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des débats
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Tuesday 25 September 2012

Mardi 25 septembre 2012

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 25 September 2012

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

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The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

MEMBERS' PRIVILEGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On September 13, 2012—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm waiting. We'll try that again.

On September 13, 2012, in response to a point of privilege raised by the member from Cambridge, Mr. Leone, I offered a period of time to allow the House leaders to devise a means by which the concerns of all parties could be met. I also indicated that I would return to the House to make a statement on the matter.

Let me now advise the House of the position we currently find ourselves in. I first want to make note for the House that the Minister of Energy and the Ontario Power Authority yesterday tabled a large number of documents related to the Oakville and Mississauga power plants.

Letters of transmittal from both the minister and the OPA indicate that what was tabled comprises all documents responsive to the May 16 request of the Standing Committee on Estimates. It would appear that the House is now in receipt of the requisite documents; however, this is ultimately a determination for the Standing Committee on Estimates to make.

It seems equally apparent to me, not having received any communication to the contrary signed by all three House leaders, that there are still some remaining concerns related to the initial refusal to produce the documents and the length of time it has taken to do so. This takes us to the finding of a prima facie breach of privilege on September 13, and the response of the House to that finding.

At this point, I want to take a moment to clarify for the House exactly what a prima facie finding of a breach of privilege means, and just as importantly what it does not mean, just as Speaker Peters did in relation to a similar situation on May 4, 2010:

“Joseph Maingot, in *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, states (at page 221):

“A prima facie case of privilege in the parliamentary sense is one where the evidence on its face as outlined by the member is sufficiently strong for the House to be asked to debate the matter and to send it to a committee to investigate whether the privileges of the House have

been breached or contempt has occurred and report to the House....

“While the Speaker may find that a prima facie case of privilege exists and give the matter precedence in debate, it is the House alone that decides whether a breach of privilege or a contempt has occurred, for only the House has the power to commit or punish for contempt.”

“In short, a prima facie finding by the Speaker does not mean that the Speaker has found anyone guilty of such an allegation. Rather, prima facie means the Speaker has determined that on the face of it, the information presented points toward the likelihood that a breach of privilege has occurred, and that it is in the interests of the House to give priority consideration to such a serious matter, and for a parliamentary committee to inquire into it.”

In the case at hand, while it may be that the House would determine that the documents having been tabled resolves the matter and that is the end of it, it may also be that the House would determine otherwise; that is, that the matter of prima facie finding still warrants a response. Either way, it is the House, not the Speaker, that is in the position to make that determination.

That being the case, I understand that the member from Cambridge has been advised on what an appropriate motion would be in response to a prima facie finding of breach of privilege such as this. I will now turn to the member from Cambridge to determine if he does wish to proceed with that motion.

Mr. Rob Leone: Mr. Speaker, I do plan on—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Indicate if you wish.

Mr. Rob Leone: Yes, I do.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Just before allowing the member for Cambridge to put a motion, I also want to clarify for the House how the subsequent debate will play out in the House in a practical sense.

The motion that the member for Cambridge will move is debatable and amendable. It will have precedence over and will displace consideration of all regular business until it is disposed of. This includes question period, deferred votes, routine proceedings and private members' public business. I will note that on previous occasions in 2003 and 1999, with a privilege motion being debated, the House still considered private members' public business. This is attributable to the fact that the physical structure of the meeting day in those years was different than it is today. It is not now possible, as it was on the previous times, to separate out a discrete time for private members' business.

Debate on the motion will comprise of the normal rotation, with each member being entitled to speak for up to 20 minutes on the motion and again on any amendment. There will not be a period for questions and comments following speeches. While the vote on any such amendment is not deferrable, the vote on the main motion will be.

I now recognize the member from Cambridge to put his motion.

Mr. Rob Leone: Mr. Speaker, I move that this House directs the Minister of Energy and the Ontario Power Authority to table immediately with the Clerk of the House all remaining documents ordered by the Standing Committee on Estimates on May 16, 2012; and

That the matter of the Speaker's finding of a prima facie case of privilege, with respect to the production of documents by the Minister of Energy and the Ontario Power Authority to the Standing Committee on Estimates, be referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, which is hereby reconstituted as it existed on September 9, 2012; and

That the committee shall be authorized to meet at the call of the Chair and shall report back its findings and recommendations no later than November 19, 2012.

0910

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Cambridge, Mr. Leone, moves that this House directs the Minister of Energy and the Ontario Power Authority to table immediately with the Clerk of the House all remaining documents ordered by the Standing Committee on Estimates on May 16, 2012; and

That the matter of the Speaker's finding of a prima facie case of privilege, with respect to the production of documents by the Minister of Energy of the Ontario Power Authority to the Standing Committee of Estimates, be referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, which is hereby reconstituted as it existed on September 9, 2012; and

That the committee shall be authorized to meet at the call of the Chair, and shall report back its findings and recommendations no later than November 19, 2012.

Mr. Leone, the member from Cambridge, you have 20 minutes.

Interjection.

Hon. John Milloy: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader on a point of order.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I'm not trying to be difficult, but we have heard this motion for the first time in the last 30 seconds. It's the usual practice of the House that members have copies of the motion through the order paper and that we have an opportunity to see it in advance. Under these circumstances, I look for your guidance. There's also the issue, as is the usual practice, of French translation etc. I look for your guidance as to how this is dealt with in this situation so that members have access to the motion that you are asking us to debate.

Interjections.

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

I thank the government House leader for his point of order. For clarity purposes, under these circumstances and under this condition, these requests are not required. I ask the Clerk to make as quickly as possible the said documents to ensure that you have copies available for you.

The member from Cambridge.

Mr. Rob Leone: Prior to coming to this place, I was a university professor. I studied political science, and one of my favourite subjects of interest was our parliamentary system and our parliamentary democracy.

One of the fundamental foundational principles of our government is the principle of responsible government. In responsible government—as I used to tell my students, Mr. Speaker—the crown, the government, the cabinet, is responsible in three occasions. On the first instance, it's responsible to the crown.

It's also responsible to the people, and we have democratic elections, at which time the people get to pass judgment on this government. Certainly, we always make the case, as the opposition, that the government is not doing its appropriate work, and in particular with relation to this matter, that we see instances from time to time where issues like this come up that seemingly brew elements of cynicism in our government. We have to protect that. That's our role here: to ensure that people have respect for the work that we do in this place and that we eliminate the cynicism to the greatest extent possible. So we're going to be making the case that the people, Mr. Speaker, that we have a position that's quite different from the government's when that time comes.

But most importantly, and why we're here, is that the government is responsible, the cabinet is responsible to this Legislature. We can never lose sight of that. It's our responsibility as legislators, particularly our responsibility as members of the opposition, to hold the government to account. In order for us to do that job, in order for us to be able to do the work that we are entrusted to do by our constituents, we have to be able to get the information with respect to what government is doing and not doing as best as possible.

The reason why we're here, the reason why I'm here standing in this place today moving the motion that I just moved, is related to the fact that we don't have the information that we have requested. We requested this on May 16 in the estimates committee—May 16. It's now the end of September, and we're just getting a few more trinkets of documents flowing through, not nearly the amount I think that we were hoping for, and certainly we have questions. But it's the fact that we have to have the information available to us to hold the government to account.

There remain lingering questions as to what the costs of the relocation of the two power plants are, both the Mississauga power plant and the Oakville power plant, the costs associated with doing that. We have questions related to the fact of why the government actually sited those plants where they did to begin with. I know, as we

all start to comb through the thousands of pages of documents that were provided, questions are not being answered. In fact we almost have more questions today than we did before yesterday. Simply for that reason, Mr. Speaker, we need a committee of this Legislature to examine, to explore, to investigate exactly what is happening in that ministry.

One of the things that has been debated at length in the estimates committee and in this House is the question of who is entrusted to represent the public interest. The public interest is something that we often hear as an excuse: "We can't give you documents because it's against the public interest for people to know exactly what their government is doing." I reject that premise, Mr. Speaker. The fact is that the public interest can never be determined by one person or one government. We're entrusted by our constituents to uphold the public interest. Each and every one of us in this chamber is entrusted by our constituents to uphold the public interest. That is what we do here. That's our role. The public interest is not for a minister to say or determine and use that as a shield to prevent the information from flowing to its committees or to this House or to the people. It can't be used as a shield. We all have a role to play in protecting that public interest, and I believe that the public has a right to know exactly the reasons why this power plant was put there in the first place and then cancelled.

Each and every step along the way, we've seen the government's unwillingness to listen, unwillingness to listen to members of this House when they're asking very simple and basic questions. It shouldn't be this hard to get information. It shouldn't be this hard to actually say, "Well, how much does something cost?" We have to wait, on the verge of finding a minister in contempt of this House, to get any information, and only then do we get some trinkets. It takes us going to these lengths to find the information, to hold this government accountable, to do the job that the people of Ontario have entrusted us to do, and Mr. Speaker, that behaviour cannot be rewarded.

In my view, we are still proceeding with the motion of contempt, or at least the motion to get a committee to study contempt, for two reasons. First of all, and I've mentioned this already, it's taken quite a long time to get to this stage. We're here four months later, still trying to get to the bottom of what's happened. And, Mr. Speaker, we got some information. I've perused many thousands of pages, and certainly other members and their staff have looked at it, too. We've looked at it. I'm not sure what the government was afraid of. If whatever is in those documents was something subject to be withheld, we certainly don't know what that is.

We get asked, "Is there a smoking gun in the documents?" I've reviewed thousands of pages. I haven't seen a smoking document. I wonder why they take so long to release something that simply isn't there. The answer to that question might be what's not in those documents. What are they hiding? If it took so long to table those documents that there's no real smoking gun in—why?

What are you trying to hide? This is why we need a committee of this House to investigate in their entirety those documents and to see if there are other documents that might be present. There are some inquiries that we need to make. There are some questions that we have to ask. I think, Mr. Speaker, that putting this question to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs is the appropriate place to have these discussions, because we're talking at the end of the day about taxpayer dollars; we're talking today about the squandering of hundreds of millions of dollars—not to build roads and hospitals and bridges, not to provide MRIs or cancer treatment, but to move power plants that simply don't exist. I think the people of Ontario have some serious questions to ask with respect to these motivations and the political motivations that may underlie the decisions that they made there.

0920

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, we have some serious questions about whether the government has in fact tabled all the documents. Certainly, it's up to this House to decide, and I recognize the points that you made prior to allowing me to stand here. But it is the House that has to determine this, and there are some questions that we have with respect to the documents. Why, for example, do we have not one document that was authored by the former Minister of Energy—not one—who is currently the Minister of Economic Development? Either he never thought it necessary to write "power plants" in any of his correspondence—it's a pretty major part of his portfolio, so I don't think that is the reason—or the government might be withholding all correspondence that was authored by the former Minister of Energy. So we have to ask those questions, and asking those questions in committee is the precise point in time to do that.

We see in the correspondence we have received to date that there are, in fact, gaps in time, where there's been a series of things that have been talked about with reference to, let's say, the Oakville power plant, and then nothing else is said for weeks. We have to ask questions, Mr. Speaker. Exactly what happened in those transpiring weeks between the blackout period, as I like to call it, between the end of correspondence and the cancellation of the Oakville plant—two or three weeks, and no documents with respect to that. So we have serious questions with relation to that.

Mr. Speaker, I do have some serious concerns about whether we've seen all the documents, unredacted, as requested by this House. Among the 36,000 pages that we've seen reported and we've reviewed, thousands of pages are blank, some of which have clear whiteouts and redactions. So we have some questions about exactly what is in those documents.

We're moving forward, Mr. Speaker. I think it's right to suggest—because people ask the question, "Why are you going forward when you received the documents?" We feel that there is still more to be said. All the documents aren't before us, and that's why we're proceeding with this motion.

Mr. Speaker, I have some ice in my mouth. I have a sore throat, too, so it's making it feel a little better.

We are in very serious times. One of the things that I think bears some questions is the precise cost of the power plants. Yesterday, those members listened to the energy minister during question period saying that the cost for the relocation of the plant is only \$40 million. Now, Mr. Speaker, that number didn't include the cost of \$210 million with respect to the turbines that the OPA has to purchase. They'll be sending a cheque next week, I'm sure. It doesn't include the cost of the new transmission lines that have to be put into place.

Simply put, in the documents we saw some very interesting information with respect to the siting of the Oakville plant. The OPA believed that that was the only place it could be if we wanted to avoid at least \$200 million in extra expenditures on building transmission lines to the western part of the GTA. Mr. Speaker, those are figures that have to be included in the total cost of the power plant. So we want to ask some serious, hard questions. Exactly what is set before us? What are the numbers? What are the facts? What are the things that we have to determine during the course of our work in committee?

So again, Mr. Speaker, this is about holding the government to account. This isn't about a political motivation, other than doing our job as members of the opposition. That is the reality of it here. What we want to fight against—what we're certainly trying to fight against is the political motivations of the government, who have clearly embarked upon the biggest and the most expensive seat-saver program in the province's history, in the country's history. So there's enough to go around to apply the blame in terms of the political opportunism that we see before us and where the political interests have superseded the government's decision to in fact do this against the public interest.

We have lots of questions, Mr. Speaker, to discuss. We're very eager to get this to committee where we can debate these items, some of which I've just outlined today, and there's a lot more. There's a lot more to be said about this, and we certainly want to pursue this investigation further because we believe that a case for contempt is probably stronger today, after those documents have been tabled, than it was before we had those documents.

Mr. Speaker, we want to uncover the truth. That's our goal, that's our mission, and that's what people entrusted us to do.

Mr. Jim McDonell: That's our job.

Mr. Rob Leone: As my seatmate has said, that's our job, and he's absolutely right. We have a responsibility here to make sure that the public interest is upheld and that people's tax dollars aren't being wasted on not building power plants and instead put to front-line health care and education, which I think members of this House think is a worthwhile and wise investment, and certainly we do on an ongoing basis, Mr. Speaker.

This is where we are, at this historic juncture. I think this hasn't happened in this Legislature for 104 years. We are in the midst of making history. This is a very power-

ful task that we are charged with, one that we cannot take lightly.

Much like my favourite parliamentary theorists like Blackstone, Dicey and Burke, who have, for years—centuries, in fact—written about the value of having responsible government and a robust parliamentary system, we are entrusted, 107 members of this Legislature are entrusted, to do that work that has for centuries been done in the Commonwealth. This is a very important task, a serious task, a task that we have taken great lengths to consider. Whether it was in the course of debate at estimates or debating it here in this House through what I thought was one of my most memorable days when we debated your ruling on this point of privilege, Mr. Speaker, I think that our forefathers and -mothers would be proud of the work that we're doing on this file each and every day.

I just received a note here, Mr. Speaker. I think there's some question about the date which we've listed here, so I would like to move an amendment that the words "November 19, 2012" be deleted and the following added: "November 23, 2012."

0930

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Cambridge has moved his amendment to read "November 23"—to confirm with the member from Cambridge?

Mr. Rob Leone: Yes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): November 23.

Further debate.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Mr. Speaker, we find ourselves in an unusual situation. This government made decisions about power planning and power investment in Ontario that will cost Ontarians hundreds of millions of dollars.

Mrs. Liz Sandals: On a point of order—

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

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Could you clarify whether we're not debating the amendment now, an amendment having been placed?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): To be precise, we are debating the amendment, but because of the content of what that amendment is, it's the overall tenor of the bill, because the numbers were changed from the 19th to the 23rd.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: May I continue, Mr. Speaker?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I will now recognize the member from Toronto–Danforth to continue.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. It is generally acknowledged in the media and in this Legislature that, contrary to the advice of the Ontario Power Authority, this government made decisions solely to save its own political fortunes. Speaker, it is our duty here to understand all the factors that led into that decision-making, who made those decisions and fully what the cost of those decisions was.

It is at least apparent at this point that the decision to build a plant in Mississauga and then cancel it once it was under construction cost the people of Ontario \$190 million. It may have cost more. It's our intention to

review the documents that were provided to us and actually determine exactly what those costs were. On the face of it at this point, the decision to go ahead with a plant in Oakville—which this party said was unnecessary, that this party said would have been far more economically dealt with through investment in efficiency and conservation. It is apparent at this point that the decision to proceed with that plant and then to cancel it in order to save a seat cost us at least another \$40 million. But, Speaker, when one reviews the file, one finds that there's at least another \$200 million added on top of that to deal with the cost of putting transmission lines in the southwest of the greater Toronto area, to make up for the fact that that plant had been moved elsewhere, to make up for the fact that power needs in that area will not have been met.

Speaker, in addition to that, there's \$210 million for steam turbine generators bought by the government of Ontario that will be provided to the plant which will be moved to Napanee. I would say that we're talking about a \$450-million expenditure there. That is of consequence. It is our responsibility as legislators to understand, again, what the processes of decision-making were that led us to commit to a plant that this party felt was not necessary, and then led to a political decision to incur extra cost for the people of Ontario by making a political decision rather than a power decision.

Speaker, Mr. Leone has spoken about the documents that have been provided to us—roughly 30,000 pages. When one reads the documents, one has to say that, on the face of it, they are not complete. If you look through the documents—and perhaps others will find documents that I have not found, that our staff to this point have not found—interestingly, there is not a single email from the previous Minister of Energy, Brad Duguid, or the current Minister of Energy, Chris Bentley. One has to ask: How did they communicate their wishes with staff? Did they operate on a verbal-orders-only basis? Did they send handwritten notes that were then filed away or recycled? How is it that they made their wishes and interests known to their staff?

Based on the documents that were presented to us, the only decision-making happened from the assistant deputy minister level down. Frankly, Madam Speaker, an awful lot of those documents were between communications staff to other communications staff: “How do we manage this mess in front of us?” That leads me to believe, as it led Mr. Leone to believe, that the documentation presented to us was, at a minimum, incomplete.

Beyond that, the letter of engagement with the law firm hired to deal with TransCanada pipeline and the Oakville matter goes page 1, page 2 and then page 5. I'm going to assume that Word was operative when those documents were generated and would automatically have numbered them, and thus I conclude some pages were missing. Of those pages that were present, there were references to Greenfield—the other plant that's in contention; the Mississauga gas plant—that had large areas of white all around them. Significant sections of the letters were taken out. I have to ask myself: Is the gov-

ernment being forthcoming when it sends us documentation that is heavily obscured, that has significant sections or potentially significant sections taken out? That does not seem to comply with the resolution of the estimates committee; doesn't comply with the direction of this House to produce the documents.

Speaker, this Legislature, and we individual legislators who sit in it, are held accountable by the people who send us here to act on their behalf. They ask us to look out for their interests, to fully understand what's going on; if we're in government, to act in the interests of the people of Ontario; if we're in opposition, to ensure that the government operates the way people expect it to operate. We are the people expected to hold the government to account, to make sure that the truth of matters is brought out and that the interests of the whole of the province are taken into consideration when decisions are made. We can't do our job, and the public cannot do its job, if documents are obscured and withheld.

It is unfortunate, Madam Speaker, but others who sat on the estimates committee with me this spring and this summer know very well that in attempting to ask questions of this minister about straightforward technical matters, we could not get answers. This minister consistently would play all over the field to avoid giving a direct answer for simple questions like: “How do you pay for insurance on your different power plants? What do you pay for insurance?” A question I asked, “How much do your energy efficiency programs cost?”, could not be answered and has not yet been answered.

Speaker, if we ask leading and rhetorical questions that really don't have an answer, well, then, I say that the minister has the right to skate around and reply with rhetoric. But if we ask straightforward questions about the operation of the ministry that the minister has responsibility for and we cannot get answers and we are delayed and we are stonewalled, then the credibility of that minister with regard to giving information to the public comes into question. If we had had a very different experience in estimates, where in fact the minister was straightforward with us, I think he might actually get a greater degree of trust in this House. But he did not engender trust. What he engendered was a sense that, wherever significant matters of concern to the people of Ontario were in play, we could not rely on him to speak and give us the information. For us, then, to go through these 30,000 pages of documents without having a clear indication that this in fact is the full body of documents in question; for us to be in a situation where we speak to our constituents, to the public, and have to say that we have been able to judge this matter clearly and adequately—we can't say that today. I wish we could say that today. I wish we could say, “We have all the documents. We will go through a process of analysis, of reading, of comparison, and we will, on behalf of the public, be able to explain what happened here.” That can't happen today.

0940

There are some tantalizing pieces in the documentation: at one point, an exchange of emails between senior

people in the Ontario Power Authority talking about the fact that the government is negotiating with the owners, the proponents of these power plants, without talking to them, even though they hold the contracts. If I was on the board of directors of the Ontario Power Authority, I would realize that I was really simply a front, a facade for decision-making taken at a completely different level. The documents may not have given all the information we want, but they have made it clear that the Ontario Power Authority is far less than an arm's-length body when it comes to power decision-making. It is simply a front for the Minister of Energy.

The other interesting document is a reference to a Minister of Energy finding out that a decision had been made about a power plant out of the Premier's office without the minister having been told in advance. One would ask, what is the purpose of the minister? What is the purpose of the minister's staff? Who actually is advising on energy and who is actually executing the decisions? These are substantial questions. When the Minister of Energy stands up in the House, it's our expectation that in fact that is the person who has the authority, that is the person who is weighing the factors that bear on the province's future and on its supply of electricity, and that is the person that we hold to account. Legally, that's what's before us. But the documentation, even in the limited form that has been presented to us, indicates that the minister is a relatively small part of this whole process.

Speaker, I'd like to move a motion—sorry; an amendment, a sub-amendment, to the amendment of Mr. Leone. I move that the words “November 23, 2012” be removed and the following be added: “November 26, 2012.” Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. Tabuns has moved that the words “November 23, 2012” be removed and the following be added: “November 26, 2012.”

Further debate?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker.

I'd like to go back and speak to the main motion, and I will have an opportunity to expand on the amendment at a later point.

