: Listen to Mr. Duguid over there.

The retirement homes issue is this: There isn’t five cents of government money in a retirement home, and yet by setting this up, there’s going to be a tax on seniors in retirement homes now, thanks to the McGuinty government. They’ve increased the costs of even retirement homes, but there’s no provincial money in them.

The context of Bill 2 is this: They’re going to say Aging at Home—that’s the strategy. Now, what does the Aging at Home strategy really mean? It actually means aging alone at home, because if you listen to your constituents, the seniors, they’re going to tell you they can’t get any hours of care. What are the people in remote and rural Ontario going to do—have a nurse drive for four hours so they can get private-duty nursing or care?

This bill is nothing but window dressing, as has been said by almost all of the speakers this morning.

In a broader sense, an article that I referred to earlier, dated August 30, in the Toronto Star—and its title is this: “Ontario Worst for Inequality.” It starts out by pro-

claiming that, under Premier McGuinty, “Ontario is the worst in Canada when it comes to growing poverty, increasing income inequality....”

It goes on to say, “‘It is time for Ontarians—including our policy-makers—to face the disturbing facts about inequality in our province,’ says the report entitled *Falling Behind: Ontario’s Backslide into Widening Inequality, Growing Poverty and Cuts to Social Programs.*”

That’s the real statement here, and that’s why they’re so silent.

They really have become quite elitist, I believe, in their attitude that we don’t need the teachers anymore. “We don’t need the public sector. We don’t need anyone. We can do it. I’m Premier McGuinty, and I’m infallible,” or whatever.

My point is this: This bill is just exactly what most people understand it to be: window dressing.

Here’s the real issue. To get the full credit of the \$1,000, it’s important to recognize that you have to spend \$10,000. Now, if you spend \$10,000, you’re going to have spent \$1,300 in tax—that’s with the HST—because there’s tax on the labour and the services, and there’s tax on the permits, all of which is revenue to the province. But what are they giving you back? They’re giving you part of your HST back.

The seniors who can afford to do this—it’s shameful. This government should be ashamed of what they’ve done to seniors. They’re ramming this stuff down their throats like they are on many occasions to a lot of issues.

So I stand here myself, listening to the speeches in the last month or two—

Interjection.

Mr. John O’Toole: I’m quite concerned that even the cabinet ministers that are here and yelling back to me, trying to overshout the person that’s trying to make some input—what I want you to do here is this: Take a second look at this bill. Take a look at this bill, and try and actually get it right. Give the HST back to people, at least.

I’m quite amazed, Madam Speaker, that they’ve been silent for the last couple of minutes. I hope they’re contrite that what I’ve said—all of which is true. There are less long-term-care beds, less home care, and less money for health care in this province, especially drugs. Who’s going to be most affected? The seniors.

This bill, which in the budget is forecast to be \$60 million, is a drop in the bucket of what’s really needed to make homes accommodate persons to age in their own homes, which I believe would be the preferred choice. But there have to be other options for people that are available and accessible to the families in Ontario today. Most of us should reflect for a moment and think of our own parents or loved ones or those with special needs, because they’re the ones that are being left behind, as referred to in the article that I cited in the Toronto Star. The Toronto Star is generally very amicable with the Liberal Party. In fact, I would call the Toronto Star the Liberal briefing notes. Basically, that’s what they are.

The founder of the Toronto Star, Joe Atkinson, was honoured this past weekend in my riding because he was actually born in my riding, in Newcastle. “Holy Joe” is what they called him. He was a wonderful person, a caring person. You tell me in your two-minute response to my remarks here this morning—

Mr. Paul Miller: There won’t be any.

Mr. John O’Toole: Anyway, in my two-minute response, I want to hear them say that I’m right.

Interjection: You’ll be waiting a long time, John.

Mr. John O’Toole: I’d like them to refute what I’ve said. I put it out there. Say what they’re going to do; that’s what debate is about.

Bill 2 was introduced in November, right after the election. It was kind of an olive branch to the seniors, who are being left behind. We’ve been talking about it for ages now. November 23 was when it was introduced. It’s quite a small bill in terms of what it actually does, but there are so many rules of how you qualify for the money, what qualifies and what does not qualify. If it increases the value of your home, it doesn’t qualify.

Interjections.

Mr. John O’Toole: Obviously this gentleman from Ottawa hasn’t read the bill. I question if he has even read it. They’ve just got the speaking notes handed to them, and they read them. That’s all they do. It’s shameful. I tell you, I’m waiting until this afternoon, because there will be a few people here this morning and this afternoon when the vote occurs, and I want to see what they are really standing up for—the people of Ontario, or are they just absent without excuses?

Anyway, Madam Speaker, I’d like to have had more time.

Third reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): It being close to 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It’s my pleasure to introduce and to welcome the mother and older brother of page Zakhar Husak, Ms. Danusia Burdyk-Husak and Lukian Husak, who are visiting us today in the gallery.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): As always, we welcome our guests.

Mr. Jim McDonell: I’d like to introduce a representative from the OSSTF, Heather Megill, who is in our gallery behind us. Welcome.

Hon. John Milloy: I’d like to welcome Leah Nelson. She’s in the members’ gallery today. She’s a first-year global and political studies student at York University who’s visiting Queen’s Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome. Further introductions?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I would like to introduce Fred Hahn, head of CUPE Ontario, in today’s audience.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further introductions? Seeing none, I would ask that our pages gather to be introduced. It's too easy. It's too easy.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would ask that all members join me in welcoming this group of legislative pages, serving for the first session of the 40th Parliament: from Etobicoke Centre, Christina Boothby; from Thornhill, Roberto Fusciardi; from Oak Ridges–Markham, Parnika Godkhindi; from Mississauga South, Jasper Hébert; from Hamilton Centre, Zakhar Husak; from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, Patrick Kyte; from Brampton–Springdale, Simran Mann; from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, Sydney McCluskey; from Mississauga–Brampton South, Sashin Narayan; from Ottawa Centre, Mathilde Papillon; from Ajax–Pickering, Katherine Parker; from Whitby–Oshawa, Andrew Rudback; from Oxford, Jenna Rutherford; from Niagara Falls, Ethan Seaver; from Peterborough, Maya Stibbards-Lyle; from Mississauga–Erindale, Maggie Street; from Beaches–East York, Caelius Tarantino; from Trinity–Spadina, Leo Toueg; from Scarborough–Agincourt, Anna Wang; and from Halton, Jacqueline Wu.

Welcome, and thank you.

Applause.

MEMBER'S PRIVILEGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On Monday, August 27, 2012, the member from Newmarket–Aurora, Mr. Klees, rose on a point of privilege concerning an anonymous document that had been distributed to members of this House, the Queen's Park press gallery and an undetermined number of other individuals. In his point of privilege, the member claimed that the document, entitled *The Frank Klees Report*, impugned his integrity and that it was clearly intended to intimidate and obstruct him from carrying out his duties as they are related to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and the committee's review of the Auditor General's report on Ornge air ambulance. After reviewing the member's written submission and the Hansard from August 27, I am now prepared to give my ruling.

Parliamentary privilege is defined by Erskine May's *Parliamentary Practice* as "the sum of the peculiar rights enjoyed by each House collectively ... and by members of each House individually, without which they could not discharge their function, and which exceed those possessed by other bodies or individuals."

Included in these rights, as enumerated in the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, is the member's freedom from obstruction, interference, intimidation and molestation. The text notes that "The unjust damaging of a member's good name might be seen as constituting an obstruction if the member is prevented from performing his or her parliamentary functions."

The document in question raised by Mr. Klees, which is undated, contains seven pages of resumé-style infor-

mation about the member's educational background and purported involvement in a number of business ventures. In making his point of privilege, the member from Newmarket–Aurora drew a parallel between the existence of this document affecting him and the posting of videos on YouTube earlier this year that directly targeted the Canadian Minister of Public Safety, the Honourable Vic Toews.

After reviewing the document of which the member complains, I have to say that I'm not able to find a realistic threat, specific or general, against the member from Newmarket–Aurora. This is an important consideration when considering the relevance of the Toews matter in the case at hand.

A key aspect of House of Common Speakers Scheer's finding of the prima facie case of privilege in support of Mr. Toews was his conclusion that, "When duly elected members are personally threatened for their work in Parliament, whether introducing a bill, making a statement or casting a vote, this House must take the matter very seriously." Speaker Scheer went on to say, "I have carefully reviewed the online videos in which the language used does indeed constitute a direct threat to the minister in particular, as well as other members. These threats demonstrate a flagrant disregard of our traditions and a subversive attack on the most fundamental privileges of this House."

The Klees document, while sinister and disturbing in its own right, does not rise to the level of an obvious threat directed to the minister last February.

In further considering how to address this point of privilege, I have found the following passage from *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, by Joseph Maingot, to be helpful. He states, "Whether a parliamentary privilege is violated depends on the nature and extent of any particular privilege claimed by Parliament in relation to the circumstances of the time, the underlying test in all cases being whether the right claimed as a privilege is one which is absolutely necessary for the due execution of the powers of Parliament. Therefore, all interferences with members' privileges of freedoms of speech, such as editorial or other public comment, are not breaches of privilege even though they influence the conduct of members in their parliamentary work. Accordingly, not every action by an outside body which may influence the conduct of a member of Parliament as such could now be regarded as a breach of privilege, even if it were calculated and intended to bring pressure on the member to take or refrain from taking a particular course. But any attempt by improper means to influence a member in his parliamentary conduct is a breach of privilege. What constitutes an improper means of interfering with members' parliamentary work is always of question depending on the facts of the case. Finally, there must be some connection between the material alleged to contain the interference and the parliamentary proceeding."

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Also on this theme, the 24th edition of Erskine May on page 263 states, "Written imputations, as affecting a member of Parliament, may amount to contempt, with-

out, perhaps, being libels at common law, but to constitute a contempt a libel upon a member must concern the character or conduct of the member in that capacity.”

In reviewing the Klees document, I can find no single connection between it and, as the member claims, his work on the public accounts committee or any other parliamentary proceeding. The member alleges this connection, and claims an attempt to intimidate him as a consequence, but the document itself is completely silent on the member’s parliamentary work. Further, the member for Newmarket–Aurora has made no claim that the document interfered with his ability to perform his normal parliamentary roles, including his work on the public accounts committee.

I am therefore unable to find that a prima facie breach of privilege has been made out.

However, I have previously referred to the sinister nature of the document in question. While not expressly stated by its unknown author, this unsigned document can realistically serve no other purpose than to attempt to impugn the integrity of its subject. It was prepared and presented in a matter that invites the reader to accept its innuendo and its litany of guilt by association as fact.

I therefore join the chorus of condemnation that members from all parties of this House expressed on the day the member for Newmarket–Aurora raised his point of privilege, and I hope the likes of documents such as this one will not be seen again.

I thank the members for their contributions.

ORAL QUESTIONS

LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

Mr. Tim Hudak: I’m continuing with the Premier on our call for closing down health bureaucracy so we can invest in better patient care, more nurses and personal support workers.

My question is to the Premier. You’ve created these new bureaucracies of middle management called LHINs. You’ve put North York in with Cook’s Bay, while Scarborough is in the same LHIN as Borden; Northwest Toronto is in a LHIN with Caledon. Basically you sliced up Toronto into five different pieces, and grouped different parts of Toronto with areas outside of the Toronto area.

So Premier, can you tell me: What is the community of interest between North York and Cook’s Bay, between Scarborough and Borden? How do these boundaries make any sense?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I’m delighted that the member opposite is actually starting to ask questions about LHINs and the good work they do.

To answer that question, Speaker, the boundaries of the LHINs were determined based on referral patterns.

People come from an area around Scarborough, for example, to receive services there. So there is logic behind those boundaries.

But I think it’s important to say that our health care system serves all people in Ontario. Those LHIN boundaries do not exist for patients. They deserve to get the care they need, where they need it, when they need it.

That is what we are committed to continuing to do: to strengthen the LHINs and to bring more providers into the LHINs. I look forward to the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: I’m not sure if I got it. I didn’t get an answer from the Premier, because these boundaries make no sense whatsoever. They’re not in the interests of patients or health care. The community of interest—if you want to argue somehow and tie yourself into a pretzel, Premier, that Scarborough and Borden have that community, or Cook’s Bay and North York.

We have a better model, Speaker: to actually have it in the community, to build on hospitals that are working and to knit together the various parts of our system between home care, community care, hospital care and long-term care. Instead of having people getting the run-around, instead of having people in our offices in tears because their mom or dad can’t get a long-term-care bed, work together, eliminate the middle management and invest in patient care. Even Don Drummond said your current system of LHINs is not working.

Choose a path. Are you doing LHINs 2.0 or a better path, one that organizes by the community, in the best interests of patients and invests in front-line care?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Well, Speaker, I think if there’s anyone confused here, it’s the Leader of the Opposition. I’m just confused. Are you talking about eliminating LHINs, or are you talking about moving those boundaries?

The work that we are doing to improve health care is getting demonstrated results. But I have to say, I did have a chance to read your pathway to nowhere paper, and it contains some very alarming language. Let me read from page 12 of your document. The Ontario PCs clearly state they want to create “competition between hospitals and independent health facilities.”

So my question for the Leader of the Opposition is: Is this the Shaun Francis solution? Are you actually setting up for private delivery of health care in the province of Ontario? It’s time for you to come clean and admit—

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

Leader.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I’m glad the minister actually now has taken the time to read our document, because it is the right path forward. A new approach is going to improve patient care.

So the minister asks about page 12. Here’s the example that we talk about: the Kensington eye clinic, which is doing eye surgeries, I think on a contract from the University Health Network, and that was actually approved by Dalton McGuinty and the Liberal government and probably Minister Matthews. So I don’t know

if you're flip-flopping now, if you're saying that the Kensington eye clinic should be shut down. If that's the case, Minister, say that's where you now stand.

I disagree. I think they're doing a good job there, paid for under the OHIP umbrella: more procedures, better-quality care. I don't know why you're turning your back on something you actually did right for a change.

Let me ask you this, Minister. In your own backyard, the South West LHIN has hit two out of 14 of their goals. Do you give two out of 14 a passing grade?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I am even more concerned now than I was when I read the document—

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): When I stand, you stop.

Minister.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I am more concerned now than I was when I read the document, because I thought, when the Leader of the Opposition actually asked the question straight up, "Are you opening the door to for-profit delivery?" he would stand in his place and say no. The Kensington model that he talks about is one that we believe in and talk about in our action plan. It is a not-for-profit model.

The people of this province want to know from the opposition: Are you for for-profit delivery or are you committed to not-for-profit delivery in our hospitals?

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Tim Hudak: Honest to God, this minister must be so distracted by Ornge and her failure to get a deal with the doctors that she has no idea what's actually going on in her own Ministry of Health today, this September of 2012.

You've done this with Kensington health clinic. You've done it with other cornea replacements, for example. You've done it with Shouldice. The list goes on. If you're going to close those down, then get on your feet today and say you're going to close them down. But we've got a better approach that actually invests in patient care, coordinates care, because, right now, under Dalton McGuinty, if you don't fight like hell for a loved one in the health care system, too often you get left behind. We'll put patients, not bureaucrats, at the centre of our system.

I'll ask the minister the question that she dodged. In your very own backyard, two out of 14 of the goals were hit by the South West LHIN. I know you've got a lot of friends there. You may have helped to appoint the CEO. But if they only hit two out of 14 of their goals, why did you give the CEO a pay raise when we're supposed to have pay freezes across the board?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, you know, yesterday we called the document "pathway to nowhere." In fact, I think today we can confirm that the title of that document should be "pathway to privatization." The op-

position party has put forth a plan that will take us in the direction of US health care. There are many examples internationally that we should be looking at, but the US model is not one of them.

We remain committed to not-for-profit delivery in our hospitals, and I would like the opposition to stand up and say, "We, too, are committed to the Ontario model, the Canadian model of not-for-profit health care." Will he or will he not do that? Clarify this issue.

1050

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: The problem, Speaker, is that this minister is committed to the bureaucratic model of health care. Ours is one that puts patients first and brings services together.

Minister, two out of 14 targets were met by the South West LHIN, your own region. Your good friend Michael Barrett was given a pay raise under your leadership for hitting two out of 14 targets, when I thought people were supposed to have their wages frozen. What does this mean for average families in southwestern Ontario? Cancer wait times did not hit the target; cataract surgery—way above target; patients needing hip replacement surgery in the South West LHIN—way beyond target; knee replacement surgery—outside of target; and emergency length of stay—too long.

We will take out the layers of bureaucracy, the middle management, stop the paper-pushing from going to the inbox, to the outbox, and invest in nurses, personal support workers and health care, not bureaucrats. Why won't you take a better path forward?

Interjections.

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

Another quick reminder that when you're asking the question, the members might want to let the question be put—and the same with the answers.

Minister.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I know the Leader of the Opposition has a newfound interest in health care, so let me educate the member opposite about wait times in the South West LHIN. Hip replacement has gone down by 215 days, a 62% decrease; knee replacement wait times have dropped by 153 days from when you were in charge, down 43%; cataract surgery is down by 23 days; MRI outpatients by 58 days—it's been cut in half; CT outpatients by 49 days—since you were in charge, we have cut CT wait times in half.

Are we there yet? No. Are we well on our way? Yes, we are.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: That is a recipe for failure. Two out of 14 of your goals? That's not on the way to progress; that's going backwards. I wouldn't give the guy a raise; I'd fire him and actually clear out the whole bureaucracy.

Minister, the LHIN in my home area, the Hamilton Niagara LHIN, is no better: two out of 14 targets hit. We've got a brand new, shiny LHIN office for the bureaucrats who don't spend a minute with patients, and

the hospital has gone nowhere. That's not progress; that's a step backwards.

This is our plan, a path for prosperity: patient-centred health care that puts the interests of the patients first. Your plan—a byway to bureaucracy, a detour to deficits, a road map to the runaround for patients—is going to come to an end. Our plan will put patients at the centre of the health care system.

Interjections.

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

Minister.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, we're very concerned about the member opposite's commitment to privatize the delivery of health care. We're also very concerned about his plan to eliminate oversight. He wants to fire 4,000 nurses. That is in the plan. You want to eliminate the oversight that we think is vitally important.

When they were in office—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The members will come to order, and when I'm standing, there's no talking. Thank you.

Minister, finish.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, this paper that was released yesterday is nothing but a recipe for disaster. It is full of holes. It does not hold water. It will eliminate the oversight and responsibility to ensure that the money goes to the right places so that people get the care they need.

We've made tremendous progress. There's more to do. I'm proud of the work we've done. This is not a solution.

TEACHERS' CONTRACTS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Last fall, the Premier campaigned on a plan to deal with Ontario's deficit. I have a simple question: Does the Premier still stand beside the plan? Does he stand by the plan that he campaigned on just about a year ago?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I certainly stand by the budget that was so enthusiastically supported by my honourable colleague, the leader of the NDP.

Our plan, at the highest—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Prince Edward–Hastings will withdraw.

Mr. Todd Smith: Withdraw.

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

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, that plan consists, at the highest level, of doing what Ontario families want us to do. They want us to get hold of the deficit; they want us to put in place a plan that provides for its elimination over time in a responsible way. They want us to protect the quality of education we deliver to their children. They want to protect the quality of health care that's delivered to everybody in the family. That is our

plan. That's what we intend to keep moving forward on, and we're pleased to have the very support of the leader of the NDP with respect to the plan as it's found in our budget.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the Premier had known about the financial challenges facing this province for some time—at least, he should have. Why did he, during last fall's election, explicitly promise not to introduce the sort of simplistic, unconstitutional legislation that he's planning on passing in a little while?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, if my honourable colleague is advocating for a social contract-type approach, we reject that. I want to make that perfectly clear. My honourable colleague believes we should be giving teachers a pay hike. She believes we should be giving doctors a pay hike. She believes we should be giving everybody in the broader public sector a pay hike. She also believes that we should subsidize horse racing in Ontario and we should subsidize the ONTC. That's not leadership; that's follower-ship.

Interjection.

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

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Leadership is about making decisions. It's about making choices on behalf of Ontario families, and families are saying to us, "Give our kids a quality education and give us a strong economy so my child, when she grows up, has access to a good job," and that's what we're delivering on.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, what I can tell you for sure is that I believe that respectful conversations with all of the people who make this province work is the only leadership that we need in Ontario.