In reading the documentation—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Excuse me. You need to speak to the amendment you just moved.

Mr. John Yakabuski: You can talk about anything.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you, John.

Madam Speaker, it is very clear that it is going to take us a fair amount of time to get through all of this. It is going to take us a fair amount of time.

When I was looking last night at the internal emails to the Ontario Power Authority around the time that the plant was cancelled—to their surprise—in Oakville, it was very clear that when they were asked, they advised that, in fact, the plant was surplus to the needs of Ontario, that it wasn't needed to back up renewable power, that it was not needed to shut down coal, that it was not needed

to meet supply issues in Ontario as a whole, and that in fact the power needs, the reliability needs, for the south-west GTA—Mississauga, parts of Etobicoke, Oakville—could be met by an investment in transmission lines. A year earlier, when this plant was commissioned, that analysis had not been done.

It was clear to us at the time when this plant was proposed that we already had a substantial power surplus in Ontario and that further investment in these plants was going to be extremely costly and, frankly, that this plant was going to be unneeded. Within 12 months, the OPA had come to a similar conclusion, even though a contract had been inked, the value of which was \$1.2 billion, the payout on which will be over \$3 billion over the next 20 years.

An initial error, a realization of the political impact of that error, a lost seat, and then incremental costs to deal with the political error—that is no way to run an electricity system, it is no way to run a province, and frankly, it is no way for us and the public to actually come to grips with how Ontario is governed.

Speaker, this government has had the opportunity to go through its files and present the documents requested by the Legislature. For reasons that are not clear to me, it has not provided the documents requested. I believe that the full order from the committee, the full decision of the committee, needs to be met by the government, that we need to see what the Minister of Energy actually directed his staff to do. We need to see if staff from the Premier's office were directing OPA or Ministry of Energy staff, aside from anything the minister was doing. We need to see the directions from the decision-makers—not the people given the job to carry out a decision, as interesting as their notes may be—saying, “This is a problem. This is how it will be solved. Act accordingly.” On the face of it, we have not been given those documents yet. For us to make our assessment, for the people of Ontario to know what really happened, we need those documents.

Mr. Leone has made a motion that aids the people of Ontario in understanding. He has made a motion that holds the government to account. We have a government at the moment that is apparently trying to dodge that accountability. It needs to, in fact, follow the original direction. Provide the documents.

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

0950

Hon. John Milloy: Madam Speaker, I stand today with mixed emotions. I stand today with a sense of pride, because it gives me an opportunity to defend and speak about a colleague and a friend, the Minister of Energy, the Honourable Chris Bentley, someone who was elected in 2003, as I was, and has served this Legislature with distinction as Minister of Labour and as Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. I had the opportunity to serve as his parliamentary assistant and saw him as a great parliamentarian. He went on to be Attorney General and served with great distinction here in the province of Ontario. Finally, he now serves as Minister of Energy,

someone who, again, has served with distinction and handled many, many complicated—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I can't hear the speaker. I'd ask you to respect the Chair.

Hon. John Milloy: He has distinguished himself as an outstanding minister and an outstanding parliamentarian.

As House leader, one would expect that in a situation like this I would be standing today with all sorts of parliamentary procedure books and quoting all sorts of arcane rulings. There's nothing wrong with that, but in this case it's actually very, very straightforward. I think it's very easy to understand what the position of the government is and what the position I would urge to be of this Legislature.

Let's look at the facts: Right now, we have a situation where a committee of this Legislature has asked for certain documents to be produced. We have produced those documents.

Interjections.

Hon. John Milloy: I hear the heckling across the way when I say that, with a bit of sadness. I'm old enough to remember the party of Bill Davis. I'm old enough to remember the great Progressive Conservative Party of this province and their respect for Parliament and their respect for our institutions.

At lunchtime yesterday, the Minister of Energy tabled, with the Clerk of the House and with the clerk of the estimates committee, all the documents that were requested by the committee. I have in my hands copies of the attestations signed by Colin Andersen, the chief executive officer of the Ontario Power Authority, and Chris Bentley, the Minister of Energy, pointing out that all documents that were requested were put there.

What's going on here today is nothing short of disgusting. It is not the party of Bill Davis or John Robarts. It's not the party of the Progressive Conservatives, who understand that in Parliament, a minister's word is the truth. The minister has signed that all documents that have been asked for have been provided, and, Madam Speaker, there is a parliamentary tradition that respects that. To sit here in some sort of kangaroo court where the opposition is saying that—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I would ask the member to withdraw.

Hon. John Milloy: I withdraw, Madam Speaker.

The principle that the opposition is putting forward, a principle which saddens me and even disgusts me, that somehow someone is guilty until proven innocent, goes against parliamentary traditions for hundreds and hundreds of years. The minister has tabled the documents that were requested.

What has been the origin of the debate that we're having right now is a motion that was put forward by the committee that I would like to read into the record. It says: "Furthermore, that the committee recommends to the House that the Minister of Energy be compelled to provide the Standing Committee on Estimates, without delay, the documents and information it ordered pursuant

to standing order 110(b) and, if the minister refuses, that he be held in contempt of Parliament for breach of privilege."

The minister has not refused. The minister has provided those documents. The case is closed. The matter is done.

As I said, I'm not going to stand here with arcane books, with procedures and rulings. I'm going to paint the picture as it is. A request came from the estimates committee for these documents. The documents have been produced. The request from the committee said that if they were refused, we'd go forward with contempt.

Madam Speaker, let me give you the context of what has happened. I'm giving you the very, very simple argument that's the heart of it, but I'm going to spend the few minutes that I have to talk about the context of this.

There were two planned gas plants, one in Mississauga and one in Oakville, and as members of this House know, they were cancelled. Why were they cancelled? They were cancelled for a variety of reasons, but I think the important point—anyone who is looking at this case would know that there was unanimity on all sides of the House.

I had a chance yesterday in question period, as I said, to walk down memory lane, so let's do it again. Let's look at the member from Halton and what he told Hansard on June 1, 2010: "The people of Oakville have told you they don't want the proposed gas-fired power plant ... and I agree with them."

MPP Toby Barrett said, in a letter to the Minister of Energy: "The potential for future alternate generation at Nanticoke to replace that slated for the proposed and disputed Clarkson plant should receive ample consideration."

The member from Hamilton Centre—it's not just the Conservatives, Madam Speaker: "New Democrats actually have thought for a long time that that plant should never have been built and we've said so."

The member from Toronto–Danforth, who we just heard: "I don't agree with the Oakville power plant. I don't think it is necessary."

Interjection: Unanimity.

Hon. John Milloy: Unanimity, Madam Speaker. So what do we do? We cancel the plants.

That's not the point of the debate today. The point of the debate today is the fact that there were discussions in front of the estimates committee about these cancellations—appropriate discussions—and the Minister of Energy was asked to provide certain documents. The Minister of Energy did not refuse outright. He brought forward the very simple proposition that many of these documents in fact reflected upon negotiations that were going on right there, related to the Oakville power plant and its potential location somewhere else, and that to release those documents of a commercially sensitive nature could cost the taxpayers significant amounts of money and jeopardize those negotiations. I think people can understand that. As I've said in other contexts, anyone who has ever purchased a car or purchased a house and

has been involved in negotiations knows that if they had access to what the other side was thinking and doing, to documents that were prepared in confidence, it could jeopardize those negotiations.

In fact, no less of an expert than an officer of this Legislature, the Auditor General of Ontario, said on September 5 in public accounts: “My sense on the Oakville one”—meaning the Oakville power plant—“is that it could very well be that some of this information could be subject to client-solicitor privilege, or even if we were to get it”—get the documents—“in my opinion, it could be damaging to the province’s negotiating position.”

There was debate at committee. There was discussion at committee. The Chair himself, Mr. Prue, agreed. He in fact acknowledged the fact that there were competing interests here. I quote Hansard on May 16 of the Standing Committee on Estimates:

“The minister has the right to decline either giving that documentation or giving voice to that documentation during his answering of the questions....

“I would advise that I’m going to allow the motion to proceed, but I would also advise—and I think the minister, being a lawyer himself, knows full well that he may choose to answer the question in such a way as not to prejudice the province in any way, and I would expect him to do so. That would be my ruling.”

The Minister of Energy provided documents to the Standing Committee on Estimates—not all the documents—and the matter was referred to the Legislature. The Speaker, about 10 days ago, stood in this place and made a ruling. He made a ruling that acknowledged the fact that we have competing interests here. He made a ruling that knew that there were commercial confidences at play, that there was solicitor-client privilege at play. He realized that although the committee has an absolute right to those documents, there needed to be an opportunity for House leaders to sit down to discuss the matter and move forward.

I think it’s worth quoting from the Speaker’s ruling. What he did is he quoted two passages from Speaker Milliken’s April 27, 2010, detainee ruling. It says:

“It seems to me, that the issue before us is this: Is it possible to put into place a mechanism by which these documents could be made available to the House without compromising the security and confidentiality of the information they contain? In other words, is it possible for the two sides, working together in the best interest of the Canadians they serve, to devise a means where both their concerns are met? Surely that is not too much to hope for.”

I go on to quote the Speaker’s ruling now directly:

“I, too, have immense faith in the abilities of the honourable members of this House. I know that a solution can be found to this impasse. All sides need to exercise sobriety in this. Political fortunes should not be the motive for eroding the supremacy of Parliament or ignoring the best interests of citizens in this province. Assiduous attention should be paid to dealing with matters such as this responsibly.”

The matter was sent to the House leaders. Again, why, Madam Speaker? Because the Speaker recognized that there were competing interests here. We had the power of the committee to ask for those documents on one hand, and on the other hand, we had the public interest—the fact that we could potentially jeopardize millions of taxpayers’ dollars if these documents were released in a manner which jeopardized the negotiations.

1000

Madam Speaker, the House leaders had the opportunity to meet four times. I, of course, was a participant in all those meetings. Just for the record, I want to talk about those discussions and what was put on the table.

What we did is, we went to the House leaders, and we put forward what we called two paths. The reason why we call them paths is, first of all, to comply with the Speaker’s ruling, a path to meet the requirements of the estimates committee, which I remind you again, was to make all the documents public. In putting those paths forward, Madam Speaker, I made two provisions. First of all, I said if the opposition wanted to come forward with their own paths, we were all ears; we were very happy to work with them and to co-operate with them. The second proviso that I put down is that the paths we put forward were merely frameworks and that we were very open to any discussion, to any amendments, to any ideas they had to alter them, to alter their nature, to change them slightly, to send it off in a slightly different direction.

I think it’s important that we look at what those two paths are. The first is that we said the minute that the Oakville plant negotiations were completed, all documents would be released. We felt that those negotiations were coming to an end, and in fact, they came to an end Sunday, Madam Speaker, or early Monday morning—late Sunday night, early Monday morning, in fact. But as we sat down with the opposition, thinking that they were going to come to fruition in the next couple of weeks, we said, “Let’s just suspend things for a period of time.” I said, “Six weeks maximum, anything longer than six weeks, the documents will automatically be out there, but we feel, in that interim, the deal will be done. The documents will be released. The best interests of the taxpayers will be protected.” The opposition said, “Forget it.” They didn’t care about the best interests of taxpayers. They didn’t care about finding a balance between the two interests, Madam Speaker. What they said is, “Release the documents.”

Then there’s the second path, Madam Speaker. The second path we put forward is one that has been used in a variety of circumstances, and any student of Parliament or parliamentary procedure would be familiar with it. That is to put together a small committee, a small group of a representative from each party, who could potentially be advised and assisted by someone like the Auditor General, by retired judges, by legal minds or procedural minds to vet the documents, to go through the documents. If they found that there were sensitive documents, that there were parts of a document that could jeopardize the negotiations that were going on, they

would find a way to make sure that the estimates committee had access to them, but at the same time protect the interests of the taxpayers of Ontario.

They were the two paths that we put forward to the opposition. We invited them to bring their own paths forward, Madam Speaker, and we invited them to come up with any amendments, with any changes that they wanted to make to these paths. If six weeks wouldn't work, could it be a lesser amount? If they didn't want a panel with the Auditor General, were there other experts they could have? We were open to discussing how this subcommittee would work.

Madam Speaker, we sat down on Friday afternoon to discuss it, and I have to tell you that the meeting lasted about six and a half minutes. We were told by the opposition, unanimously, "You have no choice: Release the documents." I go back to the original, the original motion, which said, "Release the documents." Madam Speaker, it was in their power to ask us that, and I said, "Yes, we will release the documents," so yesterday at noon, every single document that had been requested was released.

Interjection: No, it wasn't.

Hon. John Milloy: To stand up here and say it's not, Madam Speaker, is to disrespect hundreds of years of parliamentary privilege. I have here two official documents that have been tabled with the Legislature. Those documents are signed, first, by the head of the Ontario Power Authority, and secondly, by the Minister of Energy, stating that every document requested has gone forward. Madam Speaker, I come from a tradition that believes that when a member of the Legislature says something in the Legislature, that is the truth. If they are going to disrespect the traditions of this House, then I ask them to stand up and furnish proof or evidence, or if not, to shut up, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Will you withdraw that?

Hon. John Milloy: I withdraw.

Madam Speaker, this is very serious. A member's word is truth in this Legislature. That is something that goes back generation after generation.

As I say, I'm disgusted to see the party of Bill Davis, a party which was known for its mastery of this place, of this Legislature, standing up for what is nothing more than cheap political tactics and attacking the good name of the Minister of Energy, who has provided every single document as requested by this committee.

The fact of the matter is, Madam Speaker, there are competing interests at work. People understand that. As I say, it may be a simple analogy, but it's the same principle: If any of us went out to purchase a home or purchase a car—you know what?—we'd probably love to see all the internal correspondence and all the emails back and forth to family members or to others or to brokers or to lawyers about it, to understand the other side's position. That undermines negotiation. That is all that the Minister of Energy did. He raised flag after flag after flag about the potential danger of this, and the opposition said, "We don't care. We want the documents."

Madam Speaker, today is not about the fact that we raised these flags. It's about the fact that we complied with the request of the opposition.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: And they have the documents.

Hon. John Milloy: They have the documents. There is an attestation that they have the documents. We have met every single requirement that has been put forward by the Standing Committee on Estimates. As far as we are concerned and as far as I'm concerned, Madam Speaker, this matter is over.

I have to say again that I'm saddened by what we're seeing from the opposition, because I think what we're seeing is a whole trail, a whole symptom of something that seems very wrong with the way in which they are approaching the Legislature. We only have to go back to the spring, where we spent hour after hour after hour listening to bells ringing instead of debating some important issues of the day. We only have to go back to a party whose leader and others stood up and said they were going to vote against the budget before the budget was even brought forward.

Madam Speaker, this is not about me. This is not about the Liberal Party versus the Progressive Conservative Party. What this is about is the traditions of this Legislature. It's about the fact that we recognize that each of us are honourable members who are doing our best; that each of us, when we stand in this place, when we appear in front of committee, when we table correspondence in this House, that it reflects the truth. It's about the fact that we have met all the requests by the Standing Committee on Estimates, we have met the ruling of the Speaker, and it's time to put this matter against us.

Madam Speaker, we are going to be voting against this motion. We are going to vote against it because it is irrelevant, because the fact of the matter is that there was a breach in this House in the sense that the committee of estimates asked for these documents, but that breach has been repaired.

Madam Speaker, I'm going to end where I began, by talking about my colleague the Minister of Energy: the hard work that he has done in a number of portfolios, the outstanding service that he has done to this Legislature. And you know what, Madam Speaker? He joins members on all sides of this House, because when I look at all sides of this House, I do see outstanding members who have served, and I'm not afraid to say that because I have not become so overtaken by the partisan, vicious, vindictive spirit that we're seeing in the opposition.

The fact of the matter is, Madam Speaker, this is a very simple situation. Documents were requested, flags were raised, a debate and discussion ensued, but those documents in their entirety have been provided to this Legislature. Madam Speaker, it's time to put this matter before us. It's time to acknowledge and support the traditions of hundreds and hundreds of years of parliamentary traditions that have been built on this House. It's time to honour the spirit of leaders like Bill Davis and John Robarts, and it's time to move on.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Where to begin? Speaker, I spent last evening having a look at one of the packets of documents. In fact, many of the 36,000 documents that were provided, Speaker—I am here to tell you—are blank pages.

Let me give you a few examples from what we call “Mississauga file 23 of 33.” Now, there is some very interesting reading here. Despite what the House leader opposite—despite his insistence that we have all of the documents, let me give you a couple of examples, Speaker. I might take 15 or so minutes to do this.

The email here, dated August 22, 2011:

“Re the Greenfield South project issue note:

“On the rest of the topics, you said you needed material on”—well, then the rest has all been blacked out, or whited out, I should say. “Sorry I couldn’t get this to you sooner. Hope it helps...” It doesn’t help us, Speaker. There’s nothing on page 1.

1010

Let’s go to page 2, then. The topic again is “Briefing notes.” “Here is what I have so far,” it says. Dash, dash—it’s all whited out, all the way down. “Thanks for your time.”

The next document, Speaker—these are all in the order we received them, and it’s a random pile. There’s a slide deck here—a very interesting slide deck, I might add. It’s called “Greenfield South Site Options.” Let’s see what some of the site options are. “Option 3”—I’m sorry; it’s a blank page.

Let me see. The next slide—sorry, Speaker; it’s whited out. It says, “Ministry of Energy,” and it has also been whited out.

All right, on November 10—let’s have a look at November 10. It’s about the minister’s letter that’s attached. They’re looking for the minister’s signature. So let’s go to the next letter and see the letter—oh, sorry, Speaker; it was blank.

Let’s take a look here at the letter they are bringing that says here, on November 10, that they’re comfortable with the products to hand to Minister Bentley to facilitate his review, in case it’s needed over the weekend. Let’s have a look at the product they provided. Oh, sorry, Speaker; it’s also blank.

Let’s have a look here. “They would like to commence a dialogue with you on the most appropriate way to allocate the compensation between the OPA and the crown.” Great; that’s going to be the next letter. Blank.

“In response to your attached letter”—blank.

Speaker, you can see the theme that I will continue on for another 10 or so minutes. It completely exposes the House leader’s comment—his insistence—that we have received all documents.

Let’s have a look here. Oh, this one’s interesting. Rebecca just handed me an envelope addressed to Minister Bentley, and it says, “Hi” so-and-so. “We’d like to show you the letters as they currently stand.” Let’s look at

the—oh, sorry, Speaker; the letters are both here. They’re blank.

Let’s move on a little later in the day now, 2:48 that same afternoon. “The energy minister’s letter is also attached.” Let’s read it, then. Oh, sorry, Speaker; it’s blank.

We can go to the next page. This is all in order off the thumb disk that they gave us. “Confidential and privileged draft for discussion:

“Dear Minister”—blank.

“Confidential and privileged”—this one has a new sentence—“in contemplation of litigation: Draft for discussion.”

Interjection: Blank.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Blank. All right; I’m sure we’re getting somewhere here, Speaker.

“The energy letter mirrors the new language not to proceed with the contract.” Let’s look at that letter. That should be—oh, sorry, Speaker. I can’t tell you; it’s blank.

Here’s another one, the next one in order: “In light of this, the logical next step appears to be to notify Greenfield South that the OPA will not be proceeding with the contract.” Good; let’s look at that—oh, sorry, Speaker; I apologize. It’s blank.

“While full recognition must be given to the ratepayer value and the fair treatment of contractual compartment, as suggested in your letter”—let’s look at that letter, Speaker. That should be—oh, I’m sorry; it’s blank.

Speaker, we’re getting it. Hang on, now. “We need to know about the energy letter to the OPA by 4 p.m. The main change”—and it goes on to describe what’s coming up in the letter. Oh, sorry, Speaker; the letter—it’s nothing.

It’s a little later yet in the day—3:17 now. This is all from the same day. “The energy letter mirrors the new language”—oh, good. Let’s look at the new language, Speaker. Oh, sorry; it’s blank.

Let’s have a peek here. “Last evening, at a meeting with the Premier’s office, there was a reference to the gas plant”—oh, the next page. Sorry, Speaker; it’s blank.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. Would you please take your seat.

It is 10:15, and just before we recess, I want to inform the House about the meeting time structure. We will recess now until 10:30. Debate will continue until 11:30, at which time we will recess until 3 p.m. Debate will then continue until 6 p.m., at which time we will adjourn until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Point of order, Speaker.

The Acting Chair (Mrs. Julia Munro): A point of order.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I think that’s great that we are recessing, because probably by 10:30, all of those blank pages that Mr. Fedeli—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): That’s not a point of order. Thank you. This House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

Hon. John Gerretsen: Point of order, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Attorney General on a point of order.

Hon. John Gerretsen: I know that this is a somewhat unusual day, but I would like to take this opportunity to introduce a number of people from Kingston that are here today for Kingston Advocacy Day. I would hope that all the members of the Legislature on all sides would be able to join us in the committee rooms on the second floor to taste some of the hospitality from the Kingston area. Remember, Kingston was the home of Sir John A. Macdonald, our first Prime Minister, and the home of Oliver Mowat, the longest-serving Premier of this province.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: And home of John Gerretsen.

Hon. John Gerretsen: That's right.

Welcoming them today—and they're just coming in—I'd like to introduce Mayor Mark Gerretsen and Councillors Rick Downes, Jeff Scott, Sandy Berg, Liz Schell, Dorothy Hector, Brian Reitzel and Bryan Paterson.

As well, we have a number of people from the city of Kingston utilities staff, including Gerard Hunt, who's the CAO of the city of Kingston. We have members here from the chamber of commerce. We also have Chris Whyman here, the world champion town crier, who has been town-crying in the Kingston area for 25 years; members from Queen's University, St. Lawrence College—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): In a normal routine, that would not be a point of order. It is, even under these circumstances, not a point of order. I thank the member for his lengthy introduction and recognize that under these circumstances we are to move right into the continuation—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On a point of order from the member from Parkdale–High Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Just on a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to welcome Runnymede Public School to the House: one of the best public schools in the world. Great to have you here.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I think I've opened up a Pandora's box, because I believe the member from Etobicoke Centre has a point of order as well.

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have a point of order. I would like to welcome Mr. Kerry Adler from SkyPower, and Hando Kang, who used to work with us in the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I appreciate that. I'm sure that the member from Ajax–Pickering has a point of order that is going to be quick.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will certainly do as you direct. I'm pleased to introduce to you directors of Nation at Prayer with us this morning: Neil Hodgson, Brenda Hodgson, Mel Finlay and Susan Finlay. Thank you for your leniency, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): In the spirit of fair play, if there are members who want to finish this non-point of order, please do so.

I thank all members for their patience. We do welcome our guests and try to do our best to encourage them to be here, so thank you all for being here.

It is now time for further debate. The member from Nipissing.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you, Speaker. In the 14 minutes I have remaining, I will continue where I started. I picked up a pile this morning of the documents that the Liberal House leader said contains all of the files that we asked for. This is called "Mississauga, 23 of 33."

Let me read from some of these all-inclusive files that have exposed everything to us. "August 22: Greenfield South project issue note"—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me. I want to start right away. Your member is speaking and I want to make sure I focus on that, so let's keep that down. I also ask that we are very respectful under these circumstances to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to say what they need to say. I think that would be very encouraging for all of us.

The member from Nipissing: Continue, please.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: "Greenfield South project issue note:

"On the rest of the topics, you said you needed material on"—Speaker, I'm sorry; the rest of it has been whited out. "Sorry I couldn't get this to you sooner. Hope it helps at some point." Well, not very helpful when it has been whited out.

Here's another one, the next day. "Here is what I have so far"—dash, whited out, dash, whited out, dash, whited out—"Hope this helps."

Let's look at the slide show. They've got a slide deck here, Speaker, that's very informative. It's called "Greenfield South site options." This should be very interesting. There should be some very good site options here. Oh—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Prince Edward–Hastings, come to order.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Let's look at the next page. Oh, sorry, Speaker, it has been whited out. We can't get to that.

Let's start on the correspondence; perhaps we'll get into something here. "Last evening at a meeting with the Premier's office, there was reference to a gas plant." That should be an interesting letter; let's look at it. Oh, sorry, Speaker, it has been blanked out.

"See the Attorney General's comment. Attached is the first letter." Now we're getting somewhere. We're going to get the first letter. Oh, sorry, Speaker, it's blank.

These are all in order, off the thumb disk we received from the House leader.

"As discussed, here is the draft document." Finally, Speaker, we're going—oh, I'm sorry, it's blank. Well, I don't know what to say.

Oh, good. "Here is what we just sent up. Please see the Attorney General's comment below." Now we're—oh sorry, Speaker, it's blank.

Oh, this is good. Now we've got somewhere. These are all in order of how we received them. This is a contract between Greenfield South Power and Ontario Power Authority. Oh, sorry, Speaker, it's blank.

Oh, that one's blank.

Okay. The next letter here "constitutes confidential information." Oh, this is going to be a good one. Hang on a second—oh, Speaker, it's blank.

Let's see. What have we got here? This one is kind of fun. "Minister Bentley wants finance and cabinet behind him, as you heard last evening, and is still waiting for some indication from the PO redirection." Oh, good. That's in the next letter here. Oh. It's been blanked out.

"The proposed letter from the minister to the OPA"—oh, sorry, Speaker, it's blank.

Next in order—these are absolutely in order: "In response to the local community's concerns about the Greenfield South generation station, the government has committed to relocate the plant." Now we're into the contract, and—oh, Speaker, it's blank.

The next letter: "As per my earlier discussion with Carolyn, the draft letters"—oh, good, we're going to see them. "The government has stated its intention to relocate the plant. We're still awaiting word on whether the letter can be sent tonight." Well, let's look—oh, Speaker, the letter is blank.

"Hi. Just a heads-up that I told Mike"—hang on, Speaker. We've got it here. "I just told Mike the proposed letter to the OPA is with the minister for"—oh, Speaker, it's blank.

"Carolyn," whoever that is, "as you know, the minister is looking for paper comfort from his colleagues on exposure. Can you please tell me the options available for us on what paper it could be, i.e. cabinet minutes, treasury board order, letter from Dwight"—pardon me for using the first name—"etc., and the pros and cons associated. Deputy, can you please loop in with" so-and-so "on the options?" We're going to see the options now. Ah, they're blank.

This next person, she's working on her response attached. Oh, sorry, the attached response is blank.

"Will you likely want to see our advice re: the energy minister's office before we send this letter?" Oh, sorry, Speaker, the letter is blank.

"I've been talking with Craig and Murray about the issue." Let's look at the discussion. It's been whited out. You're starting to see a theme here, I sense, Speaker.

"Told him we were drafting an extra couple of sentences for the minister's letter and would share. He encouraged us to move as quickly as possible." Well, I'll move as quickly as possible to the letter. It's blank.

Speaker, these are right off the thumb disk, unchanged. This is the pile I printed last night.

Further to the House leader's insistence that we have all the documents, let me carry on.

"Craig asked that the minister's letter to the OPA"—good, we're going to see that; I know we're going to see it next—"include a sentence about engaging with his colleagues in any discussion re: the OPA compensation to

allay Minister Bentley's concerns." Well, let's look at—sorry, Speaker; his concerns are blank.

1040

"We have advised all around that we'll be sending this revised proposed letter to the DAG for review." I'd like to review it here for all the members. I'm sorry; it's blank.

Finally, Speaker, we actually do have it this time. This is the sentence that Minister Bentley went through all this hidden document—we now know the one sentence they have approved, that they have not whited out, whether by accident or not. It says, underlined in bold, "I will be engaging my colleagues in any dialogue with you on the most appropriate way to allocate compensation between the OPA and the crown." Days upon days upon days of hidden documents here to hide what that sentence used to say. On the next page, sadly, we don't know what he was going to say because it's blank.

Speaker, you've obviously sensed my frustration here that—

Interjection.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: You want me to add a little bit more? Well, here, Speaker. The new sentence suggests that the colleagues will actually be in the dialogue with the OPA. Now they're refuting that sentence. Maybe that's okay. If not, how about—well, let's see about—sorry, Speaker; it's blank.

There are pros and cons to the reference to talking to others. "Any thoughts on your end?" Sorry, Speaker. I can't show you.

So-and-so had concerns re the letter might make its way into public domain. We can see now why some of these have been blanked out. Here's what would make it into public domain: There's nothing here. I'm sorry, Speaker; there's nothing here.

We now come to a page from the Ontario Power Authority. Speaker, I'd like to show it to you, but the end of it, sorry, is blank. In the remaining six minutes, maybe I'll show just a couple more to get the general theme here. "Joseph, this draft is"—this is about that sentence again. They're still not quite happy with the wording of that sentence. "This draft is the latest version of the proposed letter from the minister." Well, let's have ourselves a little look. Oh, sorry, Speaker. It's blank. "This is the draft, Rick"—but it may not be completely there.

Let's look at something a little more simple now. It's a slide deck. This should be normal, right? This is the Greenfield South slide options. This is a different set than the first one I showed you. Oh, sorry, Speaker. The PowerPoint here has been whited out. I don't know why. I can't imagine why.

In the remaining time I have left—another blank OPA contract. Oh, good. We've got something. Seriously, we do have. "This is the draft, but it may not completely agree with the third option." What's the third option? Oh, sorry, Speaker; it's blank.

"I understand the deputy minister wants to walk a deck into the meeting. I've built a version you've sent me." Let's have a look: "Please see attached." It's blank.

This one here is blank; blank. That one, I don't know why. I understand they've had a look at it and provided input, so this is the input, Speaker. It's blank.

One more just to sort of round it all out, Speaker.

Interjection.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I don't know. It's just a blank page. It's in the middle of a slide deck, but Speaker, as you can imagine, it's blank.

"One comment re: slide five": I wonder what that comment is? It's blank.

Speaker, you could imagine our disgust with these documents.

The machines that provide the whiteout must have missed one or two pages. In the remaining four minutes, let me just run you through a little discussion about \$5 million that's been discovered here: "Regarding the proposed payment of the \$5.23 million over time under the NUG contract"—the non-utility generator—"we are okay with the idea"—you'll see where I'm going with this, Speaker—"but we're hoping we could reduce the period to 12 months." So they've got a payment here. Oh, look who it's to. This is very interesting. This payment is from the Ontario Power Authority to Eastern Power. We knew that the closed power plant in Mississauga was \$180 million. Then, the finance minister corrected and said, "No, no, no. There's a \$10-million contract here. It's really \$190 million."

Well, let me tell you what both the finance minister and the energy minister did not want us to know. I'll read this: "In the meantime, I have already asked" so-and-so "to prepare a first cut of the side letter to deal with the assignment of a NUG contract and the proposed adjustment to the monthly payment to reflect the additional compensation to Eastern Power above the \$10-million payment from the OEFC."

Speaker, there's an additional \$5-million bill from this government that they did not disclose to us. So they're asking the solicitor, "Rocco, can you confirm that you have run by Carl the concept of the \$10 million upfront"—that was announced by the minister—"and the other \$5 million through the NUG? This will not come as a surprise, right?" His answer is, "Yes, I have." You can see why all those other documents were whited out; I can't imagine how this one snuck through. He understands that only \$10 million is coming from the OEFC, and the balance will come from a NUG contract. "He pushed for an upfront payment, but I told them we would have a problem accounting for an upfront payment and would prefer an adder to the monthly capacity payment to account for the differential settlement amount." And this is done in what they call a "side letter." It's a side letter all right, Speaker.

I've got to admit, they actually dug a little deeper with a very important question. They asked, "Is the NUG needed for the system? Do we need that fuel? Do we need that power for the system? Do you know?" The answer that came back is, "The NUG is not needed." This is \$5 million more for yet more unneeded power.

This is one example from all of the 36,000 pages which we've had only time to go through a fraction of, Speaker. We've only been able to go through a fraction. We found at least 1,000 blank pages in the ones that I've looked at and our team has looked at. We found \$5 million so far in only a few pages.

But we've also determined it's not \$40 million as they claim. We've got \$200 million, in their own words, for additional transmission. If we move the plant out of Oakville, we need a transmission solution within Oakville. They still need transmission—\$200 million more, and \$210 million for the turbines that they're going to pay still an astronomical price for. That's \$450 million, not \$40 million for Oakville. Add that to the \$190 million for Mississauga. Rounded off, we're talking—

Interjection.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Oh, \$195 million—\$650 million spent to not even generate one megawatt of power.

Speaker, you can see why we need to pursue this.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Before we move to further debate, I want to remind everyone that we do not make any reference to someone's absence. That is the tradition of this place.

Further debate.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: As was outlined quite interestingly by the previous speaker, it has become very clear that, within the documents that the government decided to release, there are numerous unexplained redactions, omissions and exclusions. Some of the documents refer to correspondence which isn't even included in the package of materials that the government released. For example, emails note that communication strategies are being approved by the Premier's office, but then there's no correspondence from the Premier's office that was included in the package.

There's a surprising lack of correspondence from individuals such as the energy minister in the package. It kind of seems odd that this is a file whose responsibility lies with the energy minister, and yet there are pretty much no documents from the Minister of Energy in the package. Presumably, the Minister of Energy would have corresponded with someone at some point about some of the significant decisions that were being made in his ministry. Throughout the documents, passages are redacted without any explanation whatsoever. These are some of the things that we put together in a letter that we provided to you this morning, Speaker, indicating that we were quite concerned with what appears to be yet again this government's refusal to provide the information requested at committee.

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The government stated that the letters would be written by both the Minister of Energy and the CEO of the Ontario Power Authority attesting to the fact that all responsive records have been delivered without redaction or omission. In fact, we didn't receive those letters with the package. I understand we received them a little bit later, a little bit afterwards; it was one of those "oops" moments, but nonetheless, the package that we received

yesterday was not a complete package on all kinds of different measures.

It's really clear that what the government did was simply throw out enough volume of pages at Ontarians—just throw them out there at everybody—hoping that nobody would realize that, in fact, there were no documents from the minister opposite—no documents from the minister's office; no documents from the Premier's office—in that package; nothing in the package from the Liberal campaign team. Yet these are all relevant pieces of information that should have been included with the package—none of the documents that explain why the government decided to stick hard-working Ontarians with the bill for hundreds of millions of dollars just in order to save a couple of Liberal seats.

In the documents released yesterday, it's really clear that the cancellation of the gas plants will require much, much more money to be spent. It's not my money; it's not the government's money—it's the people's money. It's the people's money that they are spending to save their own seats.

OPA documents that were released yesterday make it very clear that the \$40 million the government paid TransCanada for the Liberals' Oakville seat-saver program is just the tip of the iceberg. Document after document refers to the extra \$200 million that the government will have to pay for transmission upgrades that will now have to be undertaken to keep the lights on in the Oakville area.

How does this government justify wasting well over \$250 million—again, not of my money and not of their money, but of the people's money—to advance their own self-interested political agenda? How do they justify that?

Let's add up what we already know: \$40 million for TransCanada fixed costs and legal fees; \$200 million in Oakville transmission upgrades; \$190 million to cancel the Mississauga gas plant just days before people went to the polls in the 2011 election.

Documents released also show a government that is desperately trying to find a new location for the Oakville plant. That's what they show when you look through the documents—a desperate attempt to find a new spot to move that plant to or to now build that plant at. They first looked at Nanticoke. Then they looked at Kitchener-Waterloo. Then they looked at Napanee.

Did the government actually decide on Napanee because a plant is actually needed there? Or did they decide on Napanee simply because it was the last possible location left that it could offer to TransCanada in order to avoid hundreds of millions of dollars more in payments?

According to the documents, Nanticoke was ruled out for a location in part because the loss of electricity from transporting it 100 kilometres to the western GTA didn't make sense. Excuse me, but Napanee is 250 kilometres from the western GTA. The current plant there only operates one day a month, and there is no mention at all of the need for a new plant in Napanee in the government's long-term energy strategy. Their long-term energy plan does not even talk about the need for a plant in Napanee

or in that area of the province. So it looks like moving the plant to Lennox was absolutely a desperate last resort. Rather than a decision that was based on cost efficiency, good electricity planning or any kind of rational process whatsoever, it was only done as a desperate last resort to try to avoid even more of the people's money being spent on the Liberal seat-saver plan.

We know that those dollars, those hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars, could have been better invested for the people of this province. We could have used their money for much better purposes. Nothing personal against the seats that got saved; nothing personal against those members who happen to have benefited from those hundreds of millions of dollars, those Liberal MPPs—it's not personal against them. But I would think the people of this province would want their dollars invested in the kinds of things that actually matter to them, that actually make life better for them, because really, that's what we're supposed to be here doing as elected officials in the province of Ontario. That's what we're supposed to be addressing—the problems, the needs, the concerns and the worries of the people of Ontario, not the political fortunes, the political well-being of the five or six MPPs who were able to get their seats saved by that massive investment of public dollars. It's a shame.

Yesterday we were talking about the ONTC, Ontario Northland. We were talking about the fact that there are young people, students, who, for the first time, are going to need to travel home for Thanksgiving dinner, for Thanksgiving weekend with their families, who are now not going to be able to take the train to do that because the Liberals would rather spend hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars—they think it's funny. Speaker, they're actually laughing across the way.

I hear the Attorney General laughing about this. Somehow it's funny that these students are not going to be able to take the train home on Thanksgiving weekend for their visits with their families because, instead of investing—what is it?—\$10 million?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Fourteen.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: —\$14 million on the ONTC, they would rather spend—what?—\$300 million, \$400 million on saving Liberal seats: \$600 million?

Mr. Paul Miller: Six hundred million.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It is really unbelievable. It is an unbelievable choice and decision that this cynical, cynical government has made.

But those numbers really pale in comparison to what we know this government is capable of, and I think that is the crux of the matter here. The government has basically demonstrated, in its behaviour yesterday and the documents that they released, that they have no commitment to, no willingness to and no sense of obligation to be open and transparent with the people of this province. They don't think that they have any responsibility to provide documents that are requested by the members of this Legislature. I think that's the worst part of this entire story. It's not even the dollars; it's the lows

that this government will sink to for its own political benefit.

Let's not forget: This is a party that was first elected on a message of change, on a promise of transparency, a promise of change and a promise of putting people first. They are obviously so engaged in the cynical political games that they used to crow against that they have no actual resemblance to the party that ran to first get elected to govern this province years ago. It is so, so obvious that they have completely, completely lost their way.

You know what? The saddest part of that is that this tired, out-of-gas government has been ignoring, while they're taking care of their own couple of members, the families in this province, the very people who are paying the freight for that seat-saver program. Those are the people who are being ignored: people who are struggling to pay the bills, people who are still having a hard time dealing with the aftermath of the recession and those folks who used to earn a decent wage and are now struggling to make ends meet on half the salary that they used to bring home, those same people who are actually paying the highest electricity bills in the country. They're paying the highest electricity bills in the country for one simple reason, Speaker: It's because this government is intent and has been intent upon penning these private power deals with these private power interests, and that's what's driving electricity costs up in the province of Ontario. Private power costs more.

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Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm sorry for the interruption, but I'm starting to hear too much sidebar activity, and I'd ask them to stop it.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And the member from Durham, not only being in his seat, is talking in the middle of my conversation again. I'm asking for control.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I see the clock, and I don't need to be reminded. She will get the time. Thank you.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Private power costs more. It actually costs more—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew does not start up when I finish.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Not only does it cost more, but by the very nature of the fact that it's private companies that provide it, it actually hides information and the facts from the people. These private power deals are structured to actually hide information from the public, Speaker. That is why it is the wrong way to go when it comes to our electricity system.

In fact, when we used to have a public electricity system in Ontario, our electricity rates were very, very, very competitive—very competitive. Our people in this province, our households, our homeowners, were not paying the highest electricity rates in the country. We are now,

now that we have private power in Ontario. The industrial sector, the manufacturing sector, the mining sector and the forestry sector weren't paying the highest electricity rates in the country. They are now. Maybe that's why we don't have any manufacturing left. Maybe that's why forestry is devastated. Maybe that's why we have such a problem with our economy: because the electricity bills are uncompetitive. That's what has happened under this government's watch.

Speaker, in Canada, there are all kinds of different electricity rates, as we know. But in Ontario, we pay about double of what they pay in the adjacent provinces—let's say Manitoba—and we pay more than double of what they're paying in Quebec. It's absolutely unacceptable—absolutely unacceptable.

As I said off the top, the government promised change and yet they're delivering more of the same. They were elected on an idea, on a plan to make all contracts public. In fact, in this House during question period, a number of times, I've raised the quotes that the Premier used to speak, talking about the fact that contracts would be public, that they believed in transparency, that they believed that the people had the right to know. Well, Speaker, we believe that the people have the right to know, and that's why we're in the process that we're in today. That's why we're having this conversation. That's why we're taking this extraordinary action right now, just to get the basic information to the people of this province, the people who are actually paying the bill.

Now, we've only had a couple of hours to look at the documents, and we know that there are many, many omissions already, so we're going to continue to pore through those documents. But I think the biggest concern that we have is that the government is going to conclude that, notwithstanding all of this work that we're going to be doing—they still think it was an appropriate way to respond. That's the thing that I find worrisome.

Today, we heard the government's comments already, and we'll be hearing more of their comments in the debate. I look forward to that. I hope the people of this province have a chance to tune in to hear what Liberals have to say about their behaviour, because my worry is, from what I've heard already, that what they're trying to do is somehow blame this side of the House for this awful mess. They're trying to somehow say that us doing our due diligence as an opposition party, doing what we're supposed to do—which is hold the government to account, which is to get the information that we need to hold the government to account—is somehow the wrong thing to do.

How does that make sense, Speaker? How does it make sense that us doing our job, holding the government to account—actually, just simply reminding them about what they used to think: that contracts should be available to the public, open and transparent. We're just doing our job, yet I understand—and I fear—that the government is somehow indicating that we're doing something inappropriate, that we're doing something harmful, that we're doing something wrong. I think what

that government really needs is a big mirror on this side so that they can look themselves in the face and decide what it is that they're here for. Are they here for themselves in that mirror or are they here for the people?

What we've seen, unfortunately, for two years now is a government trying to hide the information, trying to prevent the information from coming out. Two years down the road, we saw yesterday the government continuing with that same direction. They have tried every trick in the book to prevent the information from coming out. They've tried every trick in the book to avoid the disclosure of the documents.

I only hope, for the people of the province, as we go through the debate on this motion and these amendments over the next little while, that we have a government that shows a little bit of humility and takes a little bit of responsibility for the way that they've behaved, because it is not parliamentary to prevent information from getting to a member who has requested it. That's the end of the story. It is against the traditions, the history and the rules of this Legislature. That's the conversation we'll likely be having, once this motion goes through the House and gets into committee.

But I have to say that I'm a little bit concerned, notwithstanding the process that we are seized with now, that we will still, at the end of the day, have a government that refuses to acknowledge what their obligation was. That, for me, is the most frightening piece of all. When these kinds of things happen—they don't happen often; they happen quite rarely. But when they happen, they should be reminding not only the sitting government but any governments in waiting of what the proper way to behave in this Legislature is and what the proper respect that is due the members of this Legislature looks like. I think in their arrogance, in their many years in power, they forgot. They forgot that they actually have an obligation to the other members as well as to this Legislative Assembly and to the people of this province.

They were elected on a promise of change. They've been delivering more of the same old politics. They were elected on a promise to make contracts public; they're not doing it. They were elected on a promise to keep electricity affordable. That's not happening either; we have the highest rates in Canada. They were elected on a promise to take the politics out of power. I think this day shows very clearly that that's the last thing they've done. They have certainly not taken the politics out of power.