Parents want what's best for their daughters and sons when they send them to school in the morning. But when they look at their government, they see a Premier who is passionately arguing for the same plan that he passionately argued against not even a year ago. How can the parents of this province trust this Premier when he's putting forward a plan that he himself dismissed as being reckless and simplistic?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I think Ontario parents know where we stand when it comes to publicly funded education in Ontario.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Northumberland will come to order.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: They know we stand for smaller classes. They know we stand for higher test scores. They know we stand for higher graduation rates. They know we stand—

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: No, you don't. You lowered the bar.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Northumberland is warned.

Premier.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: They know we stand for a full-day kindergarten program. It's the first program of its kind in North America. I think this year we'll open our doors to 120,000 three-, four- and five-year-olds. By 2014, it'll be open to 250,000 of our youngest learners. That sets them on a path for progress in achievement not just in elementary school but in secondary school and in post-secondary education as well. Ontario parents know where we stand when it comes to publicly funded—

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: Do the honourable thing, Premier.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): As the warning was given, the member for Northumberland–Quinte West is named.

Stop the clock, please.

Mr. Milligan was escorted from the chamber.

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

1100

TEACHERS' CONTRACTS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: What I can tell you is that last week, the people of Kitchener–Waterloo decided that they were not going to support a government that first and foremost stands for Liberals. Parents want a plan that puts their kids first, and they're tired of a government that seems to do anything but that.

Even the Premier's own MPPs are scrambling to distance themselves from this simplistic and unconstitutional plan. Why is the Premier so determined to push ahead with a plan that he himself has criticized, he himself knows won't work and his own MPPs can't even support?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, I would recommend to my honourable colleague that she in fact read, if not the wording of the actual decisions in both the Supreme Court of Canada and the Ontario Court of Appeal—that she at least get a hold of a summary prepared by an independent third party.

If my honourable colleague takes a long, hard look at the legislation, she will understand. What it does, Speaker, is it protects some 20,000 jobs inside our schools; it protects the progress we continue to make in full-day kindergarten; it protects smaller class sizes; it protects progress inside our schools. That's what it does. It strikes an appropriate balance, given our fiscal times.

My honourable colleague honestly feels that it's appropriate at this point in our history that we give teachers a pay hike; we disagree.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the Premier believes that his simplistic legislation is going to stand up to a court challenge, but what he refuses to acknowledge is that more and more legal experts are coming forward to express their serious concerns. The Canadian Civil Liberties Association says that they doubt that the bill is constitutional. Professors at Osgoode Hall Law School note that the fact that you've simply bargained for six months—or any period of time—isn't the case law.

That's what they're saying at Osgoode Hall. I'd ask the Premier to listen to some of those experts.

The Premier says this is going to work; they say he's wrong. Why should anybody believe him?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I appreciate my honourable colleague's interpretations of the jurisprudence, Speaker, but I see it a little bit differently.

I think we have a shared responsibility, I would argue, to find a way, at this point in time, to ensure that we are moving towards balancing our budget, understanding that more than one half of the money that we spend in government goes into compensation; understanding that the fair, practical, reasonable, responsible and, by the way, lawful thing for us to do is to hit the pause button for a couple of years, not just with respect to teachers but with respect to doctors, with respect to all of our broader public sector partners, and to do that in a way that protects the quality of public services and protects jobs. We think that's exactly what our families want us to do. We think it's fair, balanced and thoughtful, and that's what we're going to do.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, parents want to see kids in the classroom; they don't want to see turmoil in our schools. They want to see a plan that puts students first, not the Liberal Party first.

The Premier brought forward a plan that he knows won't work to push an agenda that people simply are not buying. Will the Premier listen to parents, to legal experts, to educational workers and to his own MPPs and put the brakes on this reckless, reckless plan today?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Let's try to assess the reckless character of what has happened so far: Schools are open; teachers are in the schools; full-day kindergarten is continuing to expand; we're maintaining small class sizes; test scores have just gone up once again; we are maintaining our efforts to increase the graduation rate; we have a 30%-off tuition grant for our college and university students, Speaker, that has benefited our families in a challenging period of our economy. If my honourable colleague categorizes that as reckless, then I suggest that she look up the definition of "reckless" in the dictionary.

I think we are on track. We're doing what we need to do, and we're putting the needs of students and families first.

LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Minister, when your government created the LHINs in 2006, you also made a promise to conduct a review, a comprehensive review, of their performance by 2010. It's now 2012 and this review still has not been conducted. Minister, what are you trying to hide?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm happy to have my critic back. What I can tell you is that the review of the LHINs is proceeding. We have gone through the appropriate process to get that review started by an all-party committee.

I look forward to hearing what people have to say about how we can make our LHINs stronger. I look forward to hearing about what we need to do to get better care for patients.

I also want to hear from the critic herself: Do you support privatized health care? Are you part of the Shaun Francis lobby to open up our hospitals to for-profit delivery? I am hoping that the reason your name was not on that document is because you are committed to not-for-profit delivery of health care.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Minister, your LHINs are collectively only meeting 23% of their targets—it's pathetic. The Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant LHIN met only two of 14 targets. Similarly, the Central West LHIN also met only two of 14 targets. But even worse than that, the North East LHIN met only one of 14 targets.

Minister, if you're so proud of the LHINs' conduct, why don't you conduct the review that your own legislation mandates? Again, I have to ask you: What are you trying to hide?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Let me try to be clearer this time. That review will happen. We have submitted the appropriate documentation. We're ready to move forward with that review, because we're committed to continuing to improve patient care.

On this issue of privatization, I'm nervous. The member from Newmarket–Aurora ran for the PC leadership on the platform of privatizing health care. He was not successful in that leadership bid. I want to know: Is the PC Party committed to not-for-profit delivery, or are you opening up the door to for-profit delivery? That is the most important question we need you answering.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: My question is to the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. A new report from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives once again confirms Ontario's record on affordability of post-secondary education in Canada. Get ready for the results: dead last. According to the CCPA, sending a kid to university in Ontario is almost three times more expensive than in Newfoundland.

The minister is reviewing post-secondary education, but this review isn't addressing the growing challenge that middle-income families face in paying for university or college. When will the government make post-secondary education affordable for Ontario families?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: It's fascinating to me that the party opposite, when in government, cut student aid by 50%—50% when you sat over here. When we came to power, the budget for student aid was \$380 million. This year, it will be over \$1 billion.

In 1991 and 2002—those years are very important years, because the budgets for our universities and colleges were exactly the same, not adjusted for inflation. Under both parties opposite, we saw no increase. As a matter of fact, we saw half a billion dollars taken out of our college and university systems.

Since 2003, our colleges and universities have seen a 60%, 70%, 80%, 100% increase in their budgets. As a matter of fact, as the member for Whitby–Oshawa would know, the UOIT's budget has gone up 368%. We—

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: The CCPA report is clear: Ontario's tuition grant only minimally improves affordability, because fees were already so high to begin with. Worse, fewer than one in four students get the grant, and it was paid for by cutting nine grants and bursary programs.

Will the minister finally admit the cost of post-secondary education is out of reach for too many Ontarians, and will he commit to do something about it?

1110

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Ontarians know the difference between the rhetoric of the third party and the reality of the third party. We're going through difficult labour relations across the broader public sector. We have a clear plan that goes a hell of a lot farther with respect to collective bargaining than what they did when they were in government.

We introduced a 30%-off tuition, which is indexed, which is \$1,680. That's \$1,680 more going to families than—the party that in the last election, more recently, didn't even have an education platform. The NDP platform on education was blank—nothing for universities, nothing for colleges, nothing for high schools. Talk about putting students last. That's the party that puts students last.

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Tracy MacCharles: My question this morning is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Over the last several weeks, there have been questions raised in this Legislature regarding access to health care throughout the province and including in my riding of Pickering–Scarborough East. In order to ensure that more Ontarians have access to family doctors and family health teams, residents throughout the province deserve answers on how improvements are being made.

Yesterday, the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound talked extensively about a very different plan. I worry that that member will not ask the right questions on behalf of his constituents and all Ontarians, so I will. Through you, Speaker, to the minister: What are you doing to make sure that more residents of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound and all of Ontario have access to the health care they need?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the member for that question. I can tell you that making sure Ontar-

ians, no matter where they live in this province, no matter who represents them—the best-quality health care, the best access to health care is a priority for us.

That includes the people of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. I'm very pleased to report that 95% of the people in that area now have a family doctor. There are now 219 doctors, an increase of 38 doctors—38 more doctors working there now than when we took office. That's an increase of 20% in the number of doctors, even though we have actually seen a decline in population in some areas there. We've also got two new family health teams providing care to 36,000 patients. Over 5,000 of those patients did not have a doctor when the PC Party was in charge.

We will continue to improve access to care for all people, including people in Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. I heard something that's a little troubling, and I will repeat myself once again to all members: I have a problem with individuals asking questions that talk about somebody else's riding with the intent of embarrassment. I don't like it, and I—

Mr. Steve Clark: I don't like it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Second time.

I'm asking us to raise, not lower, our decorum in this place. I'm asking us to treat each other with the respect that is deserved, as all members do. I'm going to remind you, I like the idea of asking tough questions, and I like the idea of having answers, but I don't like the idea of moving into somebody else's riding and trying to cause problems. I'm asking you to ensure that it stays that way.

Supplementary?

Ms. Tracy MacCharles: Thank you, Speaker. Over the past few months, we've heard from a number of folks on our health care situation—the Drummond report, many people—about the directions of health care, and this does include the role of our local health care organizations. Indeed, we've heard a very different vision yesterday on health care from the opposition party, and one that I believe puts patients at risk and would dismantle oversight that we've worked so hard to put in place.

Residents of Ontario deserve to know if they are being provided quality care by their LHINs and their community care access centres. Through you, Speaker, to the minister: How are Ontario residents benefiting?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Let me give you just one example of how Ontario residents—in this case, people in the Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound area—are benefiting from the good work of our local health integration networks. I am very pleased that, in July, the LHIN listened very carefully to the voice of residents, and they have approved a 10-bed residential hospice. Speaker, this is great news. The community has been fighting for this.

Let me read what Ruth Lovell Stanners, a very powerful former mayor of Owen Sound, a very powerful woman, a spokesman for the residential hospice, said: “It's been very clear to the LHIN that our community is behind this. It's not just the work of a few people; it's the work of the entire two counties. We can all take satisfaction from that.”

“LHIN board chair Jeff Low confirmed that community support was the dealbreaker. ‘We got the message loud and clear on community support,’” the chair of the LHIN said.

This is the LHIN working. This is the LHIN listening. This is the LHIN acting, responding to the needs of the community. We will all benefit from this hospice.

LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

Mr. Bill Walker: My question is to the Minister of Health. Minister, you have a full slate of critics. They are called patients and taxpayers. If I doubled the debt, I would expect every person to have a doctor and a health care service that works; 98% is not acceptable.

Specifically, the people of St. Catharines are wondering when their MPP is finally going to stand up and say, “Enough,” to the litany of failed Liberal politics. They want to know why the quality of their health care is deteriorating, and their MPP and his Liberal government doesn't care.

The record of the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant LHIN, serving Burlington and Norfolk, is dismal, having met only 14% of your own targets. It has missed targets in cancer surgery, cataract surgery, hip replacements, MRI times and ER wait times. Those are the things that patients care about. Apparently, 14% is how the government accepts a high level of success. That's brutal, Minister.

Can the Minister of Health tell the people of St. Catharines why they should close their—

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

Let me restate, again, my concern: When we start making comments about other people's ridings, it's not a problem when you're talking about the generics of issues. It becomes apparent that, if it's an attack on an individual member's integrity or their capacity to serve their riding—that's where I'm trying to get you to see that it is not good for all of us.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: But we are allowed to do it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would ask that the comments be reserved until at least I'm finished speaking.

So I caution all members again to reserve that kind of discussion and elevate the discussion to issues at hand, as opposed to any one member's ability to serve their community. I reject that they don't.

Minister: Response.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: For just a moment there, I thought the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound was going to say thank you for the decision on the hospice. He knows how much this will benefit his community.

But, Speaker, what I can tell you is that, when the party opposite was in charge, they did not even measure wait times. They did not even have any idea how big the problem was. We came to office. We decided to measure

wait times, and now we are hard at work driving those wait times down.

The member has asked about Niagara. Well, let me tell you about the NHS, Niagara Health System, wait times—

Interjection.

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

Mr. Bill Walker: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm also going to ask the member to bring it down, as he has been mentioned by riding already, and you asked the question.

Finish, please.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you, Speaker.

The Niagara Health System has had remarkable success in bringing those wait times down. Are we meeting targets? On some, yes. On some, we've still got a way to go. But hip replacements: people are waiting 215 fewer days now to get that hip replaced. They've cut 153 days off knee replacements—

Interjection.

1120

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

If the member from Lambton believes that I do not have the resolve to elevate the discussion and to continue to ask us to listen to questions and answers, he's mistaken. I am intent on raising that level, not lowering it, and it's my intent to have us all be able to put questions and have answers in a decorum that's acceptable in this place and anywhere else.

Supplementary question? The member for Elgin–Middlesex–London.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Speaker, my question is back to the Minister of Health. Minister, the entire Liberal caucus has turned their backs on their constituents over the past nine months. They've been stonewalling investigation attempts into Ornge and their power plants.

Since they refuse to do their jobs and hold you accountable, the PC caucus here is going to do it for you. The LHIN responsible for Richmond Hill met only five of its 14 targets—a 36% success rate. Minister, will you admit that the Central LHIN at Richmond Hill has failed the residents?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I'm just finding this whole line of questioning a bit odd, because they didn't even measure wait times.

We measure wait times, we've set ambitious targets, and we're seeing progress towards those targets. Maybe the member opposite would look in his own backyard and see the progress we've made in London, for example. London Health Sciences has seen a reduction of hip replacements of 262 days—fewer days spent waiting in pain. Knee replacements have come down by 229 days; CTs, 10 days; MRIs, 47 days. We are making progress.

The important thing is, we publicly report. Anybody can see what those wait times are. I want to ask you: Do you support privatization of our health care system? That's the question.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Jonah Schein: My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Minister, something fishy is happening in Chatham–Kent–Essex. Residents are on the hook for cleaning up thousands of dead fish from their shores. So far, the Ministry of the Environment is refusing to cast its nets widely, and it's prematurely dismissing this disaster as a natural occurrence.

Will the minister get on board, help with the cleanup and get to the bottom of this before yesterday's catch turns into tomorrow's environmental contamination?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I should say first of all that the member from the area has raised this issue several times with me, and I've communicated with him. The member for Chatham–Kent–Essex, as the local member who is influenced by this and impacted by this, has raised this. So I want to give him his credit for doing so. He did not make outlandish charges such as you're making at the present time for what some might think are political reasons.

The Ministry of the Environment has been doing testing of the fish in this particular case to try to determine the source of what has happened. Very often, what happens, happens on a natural basis; that is, the bottom water comes up to the top, the top water goes down to the bottom.

But that doesn't mean that the Ministry of the Environment or the federal Ministry of the Environment or the Ministry of Natural Resources have come to a final conclusion on what the case may be. As soon as we have—and we've established this as a high priority—the results of that testing, we'll be sharing it with everybody.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jonah Schein: Back to the Minister of the Environment: Rather than helping the residents of Chatham–Kent–Essex deal with this serious environmental contamination issue that has the potential to impact the health of people, the Ministry of the Environment, a ministry that's undermined by deep budget cuts, seems to have hung a "Gone fishing" sign on their door.

People are holding their noses and combing their beaches with garbage bags in hand. When will the minister stop floundering around and reel in the situation before it gets away from him?

Hon. James J. Bradley: Whoever wrote that question for you has some amusing comments to use.

I have a note here. As you would know and the local member would know, there were public meetings held over the weekend. You probably didn't have a chance to attend those and were relying on some political staffers to give you the questions. But I suggest that you speak to the local member, who has been on top of the issue, along with the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Natural Resources, and working hard to determine, first of all, the source, and to assist in the cleanup.

Even the mayor of Chatham–Kent, who is a former NDP member of this Legislature, has been complimentary of the manner in which this government has handled

this situation. But I know that for political reasons sometimes it's much more fun to try to exploit a situation of this kind instead of dealing with it responsibly.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. David Zimmer: Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, over the past few years, the government's long-term energy plan has outlined a bold plan for a clean, reliable energy system. Its focus is on the health of families. It focuses on a clean environment. It creates jobs and brings investment, and it reduces reliance on fossil fuels.

Minister, last week the federal government, the federal Tories, brought forward their emission standards for coal plants, to be implemented over the next number of decades—decades. Although this is a step in the right direction, it's unlike our government's plan, which is committed to eliminate the use of coal by 2014. That's two years from now, not decades down the road. It's a decision that makes Ontario a leader in this field.

Minister, adding clean, reliable energy and replacing dirty coal is a costly endeavour—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Minister of Energy.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: The member is absolutely right: We need to get out of coal as quickly as possible to protect the health of Ontarians and to save money.

The member from Willowdale has quite rightly said that federal regulations that look decades down the road aren't helping the health of Ontario families today. We're out of it by the end of 2014. We're going to prevent hundreds of thousands of illnesses that were taking place in 2003, when coal was a quarter of our power use. We're saving over \$4 billion a year that was paid through the health system to deal with those illnesses. We're not having to spend for the environmental degradation.

Getting out of coal makes a lot of sense, is the right thing to do, and we're doing it by the end of 2014, not several decades down the road.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. David Zimmer: Minister, there has been a lot of discussion regarding the benefits of the feed-in-tariff program for our energy sector and how it helps Ontario families and businesses. These discussions talk about jobs, investments, new factories, innovation and much more.

The opposition over there is deadily opposed to the FIT program and would much rather see the continuation of coal-fired plants in this province, sort of like their federal Conservative cousins. But my constituents in Willowdale tell me that the FIT program has been a great addition to the clean economy. Indeed, other jurisdictions are following our lead; they see the benefit.

Minister, can you give me an update on the status of the FIT program and the benefits that it's bringing to our energy sector and to Ontario families?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: The member from Willowdale is quite right. We are using clean, green, renew-

able energy, whether it's solar, biogas, wind or hydro to get out, and accelerate our getting out, of coal, but also doing it in a way that establishes jobs here in the province of Ontario. We're well over 20,000 jobs already. We've got a number of manufacturing facilities. We're bringing this on and requiring that at least half of the components—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Simply putting your hand over your face while you heckle does not stop the noise.

Minister.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: I know some don't want to know the relationship between clean and green and jobs, but you know that the blade plant in Tillsonburg makes blades for wind turbines. If you kill the wind turbines, you don't need the blades and you don't need the jobs.

The frame plant, Thurston in manufacturing in Port Colborne, makes frames for wind turbines. If you kill the turbines, you don't need the frames; you kill the jobs.

We're bringing on clean, green electricity in a way that creates jobs here in Ontario. Jobs are important for families and businesses.

1130

LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

Mr. Todd Smith: My question is for the Minister of Health this morning. It's evident that the member from Ottawa–Orléans is preoccupied with conceiving and dreaming up a carbon tax and not interested in passing along the report card to residents from his LHIN—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are some things that are not in rules and in regulations. There are some things that are written, and in this place we speak about treating each other with respect. If I've opened a can of worms, my deepest apologies. I'm asking us to race to the top, not to the bottom.

The member proceed.

Mr. Todd Smith: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This all started with the Minister of Health this morning. I'd just like to point that out. I hope she has an answer for this question.

The Champlain LHIN met—wait for it—two of 14 of its targets—14%. That may be a passing grade on that side of that House. It certainly isn't a passing grade on this side of the House. So I ask the minister: Will she admit defeat and will she tell the people of Ottawa–Orléans that their LHIN and their MPP continue to fail them?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Yesterday we were presented with a white paper from the caucus opposite. It contained what I had hoped was a simple editing error. After this morning's question period, I am now convinced that the health care policy of the party opposite is to privatize health care.

I'm asking the member opposite: Are you with Frank Klees, the member from Newmarket–Aurora, are you with Shaun Francis, or are you going to stand up for publicly funded health care?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary, the member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

Ms. Laurie Scott: My question is for the Minister of Health. At least one Liberal member has been busy breaking with the Premier on his decision to eliminate 60,000 jobs in the horse racing industry.

Health care in Peterborough, in Ontario, continues to deteriorate. The LHIN responsible for Peterborough met four of its 13 objectives, a success rate of 30%—quite pathetic. The wait time for admission to hospital in Peterborough is 44 hours, which is eight hours longer than the target.