We're going to be continuing to talk to this motion for the next little while, but I want to end by saying that it gives me no pleasure to be having this conversation. It gives me no pleasure. It gives me a great deal of disappointment and a great deal of concern, because when a government stoops to this kind of low, we have big, big problems in this province—big, big problems. Hopefully, through the committee process and through this debate, we'll be able to solve some of them.

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

Hon. John Gerretsen: Let me first of all start off by saying, on a comment that the leader of the third party

just made, I have always worked on the assumption that we are all here, on all sides of the House, for the people of Ontario. That is the way it has been and that is the way it's going to be.

When you look at the advances that have been made in our health care system over the last eight years, in our educational system over the last eight years; when you look at the number of people who now have—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Let me start right away. Quite frankly—

Interjection.

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

I want to start right away—stop the clock, please. Sorry.

I want to start right away by indicating to you that my expectation is the same as I said at the very beginning: I want to hear everybody. There were very few comments being made while each of the members from each party spoke, from the government side, and that includes the person who just said "yes." I'm not here to be referee. I'm asking you to carefully give consideration to all the comments that are being made in a respectful way. And yes, there are temptations to make comment, but this is not the spot to do that, and I will be forceful on this.

Attorney General?

Hon. John Gerretsen: Thank you very much, Speaker.

I'm going to take a somewhat different approach than what they are probably expecting. If they just listen for a moment, then I will try to enunciate what I think about this whole thing.

There have been significant advances made in our health care system—the number of people who have a family doctor now—the fact that we've got smaller class sizes in the educational field; the fact that so many more students are going to university and college—these are all positive moves.

Now, let me also say that I have always worked on the theory that I respect each and every member in this—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: On a point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order from the member from Nepean—Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much, Speaker. In the standing orders, it's very clear that when a member is to debate a motion or a government motion or a government bill or a private member's bill, the member is expected to speak to the matter at hand, and in this case, we're talking about contempt of—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I am listening very carefully for the direction of the debate—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): While I'm standing and while I'm speaking, I'm not supposed to hear anyone else making comments.

I'm sure the member will get to the motion.

Hon. John Gerretsen: Perhaps the previous speaker or interrupter didn't realize what I said. I said I respect

every member of this House. We may see the world a little bit differently, we may see the solutions to the issues a little bit differently, but each and every one of us brings something to the table from which the government, from which the people of Ontario can benefit in the long run. That's always been my approach and that will continue to be my approach. I will not get involved in any personal attacks. I don't think I ever have here in 17 years. I don't intend to start now.

I also think this is a highly unusual day. I'm sure some of the other people who have been here since 1995 or before can't quite recall a day quite like this. I'm sure that the people of Ontario would prefer to have us be in question period right now where the opposition can truly hold the government accountable on an issue-by-issue basis, which is important.

All the points that were made this morning, all the points that have been made eloquently by the official opposition and by the third party, have been made here, I would say, for the last three or four months on a day-to-day basis. So what I'm interested in is how we move forward from this.

A lot of the members may not realize, but this debate can, in effect, go on for the next two to three years because everybody can speak 20 minutes to every motion, to the motion itself; every member can move an amendment; there can be no more than two amendments on the floor at any one time, and you can spend another 20 minutes. So this could literally go on for years. That is the reality of the situation. So how do we move forward?

I can remember a day—

Interjections.

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

Hon. John Gerretsen: It'll be your turn to speak a little bit later on.

How do we move forward? Sooner or later, Speaker, the House leaders will have to get together and resolve this issue. That's the only way we can move forward. I'm sure the people that are watching this are saying, "Are these people really dealing, on all sides of the House, with the real issues that affect us on a day-to-day basis?"

There are many issues that affect people, particularly the most vulnerable in our society, that we should be addressing here on an ongoing basis, and we're not doing that.

Why don't we invoke the memory of such great House leaders as Bob Welch and Tom Wells or—who did we have over there?—Stephen Lewis, and even, yes, your Bob Rae at the time, or Sean Conway and Jim Bradley. These people were able to work in a co-operative way to get us out of this kind of mess. Right now, all we're doing collectively, by keeping this debate going day after day after day, is shutting out the people of Ontario from the real issues that happen.

There are a number of—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order, please. I'm not going to stop trying.

Attorney General.

Hon. John Gerretsen: There are a number of former mayors, councillors and school board representatives here, and even some of the new members who have just arrived here, who could tell you that, quite frankly, the level of debate that takes place at most of our municipal councils and our school boards across this province is a heck of a lot better than most of the debate that takes place here. Everybody walks in with their talking points, and you've got your talking points and you've got your—

Interjection.

Hon. John Gerretsen: Yes, we have our talking points. I've got no talking points here at all, by the way. I've got no talking points here at all; okay?

All I know, Speaker, is that for the benefit of the people of Ontario, this issue has to be resolved, and however we resolve it in the long run ultimately will be judged by the people of Ontario whenever the next election takes place. Whether you like it or not, the people—last October 6, was it?—have spoken. They elected us back into government—with a minority; I realize that. Being in a minority government, we should be working collectively between all the three parties to come up with the best possible policies. Speaker, what I'm quite frankly saying is, I would implore the House leaders to get together as soon as possible to get us out of this current situation.

You have all known the Minister of Energy, those of you who have been here for eight years, as an honourable individual, in the same way that he regards each and every one of you as an honourable individual. He is an honourable individual and there's no question about that. He has served this province as Attorney General—my current capacity—for four years. He has been an outstanding practising lawyer in the London area. He has opened law clinics. He has taught at the law school in London etc. He is an individual of the highest integrity, in the same way that each and every one of you is of the highest integrity.

Having said all that, we can all get very sanctimonious, and we all get the partisan concerns involved in all of this; I realize that. You think you've got a good issue and you're going to keep pounding it. In the meantime, the business of the province of Ontario, for the people of Ontario, simply isn't being carried on, and that, I find, is a real shame.

I would dare say that there hasn't been a government anywhere that couldn't have done some things a little bit better, whether it was the 42 years of the Tory reign or the five years of the Bob Rae government. Things can always be done a little bit better.

There's no question about it: From hindsight, the two plants in Mississauga and Oakville never should have been approved. I think there's common agreement by everybody on that. You said so during the election campaign; we said so during the election campaign. The reality is, it has now been moved—by the way, not to the Napanee area. It's Bath, actually, where it's going to, or Loyalist township. That's where the plant is actually going to.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: They don't know their geography.

Interjection: It's Greater Napanee.

Hon. John Gerretsen: Well, it's Greater Napanee. It's Greater Napanee. I think I can see the stacks of the current Lennox station from my house, actually, across the lake, but that's totally immaterial.

Speaker, we all come here to do the best that we can for our own communities. I sometimes wish that we could leave our partisan attitudes at the door on all sides—on all sides—and start dealing with the real issues that we face in this province.

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It's your role to hold us accountable. I don't have any, any issue or problem with that at all. You have to hold us accountable. I still think that the best way and the parliamentary way in which a government is held accountable is on a day-to-day basis during question period. So I would strongly suggest, if for no other reason, that the House leaders resolve this issue or try to resolve this issue so that you can continue to hold us accountable during question period.

I see my good friend from Oxford there. He and I were both, many years ago, in another life or, as my son, the mayor out there refers to it—the mayor of Kingston is here, by the way, Mark—“It's so long ago, it was the Stone Age.” But, you know, we worked collectively. He saw things a little bit differently from me, but somehow, we were able to collectively advance the aspects, advance the interests of municipal government etc. I sometimes wish that we had that same kind of attitude in here.

I've been on that side. I know how frustrating it can be. I was there for eight years. I understand totally how you feel, believe it or not. Let me also say it is very easy to criticize everything. You can always find a reason to criticize something. It's the same thing with you folks: You always find a reason. You can always find a reason to criticize something. There's no reason about it. Now, to actually do something and have it benefit the people of Ontario, that is something totally different. I think we have shown as a government, over the last eight to nine years, that the people of Ontario have benefitted from the good, positive government that the McGuinty government has brought to the province of Ontario in so many, many different areas.

Those folks over there in the official opposition, they will tell you that if we just cut taxes, it's going to resolve all the issues in the world. What they never say at the same time—and to me, it ain't rocket science—is that if you cut taxes and you have fewer resources, you're going to have fewer services. They've never told us what they're actually going to cut. Are they going to cut health care? Are they going to cut education? Are they going to cut environmental rules and regulations? I could just go on and on and on.

Those folks over there, they're kind-hearted folks, too, the New Democrats—although quite often, they sound like the old democrats. The progressive attitude that they used to have doesn't seem to be there anymore. As far as

they're concerned, all the problems can be resolved if we just tax people more. I don't know what the ultimate limit is, to what level people should be taxed, but, “We can do anything we can if we just get more money from people.”

What we've brought to this province over the last eight to nine years and will continue to do in the future is a balanced approach. There's a balance in everything and there should be a balance in the way we deal with issues as well.

Look, we're all part of a team. You're part of your team; you're part of your team; I'm part of this team. On an individual basis, there may be the odd decision that is made by your team and your team and your team that an individual member may not always totally agree with.

Interjection.

Hon. John Gerretsen: I'm sure even the old democrats have that from time to time. So you go with the basic direction or philosophy that that political party believes in or advocates etc.

In the last few minutes that I have, Speaker, I would hope that since we are in a minority Parliament situation—and it is a minority Parliament situation. The only way that the people of Ontario are going to benefit from the actions that we take here is by collectively working together better than we have in the past.

Interjection.

Hon. John Gerretsen: No, I've been there, done that. I won't do it again. Okay? You can quote me on that. That's the best thing that ever happened to me, that I didn't become leader, I'll tell you that. I wouldn't be here right now. That's the best thing that ever happened to me. But I will stack up the other 12 elections that I've won without a defeat over the last 40 years against them.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order from the member from Prince Edward–Hastings.

Mr. Todd Smith: I understand why the member is taking this line of communication—because the actions of his government have been indefensible—but I would ask that he speak to the motion on the table, and the motion is that we have these documents turned over to the committee, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank the member for his point of order. I remind the member to stay focused on the motion that we're talking about. The lenience is starting to get a little thin.

Hon. John Gerretsen: Thank you, Speaker. It was the interjection about a leadership race that one of the Conservative members mentioned that brought me back to a historical perspective of my own involvement many, many years ago.

Look, the bottom line is this: We've got to get out of this dilemma that we're in right now, and the only way that that's going to happen is by the three House leaders getting together tomorrow, a month from today, six months from today, a year from today. Sooner or later, that's the only way it's going to be resolved, so I would just urge and implore them, for the benefit of all of the people of Ontario, to do that as soon as possible so that we can get on with the business of running this govern-

ment and this Parliament, and so that you can get on with asking questions that need to be asked on a day-to-day basis.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. It being close to 11:30, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1127 to 1500.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Good afternoon. Further debate.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I'm pleased to rise today to speak to the amendment to the amendment of the motion of contempt against the Minister of Energy put forward by my colleague the honourable member from Cambridge.

This is a very sad day for the province of Ontario. Not since 1908 have we come this close to finding someone in contempt of this Legislature, but it is an action that must be taken, Mr. Speaker, because the government has shown nothing but disdain for the people of Ontario and their right to know how their tax dollars are being spent.

I've heard from people in some corners that say this measure we're undertaking today, the motion of contempt, is no longer necessary because the government, at the 11th hour, and under threat, has now handed over some of the documents. To those people, I say this: We don't have all of the documents. In fact, there are hundreds, if not thousands, of pages missing. There isn't a single document, email or letter from the real decision-makers in the package that was presented.

The energy minister already told the estimates committee who made the decision to forfeit hundreds of millions of tax dollars—and we think it's up to 645 million tax dollars—on the fiasco to move the Oakville and Mississauga power plants. The minister himself made it clear that it was the Liberal campaign team that made the decision, yet there's oddly no record of that in the 36,000 pages of documents we've received thus far.

There's also nothing from the Premier or his staff, nothing from the Minister of Energy or his staff and nothing from the Liberal campaign gurus or their staff.

Even more troubling are the instances where they've just blatantly withheld information. In one Ontario Power Authority document, there is one whole blank page that simply says, "Exhibit P"—this is in quotes—"—Intentionally Deleted." In another, they've clearly blacked out the contents of an email, but you can, if you squint, easily see that the words "political activity" were amongst the words redacted, and that was from one of the lawyers at the OPA. This is a further breach of privilege, and it shows more contempt of this House, I would argue, Mr. Speaker. That's the first red flag, and it's a very, very serious one.

The next is this: If you catch a child shoplifting and force them to return the chocolate bar to the store owner, you still reprimand the child. Whether you take away his allowance, set a curfew or admonish his bad behaviour, there's still a lesson to be learned and a penalty to pay.

In this case, the Speaker—you, Mr. Speaker—has already ruled that a prima facie case of breach of privilege has been found because of the government's failure to

release the documents that the estimates committee first asked for last May. In other words, the Liberals wasted hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayer money and then broke the law and hid the documents. That's a pretty serious offence. And it isn't a game, Speaker, as some, in the hallways, have suggested on the opposite side.

The committee has the right and the power to request documents just like any court of law. If you do not produce the documents, there is a penalty, just like in a court of law. It is extremely troubling that this government seems to think that they can determine what is in the public interest, absent of any scrutiny. It's extremely sad that the public interest has been circumvented by political interference.

As legislators, it's now our duty to vote on whether or not we concur with the Speaker's ruling, and if we do, that we allow this matter to be sent to committee so that we can investigate why it is that the government refused to share the documents and why it is that they wasted hundreds of millions of tax dollars with nothing to show for it—some \$645 million so far, Mr. Speaker. This motion is also going to help us verify that we've received all of the documents, because it's clear that we haven't.

This is the job of the opposition. We are here to keep the government accountable, and that is what we are doing with this motion and with the amendment to the amendment and the amendment itself put forward by the honourable member from Cambridge: holding the Liberals accountable for stonewalling the duly elected members of this Legislature for months and months and hiding the true cost of their seat-saver scheme from the people of Ontario.

Let me remind the members of the government how we arrived at this point today.

It was on Wednesday, May 16, that 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. That is the right of the members of the estimates committee, as it is the right of all members of committees in this House and in similar Parliaments across the Commonwealth.

On May 30, the Minister of Energy responded to the request, stating, "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." The Ontario Power Authority provided similar reasoning.

Obviously, Speaker, that was a ruse. The government House leader told me on Friday last that they needed six more weeks to come to a deal with the proponents and that the documents would remain secret until that time. When I told him, "No way; we're not going to allow you to do this any longer," the Liberals miraculously came to a deal in 48 hours. That says a lot about the truthfulness of the government's original excuse concerning their refusal to release the documents.

Back to the chronology: As a result of the minister's refusal to produce the documents on May 30, the com-

mittee sent a report to the House advising the Speaker that a possible contempt of the Legislature has occurred.

On July 11, the minister provided some documents to the committee, referring only to the Mississauga power plant. However, the documents provided were far from complete, just like the documents we were given a few hours ago—yesterday.

The energy minister stated in the letter attached to the documents that “certain information remains subject to privilege and is not being included.” Minister Bentley also failed to provide any documents pertaining to the Oakville power plant, as requested by the committee on May 16.

When the House returned early for consideration of Bill 115, the Putting Students First Act, in late August, the Chair of the estimates committee reported to the House that the Minister of Energy breached the privilege of the members and the powers of the committee. It was then that the member for Cambridge rose on a point of privilege, explaining that his rights as a member of this House had been violated.

On September 13, you, Mr. Speaker, ruled that a *prima facie* breach occurred, and you ordered the minister to table the documents within 10 days, as Parliament has an absolute right to call for people, papers and things under the law.

Over those 10 days, the House leaders met more than five times to seek a resolution, and it wasn't until September 20 that the Liberals proposed a solution that would only allow a secret review of the documents.

As members may recall, the first proposal was to lock us up, but at that time they told us there were 50,000 to 100,000 documents—we only have 36,000, so that's a little suspicious—and they repeated that on several occasions at these meetings.

The proposal was to lock one member from each party in a room with one staff member—no outside experts or lawyers or anything like that—and we were to go through 50,000 to 100,000 documents.

Interjection: How long would that take?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Well, obviously, that would take us six months.

The second one was we would have a couple of judges do that for us. I think both the PCs and the NDP consistently said, “No, that's not transparency, openness and honesty.”

The people of Ontario deserve to know what the seat-saver program cost—the most egregious example of wasted money in my 22 years here in the House and, I think, ever. That you would spend more than \$645 million—you know, when people make campaign promises, normally at least there's a hospital, or a highway to drive on afterwards. You get nothing for \$645 million and counting. I think the Liberal Party of Ontario should pay it, and I don't care if it takes you a thousand years. You should be paying that, not the taxpayers of Ontario.

Here we are, debating a contempt motion, not just because the government stonewalled us for months, but because the government has handed over incomplete

documents and has not fulfilled the request of the members of this House.

1510

I thought that Matt Gurney made some good points about the game that the government is playing in the *National Post* over the weekend. He clearly gets it, and I'd like to read some of his column into the record. The piece is entitled “McGuinty Demands the Opposition Stop Playing Political Games with His Political Game.”

Mr. Gurney wrote: “The day after the Speaker of the Ontario Legislature ruled that the Liberals had *prima facie* breached the privileges of the Legislature in refusing to hand over documents requested by the opposition, Premier Dalton McGuinty struck back. Or at least he tried to.

“The matter relates to the cancellation of two proposed power plants by the McGuinty Liberals. The Liberals had insisted, for years, that the plants were needed to meet electricity needs in the greater Toronto area. They stuck to their guns on this even in the face of intense and sustained local opposition to the plants. But ahead of last fall's provincial election, when it became clear that the Liberals were in a fight for their political lives and could easily lose the next election, poof. The power plants were cancelled. The Liberals ended up holding the seats and winning a strong minority government.”

Mr. Gurney continues: “At the time, they denied their actions were politically motivated. No one believed them, and Energy Minister Chris Bentley eventually confirmed the obvious—the decision to cancel the plants did indeed come from the Liberal election campaign and not from the government. The Liberals have tried to hide the costs of the cancellation from the voters, however. They were eventually forced to admit that cancelling a plant in Mississauga cost the taxpayers at least \$190 million that the province doesn't have. But the Liberals have refused to release documents concerning the cost of cancelling another plant, this one in Oakville. It is their refusal to release those documents that resulted in the finding of a *prima facie* breach of privilege.

“That's a very fast overview of a complicated situation,” Mr. Gurney wrote. “But the key points are this—the Liberals made a purely political decision that cost the taxpayers huge money, and they are obviously reluctant to release documents that would establish exactly how much money it cost. And they are sticking to that. On Friday, the day after the ruling, when the opposition parties were demanding the Liberals release the documents immediately, Premier McGuinty again refused, saying two things: That the negotiations concerning the Oakville plant's cancellation are not yet complete and that releasing the figures could harm that process, and, also, that the opposition should stop playing political games.”

Speaker, as I mentioned, we now know that the Premier's first excuse was nonsense, given yesterday's announcement that a deal had been reached just 48 hours after your ruling, but I'll read on. Mr. Gurney continues that the “second argument is patently absurd. It's the Liberals who are playing political games with other

people's money. They've been doing so from the beginning. They still are. They clearly wish to continue doing that. In calling them out on it and demanding that the documents detailing the government's use of taxpayer monies be released, the opposition isn't playing games. They're calling out the Liberals for their games.

"It's undeniable, of course, that the opposition are seeking political advantage. But that's par for the course. Hammering your opponents when they're vulnerable on a legitimate matter of public interest isn't playing games. It's literally the job of the opposition. And, let it be noted, no less an authority on legitimate government business than the Speaker of the Legislature has already agreed that the opposition is within their rights to ask for the information. Games are certainly being played here, but by the Liberals, not the opposition."

Mr. Gurney's article ends with: "The Liberals tried to play games with taxpayers' money to win elections, and got caught. There's no way around that now. It's time for them to fess up. Until then, at the very least, it would behoove them to stop accusing the opposition of playing games. Their house is made of glass far too fragile to long survive the throwing of those kinds of stones."

Mr. Speaker, I thought that column summed up the situation pretty well, from how we got here to where we're at today.

The other point I wanted to address is this nonsense we hear from the Liberals that we would have made the same ridiculous decision had we been in government. What the government doesn't seem to understand is that we would never have built the plants in the first place. It has always been our policy that we build projects in willing host communities. I was the energy minister from 1997 to 2002, and that was always my party's policy when it comes to gas plants, wind turbines, solar projects or any other energy project. If it was not welcome and not wanted, then we wouldn't build it there in the first place. That's always been our policy.

But it has never been the policy of the Liberal Party. They are building wind turbines in places where they are not welcome and at prices Ontario families simply cannot afford. The Liberals tried to build gas plants in Oakville and Mississauga, two places where they were never welcome. That's the difference between their party and our party. We would have never gone down this road in the first place, and history makes that very clear.

Speaker, we need a full and complete investigation into this matter. Passing this motion will allow us to get to the bottom of this fiasco. It will help ensure that no future government stonewalls the people of Ontario like this, and it will help us get to the bottom of what the true costs of cancelling this plant really are, because it's painfully obvious that despite a ruling of this type and despite the public shaming they have already received, the government is continuing to hide documents and break the law.

In the few minutes I have left, Mr. Speaker, I implore the government to come forward with the rest of the documents and to adhere to and obey the Speaker's

ruling to give us all of the documents. This argument that we aren't entitled to any documents coming out of the Liberal Party of Ontario in communication with the government is absolute rubbish. You're hiding behind the technical detail that we didn't ask for it in our original motion, but the fact of the matter is, we asked for all documents. The committee asked for all documents—

Interjection: Everything related.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Everything related. The fact of the matter is, it was only a few days ago that your Minister of Energy, Mr. Bentley, admitted that the origin of this decision—where this decision came from—was the Liberal Party of Ontario. It's disingenuous of you. It's not right—I'm not allowed to say what I really think, but it's not right—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): But you did use some—a word that I'm concerned a little bit about, so please. It has been going really well. Let's stay that way, please.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I respect your ruling.

You'd have to be not of sound mind to not know that when we ask for all of the documents—and who made the decision was the Liberal Party of Ontario—we need to see the communications between the Liberal Party of Ontario and the government of Ontario.

The media has been reporting that the cancellation of the Oakville plant is \$40 million. That's laughable, and the government should be ashamed that they hung that figure out there and it stayed out there about 24 hours. Now they're all catching on that you're going to pay TransCanada pipelines \$210 million for their turbines, and you have this absolutely bizarre story that anyone in their right mind wouldn't believe that because power from the plant that's now going to be moved to eastern Ontario will be slightly less in cost than it was from Oakville, by \$2,000 a month—it's \$17,000 per megawatt hour versus \$15,000 and change, but you're paying TransCanada \$210 million, which you forgot to tell the public yesterday, for their turbines, and you say, "Well, we'll get that back because the cost is lower." If I take \$2,000 a month and I divide that into \$210 million, I come up to well over 800 years as the payback period for that kind of money, so your argument is ridiculous. The minister went out yesterday—"Payback will be in 10 years." It's over 800 years.

So we've got \$40 million, \$210 million, and lo and behold, you know what? We still have the problem we had, and that is, how do we get power to the southwest part of the GTA? Well, apparently we're going to spend \$200 million in new transmission lines from eastern Ontario—and that's just the minimum, I know; we're still digging in these documents—to bring that power all the way back to the southwest corner of the GTA.

If you people don't get thrown out of office over this, then there's something terribly wrong. We're going to do our best, along with the NDP, to hold you accountable, to get this into committee, to have these Liberal Party officials brought forward, to have the experts brought

forward—to have these lawyers at the OPA, who are ashamed to be writing these memos back and forth to each other because they know that you threw them out of the bus. And they mentioned on so many occasions that it was the Premier's office, after direction from the campaign, that made them make decisions and implement this power deal, the seat-saver program, against their will. I look forward to committee.

1520

Interjections.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I was hoping to get away and have a chat with somebody, but it doesn't look like that's going to happen.

Let me just say in the outset, in this particular circumstance, that it's rather regrettable that we're in this situation. The government last spring found itself where the committee had requested some documents, and at that particular time the government had ample opportunity to be able to provide those documents to the committee in a way that would have satisfied the requirements by the committee. It was pretty clear that the government could have done that.

For whatever reason, and we can get into it ad infinitum, but needless to say the government decided that it was going to obstruct that process, and rather than try to find a way forward last May, when these documents were being requested for the Oakville/Mississauga plants—rather than provide the documents as we had asked, as New Democrats, two years ago on the Oakville power plant, the government put itself in a position of essentially giving the committee members no other choice but to move a motion of contempt. And so here we are.

If the government would have done what it should have done way back when we asked two years ago, as New Democrats, to get the documents on Oakville—or at the very least responded to what the committee members had asked for—we would not be having this debate today, because the documents would have been provided and we would have been dealing with the fallout from the documents.

I understand, from the government's perspective, that they're not going to like what comes out of this because they essentially made a political decision. Ten days before the election, the Liberal Party of Ontario directed the government of Ontario to essentially make a decision—to make an announcement in the middle of the campaign that, if elected, they would cancel these deals. That's pretty serious stuff because these are public dollars, and we expect governments to be frugal in how they spend those dollars. For the Liberal Party of Ontario to essentially decide the policies of the government of Ontario is a pretty serious thing. So here we are, in this situation where we are dealing with this particular issue.

It is our interest, as New Democrats—and Andrea Horwath has made it very clear that what we're interested in is getting, first of all, the documents, which we've got

part of. The government, it appears, has released some of those documents. It is pretty clear that a lot of those documents are somewhat—or it would appear that there are some documents that are missing. For example, in the documents that we received, we have looked at the documents where it refers to a particular other document that doesn't seem to be contained within what we have been given.

The government says they were going to give us unredacted documents; in other words, documents that don't have black highlighter across all of the lines such as we got the first time that they released the information to the committee. It's pretty clear that those documents are highly redacted. It speaks of particular issues, and when you try to read about what the follow-up on the issue is, all of those sections are redacted.

So there is a question: Has the government actually fulfilled what the committee asked for in the first place? And that was to provide all documents, unredacted, to the committee so that it can deal with what it has—and that will be determined, because obviously there's a lot of documents here that we have to go through in order to make sure that in fact the documents that we suspect are missing are missing. It looks like that's the case right now, and certainly there's a lot of redacted documents. So there is the issue in regard to whether there is in fact a situation where the government has actually given all of the documents. That's number one.

The other thing I want to say, and the reason why this, I think, is so serious: If this had been a project under the old Ontario Hydro, we would have never found ourselves in this position. Number one, Ontario Hydro wouldn't have built a stitch of electricity generation that it didn't need. Ontario Hydro worked on a demand/supply plan, and they essentially only built what had to be done, and governments were pretty good at trying to follow that direction.

I remember being part of a government, in 1990, when there was a whole bunch of power plants, private power deals, that had been approved by the previous Peterson government, that we had actually cancelled because there wasn't a demand. The reason we did that is because, at the time, Ontario Hydro came to the Ministry of Energy and the government said, "We're building all of these private power plants, and we don't have a need. We have 25,000 megawatts that we can generate, we're using about 19,000 megawatts, and we're about to put another five online." So we decided, as a government, in fact, that we would not do an expansion through the private system, that we would cancel as many of those as we could without getting into huge penalties. So some we had to allow to go forward, and for some we were able to negotiate cancellations that were pretty frugal as far as what it cost the taxpayer. But we always understood it's best to do that expansion, when needed, through the public system, at the time called Ontario Hydro.

Let me tell you why it's important that we deal with this matter today. The government has gone down the line that the biggest part of what the government is doing

for new generation is being done by private power deals. They are not subject to the same oversight and clarity and transparency that is available when you do something under OPG, the old Ontario Hydro. When, for example, Ontario Hydro of the day or OPG of the day or Hydro One, if it's a transmission project, takes on the development of a new project, there is policy within Ontario Hydro, or now OPG and Hydro One, to have public consultations so that everything is much more transparent, that you have an ability to ask questions and to scrutinize the project to see, "Does this make sense from an environmental point of view, and does this make sense from a financial point of view?"

When you have a private power deal, it's not the same. The private power deal, by its very nature, is much more secretive. So a lot of what is talked about in regard to the contract that leads to one of these projects being built is essentially contained within the purview of the negotiations and contracts that are signed between the government—through its agent, Ontario Power Generation or OPA—and the actual private power deliverer. That's much the case of what happened this time.

What you've now got is an increasing amount of power being generated in the private sector that is not subject to the same kind of rules when it comes to transparency that you would see if it was a publicly owned operation such as OPG or Hydro One. So if we have more of that going on, we need to make sure—because we do know in the case of this particular Oakville plant and the Mississauga plant, we're now literally having to pay in the hundreds of millions of dollars for decisions that the government made—that we shouldn't be spending money that we can use in health care, education or other projects.

The problem is, there's no scrutiny. So there needs to be a very strong message, Speaker, and I think this speaks to your ruling. Governments today and in the future need to understand that they can't hide behind contracts, a sub judice rule, client-solicitor privileges or whatever to withhold information that the public should know about.

What we really need to do here is to send a very strong message not only to this government for decisions that it may make in the future, but any other government that comes in after: "Don't think that you can go and make one of these deals and never have to worry about releasing the information, because a committee of the Legislature or the House could always ask for those documents to be presented." The fact that you know that that's the case means you might be a little bit more careful next time.

It's like, what is the largest deterrent in preventing crime? It's always the fear of being caught. That's part of what we need to do here: We really need to send a very strong message that you can't think that you can hide—you can make a deal with a private power producer, hide behind sub judice, hide behind solicitor-client privilege, or hide behind a commercial agreement as an excuse for not releasing the information to a committee of the

Legislature or the House in the future. Governments in the future are going to have to know that.

That's why I think it's important, and that's why I agree that even though the government says they released some of the documents, this matter is not dealt with. We need to deal with the actual issue.

Is this about trying to do "gotcha" kind of politics? That's not what we're interested in. That's not what New Democrats want in this. New Democrats, essentially, want two things: that the issue be made public, so the public has a right to know what happened; and number two, that there's a really strong message sent that in the future, this government, or other governments after, can't hide behind that type of sub judice rules or solicitor-client privilege in not releasing documents to this committee about public dollars.

1530

Think about it, Speaker: This government has gone down the road of doing more privatization than even the Conservatives did in the time that they were there. They're now moving down the road of privatizing services under ServiceOntario. There are going to be similar types of agreements that will be made with all kinds of ServiceOntario deliveries, everything from the possible delivery of birth certificates and death certificates to the maintenance of various databases in the province of Ontario. The issuance of various permits and licences is going to be privatized.

First of all, we as New Democrats don't believe that's the way to go. Privatization costs you more money, it's less transparent, and you get worse service. Just look at winter road maintenance as an example of what that is, and these particular power deals that they've negotiated.

But the issue is, there's going to be more in the way of privatization. If the government is negotiating with a private-sector enterprise of some type that they're going to get control over a database—whatever it might be—or the delivery of service under ServiceOntario, they need to understand that all of the documents that are related to the deal can be made public. That is very important because there needs to be a clear understanding that even though the government has said you can't FOI documents under the ServiceOntario provisions, that you can't do FOIs and there isn't the degree of transparency that there would be under a public agency, those private sector contractors and this government need to understand that, yes, all of those documents that you're currently negotiating under the privatization of whatever can be subject to a request by a committee or can be subject to a request by this House to be made public. I think it's a very strong message that we need to send: that you can't just hide behind solicitor-client privilege and private contracts as a way of trying to withhold from the public what naturally is what they should be able to know about.

The other point I just want to make—and this has been said by Andrea Horwath and has been said by others—is these are public dollars. We're sent here, all of us, as honourable members to be the custodians of the public purse and to make sure that the money that we spend here

in the province of Ontario, \$100-billion-plus a year, is spent in a judicious way. I think when the public sees that you're going to spend \$185 million to cancel Mississauga, and the cost on Oakville is climbing—it's \$40 million that the government told us yesterday and \$210 million for a transmission line that's probably not necessary if you hadn't built this thing in the first place or had put it in the right place. The purchase of the generators is another \$200 million. You're up to about \$450 million to \$500 million on Mississauga alone. Cumulatively, you're talking about a \$600-million decision that was made by—the Liberal Party of Ontario got this government to make a decision that cost the taxpayers 600 million bucks.

How do you tell the teenager who's riding back on the Ontario Northland next week during Thanksgiving, which they won't be able to do, that they can't get on a train because the government can't pay \$14 million for a subsidy for the Ontario Northland when you spent \$600 million to essentially save a bunch of seats in Mississauga-Oakville? What do you tell the person who's sitting at home, who's waiting for home care services? Speaker, you get those calls as I do, as all members do. There are people in all of our communities who are needing services when it comes to home care who can't get them. Why? Because we don't have the money to augment the services that the community care access centres provide in our communities. What do you tell those seniors?

I was just talking to Velma on the weekend in regard to her particular case. All she needs is somebody to do the laundry because she has crippling arthritis, and she can't operate the washing machine and do the manipulating of the laundry. Somebody comes in her house in order to do some of her personal care. She's saying, "At one point, I'm not going to be able to live alone. It's going to be long-term-care facility or hospital." What do you tell Velma? "I can spend \$600 million to save a couple of seats in Oakville-Mississauga, but I can't spend a few extra dollars when it comes to health care"? So that's the other thing that drives this whole thing. It's not about politics and the vengeance of the opposition and game-playing that the government tries to make this out to be. Quite frankly, it's about ensuring that we are judicious with the taxpayers' dollars.

The other thing I just want to say is that—and I'm probably not going to take the full amount of time I've got, because I'm pretty well at the end of what I want to say, but I just want to really end on this note: We are all sent here to do the right thing, and I don't believe there's a member that got elected in the last election who genuinely doesn't believe that. Unfortunately, what happens at times is people get caught up in the decisions that are made by their caucuses or by their government or by their party—in this case, the Liberal Party. You would hope at one point that there's a certain amount of independence on the part of members to say, "Hey, this isn't right," and to try to make right what is a wrong decision. And I think that's the unfortunate part of this.

People get disconnected from politics because they see this kind of thing and they say, "Well, all the politicians are the same. They're all doing the same thing." And I just want to say, I don't believe that's the case. I believe there's a lot of people who are trying to do the right thing around here, and I think it's incumbent upon us as members to remember what we're sent here to do, and that is to be as honest as we can with ourselves, with our parties and with the public when it comes to the work that we do in this particular place.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank you for this time in debate.

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

Hon. James J. Bradley: I'm actually deeply saddened that this Legislature is debating a motion of contempt directed at—this is a serious debate, and I hope it can be not the usual sarcastic interjections. I've been guilty of that myself over the years, and others. But I think this is a significant debate and I hope we can have that exchange. I am saddened that we are debating a motion of contempt, actually for any member of the House, I must say, but particularly the highly respected and distinguished member for London, and a distinguished member of the legal profession.

The opposition, as is its right, demanded to have produced—and the House leader for the NDP made reference to this—the documents related to the relocation of the proposed natural-gas-fired electricity plants, plants that, yes, spokespersons for both of the opposition parties agreed should not be built. So the government has a different responsibility—I recognize that—but there was unanimity at least on that.

There were discussions at House leaders' meetings, not on whether the Speaker's ruling to produce the documents would be sustained, but how to do so and whether commercially sensitive documents vetted by experts in commercial law and by opposition representatives might be delayed until such time as an agreement with the company might be reached. It's a difficult discussion. I've been in opposition. If you're in opposition, you want unfettered release of documents, come heck or high water, and that is your right to demand that.

Government representatives—and I said I wasn't an expert on commercial law, but I said that I thought it might be helpful if a retired judge and representatives of each of the political parties went through to see if there were any documents they felt could be prejudicial to the discussions going on at that time. The opposition made the choice that they did not want to participate in that. I respect that choice. I'm not here to chastise anybody for that. That is your right to do so.

The opposition parties chose, as was their right, to ignore that jeopardy, and we had a good discussion, I think—a fair discussion. I heard their reasons, and that is fine that they had those reasons. I may disagree with them, but that's the nature of this House.

Last Thursday, the questions which were—because I was in opposition as well—written for the Conservative

caucus, a pattern of questions, were there to say to the Minister of Energy in a way—would it be mockingly? I don't know what it was—"Oh, well, we know it's not your fault, but if only you produce these documents this will be solved." And so the documents were produced, as the Speaker insisted in his ruling they'd be and as the government complied with, and yet that wasn't good enough.

Instead, the opposition wanted more. I think, in this case, they wanted to denigrate the reputation of a member of the government, an individual who has served this Legislature extremely well, and a person who is a distinguished member of the legal profession in the province of Ontario, widely respected in that regard.

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There are lots of motions that are quite legitimate in the House, but when motions of this kind come forward, which are directed personally at somebody—I call them politically vindictive; that's my view as a government member. Others may have a different view, and I respect that. I think it leads to the breakdown, and perhaps this has been an evolution, of the Legislature and the way that it functions best for all of us. I think reference has been made, by others of all parties, to the fact that the debates seem to be deteriorating. The written notes come in for each one of us from the various political parties, and they take swings back and forth. They're pretty vitriolic. I don't think they are particularly productive, I don't think they're good for the democratic system, and I think I've watched over the years this Legislature deteriorate in that particular way.

I can remember some outstanding speeches by William Davis when he was the Premier, and by Stephen Lewis. I used to actually come to the House, because we didn't have television sets then, and you had to get a squawk box, which was a hearing box; you had to have some kind of position. So when somebody like Stephen Lewis or Jim Renwick was speaking, or Bob Welch, someone of that nature, I'd come into the House—or Bob Nixon on our side—and listen to those speeches. I'd even send them out to my friends in those political parties, saying, "Here's an example of what good debate is in this Legislature." Yes, they were sometimes hard-hitting, as they should be, but I think they represented an era when people were quite respectful of one another.

I think part of the situation we find ourselves in is a result of those of us who are elected members yielding our power to those who are unelected, the backroom wise people of all the political parties who have great advice for us. Now, the great advantage they have, I must say, is that they can make the snowballs but they don't have to throw those snowballs. They don't have to accept the consequences of it. So they eagerly smile and—again, I'm trying to put this out of a partisan context to say that's what happens. Political parties have their people who make these snowballs, and they don't have to accept the consequences. I used to watch some questions when I was opposition House leader that would come that were going to be asked of government members, and I would

be considered to be miserable by some of my members or others who had written questions in saying, "No, that is not acceptable to me. That is a personal attack on the individual. If you have a policy question, I will accept it. Otherwise, I will not accept it." I wasn't always House leader and didn't always have that control, but that was a philosophy that I felt was important to follow.

Having this situation evolve, I fully expected to see, and I do today, that members of the Conservative caucus are going to vote in favour and speak in favour of this. I have no doubt about that. They have made that very clear, and they've been consistent in that approach. What I would be surprised at—and this is perhaps being unfair in one way—is to see the New Democratic Party piling on, as they use the term in football. I think the former government, the Conservative Party, has made a decision on its approach, and we know what that approach is in this Legislature. It's quite legitimate to choose that. I don't agree with it; others might. Some think it's great, the approach that has been taken, particularly when you said that no matter what was in the first budget, you weren't going to support it. You saw the government as not being supportable in any way, and that's fine; I accept that.

The New Democratic Party did choose a different path. Yes, there were clashes in the House from day to day, but they decided not to follow that path. So I ask them, looking at this particular resolution before the House, if they would keep that in mind.

You know, other times there have been situations that have arisen. I remember as a kid watching the Spadina Expressway be cancelled just before the election in 1971. There are people who made charges against Mr. Davis at that time, that this was politically motivated, and polls and so on. I actually thought it was the right decision he made at the time, a good decision, and yes, there might have been a political component in it. It cost millions of dollars to abandon that, but it was the right decision that Mr. Davis had made.

Now, I want to zero in on an interesting exchange in the Legislative Assembly involving Anne Swarbrick and Bob Nixon. It was one of the highlights of this House in my view, and by the way, Ernie Eves is in this as well. Ms. Swarbrick had sent a letter to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario expressing concern about the college's decision to allow a doctor to continue practising medicine despite four convictions of sexual assault. She was writing this letter on behalf of a constituent. She ended her statement in the House the following way: "No matter how strong my feelings, I believe it was inappropriate for me, as a minister of the crown, to attempt to influence a tribunal. Therefore, I have offered my resignation to the Premier." Similarly, Shelley Martel, who was a minister at the same time, followed the same pattern and offered her resignation.

Here's what Bob Nixon had to say, the Leader of the Opposition. This is a chance—this is a notch in the belt in politics, to have a minister resign. He said, "I have a word on the statements by the two honourable members.

I need hardly say there is no political joy in those statements, and I can assure the two honourable members on behalf of my colleagues that their reputation and integrity have in no way suffered by these statements. From my own point of judgment in these matters, I will congratulate both of them on the actions they have taken in the House at this time and leave the responsibility where it properly belongs," with the Premier, to make that decision.

Mr. Eves followed to say, "I too would like to make a very brief comment with respect to the statements made by the two honourable members.

"The member for Scarborough West knows very well what I feel about her integrity as a minister for women's issues. I've expressed that to her on at least two occasions that I can recall. The minister who is the member for Sudbury East will know that I have had a profound admiration for her abilities and integrity in the House for several years now.

"I would like to echo the comments made by the leader of the official opposition that there is indeed no joy in statements such as these made in the Legislature here this afternoon. However, I might add that I think it demonstrates to everybody that there is indeed integrity in the system we all try to serve regardless of which side of the House" they happen to be on. "I think in that respect, at least, I have more confidence than ever in the system we have here in Ontario."

What's interesting is the next question by Mr. Nixon in the House. In fact, the question says that Mr. Rae should not accept the resignation. This is coming from a Leader of the Opposition.

"Mr. Nixon: I'm questioning myself the appropriateness of the question, but I believe the Premier deserves to say something about this matter to the House. I think he understands that the feeling expressed by the two spokespersons over here is sincerely felt. Without getting beyond that feeling, the responsibility rests very largely on the head of the government, not only to respond to the offers made by the two ministers but to accept a certain special responsibility for the fact that, in spite of their strong feeling in this regard in this sickening incident, they did not know better. What has he got to say about that?" The dialogue continues with Mr. Rae.

The upshot of it is that neither minister resigned because of that particular so-called offence on that occasion. That is a situation where a Leader of the Opposition, a partisan person, made a plea to the Premier of a government whose two ministers had offered their resignation not to accept those resignations. There would have been those who would have been advising Mr. Nixon, who may have been annoyed with Mr. Nixon, who might have been advising, "Isn't it much better to have a notch in the belt—two ministers, in this case, resigning?"

But I think that is a demonstration of an approach which more and more we have to get back to in this House. When I see motions of this kind that come forward, I am very worried. I see other motions that I think

are quite legitimate, and the debate is going to be profound in this House on many occasions. It's going to be vigorous. But when I see these kinds of motions, which are so very hard on the person, for instance, a motion of contempt—I think the members of the Conservative caucus, when they asked their questions last week, in fact, pointed out to Minister Bentley what the consequences of a contempt motion would be to his political career, to his legal profession career and so on. That is why I worry about these.

I think of a lot of people, and when you've been here, I understand, for a number of years, you have a window on the past. You don't want to stay there but you have a window on the past. I have a great deal of respect for people like Roy McMurtry, Dr. Bob Elgie, Tom Wells, Bob Welch, Keith Norton, Susan Fish and former Premier Davis himself. Mr. Kennedy was a representative here and is ably represented now by Mr. Chudleigh. Mr. Kennedy who was here was a man of great integrity. And I remember, as I say, very good members of the New Democratic Party. Neither were part of my party, but I think there was a level of collegiality in those days, a level of respect for one another, a genuine desire not to get down and be firing grenades back and forth.