Will the Minister of Health admit that the LHINs are abject failures and embrace the PC plan to strengthen Ontario's health care system—

Interjections.

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

Minister of Health.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Peterborough will come to order.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: When the Progressive Conservative Party was responsible for health care in this province, 28,000 people in Peterborough could not get a family doctor. That's a fact. When the Progressive Conservative Party was in power, they shut down hospitals. They fired thousands of nurses. Doctors left Ontario for the States—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The member from Prince Edward–Hastings will withdraw.

Mr. Todd Smith: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And while I have the clock stopped, I want to bring one more point of clarity. When individuals are being attacked for the work they do, this is what is bothering me. I do not have a problem with people talking about ridings per se, in issues involved in ridings; I have a problem with individuals attacking other individuals in their ridings, and the work they do. So please, all I'm asking you is to not engage in that activity.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Durham has been talked to before, and I would like the member from Durham to stop his insistence on making comment after I'm speaking.

Minister.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I am hopeful that the member from Kawartha Lakes–Brock, being a nurse herself, will stand up and say, "I reject privatized health care. I am going to stand up for not-for-profit hospitals in this province. I reject the platform to move to private health care." Will the member from Kawartha Lakes–Brock, a nurse, stand up in favour—

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

YOUTH SERVICES

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. The government has announced its plans to close the Thistletown Regional Centre, a renowned facility that serves the needs of some of Ontario's most challenged citizens. One of the internationally acclaimed programs provided by Thistletown is the sexual abuse family education and treatment program, or SAFE-T. It provides life-saving help to children and parents who come there following a sexual assault within their family.

Will the minister explain how he thinks it is possible to maintain this outstanding program through the closures?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I thank the member opposite for the question. I want to say that after making the difficult decision to close Thistletown—by the way, a decision that was made by the NDP government as well, in the 1990s—that we are well on our way to successfully transferring programs from Thistletown into the community, including the important programs referenced by the member opposite, the great work that's being done by the programs of SAFE-T, TRE-ADD and Panorama.

I want to assure the member opposite that the important services that are offered and provided to families in these programs will continue to be offered through community-based agencies.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Miss Monique Taylor: Just for the record, we reversed that decision. That's why it's still open today.

The minister recently released the action plan for youth, which details 20 recommendations for strengthening supports for youth. SAFE-T is an essential program needing this support. Experts like Professor Marshall, from Queen's University, have written to you, saying, "I'm surprised that your ministry intends to close any programs for juvenile offenders at a time when the evidence clearly indicates that such programs not only markedly reduce re-offence rates but also assist these young people to become productive citizens." In light of all of this, how does the minister justify his position?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I would just repeat what I had said previously—the member opposite perhaps can't take yes as an answer—that I'm assuring the member opposite that the programs she is referencing and is concerned about, that provide this expert service—the important services provided to these families in these programs will continue to be offered through community-based agencies.

1140

We are well on our way to moving through a two-year process for closing Thistletown and transferring the important programs that are provided there to community agencies, which I know the member opposite would agree have the capacity of providing great services within

the communities. In most cases, in fact, for the individuals involved and the families, the services will be provided in a seamless fashion and closer to their homes. So, Mr. Speaker, my ministry is working closely to make sure that this transition proceeds smoothly.

ABORIGINAL LAND CLAIMS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): New question. The member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you very much, Speaker. And I will respect your earlier request and use the term “official opposition” when I refer to the member from Haldimand–Norfolk.

My question is to the Minister of—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, no. Stop the clock.

A lot of people are in this place. This is more about ensuring that we elevate the discussion without bringing reference to what I’m asking us not to do. What you should not be doing at the side should not be done actually. So let’s just relax here.

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you, Speaker.

My question is for the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. Over the past couple of weeks, I had the opportunity to sit on the Standing Committee on Estimates, and the minister went into great detail in discussing the issues around the Algonquin land claim. This is a very important discussion for us, as members of the committee. We learned quite a bit. But there were some inaccurate statements that have come out as of late, and recently there was a press release from a member of the official opposition that indicated that there were no public consultations going on until an agreement in principle was signed.

I’m just asking if the minister could please clear up this confusion and tell us exactly what consultations have actually taken place with the agreement in principle, which has yet to be signed.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I’m very pleased to be able to talk about the progress that has been made on the Algonquin land claim and to clear up some of this confusion about who has been consulted and so on.

The negotiating parties are not waiting to consult until the agreement in principle is signed. The formal signatures on the AIP, or the agreement in principle, would only occur after all three parties have ratified it, and that’s not likely to happen until late next year, Mr. Speaker. So the parties—Canada, Ontario and the Algonquins—are clearly not waiting for those signatures before consulting.

There has been input from various advisory groups. There are two advisory groups, one a municipal advisory committee, and a committee of external advisers, both of which have over 30 members on them, and there have been many meetings with those groups. Since 1996, there have been conversations with the community. Since early

May of this year, the Ontario negotiation team has had more than 40 meetings.

So the ongoing consultation process will continue, but there will also be consultation with the public.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you, Minister, for once again confirming that our government is committed to the consultation process, because this is an important issue in eastern Ontario and particularly in my riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

Further to some of the questions raised during the committee process, there was a suggestion that there is much secrecy surrounding this claim. Aside from the consultations that the minister just spoke about, what more are we doing, as a government, to ensure that all three negotiating parties are as open and as transparent about the process as possible?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell is very interested in stability in eastern Ontario and some clarity around these issues.

In order to protect the integrity of any negotiation process, there are some elements that need to remain confidential. So, out of respect for the large variety of interests in a highly populated region, all three negotiating parties have agreed to keep some pieces of information confidential.

Last week, the Ontario negotiator reached out to local MPPs he met with in the spring to provide them with a further update at the negotiating table. I understand that an update from the negotiators outlining some of the elements of the draft agreement in principle will be provided to the public in coming days. So, very soon, there will be more information available.

Algonquin Park, for example, will remain a public park for the enjoyment of all. No private property will be expropriated.

Those are issues that are a concern, and they need to be—

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

Interjection.

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

New question.

LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Speaker, my question today is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Instead of working hard to improve the quality of health care that constituents receive, the Liberal government has focused on cancelling gas plants in Oakville. Instead of advocating for better health care, the Liberal government is busy justifying the saddling of taxpayers with a fee of at least \$300 million to save political skin, like in Oakville. And since many of the Liberal government are probably unaware, I would like to inform them

of the health care Oakville constituents have received under the Liberal LHINs.

Residents in Oakville wait 156 days for cataract surgery, 59 days longer than the LHIN's target. Seniors wait 144 days for hip replacement surgery.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Question.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: The LHIN has only met six of its 14 targets. Could the Minister of Health tell the people of Oakville whether she believes—

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:—that a 43% success rate is acceptable, or is it more acceptable to save seats—

Interjections.

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

Minister.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: First of all, I'm delighted that the PC Party is finally focusing on health care. It's great to hear that.

Speaker, our results speak for ourselves. Let me just review how we are doing when it comes to meeting wait times: 96% of cataract surgeries are meeting the target; 90% of hip replacements are meeting the target; 83% of knee replacements are meeting the target; 45% of MRIs—we know we've got work to do there, and we're doing it; 87% of CT scans; 93% of pediatric surgeries; and 97% of general surgeries.

Now, the member opposite may want to point at—they can play fun with statistics if they want, Speaker, but these facts speak for themselves.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary, the member from Barrie.

Mr. Rod Jackson: My question is also for the Minister of Health. The member from Niagara Falls has been busy, except he hasn't been busy fighting for better health care for his constituents. He's been busy protesting his own government. He's been busy justifying the loss of thousands of jobs in his riding. And the quality of health care in Niagara Falls continues its downward spiral.

Can the minister please explain why Niagara LHIN has a 14% success rate and whether she believes that the LHIN is performing well and if this meets her so-called ambitious target for Niagara LHIN?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): This is the moment that I was using—I guess you would call this a “teachable moment.” Without the comments about the individual member, it would have been a very legitimate question to ask. I was concerned about bringing the member's abilities or whatever, not to be mentioned.

Minister of Health.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, once again let's talk about our record, how far we've come since 2005 when we instituted our wait time strategy.

Cancer surgery is down 35%. Waits for angiography are down 59%; angioplasty, down 46%; bypass surgery, down 14%. For cataract surgery, we've met our target; we've cut it by 60%. Hip replacement, 162 days down; knee replacement is down by 213 days; CT scan waits are down by 44%; MRI scans are down by 34 days.

Speaker, we will not take lessons on how to run a health care system from the party that drove up wait times, that did not provide adequate primary care. We are making—

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

MINISTER'S COMMENTS

Mr. Frank Klees: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order, the member from Newmarket–Aurora.

Mr. Frank Klees: Thank you. Speaker. With your permission, I would like to take advantage of a teachable moment as well, and it relates to standing order 23(i), which reads as follows:

“In debate, a member shall be called to order by the Speaker if he or she....

“(i) imputes false or unavowed motives to another member....”

The Minister of Health, on two occasions in responding to questions today, referred to me by name and impugned false motive.

I would like to ask this question, Speaker: Given your concern about raising the bar here, why did you not call her to order when she did that?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank the member for his point of order. I want to make it clear that some of the discussion that took place today is probably the very reason for what gave rise to my concern that I have been asking the members to pay particular attention to, in terms of individuals and their comments. This goes back to my original discussion about how, when mentioning people, you should be mentioning either their title or their riding, because if you don't do that, what tends to happen is it becomes personal, and then that elevates the anger side and the personal side of it, as opposed to the issue at hand, in terms of responding.

I made every effort today to try to elevate that debate. I thank the member and I understand his point. I would ask that all members—anyone who wants to correct their record when they make these kinds of situations happen—stand and correct their record. That's what I am going to be referring to, and I thank the member for bringing that to my attention.

VISITOR

Hon. Brad Duguid: Point of order?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Economic Development and Innovation.

Hon. Brad Duguid: It's nothing about this; I just want to introduce Steve Del Duca, who I believe is the member-elect now for the riding of Vaughan, in the east gallery.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member from London–Fanshawe has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her

question given by the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities concerning post-secondary education. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

DEFERRED VOTES

PUTTING STUDENTS FIRST ACT, 2012 LOI DE 2012 DONNANT LA PRIORITÉ AUX ÉLÈVES

Deferred vote on the motion for third reading of the following bill:

Bill 115, An Act to implement restraint measures in the education sector / Projet de loi 115, Loi mettant en oeuvre des mesures de restriction dans le secteur de l'éducation.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1153 to 1158.

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

On September 10, Ms. Broten moved third reading of Bill 115.

All those in favour, stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Gerretsen, John	Milloy, John
Bailey, Robert	Gravelle, Michael	Moridi, Reza
Balkissoon, Bas	Hardeman, Ernie	Munro, Julia
Barrett, Toby	Harris, Michael	Murray, Glen R.
Bartolucci, Rick	Hoskins, Eric	Naqvi, Yasir
Bentley, Christopher	Hudak, Tim	Nicholls, Rick
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Jackson, Rod	O'Toole, John
Best, Margaret	Jaczek, Helena	Oraziotti, David
Bradley, James J.	Jeffrey, Linda	Pettapiece, Randy
Broten, Laurel C.	Jones, Sylvia	Piruzza, Teresa
Cansfield, Donna H.	Klees, Frank	Qaadri, Shafiq
Chan, Michael	Kwinter, Monte	Sandals, Liz
Chiarelli, Bob	Leal, Jeff	Scott, Laurie
Chudleigh, Ted	Leone, Rob	Sergio, Mario
Clark, Steve	MacCharles, Tracy	Shurman, Peter
Colle, Mike	MacLaren, Jack	Smith, Todd
Coteau, Michael	MacLeod, Lisa	Sousa, Charles
Crack, Grant	Mangat, Amrit	Takhar, Harinder S.
Damerla, Dipika	Matthews, Deborah	Thompson, Lisa M.
Delaney, Bob	Mauro, Bill	Walker, Bill
Dhillon, Vic	McDonnell, Jim	Wilson, Jim
Dickson, Joe	McGuinty, Dalton	Wong, Soo
Duguid, Brad	McKenna, Jane	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duncan, Dwight	McMeekin, Ted	Yakabuski, John
Dunlop, Garfield	McNaughton, Monte	Yurek, Jeff
Elliott, Christine	McNeely, Phil	Zimmer, David
Fedeli, Victor	Meilleur, Madeleine	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Miller, Norm	

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed, stand one at a time to be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Horwath, Andrea	Schein, Jonah
Bisson, Gilles	Mantha, Michael	Singh, Jagmeet
Campbell, Sarah	Marchese, Rosario	Tabuns, Peter
DiNovo, Cheri	Miller, Paul	Taylor, Monique
Gélinas, France	Natyshak, Taras	Vanthof, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 82; the nays are 15.

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

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): This House stands adjourned until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1203 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I'd like to introduce some fabulous people from my riding and from resisters.ca: Kimberly Rivera, Alex Lisman, Ken Marciniec and Michelle Robidoux. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr. Ted Arnott: As I begin my 23rd year of service in this House, I want to thank my constituents for granting me the privilege of speaking on their behalf in this place.

I return to an issue I've raised many times: the need for a bypass around the community of Morriston in Puslinch township, south of Guelph. This project would realign Highway 6 south of the 401, bypassing the congested two-lane section through Morriston. This portion of Highway 6 is currently a bottleneck, with traffic jams that often stretch for several kilometres. Highway 6 serves as an important economic corridor, linking the 401 to the Hamilton and Niagara regions as well as to the US border. It is vital to the economy of a large portion of southern Ontario.

On May 29, Mayor Dennis Lever, other municipal representatives and I met with the Minister of Transportation in his office. Working together, we followed up yet again on this vital project, asking when the project will be placed on the ministry's five-year construction plan.

This traffic jam in Morriston happens to be in my riding, but the congestion impacts many other ridings as well. I am soon going to be writing my neighbouring colleagues in the House to ask for their support, as the project will benefit their ridings just as much as it will benefit our area. We are also working with others who have an interest in this project, to get them to speak up.

The environmental assessment has been done. Property acquisition needs to be accelerated. The government plans to spend \$2.4 billion on highway infrastructure this year. We need our fair share, and we need to know when we're going to be on the ministry's five-year plan.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I personally offer the member happy anniversary, and congratulations on your years of service—

Interjection: Last week.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): —last week.

WES PRANKARD

Mr. Kim Craitor: I'm pleased to recognize a fine young man from my riding of Niagara Falls, Fort Erie and Niagara-on-the-Lake: 14-year-old Wes Prankard. Wes's goal is to bring equality for First Nations children in health, education and play. Wes completed the playground for—

Mr. John Yakabuski: You must have been writing that statement during the vote, Kim.

Mr. Kim Craitor: Excuse me?

Wes completed the playground for Attawapiskat last year on his 13th birthday. He told many people that the smiling faces of parents and the laughter of children made his 13th birthday the most memorable, raising over \$100,000 to complete the playground.

Recently, with the help of his family and the community, Wes delivered more than one million pennies to the Toronto Dominion Bank at Lundy's Lane in Niagara Falls—\$13,518, to be exact. This money will purchase a new playground for the impoverished community of Kashechewan First Nation, a reserve near James Bay struggling with poverty and depression. Earlier this year, Wes completed a three-week camp-out at Campark Resorts on Lundy's Lane, urging kids across Canada to hold simultaneous camp-outs.

Wes is just a kid who wants to help others. His target is 20 playgrounds and two foster homes, which will require 1.5 billion pennies.

Congratulations to Wes Prankard, his family and his community for their continued contributions to the piles of pennies for the playground. Thank you, Wes.

BLYTH THRESHERS' REUNION

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I am pleased to rise today to recognize the Blyth Threshers' Reunion. On this past weekend, the Huron Pioneer Thresher and Hobby Association celebrated their 51st anniversary. During that anniversary, the small town of Blyth, located in the centre of Huron-Bruce, saw its population grow immensely as the 800-capacity trailer park was filled—filled to capacity, I'm proud to say. During this weekend festival, community spirit and old-fashioned farming techniques and pioneer life were celebrated.

There's something for everybody, for all ages, at the Blyth Threshers' Reunion, from threshing demonstrations, to kid and adult tractor pulls, to a horse exhibit and demonstration, sheep shearing, birds of flight exhibits and the talented Teeswater pipe band. It's a weekend not to be missed by anyone, either the residents of Blyth or anyone who comes to visit.

On the Friday, the threshers hold a school day, an important opportunity for those studying pioneer life as part of their curriculum, to see first-hand many of the tools and early machines used by our ancestors. Students were able to meet people and ask questions of those who have an interest in preserving history by collecting, restoring or building models of this early equipment. They also host a craft show by local exhibitors, with all handmade items, and they have a lot of entertainment, as I mentioned.

I want to thank the organizers of Blyth Threshers' Reunion, and to the volunteers, a great job done. I wish the organization continued success for many, many years.

KIMBERLY RIVERA

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I would like to introduce the House to Kimberly Rivera, a wonderful community member and mother of four in Parkdale-High Park. She and her family have lived in Canada since 2007. Two of her children were born here. She's a devoted mother, takes part in school activities and also is active in the community breakfast programs, among other things.

The government of Canada is trying to deport Kimberly and her family, and if they succeed, Kimberly faces possible imprisonment as a conscientious objector. My husband, and the father of my children, was a conscientious objector to the Vietnam War. He died in the 1990s. But she and he continue an amazing tradition of Canada welcoming those who are resisting foreign wars, right from the United Empire Loyalists to today.

I would ask everyone here to contact Jason Kenney, the honourable Minister of Immigration in Ottawa, and to demand that Kenney allow Kimberly and her family to stay in Canada, because, after all, we are a compassionate and humanitarian country.

I ask all members here to write and to check resisters.ca, to make sure that Kenney knows that people like Kimberly and her children should be allowed to stay in a place that values and loves them. Thank you, Kimberly.

TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Mr. Mike Colle: I'm here to talk about an extraordinary event that's going on in the great city of Toronto right now as we speak, and that's the Toronto International Film Festival, TIFF. We tend to forget that not only does TIFF bring about \$200-million worth of economic activity into the greater Toronto area, but it also employs thousands of people in all aspects of filmmaking and film production. It is one of the third- or fourth-largest employers, in fact, in Toronto in television, film and theatre production. This is an incredible investment in the arts.

The best filmmakers from the whole world are here. Actors, producers, writers—they're all here in Toronto for this film festival, which is really second to none.

There's no better film festival than the Toronto film festival in the whole world. We should be proud of what our Canadians have produced. We should be supporting Canadian film, Canadian television, and these are Canadian jobs.

I support this incredible venture. Our government has been investing with grants and with tax credits in the Ontario film industry, and it is well worth participating in, so if you are in Toronto over the next two weeks, do the Canadian thing: Go see a Canadian film or at least a foreign film at TIFF. Forget about watching football on TV; go see a movie tonight.

CASINOS

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Once again communities across Ontario are being divided by the prospect of up to 29 new casinos to be built by the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp. The government prefers to spend more money on this and put up to 60,000 more people out of work in this province by killing the slots-at-racetracks partnership and Ontario's horse racing along with it.

Communities in my riding are speaking out on the prospect of a casino in the city of North Bay. The township of Chisholm is one of many area communities who wrote to me who have passed resolutions on this issue, and I promised to read them—"the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately pass Bill 76, the Ensuring Local Voices in New Casino Gambling Development Act, to help ensure that local voices are respected prior to the development of any new casino."

Speaker, my party and I firmly believe a referendum must be held in each and every community in this province where a casino is proposed to be built. With the potential social implications, this needs to be a community decision, not a government decision.

Furthermore, with respect to casinos for economic development, I pose a question: Is that the best we can do?

NORTHERN ONTARIO INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Sarah Campbell: As I'm sure everyone is aware, many northern communities were hit hard by the downturn in the forest sector and then the global recession that followed. This led many in our region to leave the province to find jobs in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

Fortunately, there's good news on the horizon: Communities like Ignace and Emo are preparing for new prosperity as a result of forestry and mining opportunities that are set to bring hundreds of jobs to their communities within the next few years.

While this is great news, both communities have populations of less than 1,500 people, giving them limited resources to build the infrastructure that's necessary to meet the new demands that will come as a result of their rise in population. For instance, both commu-

ities have waste water treatment plants that are currently at capacity, and the current tax base is simply not large enough to finance new plants that can handle a population increase of 10%, 20% or even 30%.

While I am pleased to hear that the province has announced the \$60-million fund for municipal infrastructure, and I'm hopeful that both communities will be successful in obtaining funding from this fund, more needs to be done. The situation in both communities shows why we need to develop a permanent funding model for municipal infrastructure to allow our smaller municipalities to develop long-term strategies to keep up with future economic growth.

MEMBER'S COMMENTS

Mr. Monte Kwinter: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to rise today to bring to the House's attention comments made in this Legislature yesterday during debate on Bill 50. The member from Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry made the following statement: "As one of my colleagues was saying, it's 73 years ago today that Canada declared war on another tyrant, and that's what we're seeing here. The people of Nazi Germany didn't know what was going on, and over my time here I find it hard to believe how hard it is to find out what's going on and how easy it is for the government to hide things."

Comparing Ontario's government to the Nazi regime, which unleashed a wave of terror in one of the most tragic episodes in human history, is despicable and totally unacceptable. There is no place in this Legislature and no place in Ontario for allegations of racism, hatred and prejudice of the kind that characterized Adolf Hitler's Nazi regime. Such a comparison is outrageous and insulting to all Ontarians.

The member from Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry should do the honourable thing and apologize in this House for these deplorable comments, and his leader should do so as well.

ANNIVERSARY OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

Mr. John Yakabuski: As all members of this House know, today marks the 11th anniversary of the terrorist attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001. These were heinous acts committed out of a hatred that resulted in the deaths of nearly 3,000 innocent people. More than 90 countries lost citizens that day, including 24 Canadians. In the rescue efforts that followed, 343 firefighters and 60 police officers also lost their lives.

We should all take pause today to remember the victims of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, as well as the families who lost their loved ones. Many more people lost their colleagues, neighbours and friends. Today, we mourn them all.

We must never forget that the terrorist acts that day were an attack against the freedoms that all of us hold dear, by fanatical people who will stop at nothing to impose their warped beliefs on the rest of the world.

Terrorism is still a real threat, and while 11 years have passed, there are still those out there who live to destroy our western democracies and all that they stand for.

I am sure I speak for everyone when I say that I will never forget where I was and what I was doing when I first heard of those attacks on that fateful morning. I can remember the feeling of complete shock and disbelief by what unfolded before my eyes and the anger and sadness I felt as I realized what had happened.

Looking back, what we should remember from the terrible events of that day is our shared humanity. The international community responded with expressions of solidarity, mourning and pledges of support. This Legislature joined together to pass a motion pledging the resources of Ontario to assist in dealing with the aftermath. Strangers helped strangers, united in their compassion for the victims. First responders suspended concern for their own safety, caring only for others.

The victims and the first responders who lost their lives will never be forgotten. They will be forever remembered in our thoughts and prayers.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), changes have been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mr. Schein assumes ballot item number 66, Ms. Campbell assumes ballot item number 79, Mr. Harris assumes ballot item number 55, Mr. Wilson assumes ballot item number 65 and Mr. Walker assumes ballot item number 80.

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon. James J. Bradley: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of the Environment is seeking unanimous consent. Do we have unanimous consent? Agreed.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(g), notice for ballot item 55 be waived.

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

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order, the member from Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Thank you very much. I appreciate that the member said, when seeking unanimous consent, what it was about, but it would be very helpful for the government in those cases to give the House leaders an advance copy of what the unanimous consent motion is

about so we've had a chance to read it and check it and so that we don't get ourselves into any trouble.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is not a point of order. However, the point has been made, and I would suggest respectfully that the House leaders decide on how that's going to transpire in the future. Thank you very much.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

MINING INDUSTRY

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: I am pleased to rise in the House today to inform members that Ontario is experiencing unprecedented levels of mineral development activity that is promoting economic activity and job creation that will benefit all Ontarians for years to come.

Mr. Speaker, Ontario is blessed with an abundance of natural resources at a time when the world is developing faster than ever and demanding these resources. Moreover, our government has worked diligently to create a superior investment climate with our mineral development strategy, a climate that is promoting mineral development. This, coupled with our competitive tax regime, makes Ontario a prime jurisdiction for business and job creation.

Ontario's advantages appeal to mineral developers. That is evident in the new levels of exploration activity we have been experiencing throughout the province in recent years. Mr. Speaker, Ontario is a hotbed of mineral development. For the first time, there are more than 600 active mining exploration projects across the province. Another record was established when exploration spending exceeded \$1 billion in 2011, more than any other jurisdiction in Canada, ever. Mining claim activity in Ontario remains well above historical levels, and the number of active mining claim units rose 5%, to 326,000 in 2011 from 312,000 in 2010.

1520

Over the last 10 years, more new mines opened here than anywhere else in Canada. That tells us that investing in the exploration and development of minerals in Ontario pays off.

Studies have shown that a single mine can have an enormous economic impact on a community and its economy. Research indicates that the 480 direct mining jobs at a single mine can create 2,280 additional jobs, with well over half of those being filled by local residents. It also points out that an average mine contributes \$278 million to the country's gross domestic product, \$220 million of which remains local.

Mr. Speaker, Ontario is, without question, Canada's premier mining jurisdiction. We rank among the top 10 world producers of platinum, nickel and cobalt, and we are significant producers of gold, silver, copper and zinc. We are also in the select group of jurisdictions that produce, process and market diamonds.

Ontario's mining industry is valued at more than \$10 billion, and it creates over 27,000 direct and 50,000 indirect jobs in the province.

Our government intends to build on this success. With this in mind, we have committed to assisting the industry in opening at least eight new mines over the course of the next 10 years. Two of these mines have already opened this year: Lake Shore Gold's Bell Creek gold mine and AuRico Gold's Young-Davidson mine.

Interjections.

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: We won't close mines like the NDP did, who are now heckling mineral development.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Now I'll ask you to come to order.

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that there are more than a dozen projects in northern Ontario on the verge of becoming operating mines over the next few years. I am referring to projects like Rubicon's Phoenix Gold project near Red Lake and the Detour Lake operation near Cochrane, which will become Canada's largest gold mine.

Of course we're all looking forward to the development of the Ring of Fire region, which could become Canada's first world-class chromite deposit. Earlier this year, Cliffs resources announced it is building a new \$1.85-billion ferrochrome processing facility in northern Ontario after months of stiff competition from other jurisdictions, including Quebec. Mr. Speaker, this means about 900 direct new jobs are coming to the Sudbury area, 450 during construction, and up to 450 during production.

It's important to note also that the mine and mill development in the Far North will create as many as 700 direct jobs over and above the mining supply and services jobs and the induced jobs the Cliffs chromite mine will create in northwestern Ontario and elsewhere across the north and beyond. We can also look forward to other companies, like Noront Resources, mining in the Ring of Fire, creating hundreds of new jobs.

More importantly, we are approaching the development of the Ring of Fire and the massive opportunity it provides in a responsible, inclusive manner. We are ensuring that we are environmentally responsible. We are ensuring that we meet our duty to consult with the appropriate First Nations communities. We are ensuring that any undertaking must bring long-term prosperity to these communities through appropriate engagement and resources.

These are very exciting times in Ontario's mineral development community. The future prosperity of our province is being staked today by the men and women working to develop our mineral wealth for the jobs of tomorrow. We certainly look forward to the opportunity, economic development and job creation that mining will bring to northern Ontario and indeed the entire province. Thank you.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): He's finished. You can stop. Thank you.

Responses? The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka.

Mr. Norm Miller: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my pleasure to respond to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Certainly, I share the minister's enthusiasm for mining in the province of Ontario. I may disagree with some of the points he made, however, because I looked at the most recent standings for places to invest in mining—where the most attractive jurisdiction for mineral exploration and development in the world is. From this year's survey of mining companies, I don't see Ontario on the list. In fact, I have to go to the bottom of the page to see Ontario mentioned. The number one jurisdiction to invest is New Brunswick.

"New Brunswick shot to the top of the rankings as miners lauded the province for its fair, transparent and efficient legal system and consistency in the enforcement and interpretation of existing environmental regulations...."

"Combine that with a competitive taxation regime and minimal uncertainty around disputed land claims"—that's why New Brunswick is rated number one. I look to the bottom of the page, and there's Ontario: 13th, Minister. So we're not number one.

Back when Tim Hudak was Minister of Northern Development and Mines, Ontario was rated the number one jurisdiction in the world to invest in mining. Ontario PCs, unlike the McGuinty government, recognized just how important mining is. That's why I had a private member's bill to do away with the Far North Act. The Liberal government brought in the Far North Act. That would take 225,000 square kilometres of northern Ontario off the map, so to speak, for mining development; 225,000 square kilometres. Who knows how many Rings of Fire are in that 225,000 square kilometres?

I would say that there's a lot of uncertainty out there in the mining sector in Ontario right now. You just need to look at the way they've handled the Ring of Fire, something they like to talk a lot about, when they made a deal with one company without discussing with many of the other companies involved, and what do we have? We have First Nations, who have such a vested interest in this. We have Aroland First Nation coming out very much against it. We have Chief Peter Moonias from Neskantaga saying in a press release, "We will continue to fight" the Ring of Fire despite the court ruling, and he's committed to laying down his life if the bridge goes across the Attawapiskat River.

I wouldn't say that's all rosy, Mr. Minister; I would say that that shows that the province has failed in its duty to consult. If you're trying to do business in this province, you'd think that that's a fairly basic building block—that you want to do some consulting with the First Nations who are very much involved in the Ring of Fire, which I do agree has great potential for jobs for northerners, and it has great potential for First Nations to participate in the jobs. I see it as being a great opportunity, but the province needs to do a better job in its duty

to consult. It's not the company's duty to consult; it's the province's duty to consult. The province needs to do a better job of providing education opportunities for First Nations so they can fully participate in these new mines, and it hasn't been doing a great job of that. What we do have is a lot of uncertainty there.

In my last minute, if I may, I would certainly like to bring up some local issues. I have not too many mines in the riding of Parry Sound–Muskoka but I do have a graphite mine that's trying to get operating. It was an existing graphite mine. The prices are quite high for graphite. The Kearney graphite mine: I went for a tour of it a couple of weeks ago. They don't invite me for a tour unless they have problems, it seems, these days. I was there because they're really concerned about getting the mine operating. They're running into red tape and stumbling blocks with the McGuinty government, and they're really trying to get—

Hon. Rick Bartolucci: Wrong again.

Mr. Norm Miller: They're trying to get operating, Minister. I wish you'd look into it. They're trying to get operating by January. It's 80 local jobs. It's very important to the area, and many more spin-off jobs. So I really wish you would help. I know that the member for Nipissing-Pembroke has a graphite mine as well: Bissett Creek graphite mine. It's also running into red tape and problems, and they're trying to get up and operating.

1530

I simply say that we can do a lot better job. I'm sure the NDP critic will bring up some of the lost jobs in the Timmins area, like Xstrata, which just moved 700 jobs to Quebec because of Ontario's high energy prices. We can do a lot better in the province of Ontario, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Michael Mantha: It's my opportunity to respond to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines and some of the information he has brought forward in his statement.

But first, I just thought I'd share with the House that one of the biggest duties that I had when I was a newly elected member was to really find out what was going on in Algoma–Manitoulin. Being predominantly with a lot of seniors, I thought it was important that my first task was to go out and deal with the health care sector and find out what was going on, what was the state of it.

My next priority was really, as the critic for northern development and mines, to actually go out and visit miners: go out to the sites, speak to the individuals, go down in the shafts, talk to the guys on the jackleg, speak to management and really engage in regards to where they see this industry going. Where do they see the challenges are, and how are things going forward? I have to say I was successful in doing that.

With everything that has happened in my riding over the course of the summer, that was one of my biggest priorities, to reach out to industry, to find out exactly what is happening. How are things for them? Overwhelmingly, the surprise that I got from industry is, "What the hell are you doing here?"—oh, I'm sorry—"What are you doing here?" They've never had that

opportunity to really engage with the role of what a critic does, and why it is important—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Thanks, Mike.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Well, I'm sorry, I don't—

Interjections.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I'll let these gentlemen go on.

Anyway, it was in new mines, not where my colleague from Timmins–James Bay went to. These were other mines in which he didn't have that opportunity. Obviously, it had been mines where they haven't had the opportunity to speak to the minister about where they were going.

There was one thing that the minister opened up with: Ontario is experiencing unprecedented levels of mineral development activities. Well, he's absolutely right about that, but it's not in whole, or in its entirety, due to changes or actions that this government has been doing. You have to really look at where the price of the commodity has gone, and right now a lot of the industry is basing their future projects based on the price of commodities. They're moving forward with it, and that's a lot of the reason why they're moving ahead.

In my discussions that I've had with the First Nations, with industry and with those individuals, a lot of the problems that they've had in the industry is the lack of trades, the lack of individuals that will be able to come in and build the future for this industry—the lack of training, the lack of having manpower coming in. So we really need to look and get not only industry but this government on board, and all of our First Nations partners in this. We need to get them at the table prior to any announcements that are happening, because they need to build their own capacity as to how they are going to benefit in the long term. They deserve the opportunities to build their capacity as to where they're going and how they're going to secure their future in this process.

Face facts: If we don't have our First Nations partners with us at the table, which has happened with the Ring of Fire right now, we're going to have a lot of problems. We're going to be faced with a lot of challenges, and this prosperity that this government is boasting about—we're going to be challenged to get to that day. We're going to have some difficulties in reaching it.

We can talk about having these plants that are going to be developed, this refinery that's going to go in Nickel Belt. But if we don't address the question of how we are going to provide the power, or how we are going to address the question of how this company or this industry is going to be able to afford to pay these high hydro costs, we won't be able to move forward anywhere. And we're going to be back to square one, where we're going to be asking the question, why are we permitting some of our resources here in Ontario to be exported outside of Ontario, taking away our jobs, taking away our prosperity, taking away First Nation opportunities? So it's nice to see that the industry is growing and it is moving forward, but if we don't get it right, right off the bat, right at the beginning, we are putting ourselves behind the

eight ball, and we're just creating walls where there are no walls to be built, where we have the opportunity and one of the richest provinces with the resources that we have.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that the late show requested by the member from Leeds–Grenville has been withdrawn.

It is now time for petitions. The member from Durham.

PETITIONS

WIND TURBINES

Mr. John O'Toole: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to represent my constituents in the riding of Durham. The petition reads as follows:

"Whereas industrial wind turbine developments have raised concerns among citizens over health, safety and property values; and

"Whereas the Green Energy Act allows wind turbine developments to bypass meaningful public input and municipal approvals"—shameful;

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

"That the Minister of the Environment revise the Green Energy Act to allow full public input and municipal approvals on all industrial wind farm developments and that a moratorium on wind development be declared until an independent, epidemiological study is completed into the health and environmental impacts of industrial wind turbines."

I'm pleased to sign and support this on behalf of my constituents and present it to Ethan.

ELECTORAL REFORM

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Mr. Speaker, I have a petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly.

"Whereas it is the right of every Canadian to vote once in each election for the candidate of his or her choice and have their vote fairly counted and not offset by faulty voter registration or any sort of illegal practices; and

"Whereas credible allegations of voting irregularities exist for the most recent election, including non-citizens voting, persons voting multiple times at various voting stations and errors on the permanent register of electors list; and

"Whereas the practice of 'vouching' has been practised in polling stations where it is not permitted, such as non-rural polling stations, and does not require verified proof of a person's age, citizenship and residence in a riding;

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

"To support Bill 106, Prevention of Electoral Fraud Act, 2012, by Bas Balkissoon, the member for Scarborough–Rouge River, that would require that voters

present proof of Canadian citizenship; require the Chief Electoral Officer of Ontario to appoint an independent party to conduct a review of the permanent register of electors within six months after the bill passes and subsequently every five years; allow scrutineers to monitor the process by which voters add their names to the voters' list on election day; and forbid vouching, which currently excludes the requirement for legitimate identification."

Mr. Speaker, I support this petition. I'll sign it and I'll have it sent to the table by page Leo.

HOSPITAL PARKING FEES

Mr. Todd Smith: This is presented on behalf of seniors.

"Whereas the United Senior Citizens of Ontario has expressed its concerns over the high costs of parking at hospitals in Ontario on behalf of its more than 300,000 members; and

"Whereas thousands of Ontario seniors find it difficult to live on their fixed income and cannot afford these extra hospital parking fees added to their daily living costs; and

"Whereas the Canadian Medical Association Journal has said in an editorial that parking fees are a barrier to health care and add additional stress to patients who have enough to deal with;

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

"That Ontario's members of provincial Parliament and the Dalton McGuinty government take action to abolish parking fees for all seniors when visiting hospitals."

I agree with this petition and will hand it to the table with Zakhar.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that comes from all over Ontario.

"Whereas Ontario is near the bottom of the country—we are eighth of 10 provinces—in health funding per person; and

"Whereas Ontario has the fewest hospital beds per person of any province in Canada. Since the 1990s, the Ontario government has cut and closed 18,500 hospital beds, resulting in overcrowding, bed shortages and backlogged emergency departments. Hospital cuts have already gone too far, but now we are facing a new round of major cuts as a result of inadequate funding in the provincial budget; and

"Whereas long-term-care and home care have never increased enough to keep pace with the hospital cuts. Ministry of Health data shows that there are more than 30,000 Ontarians waiting for long-term-care (nursing home) placements and wait times have tripled since 2005. Home care funding has been shrinking as a proportion of health funding and thousands are on wait-lists for home care. Announced funding levels in the

budget will not be enough to catch up with population need; and

1540

“Whereas we are the people who pay for health care. We believe it is better and more equitable to pay through a fair tax system that provides high-quality single-tier public health care based on need, not on our wealth. We reject the idea that health care be sold for profit and that we—the patients—be forced to pay for privatized care when we are sick and elderly and least able to afford care.

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

“(1) Stop hospital bed and service cuts in all community hospitals and, in particular, stop the cuts to—and closures of—small and rural hospitals. Conduct a proper evidence-based study of how many hospital beds are needed in Ontario and where.

“(2) Provide adequate funding across the health care continuum—from hospitals to long-term care and home care—to maintain existing services and address the wait-lists.

“(3) Stop the privatization of health care services, including for-profit privatization of our long-term-care homes for the elderly and home care.

“(4) Hold an open, public consultation across Ontario on the planned changes to hospital funding.”

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

ELECTORAL REFORM

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: “Whereas it is the right of every Canadian to vote once in each election for the candidate of his or her choice and have their vote fairly counted and not offset by faulty voter registration or any sort of illegal practices; and

“Whereas credible allegations of voting irregularities exist for the most recent election, including non-citizens voting, persons voting multiple times at various voting stations and errors on the permanent register of electors list; and

“Whereas the practice of ‘vouching’ has been practised in polling stations where it is not permitted, such as non-rural polling stations, and does not require verified proof of a person’s age, citizenship and residence in a riding;

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

“To support Bill 106, Prevention of Electoral Fraud Act, 2012, by Bas Balkissoon, the member for Scarborough–Rouge River, that would require that voters present proof of Canadian citizenship; require the Chief Electoral Officer of Ontario to appoint an independent party to conduct a review of the permanent register of electors within six months after the bill passes and subsequently every five years; allow scrutineers to monitor the process by which voters add their names to the voters’ list on election day; and forbid vouching, which

currently excludes the requirement for legitimate identification.”

I hereby sign my name, and I will give the petition to Roberto.

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the horse racing industry employs approximately 60,000 people” in the province of Ontario and “creates \$1.5 billion in wages and \$2 billion in recurring expenditures annually; and

“Whereas the partnership that was created between government and the horse breeding and racing industry has been a model arrangement and is heralded throughout North America, with 75% of revenues going to the provincial government to fund important programs like health care and education, 5% to the municipalities and only 20% goes back to the horse business; and

“Whereas the horse business is a significant source of revenue for the farming community and rural municipalities;

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

“That the Ministry of Finance continue the revenue-sharing partnership with the horse racing industry for the benefit of Ontario’s agricultural and rural economies.”

I’m pleased to sign this petition and pass it to my page Jenna.

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Sudbury.

“Whereas the Ontario government” has made PET scanning “a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients” under certain conditions; and

“Whereas,” since October 2009, “insured PET scans” are performed “in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

“Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with” Health Sciences North, “its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;

“We ... petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through” Health Sciences North, “thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens of northeastern Ontario.”