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I look at the United States in two respects. I bring it in the context of this motion. First of all is the absolutely negative advertising we see going on, and it has permeated us, and we all do it. It happens. It happens for all political parties in elections, and I understand that. I lament that, but it does happen. Each of the political parties has participated in that.

I must say that, in my own riding, my personal policy is not to attack my opponents in any way, and they're quite respectful of that. I think that has worked very well in our constituencies. A long list of the friends that I've accumulated over the years are former Conservative candidates that I've run against over the years who, to this day, are strong personal friends, and New Democratic and other parties who I've competed against. I think we have to remember that very much when we get into these kinds of situations where we are bringing forward motions of this kind.

I look at the career of the Minister of Energy. I consider him to be a man of great integrity, not only in this House but in his personal life and in his legal profession. He served as the Attorney General of this province for four years. He has been a well-respected and honourable member of this Legislature for nine years. Before he came to this place, he was a member of the Ontario bar, the legal profession, of the highest standing and reputation over the past quarter century. He opened community law clinics and taught law classes in his spare time. I've watched him in debate, in caucus and in cabinet, and he's very measured in his arguments that he puts forward. I don't always agree: By nature, in caucus, we have our disagreements, and in cabinet we will have our disagreements from time to time.

I look and see that we have a motion that is, in effect, going to be very damaging to him if it were to pass in this

House, and I find that regretful. I also must say that I've observed things that have happened in the past that I haven't agreed with that have caused great angst and consequence for members of each of the political parties in this House.

My friend Bob Runciman once had his resignation submitted, and I must say I regretted that. I know he got a call from David Peterson, for instance, and David Peterson said on that occasion, "Bob, I don't think you should have had to resign." In these situations, we're quick—I can't recall, and someone may correct me by looking at a Hansard, but I can't recall myself ever calling for a resignation of a member of the Ontario Legislature in my 35 years in this Legislature. I have never called for a minister's resignation in this House.

I think things can deteriorate in this House considerably. I think this slope we're going down is not a good slope. I think we have to elevate the level of debate. I think we have to restore the collegiality which was there in previous—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Just a moment. Order.

You may continue.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I wanted to mention as well a person who, again, I've learned a lot from over the years, and I still go whenever he speaks to hear him speak. That is Mr. Davis, the former Premier of this province, who has clearly had a profound effect. Many, when they were guessing who the best Premier might have been, would have said William Davis. That was agreed to be Mr. Lougheed, but I beg to differ. I remember very well what he provided for us. Mr. Davis was a person who said, in so many words, that—I'm looking for someone such as Bill Davis who would—and he's loyal to the party. I read his column on Peter Lougheed, and I must say I thought it was an excellent column. He has always been loyal to his party. I think when he speaks, he speaks to the system.

I had a quote in here from Mr. Davis that said, "We confronted each other. I've confronted the Bob Raes, the Bob Nixons and the Stephen Lewises in this House. But often, after heated confrontations, deep disagreements on policy, we broke bread together."

I think a motion of this kind is not helpful to this Legislature and leads us down a path that we will be very sorry about, and we're already seeing part of that.

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

Mr. Michael Harris: Last night I had the opportunity to help our PC team go over the 36,000-plus pages of documents that we in fact received yesterday afternoon, and I'd like to thank them for their hard work in doing so.

What struck me was how many pages were either missing, redacted or whited out. So far, we've found hundreds of examples of entire passages in letters and emails that have been blanked out, referenced attachments that have been omitted and correspondence that has clearly been withheld. So I'm not sure how the gov-

ernment House leader, who I wish was here to hear this, has the audacity to tell Ontarians that nothing has been suppressed when it's so blatantly obvious that crucial correspondence wasn't released. In fact, just this morning, the member for Kitchener Centre said, "There was absolutely nothing redacted. Every single document has been provided." I'd never like to call the member, obviously, a liar, but I don't believe a word—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I'd have to ask you to withdraw.

Mr. Michael Harris: Withdrawn.

I know we've had a bit of a history lesson earlier, and I think it's important just to read into the record the reference of the Oxford Dictionary in terms of the definition of "all," and that is "the whole quantity or extent of"; "any whatever: he denied all knowledge"; "the greatest possible"; "pronoun, everything or everyone"—as well as the Oxford Dictionary's definition of "disclosure," which I'll read: "The act or process of making known something that was previously unknown; a revelation of facts; a lawyer's disclosure of a conflict.... a complete revelation of all material facts"—just for the government's record.

For starters, we haven't found a single email from the former Minister of Energy and the current one at all. I find it a little strange that the Minister of Energy doesn't communicate with his staff by email. I understand that he's a busy guy and he can't seriously deal with everything on the phone or in person. So how was the minister communicating with his staff? Was he writing notes? Was he using Morse code? Was he using pigeon carriers?

I hope you can see where I'm going with this, Madam Speaker. Clearly, the Minister of Energy had to have sent at least one email to a staff member to discuss the cancellation of these gas plants. I know, of course, he's also a proud user of Research in Motion's BlackBerry, so I do know he has a device.

Given that we don't have any of these emails from the former or current energy ministers, I think it's more than clear that the government has again suppressed critical information detailing the costs and motive behind cancelling these gas plants. One would have thought, when a Speaker ruled that the Minister of Energy had breached the privileges of a member in this House by withholding the power plant documents, that the Liberals would have complied with the estimates committee's motion to help the energy minister avoid being found in contempt of Parliament.

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Instead, sadly, the Premier and the Liberal campaign team, including his friends, withheld hundreds of pages of documents and hung the Minister of Energy out to dry. Again, it looks like the Premier, as well as the Liberal campaign team, is still willing to sacrifice the energy minister's hopes and dreams of running for the leadership of the Liberal Party just to keep Ontarians in the dark as to what really happened in Mississauga and Oakville.

For the sake of the public interest, I'd like to go over some of what we do know about the costs of the Liberals' seat-saver program.

We know now that the combined cost for both cancellations has risen to a staggering \$640 million. That's \$190 million for cancelling the Mississauga gas plant, a \$40-million payment for unrecoverable costs, a \$210-million payment to purchase TransCanada's gas turbines for the Oakville cancellation, and another \$200 million in transmission infrastructure upgrades to meet energy demand in Oakville, since the gas plant has been removed from the southwest GTA. Given the sheer size of the waste, and the gravity of the situation, here in the Legislature the minister must be held responsible.

The Liberal government has wasted well over half a billion dollars of taxpayers' money. Despite an order from the estimates committee for the release of the power plant documents, the energy minister thumbed his nose at Ontarians and this House.

The privileges of members of this House are not something to be taken lightly. They are an integral part of our representative democracy and serve Ontarians well by allowing opposition members to do their job and hold the government to account. But once these checks on government power are taken away, governments become more disconnected from the public and betray the public good for their own partisan political interests.

We, as members of the opposition, must take a stand to protect these rules of the House, to ensure that future Ontarians enjoy the freedoms we have fought so hard to have. We can't let the Liberal government trample on this institution and the democratic ideals we hold as a society. That's why we now must reconstitute the finance and economic affairs committee: so members can not only investigate the gravity of the minister's and the Liberal government's contemptuous behaviour but also determine the full costs for Ontario taxpayers of the Liberal seat-saver efforts in Oakville and in Mississauga.

As a member of the estimates committee, I can say that I couldn't believe the number of political tricks the energy minister pulled to prevent the release of power plant documents. After the initial motion for the release of the power plant documents was moved and passed on May 16, the minister and the OPA both sent letters to the committee dismissing the right of the committee to request these documents. When opposition members again requested the documents, the Liberals pulled every trick in the book to stall the debate. They continued to move frivolous amendments until the energy minister chose to release a small portion of the documents relating to the Mississauga power plant.

Despite the right of committee members "to send for persons, papers and things" under standing order 110(b), the energy minister refused to be fully transparent with the committee. That's why, to get the requested documents, the member from Cambridge had to table a point of privilege in this House. Even after that, the Liberal government chose to withhold critical information that would help opposition members get to the bottom of this mess. That's why we're calling for the committee to be reconstituted right away. We, as members of the opposition, have a job to do, but if we don't have the full story,

we can't do that job for our constituents who sent us here to represent their best interests.

There are some revelations in the documents we did receive that I'd like to go over, to further demonstrate to members why we need further investigation of this matter in committee.

Speaker, I'd like to touch on some of the documents I had a chance to go over last night. Firstly, I want to go over an email from Assistant Deputy Minister Rick Jennings, talking about how to spin the Liberals' cancellation of the Mississauga gas plant. We've all heard the energy minister say that the \$190 million that the government wasted on cancelling the plant was for its "relocation," but on October 20 last year, Mr. Jennings said that the interpretation of events was "problematic on several grounds." Here's what he had to say: "Relocate is not the right word in any event as it implies that the plant (which has foundation poured and appears to be at least one third built ...) will be moved to a new location. In fact, the plant will not, of course, be relocated."

I just want to pause on that for a moment and remind members that this is coming from an ADM in the Ministry of Energy. Obviously, his assessment in this email with the government's legal team is much more revealing than the Liberals' "relocation" spin.

Let's finish this quote. Jennings goes on to say that "the existing development would be abandoned and perhaps later demolished and possibly the developer would be awarded a contract to build a new plant at an alternative site."

On October 21, Mr. Jennings again advised the government not to use the term "relocate" since it didn't accurately reflect what the government was actually doing by cancelling the gas plant. He said that "the existing construction would be demolished, not 'relocated.'"

We know that that's exactly what happened. It's time for them to tell the truth.

The Liberals made a last-minute campaign decision on September 24 last year to save Liberal seats when they were down in the polls without even thinking at all about the consequences of their actions. In fact, I want to read a quote into the record explaining exactly what happened: "This was a campaign undertaking—at a time when I think we were still behind in the polls, so it required a government decision which occurred after the election." Speaker, do you want to know who said that? It was the finance minister in committee who said that. Here we have a direct admission that the Liberals cancelled the Mississauga power plant strictly to save Liberal seats in the GTA.

I'll pull one of my favourites. I'm actually holding a PowerPoint presentation given to cabinet to discuss what options the government had to deal with the Liberal Party's spur-of-the-moment campaign decision on September 24, 2011. Of course, the Liberals knew there would be hefty costs for Liberal seat-saver efforts, but they conducted no cost-benefit analysis of the decision to cancel the Mississauga power plant. Let's be honest: We all know the Liberals like to spend first and ask questions after.

What I find interesting in this presentation, though, is that cabinet actually considered building the power plant and then paying the operators not to run it. The presentation states, “OPA obligations to make monthly payments are low, based on [the] outcome of [the] 2005 RFP process, and paying [the] plant not to operate over 20 years may be cheaper than paying for sunk costs, remediation of the site and potentially some lost profits.”

Unbelievable. After reading that, one has to think that the \$190-million figure is likely not the whole story. How much does building a power plant and then paying not to run it for 20 years actually cost? How much are the sunk costs? What are the remediation costs? I find it hard to believe that all costs associated with the cancellation of the Mississauga gas plant have, in fact, been factored in.

Let’s not forget that the energy minister tried to say that cancelling the Oakville power plant would only cost \$40 million yesterday. That claim was soon debunked. We now know that that figure has ballooned into \$450 million and, for the cancellation of a \$1.2-billion gas plant, I suspect that that figure will continue, in fact, to grow.

1610

Folks, let’s move on to Oakville. Without any forethought, the Liberals rushed to cancel the Oakville power plant without even considering how to meet the energy demands in the southwest GTA. Now we’ve learned that within the next few years the transmission infrastructure in Oakville will have to be upgraded, at a cost of \$200 million, to meet the community’s energy needs.

When the Liberals announced that they were cancelling the Oakville power plant, they told the public that energy demand had actually dropped and as a result the power plant was no longer needed. But that’s not what OPA spokesman Ben Chin said the day after the cancellation. In fact, he told the CBC that the “power demand situation [in Oakville] has not changed.” He then went on to say that Oakville is a growing area that is “still using more electricity per capita than most places in the province.” I guess that’s why the OPA’s vice-president of communications, Kristin Jenkins, asked in an email on November 24, 2011, why the independent electricity operator got to be so forthright when the agency explained that there was still a need for energy in the southwest GTA.

At first blush, it would at least seem as though the OPA and the Liberal government initially didn’t have their story straight. Who could blame them when only a select few insiders knew that the Liberals were preparing to cancel the plant? In fact, OPA director of contract management Michael Killeavy told a colleague in an email the day after the Liberals cancelled the plant that he was sorry he didn’t inform her about the Liberals’ plans. He then states he was “told not to tell anyone.”

This confusion can also explain why the Liberal government had to work hard to get all OPA officials to fall into line on how to message the seat-saver decision. As I’ve pointed out earlier, OPA officials didn’t agree

with the government’s talking points on demand, but they also didn’t agree with the Liberals’ messaging on transmission infrastructure. In fact, OPA CEO Colin Andersen said just seven months ago, before the Oakville power plant was cancelled, “It would not be responsible to build a plant elsewhere and deliver its power to the southwest GTA because that would require building new high-voltage transmission lines, which would impact many other communities and mean hundreds of millions of dollars in additional costs that would have to [be] borne by the ratepayers of Ontario.” Again, that is what OPA CEO Colin Andersen said.

I encourage you all, if you’ve not had an opportunity to see the piles and piles of documents, to have a quick look at these—great weekend reading material.

Clearly the CEO knew then that the transmission lines would be an additional cost to taxpayers, despite the spin the Liberals put out yesterday. According to the OPA, this significant transmission work needs to be completed by 2017-18. So, as I already explained before, that pegs the Oakville cancellation at \$450 million. How much more will it cost?

I find it troubling that the Liberals think they can release some documents without any email communications from the Minister of Energy or the current Minister of Energy, and we still haven’t seen any communications between the Liberal campaign team and the Minister of Energy. As I’ve said in estimates committee, I find it shocking to think that a government will allow political strategists and campaigners like Don Guy to write energy policy on the fly in the final days of a campaign just to save a few lousy Liberal seats.

The Premier repeatedly said, while these power plants were being developed, that he wouldn’t tolerate NIMBYism. Then, when the Liberals were down in the polls, as I had mentioned previously with what the finance minister said in committee, the Liberals suddenly heard the voice of the residents, who were always opposed to locating these plants in their neighbourhoods. They wouldn’t have located the plants there, and neither would we. We knew Mississauga was a bad location, but the Liberals chose to go ahead anyway. Given the Liberals’ lack of foresight and their desperate attempts to withhold documents that would paint a clearer picture of what really happened in Oakville and Mississauga, we must reconstitute the finance committee right away and get to the bottom of this issue.

I’d like to congratulate my colleague the member from Cambridge for putting forward this motion, the work of the members of the official opposition and other opposition members, and the work on estimates.

This issue will not go away. It’s one that we as the official opposition need to hold the government to account on. Taxpayers are asking us at home in our constituencies to stand up and fight this waste that they’ve seen this government time and time again continue to do, the hundreds of millions of dollars that were wasted—wasted. We can all imagine what we would have done with that to protect our core social programs here in the province:

our health care, education. They simply used it for their own political purposes and self-interest.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm not going to say I'm pleased to be able to join this debate, because I think it's one that devalues this place. I just want to reinforce what the Minister of the Environment said. I think what he did was he sounded a cautionary note in terms of the tone of this place and warned us about allowing the debate and the tone to devolve into one that is baser and more vicious than we would want it to be. I really take that to heart.

The government House leader this morning outlined the process that brought us here. I want to keep my comments in that context, because I think it's important to remember how we got here. He outlined the process. He made it clear that this is a relatively straightforward situation, and I think that we need to remember that.

Between May 9 and May 12, the Minister of Energy appeared before the Standing Committee on Estimates in order to answer questions about the 2012-13 estimates of the Ministry of Energy. While the minister answered questions that related to a number of issues, the committee members from the official opposition spent a lot of time asking the minister questions relating to the two gas plants that were to have been built, both in Oakville and in Mississauga.

While he was before the committee, the Minister of Energy was placed in a very difficult situation because of those questions. He was repeatedly asked questions relating to those two facilities, and the overwhelming majority of the questions related specifically to the ongoing outstanding legal proceedings and confidential negotiations. I think that's an important piece to remember: He was being asked questions that were sensitive, that were confidential and that he was not at liberty to elucidate on.

What the Minister of Energy tried to do was to strike an effective balance between the committee's authority to ask those questions and to request those documents, and the need to protect the public interest in the midst of those highly sensitive commercial negotiations and litigation. He has a responsibility—he had a responsibility, and he has a responsibility as a the minister of the crown. It's different than the responsibilities that other members have. He was taking those responsibilities very seriously.

The Chair of the committee, the member for Beaches–East York, was very aware of those responsibilities. In fact, he repeatedly ruled that the committee members were permitted to ask such questions but that the minister was able to exercise his discretion and to respond to such questions in a manner that protected the interests of the province. I think that was as it should have been.

Just to exemplify that, on May 16, Mr. Prue said, “The minister has the right to decline either giving that documentation or giving voice to that documentation during his answering of the questions.” On the same day, May

16, Mr. Prue said, “I would advise that I'm going to allow the motion to proceed, but I would also advise—and I think the minister, being a lawyer himself, knows full well that he may choose to answer the question in such a way as not to prejudice the province in any way, and I would expect him to do so. That would be my ruling.”

1620

The reason that it's important that we raise these facts and those statements repeatedly is that I think it's important for everyone to understand that the rules were being followed, that the Minister of Energy was being very careful to protect the public interest. There were sensitive negotiations going on. The Chair of the committee was making his ruling. He is a seasoned member of the Legislature as well, and he knew what his responsibility was.

What happened was that then the official opposition and the third party attempted to begin to vilify the Minister of Energy. The notion that somehow something was being hidden or concealed entered the rhetoric. That's simply not true. I think that it's important that we deal with the facts. The record shows that the Minister of Energy was trying at all times, as I say, to balance those competing interests. He was trying to balance the right of the committee to ask those questions with the public interest of making sure that what needed to be confidential remained confidential.

So if we fast-forward to the Speaker's ruling of September 13, 2012, the recent ruling, the Speaker ruled that, while a prima facie breach of privilege had been established, he would set aside the matter and ask the three House leaders to go away, to “take it upon themselves to find a path that can satisfy the request of the estimates committee,” and that is what they undertook to do. They undertook to go away and to come up with a resolution to this issue of the release or not of the documents. And in this matter, the Speaker exercised his discretion. He followed the novel approach that was adopted by Speaker Milliken, as the government House leader has said. That approach was adopted by Speaker Milliken in the Afghan detainee matter by setting aside his ruling in order to allow the House leaders to devise a means whereby both their concerns were met. So he allowed for that process, and I think that in doing that he was putting in place a very rational initiative that would allow for a resolution in a civilized way.

The approach that the Speaker took, I think, was taken for a couple of reasons. The Speaker recognized, I believe, that there were competing public interests at play—the interests of the committee, as I've said, in exercising its parliamentary privileges, and the interests of the Minister of Energy in temporarily refraining from the disclosure of sensitive information in the midst of commercial negotiations and related proceedings. So I think that the Speaker also recognized that it was very important that those competing interests be acknowledged and that they be part of the context of this decision-making.

I think the ruling clearly laid out that this was a unique situation. This wasn't something that we come across

every day; it was something that needed special treatment and needed to be treated in a considered way, and that is what he did.

So if that's what happened, then the next step was that the House leaders would go away and that they would come back with their decision. Yesterday, shortly after announcing the settlement of the Oakville matter, the Minister of Energy, as we all know, and the Ontario Power Authority released 36,000 records that were responsive to the original motion of the estimates committee.

I know there has been a lot of debate about whether the 36,000 documents are all of the documents. I think the fact, as the government House leader said, that there are two letters of attestation, from Colin Andersen and from the Minister of Energy, should stand as making it clear that all of the documents that have been released are the documents that were available and are the ones that were asked for.

The government went so far as to provide the document in electronic form and to give a USB key to each one of the opposition parties, in addition to the Clerk, and to our mind, that should have meant that the request had been satisfied and that the matter should have been closed. But here we are, standing today and having another conversation.

To my mind, we're dealing with a situation of manufactured discontent; that the opposition is deciding to create and fabricate—

Interjection.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: No, actually, I'm describing what I see, which is a situation where all of the steps—

Interjection.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Kathleen, actually, is the name.

It seems to me that all of the steps that were asked, all of the requests that were made of the House leaders have been complied with. The ruling of the Speaker has been complied with, and the documents have been released. And yet there seems to be a desire to create this very negative debate that really is an assault on personalities more than it is a discussion of policy.

It was interesting to me: The member for Cambridge, I think, this morning talked about how there was not a political motivation to this. I would suggest, Madam Speaker, that there's nothing but a political motivation behind this; that this is all about a political motivation coming from the other side. So—

Interjections.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I understand that they're not going to be happy about me saying that, but that is what I see, Madam Speaker.

Again, I go back to the Minister of the Environment and his cautionary note about the kinds of debates we bring to this House, the kinds of questions we ask of each other, the way we treat each other, and what the impact of that is on parliamentary proceedings.

I am very aware—and I will come back to this at the end—of the pages sitting in this House. I'm very aware

of the young people who will be watching this debate. I'm very aware of the—not necessarily young people, but the people of Ontario who are watching this debate. There must be questions in their minds about the business of their government, and what exactly it is that we are going to be able to accomplish here, because I know that many of them know that the Minister of Energy is a man of integrity. They know him. They have seen him operate. They have seen him as the Attorney General of this province for four years. They know that he's a well-respected member of the Legislature and a well-respected member of the bar. They know that he has practised law and that he has a very fine reputation in the province. So the fact that his personal integrity has been questioned I think again points to a certain devolution of the debate in this House. I think that all of that is important as we undertake to haul ourselves up and make sure that we are dealing with the business of the people of the province.