I fully support this petition, Mr. Speaker, will affix my name to it and ask Mathilde to bring it to the Clerk.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Mike Colle: This is a petition to replace the dirty diesel buses on Dufferin Street.

“Whereas Dufferin Street is a very congested street in the heart of Toronto with very serious pollution challenges; and

“Whereas the thousands of trips made on Dufferin by diesel buses 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, are adding to the” health problems of people in the Dufferin area;

“Whereas many of the residents on Dufferin are only a few feet away from the fumes produced by these diesel buses; and

“Whereas people cannot sit on their verandas or open their windows for fear of breathing these hazardous fumes; and” whereas when they open their windows the carbon monoxide detectors go off—Mr. Speaker, that’s how bad it is on Dufferin—

“Whereas good, clean public transit is essential to the hard-working people who live on Dufferin or who ride on the Dufferin bus;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the province of Ontario to replace the” dirty “diesel buses on Dufferin Street with electric transit vehicles or other transit vehicles that use non-polluting, clean energy sources.”

I totally support the people on Dufferin and I put my name on it.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Jeff Yurek: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there are a growing number of reported cases of no accountability, complacency, waste, patient neglect and substandard care in our health care system;

“Whereas people with complaints have limited options, and oversight of most health care agencies is done by that agency or sometimes through the ministry;

“Whereas Ontario is one of the few provinces in Canada where our Ombudsman does not have independent oversight of health care services;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to expand the Ombudsman’s mandate to include investigation of our health care services, including health units, hospitals, retirement homes, long-term-care facilities and ambulance services.”

I agree with this petition, affix my name and send it to the table with Maya.

INDOOR TANNING EQUIPMENT

M^{me} France Gélinas: I must say that I agree with the petition that was just read also.

“Whereas there is a growing body of evidence linking tanning bed use to increased cancer risk, the World Health Organization considers tanning beds a group 1 carcinogen, and use of tanning beds before the age of 30 raises one’s risk of melanoma by 75%; and

“Whereas many groups, including the Canadian Cancer Society and the Ontario Medical Association, support a ban on the use of indoor tanning equipment by youths under the age of 18; and

“Whereas the provinces of British Columbia and Nova Scotia have passed legislation banning youths from using

indoor tanning equipment, and governments around the world are considering similar legislation; and

“Whereas there is broad public support in Ontario for increased regulation of the tanning industry, with 83% supporting a ban on indoor tanning for those under 18;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation banning youths under the age of 18 from using indoor tanning equipment except in the case of medical need.”

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

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Phil McNeely: My petition is from the people in Ottawa–Orléans.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there is presently an interprovincial crossings environmental assessment study under way to locate a new bridge across the Ottawa River east of the downtown of Ottawa;

“Whereas the province of Ontario is improving the 174/417 split and widening Highway 417 from the split to Nicholas at an estimated cost of \$220 million;”—

Mr. John Yakabuski: What about the sinkhole?

Mr. Phil McNeely: “Whereas that improvement was promised to and is urgently needed by the community of Orléans and surrounding areas;

“Whereas the federal government has moved almost 5,000 RCMP jobs from the downtown to Barrhaven;

“Whereas the federal government is moving 10,000 Department of National Defence jobs from the downtown to Kanata;

“Whereas over half these jobs were held by residents of Orléans and surrounding communities;

“Whereas the economy of Orléans will be drastically impacted by the movement of these jobs westerly;

“Whereas additional capacity will be required for residents who will have to commute across our city to those jobs;

“We, the undersigned, call on the province of Ontario and the Ministry of Transportation to do their part to stop this environmental assessment; and further, that the new road capacity being built on 174 and 417 be kept for Orléans and surrounding communities in Ontario; and further, that the province of Ontario assist the city of Ottawa in convincing the federal government to fund the light rail from Blair Road to Trim Road, which is much more needed now that 15,000 jobs accessible to residents of Orléans are moved out of reach to the west.

“We, the undersigned, support this petition and affix our names hereunder.”

And I’m sure that pothole will be fixed this week.

1550

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

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

“Whereas the McGuinty government has mismanaged negotiations with Ontario doctors; and

“Whereas this government has unilaterally imposed fee cuts that could negatively impact patients; and

“Whereas these changes will affect the ophthalmology, cardiology and radiology services that are currently crucial to many Ontarians’ quality of life;

“We, the undersigned, do hereby petition the government of Ontario as follows:

“That the McGuinty government reach a negotiated settlement with the Ontario Medical Association that puts the needs of patients first and maintains a proper level of care for Ontarians.”

I agree with this, sign my name to it and transfer it to page Roberto.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ONTARIO ELECTRICITY SYSTEM OPERATOR ACT, 2012

LOI DE 2012 SUR LA SOCIÉTÉ D’EXPLOITATION DU RÉSEAU D’ÉLECTRICITÉ DE L’ONTARIO

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 13, 2012, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 75, An Act to amend the Electricity Act, 1998 to amalgamate the Independent Electricity System Operator and the Ontario Power Authority, to amend the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 and to make complementary amendments to other Acts/ Projet de loi 75, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur l’électricité pour fusionner la Société indépendante d’exploitation du réseau d’électricité et l’Office de l’électricité de l’Ontario, modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur la Commission de l’énergie de l’Ontario et apportant des modifications complémentaires à d’autres lois.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Pursuant to standing order 47(c), I am now required to interrupt the proceedings to announce that there has been more than six and a 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 indicates otherwise.

Hon. James J. Bradley: The debate should continue, please.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you.

Further debate?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Madam Speaker—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Point of order.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Yes, Mr. House leader?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I believe this is supposed to be the lead, because the critic was not here and we had stood down our lead, if you check at the table.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: You’re welcome, Peter.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Toronto–Danforth.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: The ways of House leaders are indeed mysterious to the rest of us.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: You have a 20-minute speech; you can draw out the 20.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I can draw out the 20.

Madam Speaker, as you noted before I started talking, this is the last round of debate on Bill 75, An Act to amend the Electricity Act, 1998 to amalgamate the Independent Electricity System Operator and the Ontario Power Authority etc.

Madam Speaker, if you had been here for the leadoff by the Minister of Energy and his parliamentary assistant—and you may have been here—you would not have known what this bill does, having listened to their one-hour presentation. Effectively, the most significant, the largest piece of this bill turns off the lights on public scrutiny of power planning in Ontario. There are other matters that are addressed by the bill, but the largest, most significant piece, the one that is of greatest concern to the people of Ontario, is in fact this one piece. In doing so, this bill continues a Liberal tradition of continuously pushing the public out of scrutiny of power plans, of turning down the lights, of darkening the room to make sure that we legislators here, responsible for ensuring that the government is held to account, are dealt out; making sure that the people of Ontario have great difficulty in determining what actually is going on; and making sure that the people of Ontario aren’t allowed in to see the numbers, the analysis, the assessments upon which any power planning for this province is based.

In the past, it was held that to assess the power plans for Ontario, one needed an environmental assessment. Frankly, it was something that, although never acted on, would have been extraordinarily useful for this government, for governments to come, and for governments that had the opportunity and the privilege to govern in the past. A full environmental assessment would have allowed the presentation of a government plan for provision of electricity in Ontario. Presentation before an environmental assessment board would have allowed questioning of witnesses, presentation of evidence and, most importantly, would have required the government of the day to present alternatives to the scenario that they put forward for consideration so that one could see, apples to apples, what made sense in terms of costs, oranges to oranges, what made sense in terms of the environment, so that in fact one of the central decisions around the operation of this province was subjected to the kind of thorough analysis that I believe and New Democrats believe is required for something of this magnitude.

You have to know that in 2006 when the first power plan—and I’ll use this term once: the integrated power supply plan; I’ll just call it the power plan. When that came forward, surprisingly enough, the government changed regulations so that the power plan was no longer to go through a full environmental assessment. Indeed, it was decided that it would go to a hearing at the Ontario

Energy Board on a far reduced scope of assessment. This bill takes that reduced scope for assessing power planning in Ontario and makes it far narrower, sets up the power of the minister to determine what the parameters are of questions to be asked and answered by the OEB and, for all of us, turns out the lights on public scrutiny.

The integrated power supply plan, the power plan, is replaced by what are called ministerial energy plans. The minister must consult with the Ontario Energy Board on the impact of the energy plan on consumers' electricity bills. Note, it doesn't say that the minister has to consult in public. It's not a question of hearings. It's a question of the minister being allowed to go to the Ontario Energy Board and say, "You know what? I need your advice. Is this going to be damaging? Is this going to be useful?" And then the minister gets to refer to the Ontario Energy Board and say, "I've done all this work. Take a look at these capital plans. Take a look at the cost. If you want to have hearings on the cost, go ahead." But the larger questions of cost-effectiveness, of compliance with the goals that have been set for electricity development in Ontario—set aside.

It deprives stakeholders—and there are many—deprives people who are concerned about the economic impact of the electricity system, about the environmental impact of the electricity system, of the ability to test, in open hearings, the evidence of the minister, the evidence of the government and the basis for its argument that this is the way we need to proceed with energy.

I have to say that the speeches made by the minister and his parliamentary assistant reflected the tradition of the Liberals when it comes to this issue, and that's that they didn't address the substance of the bill; they set that aside, talked about their virtue, patted themselves on the back and neglected to say a single word about the dramatic reduction in public scrutiny of energy planning in this province. I guess, if you're going to put people in the dark, you might as well not wait around. You might as well get at it from the get-go, and that's what the minister and his parliamentary assistant did.

I have to say that many people find that, after they listen to speeches in this Legislature, they shouldn't be allowed to drive heavy vehicles. There's a reason for that. One approaches these speeches with caution. One approaches listening to and reading the Hansard of these speeches with caution. I actually went through the speech of the minister and the parliamentary assistant; I listened to them while they were speaking; I took notes, and I went back to Hansard.

1600

I have their speeches before me. I would be happy to provide you with a copy, Speaker, if you wanted to go through and see if you could find any reference to this dramatic reduction in public scrutiny, but I can assure you right now that it's not there, and I can assure anyone who goes to the legislative website, looks up Bill 75, goes to the record of proceedings, goes to the speeches, that, again, you will not find it either, but you may deal

with the insomnia problem that is bedeviling you when you watch this show.

What the minister had to say was that in the years leading up to 2003, Ontario became more and more reliant on coal, on energy produced from coal, on energy that relied on a technology that had been around for centuries, which is in part true, but there is a larger truth, and that's that Ontario, which had bet everything on nuclear technology in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, in the 1990s found that plants that were supposed to last 40 years were not working anymore, were in dire need of rebuilding, because they had come to the actual functioning end of their lives. The motors, the reactors at the core of those power plants, had suffered far more wear than had been proposed by their engineers, and so the multi-billion-dollar expense that we had taken on as a province, that was supposed to be spread out over 40 years, suddenly the motor on that vehicle had died, and we were at the 25-year mark.

And so Ontario took its coal plants, which it had been using to provide power at what are called peak hours—when you have the highest demand in the middle of summer because it's so hot and everyone turns on their air conditioning, or peak demand in the middle of winter when everyone, concerned about the cold, cranks things up in their households, and those plants moved to providing the power that the prematurely deceased nuclear plants had been providing.

That's what the minister doesn't say, and he doesn't say that because his whole strategy is based on going back to that technology which caused such huge financial problems for Ontario, rebuilding it, expanding it and thus addressing electricity needs in Ontario. He told us part of the truth about what happened with coal but neglected to talk about how he was turning off the lights on public scrutiny.

As you go through, he talks what about the Ontario Power Authority is, what the Independent Electricity System Operator is. For those who are watching and are curious, the Ontario Power Authority develops plans for power in Ontario and secures contracts with suppliers who can provide us with that power. The Independent Electricity System Operator is the organization that actually runs the system on a day-to-day basis, matches the production of electricity to the demand for electricity, so that in the end our lights don't flicker in our homes and machinery does not go off in our office buildings or our factories.

He talked about that—a useful bit of explanation—but he didn't talk about this dramatic reduction in public scrutiny of his planning. He mentioned that this government is setting up a panel to look at what's called consolidation of local power companies. So if you're in Ottawa, consolidating the local distribution company that sends you your power bill in Ottawa—consolidating it with the power companies that provide the transmission lines in the communities around Ottawa; similarly Toronto; similarly Hamilton, London, Windsor.

That issue is one that will become more prominent later this year as the panel that was set up by the minister

meets and reports back. That initiative will have very dire impacts on the people of Ontario if it is allowed to go forward with the privatization of local distribution companies—again, a significant matter, but not what's in this bill.

The minister is quite studious. He avoids talking about the content of the bill. He talks about selling clean energy and developing clean energy technologies. He doesn't mention that there's a cap on the amount of renewable energy that Ontario will buy. He says that if we want to sell it abroad, if we want to export, we have to buy and use it here in Ontario. If, in a year or so, you stop buying it because you're too busy investing in nuclear power plants, quite frankly that undermines your argument around the world about the exportability of Ontario-made renewable energy technologies.

Mr. Moridi, the member from Richmond Hill, also spoke, and he spoke quite a bit longer than the minister. But like the minister, he made sure that the change in the approvals process was not there. He talked about the history of power in Ontario, talked about Samsung, talked about the smart grid, smart meters, all of that; what the ISO does; what the OPA does. But with all this paper, neither of them talked about changing the way that power planning is done or reviewed or approved or scrutinized here in Ontario. That's substantial. That is substantial because, of all the changes that are made in this bill, this is the one that will have the greatest long-term impact on the people of Ontario, and I will expand on that as I go forward.

This bill ends the requirement in the Electricity Act to have public hearings and a decision by the energy board on power planning. The bill currently reads that once during each period prescribed by the regulations, every few years, or more frequently, the minister will have the board of the Ontario Power Authority submit to the Ontario Energy Board, the body that regulates prices in Ontario and regulates the electricity system and regulates the gas system, an integrated power supply plan, a power plan.

The board is given a number of duties, but summarized most neatly: "The board shall review each power plan submitted by the Ontario Power Authority to ensure it:

—complies with any directions issued by the minister; and

—is economically prudent and cost effective."

Who can argue with doing those things and doing them in public, doing them in a situation where stakeholders—and frankly, anyone who pays a hydro bill in this province is a stakeholder—giving stakeholders the opportunity to look at what's actually being done, question it and say, "We want changes to this"? It has been dramatically changed.

The new wording says, "The minister may, in consultation with" this new body that's being set up under the act "or any other person, develop and ... issue energy plans." It says that "in developing the energy plan and before issuing it, the minister shall consult with the board

on the impact of the implementation of the energy plan on a consumer's electricity bill." As I mentioned, that doesn't mean a consultation in public; that doesn't mean a detailed review of the numbers, projections and assumptions of the minister in public. It simply means that the minister may, if he or she so desires, go and talk with the regulators and get their opinion on how this works for consumers.

1610

Speaker, the one thing the minister is required to do is "refer an energy plan to the board for the board's review of estimated capital costs in the plan." Then the minister can require the board to look at other matters—or not. It's up to the minister's discretion.

So if you are concerned about what electricity is costing you in Ontario, and you want an opportunity, before another \$10 billion, \$50 billion, \$100 billion is spent—if you want an opportunity to actually get in there and have an impact in a formal assessment, well, in fact, most of what you would be able to comment on has been taken away.

If the minister decides, in referring this whole thing to the regulator, that he didn't really mean to have them look at how this or that works, well, then the minister can say, "I'm changing the terms of referral."

It is a very substantial reduction of the public's right to question government and hold it accountable—a very substantial reduction, a matter not mentioned once by the minister or his parliamentary assistant when they presented this bill to the Legislature.

There are consequences to taking away public scrutiny. There are consequences to putting people in the dark. We have seen a number of those, and I want to address just a few in my opportunity to speak today.

It is very difficult, if you are a member of the public, to find out what's really going on in government. It is unfortunate. I think it's wrong, but I think it's true. I need to tell members of the public who ask, "Why is it that I can't find out why this or that decision is made?"—what the factors were that were balanced against each other—that for most legislators in this chamber, that's the real situation we face as well. That's the difficulty we face. It is very hard to get an assessment from this Liberal government as to why they've made the decisions they've made, so that they can be held accountable.

If we can't get useful information, if we can't find out the basis for decisions, how is the public supposed to do it? How is the government supposed to be held accountable? Can it only be held accountable when the bills get so high that people, through sheer rage, decide to throw out a government? Does it have to go to that? Does it have to wait until the system starts flickering and faltering before it can be seen that the government has made substantial and profound mistakes in decisions around electricity planning and investment? Why does it have to wait to go to that stage?

Speaker, things should not be set up that way. We should be able to get answers, and the public should be able to, in an open hearing of the regulator, the Ontario

Energy Board, question and assess power planning in this province.

Just in the last few months, I've had an opportunity to sit on a committee here in the Legislature. Most people won't know about it; it's called the estimates committee. Ministries bring in their numbers. They bring in the senior staff. They bring in the deputy minister. They sit before a committee of the Legislature, and in turn, each party gets an opportunity to ask questions of the minister. Sometimes we use that time wisely; sometimes not as well as we could or should. But in general, my experience is people try to get answers so they understand what's going on and so that they can hold a government to account.

Speaker, one of the questions I asked the Minister of Energy was how he and the Ministry of Energy decided on the level of investment in nuclear power in Ontario. I asked the minister why his government believed that it was necessary to maintain nuclear power at 50% of the grid mix over the next 30 years. Why is it that half our power should come from nuclear?

After all, this is a technology now that's half a century old, 60 years old. The world's been moving on. There are a lot more cost-effective options out there. We know the kinds of risks that we run. How did you decide on 50%? Why not 20%? Why not 80%?

When I asked the minister that question, his response was: "It's interesting. Yesterday, I believe, was the 50th anniversary of nuclear power in the province of Ontario."

Speaker, I have to say that was not a direct response. That did not actually get at the heart of the question I was asking. It was a delay answer. It ate up a few minutes. In fact, I wasn't asking something exotic, something that was currently the subject of a judicial inquiry or of a court case. I was just saying, "How did you determine this percentage instead of that percentage?" Surely somewhere in this vast Ministry of Energy someone has thought about why this percentage and not that percentage.

The minister went on to talk about the development of Candu technology in Canada, historically interesting but not the reason why you decide on one level of investment or another. So I asked him again, "Could you please give us an undertaking to provide the background documentation and analysis justifying your position that nuclear should remain at 50% of the grid mix?"

And the answer I got was, "Well, I think you can—different countries and different jurisdictions can make a different determination—"

Fair enough. I wasn't asking for other countries. You know, I'm not being greedy. I just want to know why the government of Ontario makes this decision. That's all I wanted.

And his answer for my third try was, "I'm sure that part of the determination was the fact that nuclear has historically been part of our mix here in the province of Ontario...."

You know, Speaker, just saying that we're going to do it because we've done it in the past is not necessarily a

good way to do business. I like to breathe. I did breathing in the past. I hope to breathe in the future. I hope to breathe for a long time. But I'm asking a different kind of question.

You're about to invest tens of billions of dollars in the electricity system of this province, the nerve system of the province. Why is it that you've made this or that decision? And what I got was, "Well ... the long-term energy plan was the subject of much discussion, a public hearing, analysis, no doubt questions in the House, and you would have been part of those discussions, quite significantly."

Well, there weren't discussions. There was presentation of this long-term energy plan. But discussions? No. It wasn't adopted by the Legislature. It didn't go through any agency for review. No, Speaker. There was no rationale for this very significant decision.

We tried to get information from the minister on his experience with the Mississauga power plant. Very roughly, the story from 2005 to 2011 is this: that the developers got a contract in 2005 but had difficulty getting financing, and they went for years. They went through approval processes but they didn't find anyone who was willing to give them money. Why exactly that's the case, I don't know. I don't have access to such documentation. But I do know that in the years 2005, 2006, 2007 and so on, our former leader Howard Hampton and myself, once I got here in 2006, talked about the risks of these private power deals, the risk in cost and, frankly, the risk in the government's approach to building all these gas-fired power plants that could well turn out to be unnecessary. In fact, I think most of them are unnecessary and that an investment in efficiency and conservation would have been far more sensible and far less risky. But the government didn't listen to that.

1620

In 2010, finally Eastern Power Developers got money. Someone was willing to bankroll them. It turns out to be that an American hedge fund bankrolled them. They moved on with construction.

So, Speaker, in the fall of 2011, a government that had decided to go forward with private power deals, that had decided to go forward with a technology that was more expensive than efficiency and conservation, found itself in a jam at roughly the 11th hour of the election in 2011, and decided that the crisis it had created in approving this plant was one it would solve to get seats, and we got stuck with the bill.

Mr. Leone from the opposition party put forward a motion to compel provision of documents to the estimates committee. Because the government resisted that, we passed a motion asking the Speaker of this Legislature to find the Minister of Energy in contempt. Mr. Leone was very straightforward in his request and very logical in his arguments. He said, on Wednesday, May 16, 2012—and these are comments later in the hearings—the Standing Committee on Estimates passed a motion that required the Ministry of Energy and the Ontario Power Authority to provide the committee with

documents relating to the Oakville and Mississauga power plants.

The Minister of Energy, on behalf of the Ministry of Energy, responded to the committee on May 30, 2012, and stated, "In light of the confidential, privileged and highly commercially sensitive nature of these issues, it would not be appropriate for my office or the ministry to disclose information that would prejudice these ongoing negotiations and litigation."

I have to say that Mr. Leone made a very powerful argument, pointing out that the Harper government in Ottawa had similarly tried to deny access to documents regarding Afghan detainees to a committee of that Parliament, and in that case, the minister involved was found by the Speaker to be in contempt of the House.

We are elected to oversee the well-being and business of the people of Ontario. You may not like individual legislators; you may like them a lot. Their likability is irrelevant. Their duty is clear. They have to hold government to account, and to do that, they have to have access to documentation.

This minister hid behind the argument that this whole matter was before the courts. When an agreement was reached, a deal was made, we were provided with some of the documents that bore on this matter. I had an opportunity, with others, to review those documents.

Speaker, it would be very useful for us as legislators to actually see fully the documentation and not the documentation at the level of, "I've been told by the minister that you have to stop this," and then the running around, the to-ing and fro-ing, in the Ontario Power Authority.

I say all this because even when threatened with a finding of contempt of the Legislature, the minister didn't provide the documentation that was requested. The bill before us will give the minister and the government even more insulation against providing scrutiny of the minister's and the ministry's actions. I think that's the wrong direction. I don't think it's the direction Ontario wants. I think it's a direction that will lead to even more costly power, and frankly, I don't think this Legislature should support that.

I note Eastern Power developers in Mississauga—but there's the Oakville plant as well—in the course of that fight, when the residents came to see me and presented their arguments about why a large—I think it was a 900-megawatt—power plant, should not be situated very close to their homes, when we reviewed the power needs in the southwest GTA, it became clear that this plant was not defensible. And yet the government went on and on and on until it became very clear that the seat in Oakville would be lost. At that point, a decision was made to change course.

For us, we are still waiting for the documentation. If a committee of the Legislature requests such documents, and that is carried by a majority of that committee, and the minister still will not provide information, how much worse will it be when the minister is provided an even greater level of protection against scrutiny of his power planning?

We have had experience with this government and its decisions around expenditures. We went through, and are still going through, the whole expense of smart meters, spending somewhere in the range of \$1.5 billion to \$2 billion across the province. Interestingly, I actually went to the documents that are available by the consultants, Navigant, who looked at what the benefit would be from spending that \$1.5 billion to \$2 billion, and the consultants at that time said, "You know what? You'll likely reduce the amount of power consumed by houses by 1% across the province as a whole." Since residential uses are somewhere in the range of 25% to 30% of our electricity use, they're talking about one third of 1% reduced for about \$1.5 billion or \$2 billion.

Think for one moment about how we could have reduced people's home electricity bills by providing that fund for low-interest loans so that people could dramatically increase their insulation and reduce their consumption. Then we would have been getting somewhere, because I find most people have had enough stick. They've been beaten enough. They know it's pricy. What they don't have is that carrot that allows them to actually make the investments to weatherseal their homes. They need the money, which they would pay back on their hydro bill. You have a low-interest loan, and you pay it off over 10 years, 15 years, 20 years. If people could reduce their energy costs now, they would. Instead of helping them that way, we made a lot of people much richer by proceeding with smart meters at a minimal savings: one third of 1% of peak power in Ontario. We're not talking about a lot of money.

Do we want to actually give this government even more cover—more cover of darkness—when it makes decisions about energy and electricity?

1630

Decisions made about power will affect day-to-day costs, but they also have substantial impact on the credit rating of this province. I asked the minister if he had actually looked at the impact of nuclear power on Ontario's credit rating, because I had an opportunity to look at the study or the commentary made by Standard and Poor's on the credit rating of Ontario Power Generation.

You should know that this is a company, a utility, that sells into a relatively closed market. We're not competing with Chinese electricity; we're competing with electricity producers in northeastern North America.

Standard and Poor's gives Ontario Power Generation an A rating because its debt is guaranteed by the province of Ontario—although they use different words. They say, "We can't imagine that Ontario wouldn't step in and help deal with any cash crisis if OPG was in trouble." But they say that if Ontario Power Generation didn't have the government of Ontario backing it up, didn't have all of us in this chamber and all of you watching on television, didn't have access to our wallets and bank accounts to provide those guarantees, then its rating would be BBB.

If you go one step below that, that's a junk bond. That's the same credit rating as Spain or Ireland. I don't

know about others, but as I read the business pages, Spain is not doing as well as one would hope.

Standard and Poor's says that it gives it that low rating in part because "[w]eak cash flow metrics and operational and nuclear technology risk offset these credit strengths." So in fact, investment in nuclear power damages the credit rating of Ontario Power Generation. The province of Ontario is carrying that burden.

Speaker, the province of New Brunswick had its credit rating downgraded by Moody's in 2009. Why did Moody's downgrade the credit rating of New Brunswick? I'll read:

"The rating action also reflects Moody's assessment of the risks associated with New Brunswick Power.... The narrowing of" New Brunswick Power's "margins in recent years, in conjunction with high leverage and risks related to the refurbishment of the Point Lepreau nuclear generating station, represents an element of risk for" New Brunswick Power. As such, New Brunswick Power's "provincially guaranteed debt, which is borrowed by the province and on-lent to" New Brunswick Power, "constitutes a contingent liability for the province."

Large-scale investment in nuclear power puts a province's and company's credit rating at risk. Just this year in the United Kingdom, some very large power companies, RWE and E.ON, major players in the European electricity market, dropped out of contracts that they were going to sign with the government of the UK for nuclear power plants. Why? Because it would affect their credit rating. They said that they would have been forced into a credit rating downgrade.

It's pretty clear that when you are investing tens of billions of dollars in a technology that has high risk, as defined by credit rating companies, you need to be very cautious. You need to have your eyes open. You need to be watching.

I asked the minister about this, and the minister, first of all, when I asked him about whether or not he or the ministry had assessed the credit risk, said, "Personally, no." I assured him that I didn't really know if the minister was qualified to assess credit risk. Had he asked his staff? Had he asked his ministry? Was he, in fact, as minister, looking out for the interests of the people of Ontario, looking out for the risk to our finances from these investments? I got a lot of talk about how different bodies within Ontario—the OPG, Hydro One—were looking at their risks, but in repeated questioning, he could not tell me that he had actually taken a look at the risk that Ontario was assuming in proceeding with large-scale nuclear refurbishment and construction.

That is a minister who is not doing his job. Either he doesn't know what's going on, doesn't know what risk we're running, or will not tell what he thinks and is thus evading accountability. I don't know which of those is true, but that's the reality that we face today.

Should we give this government, should we give this minister, greater protection by turning off the lights of public scrutiny? I don't think so. I don't think that's what the people of Ontario want. I don't think that's what they expect from us. They expect us to keep our eyes open.

I asked the minister separately about the refurbishment of the Darlington nuclear power plant and risk management there and the building of a new nuclear power plant at Darlington. You may well know the experience we've had in Ontario, that we have never avoided having a large nuclear project go over budget. It just hasn't happened. In fact, interestingly, about a month ago I was going through some documents in reference to another case and came across a note about the Bruce nuclear power plant refurbishment, which, by the way, is not complete as of today. That was supposed to have been done in 2009. That's over budget. The government of Ontario is stuck with a chunk of that over budget, the government of Ontario having negotiated a price increase to Bruce nuclear for what I'm told are reasons related to that overrun.

So I asked this minister what it was going to cost to refurbish Darlington, and what I got back was that the ultimate cost is not known, that this government has spent \$600 million to hire companies to do construction schedules and contracts, to actually even build a fake reactor. And I believe that if you go along the 401 near Darlington you will see that fake reactor under construction. The minister won't answer questions about at what point nuclear power is no longer financially acceptable, because I think the reality is, it doesn't matter what the cost is. The commitment to the technology far exceeds any commitment to wise public spending.

Instead of calling for bids on a refurbishment that would require the contractor to accept all the risk, what the minister told us was that building his fake reactor so that people could practise on it, breaking up the contract into six other contracts, and within that having it broken down into half-hour segments—that's the risk management. The Darlington plant went from about a \$3-billion or \$4-billion budget to \$13 or \$14 billion on completion. And I would say that if the minister continues with the plans that he's put forward, continues to throw good money after the \$600 million he's already put down, once again we will face extraordinary costs at this location.

1640

Should the minister be allowed to plan for these kinds of power expenditures without having to go to a regulator in public session, present testimony and evidence and be questioned? Should he be excused from that? Should the public be put into the dark? No, I don't think so, Minister. I don't think that makes any sense at all. I don't think it makes sense for the well-being of the province. It doesn't make sense for the well-being of our electricity system.

A few years ago, public bids were let for construction of new nuclear reactors at Darlington. The prices that came in have never been officially revealed—never, never. The Toronto Star published a number that has not been challenged, saying that it would cost \$26 billion. Those of you who are at home watching this would say, "Well, \$26 billion is a lot." Compared to what? Is that what they normally cost? Can you get a better deal on a used nuclear reactor somewhere at a lower price? The

budget that Ontario Power Generation had to build that plant was more in the \$6-billion to \$10-billion range. This blew past any budget or assessment of what it should cost—completely past. The minister has not revealed the cost and has decided to proceed with a bidding process for new nuclear reactors, but has not made it clear, frankly, as I went through the notes from his statements at the estimate committee, whether we would be protected from any overrun.

The minister was asked about the source for his estimates of the cost—one of his staffers was there—of the refurbishment and said it was close to \$2 billion per reactor, that the cost was somewhere between \$6 billion and \$10 billion. And I asked for some refinement on that because, Speaker, I don't know about you—maybe I'm old-fashioned; maybe some of my colleagues may think differently—but when I'm going to spend \$10 billion, I like to have some idea as to whether or not that's really the ballpark. Is that really it? Is that a close enough cost that I can say, "Yes, that's where I'm going"?

It doesn't appear that that's going to be the case. It looks like what we're going to get is a decision to go forward because this government wants to go forward. In the course of discussion, I asked the minister about his long-term energy plan. I was told that the numbers in there were very, very rough—a very rough ballpark estimate. That could well say, then, that the \$86-billion estimate, upon which a whole variety of decisions are made, bears only the vaguest resemblance to what is real, that in fact estimates that we could be talking about more like \$120 billion or \$160 billion are just as credible. If I have a minister who says, "That estimate prepared by my department, using some of the most experienced electricity industry people in North America, people who were loaned to New Brunswick to help them with their problems"—if their best guess is off by, what, almost 100% in their estimates and is referred to by the minister as very, very rough, what kind of plan do we have? What kind of plan do we have? Because, in fact, the process that was set up in law by this government was ignored by this government for the last few years, the kind of process we have is one that doesn't get subjected to public scrutiny, to cross-examination, to assessment by stakeholders and to the kind of rigour that I believe the people of Ontario deserve.

If you go back to this energy plan that the Liberals released in 2010, you'll see that they expected that from November to January 2011, there would be a posting on the environmental registry, that in the middle of 2011, the Ontario Power Authority would prepare a detailed power plan, full of consultation, and submit the whole matter to the Ontario Energy Board, and the Ontario Energy Board would review it between 2011 and 2012. That's the Electricity Act. That track is what's set up in existing legislation. Existing legislation was ignored.

The minister wants legislation that doesn't force him to go through all that rough, demanding, tough stuff, where he has to provide pretty sophisticated estimates and allow them to be tested in a public forum. That's what he wants: He wants to get away from that. He wants

to be able to do what he wants to do, without public accountability, because I have to say that these plans don't go through a committee here at the Legislature. I know people say to me, "Don't you get to approve this whole framework?" I say, "No. It's supposed to be a regulatory body, the Ontario Energy Board. It reviews the plans, makes sure they reflect the needs of the province and approves, disapproves or amends them." That was ignored, and the government has brought forward a bill that gives it a much freer hand.

Speaker, as you well know, some very strange things grow in the dark, and putting an energy plan in the dark, making sure that it can't be tested or examined, that no light can be thrown upon it, does not bode well for the province of Ontario.

This bill purports to save money by consolidating some functions. I mentioned at the beginning of my hour bringing together the Ontario Power Authority, which does planning, signs contracts with power generators, and the Independent Electricity System Operator that, actually, on a day-to-day basis, runs the system from control centres here in Ontario. I actually think that has some limited use; it's probably not bad to explore that. I don't think we need two CEOs; I don't think we need two boards of directors. I think saving money in that area may be useful to the people of Ontario. But, frankly, if that's what's offered and the price is a dramatic reduction in scrutiny of government activity and a dramatic increase in the risks that we as a province take with power planning, then that doesn't serve us. It doesn't serve the Legislature; it doesn't serve the province.

I think that this bill needs to be dramatically revised. It needs to have public scrutiny in it upheld. It needs to be reviewed by committee so that those parts that are worth saving and using are saved and used, but those parts that make it even less likely that good decisions will be made for this province with regard to power are taken out of this bill.

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

Mr. Reza Moridi: It's a great pleasure to rise in this House and respond to the honourable member from Toronto–Danforth, who made deliberation on Bill 75, the Ontario Electricity System Operator Act. The member touched a few bases about Ontario's electricity system as a whole.

1650

In the couple of minutes' time I have, I just want to briefly mention a few points about this government's achievements in the area of the electricity system in this province.

When we came into office in 2003, Madam Speaker, we were facing blackouts, brownouts, importing electricity from the US and Quebec and our neighbours in general. Our electricity system was in bad shape at that time.

Since then, we have invested \$13 billion in new generation. We have brought 9,000 megawatts of new power to the grid—this is a major achievement—which is basically one fifth of our capacity in total. We have also

invested \$10 billion in upgrading our transmission system. We have built and maintained about 5,000 kilometres of our transmission system. This is the distance from Toronto to Vancouver. It's a major, major achievement.

We have also made a policy decision, Madam Speaker, to get rid of dirty coal. As we know, just burning coal costs about \$4 billion every year to our health care system because it causes asthma and other respiratory diseases in people who live around coal-fired plants. So we made a decision to get rid of dirty coal. This in itself is a major achievement we brought to the electricity system in the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to provide a couple of minutes of questions and comments.

I appreciate what the member for Toronto–Danforth put on the record today. That was his lead.

This bill, Bill 75, was tabled for first reading on April 26, and I think it really speaks to this government's inability to manage the minority. If you look back to the election, from the election to April 24 this government opposite was only able to get the Supply Act, the Jewish Heritage Month and my bill, Isaac Brock Day—because they can't manage the minority.

We took five months to get committees. We've been back now, Speaker, for three weeks. This is the third week. We've now had a couple of days of sitting. We still have no committees, so it's a moot point whether this bill collapses today; there are no committees for it to go to for second reading.

Again, it just speaks to how this government is unable to manage their legislative agenda. We needed a programming motion to be able to get Bill 19, Bill 13, Bill 55—we had to actually get a programming motion together.

So here we sit, debating this bill—and Bill 2 this morning. There are no committees for it to go to. They sat here and complained about us ringing the bells about the committee for Ornge, yet this group here blamed us for Bill 11, blamed us for a whole host of things. They blamed us this morning.

The fact of the matter is, you've got to understand that last week you weren't given a majority, so you're going to need to work with the opposition parties. If you're going to put legislation through, if you want it managed, you'd better start working with the opposition.

This is crazy. You need some committees to operate this House. Don't wait another five months.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments. The member for Algoma–Manitoulin.

Mr. John Vanthof: It's an honour for me to stand up and speak on the comments of the member for Toronto–Danforth, who actually talked about Bill 75.

Like a lot of the bills that I've seen since I've been here, there's a good part that the government likes to talk about—merging some and saving some money—but in there, there's the not-so-good part—

Interjection: The dark part.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes, the darker side. They don't seem to like public scrutiny on a lot of their power issues, so they've decided, in this bill, that they'll remove some of that. That's the goal here. The member from Richmond Hill talked about all the good things, but he didn't talk about the bill. He didn't talk about what exactly is in this bill.

The member from Leeds–Grenville had other issues, but once again, he didn't talk about the bill.

The member from Toronto–Danforth hit the nail on the head. What this province needs is—and we talked about this yesterday—freedom of information. What makes government better is more public information, not less. When governments are subject to scrutiny, they make better decisions. Each time you take a step to reduce public scrutiny, you increase the likelihood or the possibility of future problems.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Like Ornges.

Mr. John Vanthof: Like Ornges. We're increasingly disappointed that instead of making legislation stronger, there are always poison pills in there to make it weaker.

This bill needs to be very strongly amended.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments?

Mr. Phil McNeely: I'm pleased to speak to this bill today. Basically, it's putting two organizations together, the IESO and the OPA, to make them more efficient. They both had a planning function within electrical generation in Ontario, so there's a \$25-million savings just in putting them together, and more savings if you put the two—the planning will be better as one organization. So that's what the bill is about.

I'd like to say that I'm so pleased that Ontario will be out of coal in 2014. This is amazing. This is the first government in the world that has taken that initiative of getting out of coal. We did it for medical reasons; there are \$3-billion to \$4-billion worth of savings just from asthma, etc.—all those chemicals that come out of coal. Coal should not be used anymore. We know that. We know that that's important.

The feds don't agree with that, because they came out with their new reduction of carbon dioxide emissions from coal-fired generation of electricity regulations. It should not be the reduction of carbon dioxide; it's the increasing of carbon dioxide, because they're actually pushing coal plants across the rest of Canada when Ontario has taken the initiative to get out of it. So I really think it's important that we give credit where credit is due. This government, since 2003, has us almost out of coal, and we're saving in the medical system.

More importantly, the carbon dioxide, which is now at 396 parts per million—I'm sure that you don't understand that because you don't even want to mention carbon. I'll mention carbon: 396 parts per million and rising. The Arctic ice reduction—the lowest ever—is coming out in a few days. The Arctic ice is going to lose a huge amount of coverage. And if that's not the canary in the coal mine, I don't know what is.

So, get on board. Go along with Ontario doing a great job on energy.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member from Toronto–Danforth has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, first of all, of course, my thanks to the members from Richmond Hill, Leeds–Grenville, Timiskaming–Cochrane and Ottawa–Orléans. I appreciate the fact that people listened to my speech and had useful comments. I want to say that the member from Leeds–Grenville is right: There is no committee for this to go to, in any event. It will be interesting to see what happens in the next few days, whether we get committees or don't get committees.

To the members from Richmond Hill and Ottawa–Orléans, I think you do the bill a disservice, even on your own terms, if you don't explain why you want to cut out public scrutiny. I'm sure you'll put it in different words, but you have to explain why you no longer want a power planning system to go through a regulatory assessment. You seem to assume that your government will be in power in the future. We've gone through this debate before. Every party in this chamber has gone through the cycle of being in government and in opposition, and I think it behooves everyone to ensure that there are democratic structures in place so that no matter which government is in power, their electricity planning regime or idea or scheme—take your pick—actually has to go through a rigorous hearing, because there may be those who come to power at some point for whom getting rid of coal is not a concern whatsoever. How will you hold them in check if you have no ability to have an impact on power planning? Speaker, this bill should not become law in its current form.

1700

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. I wish to correct my own record, in that, by mistake, I referred to the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane as Algoma–Manitoulin, so I just want the record to show.

A point of order.