To my mind, this is a disrespectful gambit that the opposition is leading. I think that it's not helpful, and the tone of the debate has not been helpful.

I believe that our government has demonstrated that we are determined to work for the public good, Madam Speaker. Our Minister of Energy weighed the competing interests of the committee. The Speaker ruled on a motion and asked that the leaders come to a resolution. That happened. The documents have been released, the 36,000 pages. The Minister of Energy and the head of the OPA have written letters of attestation. All of that has happened, and then still the desire is to paint our behaviour negatively.

I wanted to draw the Legislature's attention to an opinion piece that was printed today in the Toronto Star. I'm going to read parts of it, and then I will just comment on those. It was authored by the Premier, so the byline is "Dalton McGuinty." The headline is, "Didn't Get It Right on Gas Plants, Premier Says." The context in which I'm reading this is that it's extremely important for governments, of whatever stripe, to take responsibility for their actions, and that is in fact what the Premier says in this article. He begins by talking about our record on energy. He says:

"This week, our government announced we are relocating a gas plant from Oakville to eastern Ontario. The total cost of the relocation is \$40 million. This follows another settlement to move a natural gas plant from Mississauga to Sarnia. The cost of that relocation was \$190 million.

"We believe in accountability to those we serve and we take full responsibility for decisions we make. Here's why we made the decision to relocate these two gas plants."

1630

Then the Premier goes on to talk about some of the things that we have attempted to do. Again, this is critical, because this whole discussion about energy is in the context of our policies to move to a greener supply of energy in the province. Again, Madam Speaker, I wouldn't expect necessarily the party opposite to agree

with this. I would expect the NDP, the third party, to be supportive of moving to a greener energy supply; I wouldn't expect the opposition to be.

But here's what we have done, and I go back to the article: "Since 2003, we've rebuilt our electricity system. We've added 10,000 megawatts of new, clean generation, including six new gas plants, and 5,000 kilometres of transmission lines"—transmission lines, by the way, that were in sad disarray, that needed a huge amount of work and investment, investment that had not been made over the term of the previous government, and when we came to office it was imperative that we move on that, so the Premier, in his article, talks about that.

"That represents almost \$30 billion"—he goes on to say—"in investments from the public and private sectors and is creating tens of thousands of jobs.

"We made a commitment to Ontarians to close coal-fired generation, a North American first. Burning coal is a leading cause of smog. It contributes to climate change. Particulate matter from coal can penetrate deep into the lungs and it can cause premature death.

"Since 2003, coal generation is down 90%, with a corresponding 93% decrease in harmful sulphur emissions."

Just as the starting point of the Premier's article—the motivation for what we have done over the past nine years is that we needed a cleaner, greener and stronger infrastructure for our energy supply in the province. If we are to continue to be a strong economic driver for the country, which we still are, we need to continue to do that. We have to have our energy supply in good shape.

He went on to say, "As we moved away from coal and renewed the system, we had to make sure our homes and businesses would have the energy they need. Demand is especially high in the GTA—so we planned these natural gas plants in Oakville and Mississauga."

He goes on to say, "Locating new energy plants and predicting our long-term energy needs are never easy things to do. We take responsibility for not getting this right the first time. And we're currently developing better guidelines on choosing sites."

That speaks to two things. It speaks to taking responsibility for having made a decision that probably wasn't the right decision. It also speaks to learning from that and putting in place a better system going forward, and that is as it should be.

I can't imagine an Ontarian—and I have a huge respect for the people of Ontario. I think, as politicians, we often underestimate them, and I've said that before in this House. But I cannot imagine an Ontarian who would want to have a government in place that would not be able to say, "We made this decision. It was not the right decision. We've listened to the community; we've listened to the experts. It was not the right decision, so we are going to correct that." I think to do otherwise, to make a decision that you then realize is not the right decision and to just bully through and say, "Well, no matter what we know now, we are not going to go back and we're not going to change our minds," would be

irresponsible. I think that the cries from the other side to do just that—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I'd remind the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke that to heckle, you need to be in your seat, and when I'm standing, you're quiet.

You may continue.

Interjection.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The member opposite says there are other unpopular decisions, and that's very true. In government, what you have to do is weigh priorities—absolutely. We are saying we made a decision around these gas plants that, in retrospect, we would not make today, so we take responsibility for that.

The Premier goes on to write: "It is worth noting that both opposition parties promised to cancel the Mississauga plant. They agreed with our decision. They understood there would be a cost to this." So we are dealing with the situation.

I haven't served in opposition, but I can tell you, Madam Speaker, I spent a lot of time in those gallery seats. I watched. I spent a lot of time watching the Liberals in opposition, dealing with the Conservatives in office. I understand the role of the opposition. I understand that the role of the opposition is to hold government's feet to the fire. But I also understand that it is the role of the opposition to engage in meaningful policy debate. It is not, I believe, the role of the opposition to engage in individual character assassination or in attacks on individuals who are above reproach in terms of their integrity, and I think that that's what we're dealing with.

Again, I'm going to come back to the pages, because it's hard for me not to look at their faces while we're having these debates in this House. I'm saying to the pages and to the children of the province: There is no human endeavour that does not involve successes and mistakes, does not involve success and misstep. There's no shame in making a mistake. In fact, I would argue that there's shame in not taking initiative in order to avoid mistakes—but there is no shame in making a mistake. There is shame in not taking responsibility.

We've taken responsibility, we've complied with the Speaker's ruling, and I think that what we're engaged in now is a very political and, I believe, as the Minister of the Environment said, a dangerous debate in terms of the future of the parliamentary tone in this House. I hope that we can find a way through this, because otherwise I think we're on a slippery slope, and I hold the party opposite responsible.

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

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I find it somewhat unfortunate that there really aren't more members from the government present to actually engage in this very serious motion of contempt. There's under 20% here, and to me, that's inexcusable.

I rise today with feelings of sadness, sadness because I rise during a time when a minister of this government has

been charged with contempt of Parliament. This is perhaps the very first time ever that a minister of an Ontario government has been found to be in contempt of Parliament. This is a sad day indeed for all of Ontario. It's a sad day when a minister and a Premier so utterly violate the trust that the people of this great province have so graciously given them.

Speaker, you've heard me say many times in this Legislature that when you mess up, you fess up. The Minister of Energy was given ample opportunity to in fact fess up, but he, sadly, has refused to act in accordance with the initial requests of the estimates committee, of which I am a committee member, and then with your wishes as well.

Speaker, the minister has been charged with contempt of this Parliament. You ruled that the minister violated the privilege of another member. This isn't about the privilege of a member; it's about the right, one of those most fundamental rights in a democracy, of the public to know whether their government is misusing their hard-earned money, whether or not their government is telling them the truth and whether or not their government is conducting backroom deals in the shadows.

All this side of the House asked for was an answer to those simple questions, and all this government gave us was a litany of excuses on why they were unwilling to provide us with the truth. After months of foot-dragging, the documents have been released, but six months of covering up the truth from the people is simply unacceptable.

Were they simply buying more time for more secretive deals? Only those who have something to hide are afraid of public scrutiny. Those fearful of what the truth will bring to light hide behind empty technicalities. Why did this Premier not release all documents related to the cancelled power plants immediately upon request? Whether it's Ornge or eHealth or cancelled power plants or MPAC, it seems that there is an unending stream of mismanagement and deceit coming from this Liberal government. Scandal—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I'd ask the member to withdraw that.

1640

Interjection: Say, "I withdraw."

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I withdraw. What did I say?

Interjection: "Deceit."

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Oh. I withdraw.

Scandal after scandal: The people of Ontario are wondering when the madness will stop. I hope soon, for the sake of all of us. The Liberals have run out of excuses, and they have run out of time. No pun intended, Speaker, but they've also run out of gas.

This government cancelled two power plants for the sake of saving four seats and hid the true costs from the public. Then they stonewalled for six months, refusing to provide the documents they were ordered to hand over. Having no ideas to run on and facing defeat, this Premier and his Liberal government did what they do best:

needlessly spend taxpayers' money for the sole purpose of politics.

So far, we know that the taxpayer has been hit with a \$190-million price tag for this political stunt. The fact that the Liberals refused for so long to provide us with all documents pertaining to this backroom deal proves that their assault on the Ontario taxpayer is, in all likelihood, much, much higher. Some published accounts have put the cost closer to \$650 million for the cancellation of the plants.

Speaker, this is unacceptable. At a time when this province is at the brink of bankruptcy, running towards a \$411-billion debt and with 600,000 Ontarians out on the streets, unable to find a job, this Liberal government bungles hundreds of millions, if not billions, of taxpayers' dollars to save a handful of parliamentary seats.

This record of secrecy is part and parcel of this government. Just last week, the Ontario Environmental Commissioner, Gord Miller, issued a report entitled *Losing Touch*. In it, the commissioner condemns this government for its constant hiding of information from public scrutiny and its record of secrecy. Allow me to quote from the report: "[V]arious ministries persist in hiding environmentally significant decisions from public scrutiny...." Speaker, when a non-partisan officer of the government comes out with findings like this, you know there is an issue. This goes beyond the question of which political party one belongs to; this is about being accountable and honest with the voters of Ontario.

I'm a member of the Standing Committee on Estimates. For the past few months, this committee brought to light this Liberal scandal, and it was this committee that discovered that the Minister of Energy learned about the power plant cancellation from reading the newspapers, not from his own Premier or caucus. We also learned that this was an entirely political decision, meant to save parliamentary seats for the Liberals. Even if this decision by the Liberals didn't cost the taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars and even if this Liberal government were not in contempt of Parliament, the utter incompetence of this government disqualifies them from governing Ontario.

Unfortunately for us all, this goes beyond mere incompetence. As a member of the Standing Committee on Estimates, I heard countless hours of deflections and excuses about why this government didn't want to give this House and the public the truth about the power plants. But the minister, who is a lawyer and a former Attorney General, must know the consequences of being found in contempt. The minister is surely aware of the political and legal ramifications to his career that he's threatened with for concealing the truth from this House and the public for so long.

Allow me to revisit some of the things that the minister told the committee on estimates. According to Hansard, on June 5, 2012, the Minister of Energy admitted to failing to engage in community consultations before actually placing the Mississauga power plant in the first place. Only when that decision became a political

liability did this government cancel the plant, and at an extreme cost to the taxpayers.

Speaker, perhaps if this Liberal government actually listened to the people of this province, we wouldn't be in this utter train wreck, as we are now.

They would claim that we agreed to have it there—not true. We said we would never put it there in the first place. This government ignored the voices of middle-class, hard-working Ontarians for the past nine years. This latest disaster is simply another result of that deafness.

During that same day of testimony to the committee on estimates, this minister, when faced with a question that I posed to him, gave us more deflection and excuses and not a single answer. Speaker, we know for a fact that EIG Management, a US hedge fund, sued the province for \$300 million over the Mississauga plant. The OPA offered to settle the lawsuit for \$82.3 million. My question posed to him then and repeated again was, “Minister, where will that \$82.3 million come from?”

Millions of public dollars are being used to settle lawsuits, and the taxpayer has every right to know who is on the hook for that \$82.3 million. Perhaps if this minister had actually provided this House with all documents relating to the cancelled power plants when we asked for them months ago, we would know where this \$82.3 million came from. My bet is that this \$82.3 million isn't included in what the Minister of Finance claims to be \$190 million in “relocation costs.”

The following week, the Minister of Finance testified to the committee of estimates. He told the committee that the Minister of Energy was completely wrong. He said it wasn't a political decision. The Minister of Finance gave diametrically opposing testimony that contradicted his colleague, the Minister of Energy. He completely threw the Minister of Energy under the bus, just as this Premier threw the minister under the bus and forced him to take the fall. Why don't they throw the now Minister of Economic Development and Innovation under the bus too? After all, he signed the agreements, including the \$6-billion Samsung deal, which isn't any part of this act of contempt, but I'm throwing it in anyways.

Oh, I'm furious, Speaker, furious on behalf of the Ontario taxpayer, and furious on behalf of my PC caucus as well. The burning question, of course, is when and why did the cancellation decision come about? We know that it was the current Minister of Energy's predecessor who, appearing with the member from Oakville, made the stunning announcement that the plant in Oakville would be cancelled. Speaker, that was back in 2010. That surprise announcement by the former Minister of Energy from Scarborough Centre was made solely to save Liberal seats in and around Oakville and Mississauga.

Who was involved in the decision to cancel the power plants? Did the Premier make the final decision, or did someone on his campaign team make it? Speaker, the people deserve to know the answers to these questions.

One of the most fundamental bedrocks of a democratic society is a transparent and accountable government.

When a government hides information and ignores the public's right to know how their hard-earned money is being spent, it constitutes a total assault on democracy. The Liberal government has breached the public trust time and time again. Every week, it seems there's another scandal, another case of mismanagement, another record-setting report of unemployment or of the deficit. This list of failure, incompetence and scandal is seemingly unending. If only this scandal was the only one under this Liberal government, but for almost a decade, the Liberals have been involved with one scandal after the next.

Only the PC Party have a plan to put Ontario back on the road to prosperity. Only the PCs have a plan to reduce the size of government—

Interjections.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Oh, I'm sure—you finally woke up; I'm glad to hear that.

We have a plan to reduce the size of government and to get the people back to work and, most importantly, only the PCs can restore the lost trust the people of Ontario have in government after almost a decade of abysmal failure, debt and scandal. It's time for change.

1650

This goes beyond mere partisanship and politics. Ontario is in serious trouble, and under this Liberal government, that trouble is only getting more severe. People are hurting in Ontario right now—the young, the families, seniors, students, you name it. People are hurting, and they'll admit to it as well. Six hundred thousand Ontarians are unable to find work, the debt is exploding day by day, and we are spiraling towards bankruptcy. The old saying “It's better to ask for forgiveness than get permission” doesn't apply here. What this government has done is unforgivable and justice must prevail, trust must be restored and accountability must take precedence.

Again, Speaker, it is unfortunate that the Minister of Energy did not comply with the wishes of the estimates committee and produce the requested documents. It's unfortunate that a motion of contempt had to be introduced, but the minister knew the rules and the repercussions of his inactions. Once again, Ontario taxpayers are on the hook for the bill. Imagine how many MRIs, hip and knee surgeries, additional health care to those in need—and the list is endless—could have been provided if this government had shown true responsibility and accountability to all of Ontario.

We're not happy about this entire situation at all. However, we are elected representatives of the people from our ridings. The people from Ontario require and request and insist that they have proper representation in this House. We would be doing a total injustice to the people of Ontario had we not acted properly and presented this motion of contempt, simply because of a refusal to co-operate with the estimates committee.

It's a sad day when, in fact, individuals are being forced to be put in contempt, but Minister, we have no other choice. We're doing what we have been elected to do, and that is to best represent the people of Ontario, the people who have put us in this Legislature to act in their

best interests. Unfortunately, the amount of money that has been wasted in lawsuits and relocation costs of gas plants in Mississauga and in Oakville, for which the contempt motion has been put forward, as I've mentioned earlier, is intolerable. It's inexcusable. It is fully unacceptable. That money could have been better spent because it was hard-earned taxpayer money that, in fact, they squandered.

They make the announcements. They don't consult properly, and as a result—who would invest all of that money and get everything to the point of almost ready to go, and then two weeks before an election decide to pull the plug and say, “We're not going to continue. We will not have a gas plant in Mississauga”? That is inexcusable. That is wasted taxpayer money, when in fact this province is on the brink of bankruptcy.

We need change, and unless we get the proper answers and the full truth is revealed with regard to this motion of contempt, we will continue to spiral out of control, and that is not good. It's certainly a bad mark on this government, but it's not good for the total province, the people of Ontario, the people who have put us here. And with that, Speaker, thank you very much.

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

Mr. Bob Delaney: After this much time spent in debate, I usually like to try, for anybody who's watching at home, beginning with a bit of a recap. Let's just start with a recap—where we are, what we're doing—and then we'll continue.

To recap, we're doing the things that we're doing because a committee motion suggested that the Minister of Energy should be held in contempt for breach of privilege in the event that he refused to release records that responded to a motion brought by the PC member from Cambridge on May 16, 2012. That date by which all of those records were supposed to be released was yesterday, and before the termination of yesterday, the Minister of Energy and the Ontario Power Authority released all of their records shortly after 12 p.m. yesterday, Monday, September 24. On that basis, one could say on the face of it that the committee's motion has been satisfied and that, pursuant to the express agreement of the committee in its motion of July 11 of this year, indeed, no contempt finding should arise from this matter. But it would seem that, just like the opposition did with the budget, they intend to do with this particular issue.

Again, let's recap the budget. The budget was presented back in late March, and before even reading the budget, the Progressive Conservatives said, “Oh, we're voting against this”—regardless of the fact that the budget of 2012-13 directly included some of the key things that they said in their platform just last year they would support. Even though the budget said that we'll implement some of that, without even having read it, they said, “We're voting against it.”

Yesterday, some 36,000 pages of documentation were released. If indeed this motion was that important and they were worried about what was or wasn't in the ma-

terial that was released, perhaps they could have actually taken a reasonable amount of time, read the material, and if, then, there were significant errors, omissions or whatever, they could then have outlined what these were and brought this motion. But did they actually take time to read the documentation? No. No, they didn't.

Again, the Ontario PCs have ground the business of the Ontario Legislature to a halt, just as they spent all spring delaying government business, keeping the people's business from happening. Now there's this.

Today, we were supposed to have a third reading vote about the healthy homes renovation tax credit. That would have been today. We would have voted on that, and then Ontario's seniors could have a tax credit that could help them improve their lives, help our seniors. The Ontario PCs spent months debating and delaying it. In fact, they talked about everything except that bill. Today, it was going to come to a vote. Was there a secret agreement that in order to once again delay the vote on the healthy homes renovation tax credit, they would introduce this motion and, in so doing, postpone it and postpone it and postpone it?

That's a decision that was made in the backrooms of the Ontario PC Party. What they discussed—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Point of order, the member for Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: Sometimes, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite stray from the motion and the amendments that we're speaking about today. I would ask that the member keep his comments to the motion—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I return to the member for Mississauga–Streetsville. He knows what we're debating, and I would encourage him to ensure that his remarks conform with the subject at hand. Thank you.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Thank you very much, Speaker. To my colleague from Leeds–Grenville, the point of order that you're referring to would be standing order 23(b), and that has to do with the discussion of the matter under consideration. Just in case you choose to raise it again, you can write it down now: standing order 23(b).

This is the reason that the opposition has once again hijacked the Legislature: to debate the nuances of documents—documents that they admit they haven't even read.

1700

Again, let's just do a quick recap. The Conservatives asked the government for documents. The government made the case that providing those documents at the time that they were requested would compromise the ability of the government to negotiate with the proponents of the two power plants.

Let me give you an analogy. Imagine you're negotiating with someone for the purchase of a home, and in your mind you think to yourself, “Okay, this is a GTA home, and I'm willing to pay up to this amount of money for it,” and in the course of this, you send an email to your spouse. If you were the seller, wouldn't you like to know what the buyer's top-line bid would have been?

That's exactly what the Minister of Energy said at the time. He said, “We have got litigation to resolve, and

we're in the middle of negotiations with the proponents" over whatever the litigation or negotiations were about. When the negotiations were concluded, the opposition received 36,000 pages of documents, which they haven't read—and, very tellingly, the government followed through.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I apologize to the member for Mississauga–Streetsville, who has the floor.

I have to ask the opposition members to refrain from heckling the member, because I have to be able to hear him.

I return to the member for Mississauga–Streetsville.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Thank you very much, Speaker.

Among the other things that I've heard, as I go back to this, is that the opposition has criticized the Minister of Energy for decisions about the circumstances around the cancellation of the gas plants in Oakville and Mississauga. There's just a real problem with this particular line of criticism, because at the time that the decision was made, the member for London West was not the Minister of Energy. So how in the name of heaven is the member for London West expected to know the circumstances around the cancellation of a plant at a time when he wasn't the minister of the crown for that particular portfolio? And yet, the previous speaker went on and on about this one particular point.

Speaker, one of the—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the members, by name, to come to order. The member for Prince Edward–Hastings, the member for Chatham–Kent–Essex, please allow the member for Mississauga–Streetsville to give his speech and make his points.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Speaker, the members opposite, some of whom I know—we listened respectfully when they stood up and made their remarks. We respectfully disagree with you, but we have respectfully heard you. The motto of this Legislature, "Audi alteram partem," means, in Latin, "Listen to the other side."

The fact of the matter is that prior to the government's announcement to cancel the gas plants, the following things happened—I'm a Mississauga member, so this is something that I was reading about in the newspapers. The mayor of Mississauga said, "I don't think we need that gas plant." Some of the residents in the area around the gas plant objected to the gas plant. Indeed, the Progressive Conservative Party said, "We don't need that gas plant."

Just to make sure that they remember what it is that they did say, in the Hansard of June 1, 2010, the member for Halton said, "The people of Oakville have told you they don't want the proposed gas-fired power plant ... and I agree with them."

Interjection: They said that?

Mr. Bob Delaney: They're on the record.

On September 25, 2011, during the election campaign, the Leader of the Opposition said the following: "We've

opposed these projects in Oakville and Mississauga." So, very clearly, if in government, they too would have cancelled the gas plants in Oakville and Mississauga.

This begs the question, then, that if the opposition had committed itself to cancelling the very gas plants that the government cancelled, clearly they had an estimate of what this would cost them. When the government has a chance to place an amendment to this motion, I think we're going to ask for those documents in the possession of the PC Party that estimate what their costs were in cancelling the gas plants in Oakville and Mississauga, because we have not seen their estimates. We don't know how much of the taxpayers' money they would have spent. We don't know what assumptions their estimates were based on, and I think in fairness that they should be tabling their estimates of how much the PC Party was willing to spend to cancel the gas plants in Mississauga and in Oakville, and we want to know the basis of them.