Mr. Jim McDonell: Speaker, I'd like to rise on a point of order to clarify a comment I made yesterday. As I got up to speak on Bill 50, it was brought to my attention about the anniversary of Canada's declaration of war on Germany. I thought it was an important item to mention, and I tried to work it into my discussion. I certainly withdraw the comment if it offended the other side. There was no intention to it. It was more to highlight this important event in Canadian history, one of the more important events in the 20th century, as I understood it hadn't been brought up yesterday. I apologize if it was misinterpreted in any way, but that was the intent.

HOUSE SITTINGS

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): On a point of order?

Hon. James J. Bradley: Madam Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to present a motion. Do we?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Is there unanimous consent?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Just on a point of order: I do know what the motion is, but I just want to be clear that when the government gets up for these things, to say, "I have a unanimous consent motion dealing with...." so that we're clear about what we're talking about.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I always like to please my friend. He's right in wanting to get that information out. I believe we have unanimous consent for a motion on when the House is going to sit.

Interjection.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Okay. I move that, notwithstanding standing order 6(a), when the House adjourns on Thursday, September 13, 2012, it shall stand adjourned until Wednesday, September 19, 2012.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Do you want to read it again, Speaker?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Yes, that notwithstanding standing order 6(a), when the House adjourns on Thursday, September 13, 2012, it shall stand adjourned until Wednesday, September 19, 2012. Agreed? Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

ROYAL ASSENT

SANCTION ROYALE

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I beg to inform the House that, in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, His Honour the Administrator has been pleased to assent to certain bills in the Lieutenant Governor's office.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): The following are the titles of the bills to which His Honour did assent:

An Act respecting the continuation and establishment of development funds in order to promote regional economic development in eastern and southwestern Ontario / Loi concernant la prorogation et la création de fonds de développement pour promouvoir le développement économique régional dans l'Est et le Sud-Ouest de l'Ontario.

An Act to implement restraint measures in the education sector / Loi mettant en oeuvre des mesures de restriction dans le secteur de l'éducation.

An Act to amend the Legislative Assembly Act with respect to the Board of Internal Economy / Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative relativement à la Commission de régie interne.

ONTARIO ELECTRICITY SYSTEM OPERATOR ACT, 2012

LOI DE 2012 SUR LA SOCIÉTÉ D'EXPLOITATION DU RÉSEAU D'ÉLECTRICITÉ DE L'ONTARIO

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

Mr. Todd Smith: It's a pleasure to speak to Bill 75 here this afternoon. We had a little interruption in the proceedings, so that is the Ontario Electricity System Operator Act, just in case you're just tuning in.

Here it is, five after 5, on a Tuesday, I believe it is, and we've been talking about this bill for quite a long time, I believe. As the member from Leeds–Grenville pointed out just a few minutes ago, it was tabled in late April. There hasn't been a whole lot of discussion on that, but there certainly has been some here today.

As the PC critic for red tape reduction, I'm generally speaking in favour of something that reduces the size and cost of government and makes it easier for our businesses to do business in the province of Ontario. But somehow, this government even manages to miss the mark when they're trying to do that—find cost savings in the energy sector. That's what this is aimed at doing. It's aimed at saving millions of dollars by amalgamating or getting rid of one bureaucracy, merging it with another. Total savings: \$25 million.

It kind of pales in comparison to what has been going on with the Liberal government over the summer months. In case you were at the cottage and weren't keeping up with the papers, it was announced at estimates committee by the Minister of Energy himself that it was going to cost \$190 million to buy four Liberal votes in the last election by cancelling the power plant in Mississauga, that plant since moving to the Sarnia–Lambton area. It was big news over the summer, and maybe you missed it. That's what this government has been doing with your tax dollars: blowing \$190 million to cancel a power plant. Then they bring in a bill called Bill 75, aimed at saving \$25 million.

The Ontario Power Authority was created 15 years ago as a transitional body to manage Ontario's energy supply. The problem with anything that's created as a transitional body by this government is that it soon becomes a permanent body, and it grows exponentially. It is now a large bureaucracy that is sucking cash, taxpayers' money, out at record amounts. Governments get addicted to spending money, especially this one, and this government has spent more than any other government in the history of the province, and you can take that to the bank.

I suppose I should say that this government has not just spent more money than any other government; they've wasted more than any other government in the history of Ontario as well. After a couple of billion wasted on the eHealth scandal, there were a billion or so wasted on the Ornge scandal. That was also making headlines over the summer. We already mentioned the \$190 million on the cancelled power plant for Mississauga to save four Liberal seats there, and maybe a couple of hundred million more to cancel a power plant in Oakville.

The minister comes in here touting a bill with a meagre savings of \$25 million. It kind of pales in comparison to the money that has been wasted by this government.

There are currently 235 people employed at the Ontario Power Authority. As I was mentioning, the OPA is one of these alphabet soup of agencies that are out there. There are 235 now in this transitional body that had 15 at first. Now there are 235 there, and 87 of them are on the sunshine list. If you're not familiar with the sunshine list, they're making over \$100,000—87 of the 235 there are making over \$100,000 a year. The CEO of the OPA, the Ontario Power Authority, makes \$570,000 per year. So where are we saving money here?

If we're just going to take all the bureaucrats working at the OPA and move them across the hall to the IESO, then we're debating yet another piece of Liberal legislation whose sole purpose is to make a useless government seem active. This is the second time I've been up debating a bill here today—Bill 2 earlier this morning: more window dressing in Bill 2. The same thing is being done on the power front with this Bill 75.

If we're talking about shuttering the OPA, the Ontario Power Authority, and transferring its responsibilities to the IESO, then why isn't the minister simply saying that? Where are the savings coming from? Is the minister simply pulling this \$25-million figure out of the clear blue sky? The minister tends to favour things that you can pull out of the clear blue sky.

This bill also fails to seriously address the problems with ministerial accountability. As the member from Toronto–Danforth pointed out in his hour-long response to the minister, the accountability doesn't exist. The ministerial accountability that currently plagues the electricity system in the province is huge. We need some more transparency and we need some more accountability, and this bill does nothing to provide more transparency or accountability. As the member from the third party pointed out, it actually puts a lot more things in the dark when it comes to the power sector, and he was right when he said that.

Last spring, the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers came out, and they critiqued the government's green energy policy on a purely scientific basis for the problems it was creating in the electricity grid in Ontario.

1710

We cannot seriously be considering any bill with regard to the energy sector that doesn't hold the minister accountable for serious technical and engineering problems that can and have occurred with the grid thanks to the political calculations of both his office and the Premier's office as well. Sometimes we wonder which office is actually looking after the power grid. As a matter of fact, I think a lot of us wonder who is calling the shots over there. Is it anybody in government or is it a Liberal campaign team? When it comes to the Mississauga power plants, I think we got our answer. It was political organizers that were calling the shots here on public policy, and it was quite clear from the minister over the summer that that was the case.

Unless we get some transparency in this bill and a little more accountability, it's not there. All we're doing is changing a coat of paint on the ministry that's in need

of actual structural reform. Last month, 66% of Ontario's small business owners listed rising energy prices as their number one cost pressure. That's higher than every other province except for PEI and Nova Scotia. I'm not sure if it's a coincidence or not that PEI is the only jurisdiction on the continent with higher electricity rates than Ontario. That's on the continent. That's North America. It's a lot of jurisdictions. So there's only one, actually, that's higher, and that's Prince Edward Island.

Mr. John Yakabuski: They have no generation there.

Mr. Todd Smith: Yes. Here we are back in Ontario, and ninth out of 10 is not usually good when we're talking about the provinces, right? We're at the bottom of the list next to Prince Edward Island. We can do much better than that, considering the fact that Ontario, before this government took power, actually had the most affordable energy in North America, and now we have PEI that is the only one that actually has higher electricity prices. We have to start to get our electricity prices under control.

Tim Hudak and our party have put several ideas on the table for this government. What does this government do? Ignore them. They put out Bill 75, which is aimed at saving \$25 million and that's about it—no big structural changes.

Mr. John Yakabuski: And will it actually save anything?

Mr. Todd Smith: I guess that's the question: Is it actually going to do anything to find savings?

This morning in the House, as I mentioned, I spoke about Bill 2. Here I speak about Bill 75. Bill 2 spoke about a bill that we can't afford, aimed at people who can't afford it, to create work for tradespeople that we're not even training. This afternoon we've got Bill 75, aimed at reducing the size of government, that doesn't actually reduce the size of government. It's a bill to reduce the cost of the Ministry of Energy that won't save ratepayers a single dollar on their electricity bill, and that's very unfortunate: a bill that acknowledges real problems in the Ministry of Energy and then completely ignores them.

I have a lot of energy concerns in Prince Edward—Hastings riding. I've spoken about them many times here in the House. I've talked about the wind turbine issue on the south shore of Prince Edward county that this government continues to force in there, despite the fact that the municipality of Prince Edward county has very clearly said that they don't want them there. As a matter of fact, over the summer, one of the newspapers actually had a well-orchestrated referendum in South Marysburgh, where the majority of these wind turbines are slated to go: 90.2% of the people who turned out—and there were 62.5% of the people in South Marysburgh that showed up—said they don't want turbines in the community. The municipal council is on board.

Dalton McGuinty, back in April, actually said in the Belleville Intelligencer newspaper that communities without majority support for wind turbines would go to "the back of the line." I'm just wondering if the Minister

of the Environment, who actually has the powers in the EBR process that are granted to him, will do the right thing and stop any wind turbines from going into Prince Edward county. That's what is driving up the prices in the province of Ontario.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Maybe Dalton McGuinty could just keep his word, for once.

Mr. Todd Smith: Or perhaps McGuinty could keep his word. Thank you.

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

Mr. Reza Moridi: Just following my earlier comments on Bill 75, I would like just to make a few more comments about the content of the bill, basically.

The bill is basically bringing the two organizations, the Ontario Power Authority and also the Independent Electricity System Operator—these two agencies will be combined and they will be merged together and will form a new agency called the Ontario Electricity System Operator. One of the reasons that we are merging these two agencies together is based on our achievements in improving the electricity system in Ontario over the past nine years. As a result, we always have been trying to increase the efficiency of agencies. In the past year, we asked Ontario agencies to look for savings in their organizations, and they responded with \$1 billion in savings in the whole of the agencies in Ontario. And by this merger, we are going to make a \$25-million saving. This constitutes about 15% of the operating costs of these agencies.

Bill 75, if passed, will create one single agency which will be responsible for market operations, and it will also be responsible for providing opportunities to increase contract efficiencies, while not impeding the fairness and transparency imbedded in the market rules.

It's also going to provide streamlining of the system to reduce administration burden on local electricity distribution companies. It will also create an electricity system that is going to be more responsive to the changing conditions in our electricity system as we move forward.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'm happy to talk about Bill 75, because, of course, without energy, none of us could survive in our homes. Energy is a pinnacle thing that we need to have: heat, hydro—you know, cook our meals on the stove. So it's a very important topic, and that we discuss it.

The fact that Bill 75 is looking at increasing efficiencies and taking agencies and combining them into one single agency is a good thing, because it's saving money. But, then, we also have to think about how we are going to save money for the regular consumer, and our member from Toronto—Danforth touched upon that.

Conservation is very important for consumers to save money as well, and if we have those conservation programs for helping people to get high-efficiency furnaces, change their windows and also put in insulation, that

could help the average person. Absolutely, we want to make sure that the government agencies are running in the most efficient way they can so that money isn't wasted and those extra expenses passed on to our consumers, but we also want to have programs to help our consumers save money.

The other part of that bill that we touched upon, and the member from Toronto–Danforth did a great job, is the part where the transparency piece is being lost again. We've learned—we're talking about Ornge and we continue to talk about Ornge, which is something we have to bring to the public's attention—that when we don't have transparency where the public can ask questions at a regulatory board, there is a huge problem that this government is trying to hide. What is this government trying to hide? Why is this government trying to keep people in the dark?

People need answers, and there should be a clear path to get those answers when government money is being spent on any government program that is being delivered to the public.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments?

Mr. Phil McNeely: I would just like to add additional comments regarding the good work that has been done in Ontario since 2003. We've spent so much money in rebuilding the whole system that now we're in a position of surplus energy. We went through a very hot summer. We didn't have too many smog events in Toronto. I'm not sure if there were any, but the smog was getting right up into our major parks in central Ontario at one time. So we did a great job.

Ontario puts out about 225 megatonnes of CO₂, and it's important to know that; 25 megatonnes was the reduction we got through closing our coal plants. We're almost there. It's extremely important.

What you're going to see in the next few days—in the next few days, it will be announced, but I got this from the Ministry of the Environment about one week ago—is that we have record-low ice areas in the Arctic, and not only a small change. The low before was about five million square kilometres; this year, it will be down to three million square kilometres of the Arctic sea ice. So we can see what's happening in our environment. The deniers of climate change are having less room to operate all the time. The evidence is coming out very clearly.

1720

So having more green energy in Ontario, having the nuclear energy around 50%, having as much hydro as we can develop—these are all good things. The planning is going to be better now because the IESO and the OPA will be joined into one new organization.

It's important. Our climate change is really happening. Just have a look at the Arctic sea ice extent. It is—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. The member for Nipissing.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you, Speaker. Certainly, there's a lot of hot air but no energy here today. This government has mismanaged the energy file.

Let me refer you to a recent article that cites “a rural backlash against industrial wind farms.” They're blaming that for Samsung's failure to create promised renewable energy jobs, as they're contracted to do. The article notes that the plants in Tillsonburg, Toronto and Windsor that are designed to service wind and solar farms are not operating at capacity, while the London plant is delayed.

The minister is pointing fingers at anyone and everyone, as a matter of fact, for this government's failed energy plan.

Actually, it's quite absurd to blame public dissent when Samsung hasn't even chosen a location yet for the plant in London. With no local decision-making powers, how are these many local displays of frustration causing any delay for Samsung?

The town halls are certainly very effective in making Ontarians aware of the high cost of energy today, and the reasons, and how the Liberals have doubled hydro rates since taking office in 2003. But now the minister wants to further denigrate rural Ontarians and use them as his excuse for mismanaging the file.

We do know, of course, that excessive subsidies for wind and solar are the cause of our doubling of hydro rates, Speaker. When this government took office, hydro was 4.3 cents a kilowatt hour. Today, seniors and families pay 8.8 cents a kilowatt hour, and this government should be ashamed.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. The member for Prince Edward–Hastings has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Todd Smith: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'd like to thank everybody who chimed in, from Richmond Hill and London–Fanshawe, as well as Ottawa–Orléans, and my good friend from Nipissing, who has been excellent on the energy file since he was given that portfolio by Tim Hudak.

I do have to correct my record before I move on. When I was doing my critique on Bill 75, I mentioned that the Ontario Power Authority was created 15 years ago. But that swelling bureaucracy was actually created by this government in 2004, with 15 people on a transitional authority. So I would just like to point out that it was this government that created the OPA in 2004, and it has now grown to more than 275, with 80-some on the sunshine list. That's what happens with this government. They continue to create bureaucracy here in the energy sector. That's a perfect example.

We had a great debate in question period today about the LHINs and the CCACs and the fact that they have grown to enormous bureaucracies as well and need to be cut back. We need to be putting the money that's going into these middle layers of bureaucracy back into home care and health care, and that's the plan that the PC caucus has put forward. We need to eliminate bureaucracy and get back to providing the services that we require in the province.

The member from Nipissing pointed out, rightly so, that this government has watched as electricity rates have gone through the roof. We do have a real problem in the

province of Ontario in our energy sector, and our small business owners and operators see it every day when they open up their power bill.

I used to go in and put my elbow down on the counter at Stan's Grocery in downtown Bancroft and have a good chat with Stan. I don't do that anymore. Do you know why? Because Stan is out of business because of his soaring electricity rates.

We have to do more than what Bill 75 does. We have to fix it now.

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

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I'm very happy to be able to rise today and speak to this bill, Bill 75, the Ontario Electricity System Operator Act, not necessarily because it's a superior bill, but because it is a very worthy discussion.

I'd like to take a moment to explain some of this act for those in my riding who may be watching this on TV, either now or later, because the cost of electricity is a major issue of concern in the north. In a nutshell, G75 proposes to merge the Independent Electricity System Operator, which is responsible for the day-to-day operations of Ontario's electricity grid, and the Ontario Power Authority, which is responsible for producing and coordinating that supply. Now, that is very much an oversimplification, but I did want to give a very general view of what we are discussing today.

These are two of the multiple agencies that were created when the Harris government attempted to privatize our system in the late 1990s and, in so doing, created a system of overlap and confusion that is not only very confusing but also very expensive. Of course, the five others are Ontario Power Generation, Hydro One, the Ontario Energy Board, the Ontario Electricity Financial Corporation, and the Electricity Safety Authority.

But it all boils down to one thing: Our energy bills are too high. Consumers don't care about the semantics about this organization or that organization. They want action on their hydro bills. We live in an era when the majority of the casework in my constituency office is around hydro bills, whether it's being unable to afford \$200, \$300, \$400 and sometimes even \$700 a month for electricity, or it's the pain and suffering that's caused by energy retailers who promised consumers relief and then gouged them for what seems to be every cent that people have.

Energy and hydro is the issue in my region, and it is the issue in my offices, and it's the issue for hard-working people who are struggling to pay their bills, because of the mismanagement of our system. That's why I'm very happy to speak to this bill today.

I would, of course, be remiss if I didn't take the time to thank two women in my riding for the outstanding work that they have done on this file. Kelly Getson and Becky Fediuk are two mothers from Minnitaki, just outside of Dryden, who became fed up with the way that things were going. They were tired of seeing their friends and family members who were unable to pay their hydro

bills. They were sick of seeing people living in poverty as a result of the skyrocketing monthly costs of their hydro bills. Kelly and Becky did something. They took action and they started the Facebook group Join the Fight Against Hydro One Rates.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Just a moment. I ask the members, if they are going to continue their conversation, to take it outside. It's very difficult to hear the speaker.

You may continue.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Thank you, Speaker. These two women, Kelly and Becky, planned protests, they did media interviews, and they raised awareness of the problems associated with high hydro bills. I firmly believe that their actions made a difference because, for years, we had to listen to the government saying that hydro prices were not an issue. For years, we had an energy policy that spiralled out of control. For years, we had denials that hard-working families, pensioners and small businesses were being pushed to the brink because of rising hydro prices. And now we're here today.

It's true that the NDP has raised this issue for years, but we finally have an acknowledgement that the costs are out of control because this bill is in front of us, and in recent statements made by the minister.

I think it's fair to say that we should take a minute to thank Kelly and Becky, because we did not get to this point alone. So for that, I thank them very much. It's because of their hard work that there is finally this acknowledgement. Again, I'd like to take this opportunity to say thank you on behalf of all of us who are fed up with rising electricity rates.

This bill is not the be-all and end-all. In fact, it can best be described as a very small step. It's a half measure. If anything, it's a symbolic half measure. It's no secret that this bill offers only a small part of what New Democrats have been pushing for.

It amalgamates two of the seven organizations that were created as a result of the dismantling of Ontario Hydro. New Democrats have pushed for all seven to be merged into not only a better-coordinated policy but to bring cost savings that will impact the consumer. Savings from this bill are expected to bring \$25 million in savings to the system annually. That's what the government's alleging. I don't know if that's actually the case, but they're throwing around that figure of \$25 million.

1730

This does lead me to the point. I want to point out that if we can save \$25 million from merging two, how much would we save from the merger of all seven? That's one of the improvements I would really like to see. Of course, it is more of a long-term strategy.

Just to contrast, this \$25 million that would be saved by the merger of these two bureaucracies—as of 2011, the amount spent on executive salaries for all the seven bureaucracies was \$14 million. That's Ontario Power Generation—these are just the top five executives. As of 2011, they made \$4 million. Hydro One: The top six

executives made \$3 million. The Ontario Power Authority: The top five executives made \$2 million. The Independent Electricity System Operator: The top six executives made \$2.5 million.

Interjection.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: The government is kind of vocal over there. It seems like they're not too happy with these numbers, but they're the ones who are enabling the system and allowing it to continue.

The Ontario Energy Board: The top eight executives made \$2 million. The Ontario Electricity Financial Corp. CEO—the one CEO—made \$560,000.

Let's contrast to Manitoba. Manitoba is a sore spot—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I'd ask the member for Peterborough to respect the speaker.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Thank you, Speaker.

I was about to say that Manitoba and the hydro prices charged in Manitoba are a sore spot for the people living in my riding because, for those of you who've looked at a map, you know that my riding is the most north and the most west, and it borders the Manitoba province. If you look at their rates, they are drastically, substantially lower than what we're paying here in Ontario. What's interesting is, if you look at how much they pay their top executive, it's \$375,000. To me, that is a good salary. That's well in excess of what people on average make in my riding, and I would imagine it's quite high compared to what the average salary is across the province. That is plenty. Why do we need to spend these millions of dollars on these executive salaries?

If we were to do that merger and if we weren't to just keep all those executives, that's \$14 million right there that we could save, on top of the \$25 million, not even factoring in all of the other efficiencies that we could get.

This bill will eliminate much of the overlap that currently exists between the two organizations. That said, we, as New Democrats, do have some concerns about the safeguards that currently exist, such as the Ontario Power Authority's power to develop an integrated power system plan and the Ontario Energy Board's power to review that plan for economic prudence, cost-effectiveness and regulatory compliance.

Many organizations have raised this concern about this change, and we hope to bring forward some amendments, if it makes it to committee; I'm not sure if it'll make it to committee or not. We'd like to see what kind of enhancements we can make.

The IPSP would be replaced by ministerial energy plans, and the minister must consult with the energy board in developing that plan. While the change more properly reflects the way that policy has been implemented, there are some concerns, once again, that this will limit input, and it could have negative repercussions.

When we talk about limiting input, that strikes me—just yesterday, and I believe earlier today, there was discussion about Bill 50, which is An Act to amend the Ambulance Act with respect to air ambulance services, and one of the themes of that bill is openness and

transparency. One of the things I raised yesterday was that it's not enough to raise openness and transparency in one act. If Ornge, if the Mississauga gas plant, if any of these things have taught us, we need to make sure that all legislation coming forward is transparent and is open.

Ultimately, our biggest concern is that this bill doesn't go far enough to consolidate the multiple agencies that exist. In failing to do so, it does leave a number of potential cost savings on the table.

One thing that it does not do—I see I'm really short on time, but I do want to mention it—is that it does not force municipalities to give up their municipally owned utilities, which is something that the minister has been pushing for and that we in the north have been fighting vehemently. So I'm quite pleased about that.

I have a whole bunch of other things I'd like to mention, but I've run out of time so I'll try to squeeze them into two-minute hits as I get them.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Questions and comments?

Mr. Reza Moridi: Madam Speaker, in response to the comments made by the member from Prince Edward-Hastings about the price of electricity, I just want to bring a few points to the attention of this House and also the public. When his party was in office, they tried to sell, to privatize Ontario Power Generation, our electricity system, and then they failed. This failure caused the price of electricity—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Excuse me. Your comments are to be directed in response to the speech you just heard.

Mr. Reza Moridi: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was talking about the price of electricity, that the price of electricity has risen by 30% in the past. Since we came into office, we brought in the Energy Consumer Protection Act, which basically controls the price of electricity.

In the past, our generation capacity decreased by 6% while demand increased by 8%, and that caused the government of the day to bring in diesel- and gas-powered generators. As a result, the price of electricity cost \$2.83 per kilowatt hour, and this basically cost the taxpayers over \$1 billion.

There are a couple of points I would like to mention about nuclear power, as the member from Toronto-Danforth touched base on the Darlington refurbishment. I must indicate that this project is going to create 25,000 jobs, and it's going to contribute to our economy in the amount of about \$5 billion per year. It's a major project.

Nuclear power in general, as the member knows, is an emissions-free source of electricity. It is safe, it's reliable, and we are dependent on that—not only us. There are 400 nuclear reactors in operation around the world. They are producing electricity—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. The member for Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you very much. I toast that, Speaker.

I just wanted to talk a little bit about some of the comments I've been hearing about Bill 75. We've got to

remember that the government is planning to merge the OPA and the IESO as what they purport to be a money-saving venture because they're focused on austerity here in the province of Ontario.

Let's remember it was this government that invented the OPA, conceived it, put it together, and talked about it being a virtual agency. You remember Bill 100, Speaker? Dwight Duncan was the Minister of Energy then. He said, "Bill 100 is going to create the OPA. This is going to be the answer to all of the electricity issues in the province of Ontario." He stood in his place right over there and he talked about how this was going to make the electricity system more efficient and more effective in the province of Ontario. All it was was a shield for the broken-down, bankrupt policies of this government, but to use the OPA to protect them from any kinds of criticism.

But here we know it is an absolute admission on their part that it has been a disaster. It started out as a virtual agency, was going to amount to a few people working in an office working on some plans for the future for the Ontario electrical system. It turned into a boondoggle of 240-some bureaucrats, costing the treasury hundreds of millions of dollars so far, and all it has done is presided over—along with this McGuinty government—the largest increases in the cost of electricity in the history of the world, here in Ontario—in the history of the world, over that period of time. Why? Because of a botched energy policy, and I'll talk more about that when I have a little more time, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Just responding to my colleague from Kenora–Rainy River, she brings up a great point. She lives in a riding in the northern part of Ontario, where hydro and electricity costs are of the most primal and most serious concern. It makes sense. It's an area where there are long, cold winters.

1740

I want to talk about two things in my two minutes. One is that this is clearly an example of a mistake that this government made—and they're correcting it, which is the right thing to do. I applaud you for correcting a mistake that was made.

There was another mistake that was made: the privatization of our electricity. That shouldn't have been done. The thought was that privatizing electricity would have made it more affordable. It was not more affordable. That was a serious mistake, and that also needs to be corrected.

I encourage you to correct your other mistake on the idea of energy and conservation. I think conservation is a way we can truly move towards really making more efficient use of our electricity.

In areas like Kenora–Rainy River where there are cold and long winters, it makes sense for us to use lots of electricity, because that is one of the sources of heating. But why is it that in places like Toronto, in places like southwestern Ontario, our electricity costs are higher in the summer, when we have warm, hot summers and long

hours of daylight? It makes no sense. We need to live in a way that's more sustainable. We can't be air-conditioning areas where we can live just fine with warm temperatures. It's a ludicrous idea, it's unsustainable, and it's not living in tune with nature. I haven't used the air conditioner in my house for six years; I have not turned it on once. I think we can move towards a society that's more sustainable if we learn to live in tune with nature instead of cranking up our air conditioners and cooling ourselves down. We don't need to

Areas like Kenora–Rainy River: That's where we need to have heating, and that's where there are some costs that make sense.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments?

Hon. James J. Bradley: The problem, when members are limited to only 10 minutes in their speeches, is that they don't have the time to canvass all the issues they would like to. I know that's the case for the member, because I know that there's intense interest in her part of the province in the question of why the NDP cancelled the Conawapa contract. There were some interesting negotiations going on with the province of Manitoba at the time. Someone will correct me, I'm sure—maybe Mr. Yakabuski will—but I think it was at something like 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour that they were willing to sell power from Manitoba to Ontario. The NDP government of the day, some members of whom still sit in the House, cancelled that contract which could have provided some very nice electricity—first of all, because it's more environmentally benign, it was hydroelectric power; and second, because the price was substantially lower than what could be arrived at today.

My friend from Timmins–James Bay, I'm sure, was pleading with them in the caucus of the NDP to proceed with the contract. I thought he would have been, because he would want low-priced, clean power coming into Ontario from an adjacent jurisdiction, which, by the way, has an NDP government.

So I'm very interested in the member for Kenora–Rainy River and whether she has questioned those in power at the time, some of whom sit in the NDP caucus today, on why they would have abandoned the lucrative-for-Ontario and good-for-Manitoba Conawapa contract with the province of Manitoba and Manitoba Hydro.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Kenora–Rainy River has two minutes to respond.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Thank you, Speaker.

I have canvassed thousands of doorsteps, and I can honestly tell you that that issue has never come up. But what I can say is an issue—and it's a burning issue—is the fact that we can generate in the northwest some of the cheapest and cleanest electricity in all of North America. And what's particularly frustrating is that we are lumped in with the rates that are being charged to all of Ontario—those gigantic cost overruns of building all these nuclear plants with—let's talk about the debt retirement charge. We have to pay that, even though we aren't the recipients of the nuclear energy. It's frustrating

where we've seen our industries, whether it's a sawmill or a paper mill—mill after mill is closing down, when on the river they're able to generate electricity, some as low as 2.3 cents. So why and how is it acceptable for us to pay upwards of 10 cents a kilowatt hour?

What I wanted to talk about also is, when we're talking about making changes to energy in Ontario, I think there are two important financial considerations. First, there is definitely saving the public purse. There's finding greater efficiencies; absolutely. When we have a deficit that's in the tens of billions of dollars, we definitely have to consider that.

The other consideration is the pocketbooks of the public. What can we do to make things less expensive for everyday people? What can we do to bring down the costs on their hydro bills? I really can say that I don't think there's anything in this legislation that we're discussing here today that is going to have that effect on people's pocketbooks. I say that we can do more, and I challenge the government to do more.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Bill 75, the Ontario Electricity System Operator Act, 2012. As we've heard, this legislation proposes to amend the Electricity Act to allow for the merger of the Independent Electricity System Operator and the Ontario Power Authority. What bothers me about this bill is that we're headed down the same path as so much other legislation we've seen from this government. Since last fall, we've had an opportunity to debate several bills here in the Legislature. Time and again, the message from our caucus—and, I think, to some degree, the MPPs from the third party—is that these bills are designed to fool the people of the province into thinking that the McGuinty government is doing something. But the truth is that this bill and the others introduced won't actually do much for citizens of Ontario. Regrettably, despite some very serious challenges facing the province, the only legislation the government can come up with amounts to what I would say is window dressing. This government opposite has no plan. They've got no ideas about how to pull our province back on track, and as a result we're forced to debate bills like we did this morning and this afternoon.

When I go home when we're sitting and go to events like I did on the weekend, events like the Spencerville Fair, people come up to me and they talk about their costs of electricity. They talk about the skyrocketing costs that they're seeing on their energy bills. In fact, I'm sure that if I told my constituents that we're debating a bill that deals with the energy sector, they'd probably actually get excited; finally, they would think, this government is getting down to addressing the issues that are affecting those constituents and their families in their day-to-day lives. Unfortunately for the increasing number of folks in my riding dreading that hydro bill arrival, the fact that they don't even want to open their bill, this piece of legislation just isn't the answer to the problems that they're facing.

Like Bill 2 in this morning's debate, again I'm going to use the words "window dressing," because I think that's really what the government is trying to accomplish. I don't think this revelation is going to be a surprise to anybody in our caucus. After all, I think that this government is just spinning their wheels. I mentioned earlier this afternoon in my two-minute questions and comments that we struggled in the first session to get some committees in place; we still haven't got them, and we've been back three weeks. It's just, again, a disgrace that this government can't seem to get their legislative House in order and manage the minority.

I don't want members here to take my word for it. I want to quote from one of the members of my community, one of the industrialists who own and operate a manufacturing facility: Shelley Bacon, who is the president of Northern Cables. It's a company that is proud to call Brockville home. They also have a plant just down the road in Prescott as well. They began their operation in 1996 from people like Shelley and also former members of Phillips Cables, which had just closed. So they got together, a determined group, got their manufacturing licence and started Northern Cables. It's a company that I believe has been a great leader in its field. I think it's a great success story in Brockville and eastern Ontario, the fact that they started this company from the ashes of another, and now it's a major force in two cities in my riding.

1750

But, you know, when Shelley Bacon talks about a problem, I listen, Speaker. In fact, I was in fact so pleased that last month we had scheduled a chamber of commerce meeting with the member for Nipissing, who is our energy critic; he was going to come. Unfortunately, when the government created their crisis in education that they needed the PC Party to bail them out on, we had to cancel that chamber meeting. I know that the message that my friend from Nipissing had was one that my community really wanted to hear.

Back to Northern Cables and Bill 75: He really brought to my attention his energy bill, which shows this government's green energy boondoggle. The energy bill he gave me listed a surcharge, which is now the infamous global adjustment fee, which is basically Dalton McGuinty's green energy tax on businesses and homeowners. That one bill, Speaker, that he gave me was nearly \$12,000. It's \$5,000 higher than what they actually paid in electricity use. In one month, one company in my riding handed over nearly \$25,000 from their three sites.

To pay for the power that we're using on the grid is one thing, but no, this dollar figure was to pay for the failed green energy experiments of the McGuinty government. Between the actual cost of electricity and the global adjustment green energy tax, the site was billed almost \$18,500 for the kilowatt hours of electricity used.

You know, Speaker, 100 miles across the border in the United States power sells for three cents a kilowatt hour. I think that is something that anyone who operates a

manufacturing facility in eastern Ontario deals with. If you looked at what would happen across the border, they would have paid about \$8,100, so \$18,500 in Ontario and \$8,100 in the US.

Is Shelley Bacon going to be moving the plant? Absolutely not. He's committed to eastern Ontario, committed to Brockville. But again, his question to me is, what would a manufacturing company that wanted to locate in this province have to do when they looked at what benefits they would get in terms of the energy sector? This government really has its priorities out of whack when a company like that has that big a variance when it comes to power.

Every manufacturer probably got this letter from the St. Lawrence County Industrial Development Agency, over in Canton, New York. As one of their six reasons to come, they quote "Some of the lowest-cost and most reliable electricity in North America (50% less than you might be paying now)."

So if we're trying to create good private sector jobs, like we want over on this side of the House, we've got to get our energy sector in order. Things that you've put on people's bills like that global adjustment fee just drive more jobs across the border. It's sad.

Again, this bill tinkers around the edges. When you look at the bill, the Minister of Energy claims that it will save up to \$25 million a year by consolidating the IESO and the OPA. As the member for Nipissing noted in his leadoff debate on this bill, \$25 million is like a rounding error for this government. It's a shame the way that they've dealt with the price of energy. The savings would be erased in just two billing periods with the most recent rate increases that Ontarians have been hit with.

So I think it's fair to be concerned about the fact that this legislation basically creates a mega-agency by folding in the IESO and the OPA. We know the government's track record when it comes to creating agencies. We've sat here and debated eHealth and Ornge, and even the OPA itself—just a couple of examples that come to mind when you want to look at the McGuinty government, how not to create an agency. On this government's watch, and we've said it time and time again, the OPA has grown from a transitional, temporary 15-person body into this permanent 235-person agency that dominates the sunshine list. It's bad enough that in Bill 75 that takes place, but we've also removed some transparency and accountability by giving more power to the Minister of Energy. So I think we should all be concerned.

This government's track record, with its decision to scuttle the Mississauga and Oakville power plants, is going to cost taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars. It's just another move, as we've said. It's the Liberal seat-saver plan, which continues to add costs to energy bills right across the province.

The last thing that the energy sector needs in this province is more political interference from the Minister of Energy. I think it goes the wrong way by creating this mega-agency. And you know what? It doesn't really matter, because we've got no committees for this bill to

go through. It's just, again, another disgrace on your government, plain and simple.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

The member for Thornhill has given notice of his dissatisfaction with the answer to his question, given by the Premier, concerning Ontario's economy.

Because it isn't 6 o'clock, we'll suspend the order until 6.

The House suspended proceedings from 1757 to 1800.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for London—Fanshawe has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities concerning post-secondary education.

You have up to five minutes to make your presentation.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Thank you, Speaker. I didn't want to be late for my own late show, so I'm glad I'm on time, rushing here.

Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to explain the reasons behind my dissatisfaction with the response I received today in question period from the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities to a question I posed about rising tuition costs in Ontario.

I raised the question today, in good faith, about an issue I hear within my community and across Ontario: the affordability of post-secondary education. My question was based on a new report issued today by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives called *Eduflation* and the *High Cost of Learning*—and "eduflation" is meant to be pronounced that way.

The report brings attention to the rising costs of education in Canada and the barrier this poses to attending post-secondary education. The report states that lower-income students are much less likely to attend university than high-income students, a testimony to that cost barrier that exists.

The report also indicates that post-secondary education is the least affordable in Ontario compared to all other provinces. The report goes on to say that even after the government's 30% tuition grant is taken into account, Ontario still will have the fourth-highest tuition costs in Canada for middle-income families, and the second highest for lower-income families.

I raised this question in good faith and hoped for a straight answer. Instead, the minister chose to attack my party's record from almost 20 years ago and make inaccurate statements about my party's platform for 2011. He said the NDP "in the last election, more recently,

didn't even have an education platform. The NDP platform on education was blank—nothing for universities, nothing for colleges, nothing for high schools.” Speaker, that’s not true. He also said, “Talk about putting students last. That’s the party that puts students last.” That was his quote.

The fact is that the NDP did put forward a clearly outlined platform on public education and post-secondary education in advance of the recent election—a platform that includes significant investments to put in place a four-year tuition freeze, an end to interest payments on student debt, and a number of other investments to improve access to and quality of public education. It’s a shame that the minister chose to divert attention from the real issue I raised and instead engaged in a political attack against the third party.

I believe students and families who are struggling daily to pay for their university and college education really deserve better. They deserve the respect of the minister, as would have been shown by acknowledgement of the challenges they face in accessing post-secondary education and an honest commitment to make the situation better.

Speaker, that’s my late show, and I’m looking forward to hearing the response.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The parliamentary assistant.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you, Speaker. It is a pleasure to respond to the member from London–Fanshawe. I do appreciate her interest in post-secondary education and the affordability, accessibility and, of course, the quality that we have here in the province of Ontario. But the facts speak for themselves, and that’s why I’m here today to answer some questions on issues that were raised today.

Between 2005 and 2010, we implemented what was called the Reaching Higher plan for post-secondary education at a cost of about \$6.2 billion, and any analysis will show that that has created more opportunities. It has increased student financial assistance and higher-quality student experience.

If we look in the province of Ontario, Speaker, last year 82% of our high school students earned their secondary school diploma. That’s a jump of 14 percentage points since 2003. More and more of them are going on now, obviously, to college and university. We know, and I think the member would share this, that the key to a strong economy is having a highly skilled workforce. To have that highly skilled workforce, we need workers who can compete with the world and we need a world-class education system right here in Ontario, and I think we have that.

What I think the minister was getting at is that it’s ironic that, when in government, the member’s party cut student aid in half, and that simply is a fact that needs to be put out there. At a time when the affordability of education for Ontario students was not a question, they eliminated upfront grants. We have brought them back as a part of the process to improve this. When we were

bringing back the grants, we made sure that student voices were heard.

Last year, Ontario issued over \$1 billion in grants and loans. The number of college and university students that qualified for OSAP has increased by 77% since 2003. Any student that applies for OSAP is automatically considered now for 10 grants and loans, including the 30%-off tuition grant. Last year we promised we would support middle-class Ontario families, and we implemented a 30% undergraduate tuition grant. I’m happy to report that we were able to launch the on-line application for that on January 5 of this year, and we’ve had a huge take-up on it, Speaker. Last year, over 200,000 college and university students saw their costs reduced by 30% for the winter term. It has been indexed as well to reflect current tuition rates. That means that in 2012-13, students in a university or college degree program will save \$1,680 on tuition. Students in a college diploma or certificate program will save \$770.

Furthermore, Speaker, this government has committed to keeping student debt low, through the Ontario student opportunity grant. Debt is capped, under that program, at \$7,300 a year. It’s a cap that has stayed pretty much the same since 2003, and it gives even more students non-repayable grants as OSAP becomes more generous.

All students also receive a six-month grace period after graduation in which no payments need to be made, and those who decide that their future may lie in the non-profit sector get an additional six months. No interest accumulates on Ontario student loans during that grace period. That plan is a payment relief program where the borrowers are not required to pay more than 20% of their family income towards loans. After 15 years, any remaining student loan debt is completely forgiven.

Speaker, the party that the member belongs to cut funding to our colleges and universities. We’ve increased funding to our post-secondary institutions by 81% since 2003. Post-secondary enrolment in the province is growing about five times faster than it did in the 1990s. The percentage of 18- to 24-year-olds attending college or university has increased by anywhere from 35% to 40% since 2003. We’ve increased the number of students attending colleges and universities and learning a trade by 210,000.

In closing, I want to thank the member for the question. I know it’s sincere. The facts are that our government’s commitment to education has made Ontario the province that has the highest post-secondary education participation rate in the western world, with one of the most generous tuition forgiveness programs in the country. I think that speaks volumes about the commitment of this government to making sure that we don’t only have high-quality education at the post-secondary level but we also have affordable and accessible fees that go along with that, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): There being no further matter to be debated, this House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1809.

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Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
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Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
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Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
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Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
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Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
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Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
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Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
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MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
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McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	

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Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
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O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Piruzza, Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
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Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
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