Now, similarly, the PC Party of course is committed to cancelling the feed-in tariff program. We want to see their estimates of the economic impact of the cancellation of the feed-in tariff program. This is a program that has 20,000 Ontarians working in a leading-edge industry right here in Ontario, and they're willing to throw them all out of work by cancelling it. There are some costs, and I mean major costs, associated with cancelling the feed-in tariff program, and clearly having made that commitment during the election and repeated it over and over in the House, they've done some of those cost estimates. Why have they not tabled those estimates right here in this House so that we can look at them? It's scandalous. They're clearly sitting on information that deserves to be in the public domain, and they won't table it.

So, on what basis, then, to come back to this, did the PC Party—and it must be said, in fairness, the NDP party also said that they, too, would cancel it. But on what basis did the PC Party conclude that the gas plants weren't needed? Because they did conclude that they weren't needed. We need to know that basis. If we're going to have this debate and make an intelligent decision on this motion, we need to know what their costs were. We need to know how they arrived at their estimates. We need to know on what basis they decided that these gas plants weren't needed.

We also need to have copies of correspondence between the PC Party and the Ontario Power Authority and Hydro One and everybody else, including the proponents. We'd like to see copies of correspondence between the PC Party and the proponents detailing what information they knew and how they used that information to make a decision that these gas plants were not needed. In order to vote intelligently on this motion, I think it's only fair that they provide that.

How, for example, Speaker, did the PC Party arrive at a conclusion that there was a linkage between the fortunes of any candidate in the last election and whether either of the gas plants got the go-ahead? They were just guessing. It's all empty rhetoric.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke on a point of order.

Mr. John Yakabuski: This is absolutely out of order. It is the Minister of Energy who's being held in contempt here, not the PC Party. This is ridiculous. That member has got nothing better to say than that—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I appreciate your observation. I return to the member for Mississauga–Streetsville.

Mr. Bob Delaney: I guess they're feeling the pain, Speaker. I guess they're feeling the pain.

You know, Speaker, they have made this arrogant and self-serving and, I must add, completely unsubstantiated allegation, and now the PC Party must produce documentary evidence to support the fact that they have entirely failed to show the linkage between either our electoral fortunes in the area or the need for this particular plant.

We need these documents from the PC Party. We need them right now, and we need those documents in full. I anticipate, Speaker, that the next PC Party speaker is going to stand up and tell us exactly when we can expect the tabling of all of their documents that show what the power demand was in the greater Toronto area and exactly why they made the decision they made and when that decision was made. Was it in fact made pursuant to an actual form of numerical analysis and quantitative analysis, or was it just a decision by the PC campaign committee, as we all fully expect that it was?

Interjection: We'd like to know.

Mr. Bob Delaney: We have to know that.

The PC Party members routinely stand up and proclaim a deficit forecast much, much higher than that made by the Ministry of Finance.

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But you know, Speaker, the hard-working people of Ontario and this House have kept Ontario's economy outperforming every other national and regional economy in the developed world. While our US brethren continue to flirt with neoconservative ideology that now dominates the once-great party of Leslie Frost, John Robarts and Bill Davis—once-great—the USA, which has also flirted with that ideology, has only recovered roughly 45% of its bottom-of-the-recession job losses. But here in Ontario, we've recovered 130% of our bottom-of-the-recession job losses. There are more people employed full-time in Ontario now than there were at the top of the last growth phase.

Almost certainly those large Progressive Conservative budget estimates stem from all of the money that their party would have to spend on cancellation fees, on shutting down the FIT program, on dismantling the type of infrastructure that this province has built to overcome the very power shortages that, as a government, we inherited in 2003. We should remember that in 2003, not only did we have that blackout, but we also had the spectre of oil-fired generators in our cities. They were so worried, the PC government of the day was, about the

stability of our grid, that they had to set fire to oil, belching pollution into the air in order to simply maintain the power grid.

That doesn't have to happen anymore. The number of smog days in the greater Toronto area has dropped to almost none. The kids who used to go to school with puffers because of the quality of the air no longer have to. Part of the reason for that is that Ontario's power system is robust, and that's largely because this government has invested in a broad and diversified power distribution and power generation system, and we're getting out of coal.

Along the way, Speaker, our government has built 17 gas-fired generating stations. Two of them weren't properly placed, one in Oakville, one in Mississauga; 15 others have worked just fine. Those two will be relocated.

When renovating some \$96 billion of electricity production infrastructure, you pretty much can be sure that not everything is going to go according to plan. When planning to do it over two and three decades, things will change. Even for the PC Party, these things have happened. There was a time in the 1970s when we were digging the Spadina expressway, and the Premier of the day was, very frankly, a role model of mine, a guy who lives in Peel region, a gentleman in every respect: William Davis. Everybody likes William Davis—Brampton Bill. It came to pass that the Spadina expressway, which became known derisively as the Davis Ditch, was cancelled, and it was cancelled for political reasons. It was cancelled because the Premier of the day, a role model of a lot of ours, a man who, after Peter Lougheed, another great Premier and a Conservative, a real Progressive Conservative, a man whose leadership we should emulate—Bill Davis said, "I don't want to bear the political pain of this," and he cancelled it.

Speaker, to recap, this is a debate about a motion asking the Minister of Energy to produce some documents. The Minister of Energy was given a deadline by which he should produce those documents. Ahead of the deadline, the Minister of Energy did produce those documents. If the members of the PC Party had taken the time to read the documents and they wanted to come back to the House with a motion and say, "This is a list of the information that's missing," that might make their resolution more credible. But as it is, this is a motion about nothing by a party that hasn't even read the material provided to them.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: I find it difficult to follow the member for Mississauga–Streetsville. I know he's a goaltender in hockey, and I don't know if he faced a lot of rubber last night or what's happening, but it was sometimes a bit outlandish, some of the things that he included in his speech.

This is a historic day today. I know many Ontarians who tuned in at 10:30 to see and watch question period must have been a little surprised, and I know, especially

in the last 20 minutes, some people who might be watching from home might wonder what the fuss is all about. And sometimes that can be a bit understandable. Debates in this place do tend sometimes to focus on our arcane rules, our procedures that govern how we conduct business here in this chamber on behalf of the people of Ontario.

I think what people need to know today is that this is not one of those occasions, no matter how hard the members opposite, the government members, either in this place or outside of this chamber, will try to tell you.

When we talk about the rules we use this term called “inside baseball,” and I want to make sure that people realize this isn’t an inside baseball issue we’re discussing today. We’re not debating an obscure principle when we talk about the member for Cambridge’s privilege that was breached by the Minister of Energy, as we all clearly know that it has.

This goes to the right of our democratic system—the very heart of our democratic system. It speaks to the ability of opposition members to hold the government to account and to prevent them, as a government, from abusing their power. That’s what I think we are discussing today. We’ve got a government that has abused its power, and it’s betrayed the trust of people in this province who entrusted them about a year ago to make decisions in their best interests. Instead, we know that the government made a very calculated decision based on consultation with its campaign team for purely political purposes.

With all of the great needs we have in this province today, with the incredible fiscal challenge that we’re facing, this government made a decision to spend \$640 million to save a handful of Liberal seats. What this government has done by throwing away more than half a billion taxpayers’ dollars on a scandalous seat-saver scheme is utterly shameful, and by failing to comply with the Speaker’s ruling to come clean, with not only the members of this Legislature and, by extension, the people of Ontario, is also an utter disgrace.

What they’ve done diminishes this place. We’ve reached a new low in Ontario’s political history with the efforts of the McGuinty government. It’s fed a growing cynicism that Ontarians feel about their elected officials, and that cynicism affects every single one of us, all 107 MPPs. It affects us. The actions undermine the integrity of this House and those of us who are entrusted with conducting business on behalf of the people in all of our 107 ridings who elected us.

As upset as Ontarians should be about the wasted money, I think every single member of this House should be outraged at what this government has done, especially those in the government backbench. The McGuinty government’s abuse of power and the public trust makes it more difficult for every single one of us to execute our duties, both here in the Legislature and in our ridings. It produces a sense of skepticism, cynicism and mistrust, and it colours everything we do—the way a handful of McGuinty cabinet ministers and the Premier himself have undermined everyone in this place.

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Beyond the effect it has on us, it’s actually weakening our democracy by reducing the number of people who actually participate in it. The cynicism this government has fed not only has people tuning us out between elections but also has them ignoring very important debates of public policy. That’s bad enough, but what’s worse is the fact that it may be one of the key reasons why people fail to show up at the polls and participate during provincial elections. The conduct of this government cheapens those of us who answer the call of public service and do so out of a desire to live up to the standards of those great men and women who took their seats before us.

It’s actually unbelievable—I’ve heard a number of members mention these names earlier, but I want to express how unbelievable it is that the government House leader, someone who’s up to his elbows in this shameful conduct, would stand up this morning and invoke the names of great leaders like John Robarts and Bill Davis.

I recall reading that the Premier, Premier McGuinty, met with Mr. Davis following last fall’s election to get some advice on how to manage affairs in a minority Legislature. I don’t particularly know what advice Mr. Davis gave Mr. McGuinty that day, but I know for certain, based on the way that this government has conducted itself over the last year, that the Premier ignored that advice.

I can tell you that if the Premier sought Mr. Davis’s advice on the matter at hand today, well, I have to say that we wouldn’t be here having this debate today. That’s because leaders like Mr. Davis and Mr. Robarts built this province to be the envy of every single other Canadian province and, I might add, people around the world. They were able to do so not only because they had a grand vision about the province of Ontario and how best to set it up for a bright future; they were great leaders because they inspired people to follow their vision and to make it their own. They managed to do this in large part because, at the very core, they respected the institutions and the people of Ontario in a way that the McGuinty government has repeatedly shown it lacks. Rather than inspire people to follow, this Premier and cabinet seek to continue to divide Ontarians with wedge issues. The result may be that they’ve been pretty effective at the polls, but we’ve paid a steep price, I would suggest, for their efforts.

We know that under nine years of Dalton McGuinty and this government, they’ve largely squandered the economic legacy of Bill Davis and John Robarts. There are plenty of statistics I can recite today and others have recited before, but this power plant issue is tearing away the esteem and high regard that the people of Ontario once felt for their government because of the admirable and honourable ways we used to have with leaders like Robarts and Davis when they did their business.

To the government House leader, who used their names this morning, I say, sir, what our caucus is engaged in today upholds the finest traditions of the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario and every single

one of their predecessors in this place. What we're trying to do with this debate is hold you to account so that we can get all of the information. We need to expose the full scope of this particular scandal. It's not a cheap political stunt; it's for the greater good to have this level of accountability come forward. As the 107 members of this Legislative Assembly, we have to preserve the dignity of this place, which I believe has been put into jeopardy because of the cynical conduct of the McGuinty government and its cabinet.

I also want to take extreme objection to the government House leader's characterization of this Legislature this morning by calling it a "kangaroo court." I think it's offensive—and I withdraw that reference, Speaker. I think it's offensive that any officer of this Legislature would have such a low regard that he would use comments like that this morning.

MPPs who sit here have a right to question that when 36,000 pages are provided, with many of them blanked out or redacted—how can we feel that that complies in any way with the Speaker's September 13 ruling? It certainly doesn't. Only this government would be so arrogant to think they could pull a stunt like they pulled and not have someone try to hold them to account.

I was also disappointed this morning to hear the Attorney General's comments. He's a man that I've known for decades, and I have a great deal of respect for him, but I was very disappointed today when he suggested that our debate today is somehow—and I think he used the words "shutting out the people of Ontario from the real issues." With all due respect to the Attorney General, I think this is a very important debate we're having about why a government would obstruct our ability to hold them to account.

He went on in his speech—the Attorney General—to suggest that we should take this debate out of the public forum that we're having it in today and take it behind closed doors. He mentioned the House leaders would be a place where he felt it should be discussed. Well, having participated in part of those discussions and meetings following the Speaker's ruling two weeks ago, I can tell you that that suggestion has absolutely no point in moving that forward.

Further, I think having that debate behind closed doors would run counter to what our caucus is trying to accomplish today. We're having this debate instead of going about our regularly scheduled business because we want to finally shed a light and give a full public airing to the depths that the Dalton McGuinty government has sunk. We are not going to assist them in keeping the truth from seeing the light of day, and we're not going to agree to shove these discussions behind closed doors. Besides, it's unreasonable to think that any amount of conversation or negotiation is going to produce a different result because we have to look at how we arrived at this debate today.

We know the origin was the request from the Standing Committee on Estimates that the Minister of Energy produce all of the documents associated with the Missis-

sauga and Oakville power plants. The government ignored that original request. It led to the member for Cambridge rising on August 27 to draw attention to the fact that his privilege has been breached by the minister's refusal to comply. That did turn up the heat on the government, but they continued to stall. They even tried to hide behind solicitor-client privilege. It was almost a laughable excuse.

Then, Speaker, we had the September 13 ruling, which made it clear that the jig was up and that all of those documents had to come forward. But what did the government do? They still played games. The government waited until the very last moment, and only because of the Speaker's deadline—and they still tried to bury the opposition and the media with the mountain of documents.

I want to thank the members of the Ontario PC caucus who really have demonstrated throughout the debate today that we knew that the government wasn't going to come clean, and we wanted them to continue to go forward.

That's why, when you look at the documents—how can they claim that they've complied when, in all of the pages, there's not a single email from the former Minister of Energy? There's nothing from the Premier. There's nothing from the campaign team, despite the fact that the finance minister, when he testified on the decision to scrap Oakville in the final days of last year's campaign, acknowledged they were political. And I know that—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Mississauga.

Mr. Steve Clark: Sorry; Mississauga.

I know that the member for Kitchener–Conestoga did quote—and I will for the record quote the Minister of Finance from that estimates committee on July 19: "This was a campaign undertaking at a time when I think we were still behind in the polls, so it required a government decision, which occurred after the election." Speaker, there's still no paper trail in any of these documents that were released. You have to ask that question: Where is it, Speaker?

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We know, when you release 36,000 pieces of paper—the member for Nipissing quoted many of them this morning. There were thousands that were either redacted or completely blank. If nothing else, we need to come forward to find out the details of these two power plants and the accounting on what the Liberal Party of Ontario owes the people of Ontario.

The Liberal Party of Ontario made the decision to cancel these plants to save Liberal seats and cling to power. They were clearly partisan decisions. They were totally counter to sound public policy, and we can prove this, even with the limited amount of documents that we've received as part of the Speaker's order. So I think it's only fair that the Liberal Party of Ontario pay that money back to the people of Ontario for their political decisions.

I think it's an easy debt to square, because it can be measured in dollars and cents, but I think the damage to

the public's trust is going to take a lot longer for us to rebuild. I'm hoping that the government does see the error of its ways and starts the healing process by releasing, in their entirety, all of those documents, as per the Speaker's order. I hope that soon we'll have this debate and move it forward into the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs.

On this side of the House, we've warned the government for years about their mismanagement of the energy file. It's been ruining Ontario. We've talked, on this side of the House, about their disastrous schemes like the Green Energy Act, the Samsung deal, and, yes, to first place and then cancel both the Mississauga and Oakville power plants. I think they tell a sorry tale of this government and how clueless they are about ways to generate affordable, reliable energy. The fact that Ontarians are now paying double what some jurisdictions in Canada pay for electricity is ridiculous.

We can now point to some of the terrible decisions that Ministers of Energy have made. The result is businesses are being wooed elsewhere for cheap power. Jobs are leaving our province. That's why we've got 600,000 people in this province looking for work today. It's part of the reason why entire sectors of our manufacturing industry and our resource sectors have simply disappeared. They can't afford to do business in this province because of this government's energy fiascos.

Residential users, meanwhile, have seen their family budgets pressured to the breaking point by rates that have soared from 4.3 cents per kilowatt hour in 2003 to 10.7 cents in 2011. Speaker, that's an increase of 150%, and it's just part of this tale of incompetence and mismanagement at an unimaginable scale that we've seen from the McGuinty government on the energy file.

The Mississauga and Oakville power plant scandals are just another sorry, sad chapter in the McGuinty government's poor energy file. Only a government this adrift would choose to fix a problem from its own doing by making a hundreds-of-millions-of-dollars decision to throw money to relocate these plants, seemingly on a whim.

You look at the fact that there's no rhyme or reason to pick Lambton and Lennox. All we know is this government has backed itself into a corner. They needed to make a decision, and Lambton and Lennox were chosen because they were available. That's why they made that decision. Were there better options? Were there better, more cost-effective solutions? Perhaps, but we'll never know, because the minister didn't take the time to look at them.

Frankly, if you look at the way that this government has operated its public policy process on this file, it's ridiculous. You look at the eastern Ontario decision. The fact that they have to spend hundreds of millions of dollars to create transmission lines just shows the hastiness of this government when they made this decision.

Speaker, in closing, you look at one minister dealing with the decisions of another minister. It's just a sad way that we've progressed with the McGuinty government and this file.

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

Ms. Tracy MacCharles: Speaker, normally I'm very happy and energized to rise in this House and speak and engage in healthy debate, both here and at committees. That's what the residents of Pickering-Scarborough East sent me here to do. We're all honourable members. We don't always agree, and that's fine. That's why we're here. We're legislators. We're here to engage in those healthy debates and to help make good policies and legislation for the people in our ridings and for people in Ontario. It disturbs me greatly, Speaker, how caustic and negative some of the discussions have been in this House very recently. I think it's not consistent with what honourable members do, quite frankly, Speaker. As I said, we don't have to agree all the time, but the tone and tenor of the dialogue here has been quite negative.

Having said that, Speaker, I'm a practical person. I think most members of the House are indeed practical people. Ontarians are practical people, and they expect us to be practical in conducting our business. They expect us to be practical in dealing with taxpayers' dollars, because at the end of the day, we shouldn't have to remind ourselves that we are here overseeing the programs and services in Ontario using taxpayers' dollars.

As I understand it, the run-up to this motion and the debate that we're currently engaging in has to do with the release of these documents that we've been talking about. Just yesterday, shortly after announcing the settlement of the Oakville plant matter, the Minister of Energy and the Ontario Power Authority released all 36,000 records that were responsive to the original motion of the estimates committee. The government even went so far as to put each and every document on a USB key and provided one each to the opposition parties, in addition to the Clerk.

The request of the committee for these documents, in my view—and I think in the public's view, Speaker—is that the matter is satisfied, that the matter should indeed be over. Why are we standing here in the Legislature debating this? We should be talking about moving forward on other important pieces of legislation. Like many people, I came into work this week hoping to discuss a range of important other initiatives, voting on key things that have been debated in a very healthy way in this House.

Interjection: The seniors' tax credit.

Ms. Tracy MacCharles: Yes, the seniors' tax credit for one, but there's also some really good private members' motions that were scheduled to be debated this week, and I'm not hopeful, given the tone and tenor of the discussion, that we'll get to those very good private members' resolutions. I would say, from my understanding of those motions, that two of the three come from the opposition side that are excellent motions. So my fear is that we won't get there.

As I said, I'm a practical person, and it's my job to account to the residents of Pickering-Scarborough East about what's going on—and, to the extent I can, to all

Ontarians. So I think what I want to do is talk a bit about the estimates committee, if I may, because I did spend some time at the estimates committee in the spring and the summer, so I know first-hand a bit about what happened there. Over the last few weeks, the official opposition seems to suggest, and even the third party suggested, that the Minister of Energy wilfully attempted to hide or conceal these documents from the Legislature. That's fine. That's their opening position. They're free to say that. But really, Speaker, I was there when this started at committee, and nothing could be further from the truth. I think we have to look at the facts. I think we have to be practical about this.

Between May 9 and June 11, the Minister of Energy appeared before the Standing Committee on Estimates for the purpose of answering questions regarding the 2012-13 estimates of the Ministry of Energy. All ministers do that from time to time: appear before the Standing Committee on Estimates. That is the function of that committee, to review the detailed finances and so forth of the ministry that is appearing before that committee.

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While the minister answered questions related to many issues, the committee members from the official opposition spent considerable time asking the minister questions relating to the two gas plants, which were to have been built in Oakville and Mississauga respectively. When he was before the committee, the Minister of Energy was placed in a very difficult position, because he was repeatedly asked to answer questions relating specifically to the outstanding legal proceedings and confidential negotiations.

I think the taxpayers of Ontario understand that it's important to protect the public's interests. And when we talk about public interest, we're talking about taxpayers. We're talking about the implications of legal proceedings, and if they're not handled properly, if they are not handled in a confidential matter, that actually translates, at a practical level, to increased costs to taxpayers. And so that's where the Minister of Energy was coming from. He attempted to strike a balance, Speaker, between the committee's authority to ask those questions and the needs of the public interests in the middle of highly sensitive commercial negotiations and litigation. A healthy debate, yes; questions, yes, but I think, again, asked and answered many times, and unfortunately the opposition didn't take no for an answer, that we were indeed dealing with confidential negotiations.

When you are a minister of the crown, it is that balancing act that has to take place. The Chair of our estimates committee, the honourable member for Beaches—East York, recognized how precarious the situation was for the minister. In fact, he repeatedly ruled—repeatedly, Speaker—that while the committee members were permitted to ask such questions, the minister was able to exercise his discretion and respond to such questions in a manner that protected the interests of the province. Isn't that why we're all here? We are here to protect the

interests of Ontarians. We are here to advance the interests of Ontarians. We are here to deliver good programs—health care, education, social services and the environment. That is the job.

Going back to the estimates committee, I refer to Hansard, Speaker, on May 16, where Mr. Prue, the Chair of the committee, said, rightly so, "The minister has the right to decline either giving that documentation or giving voice to that documentation during his answering of the questions."

Further in Hansard, May 16: "I would advise that I'm going to allow the motion to proceed, but I would also advise—and I think the minister, being a lawyer himself, knows full well that he may choose to answer the question in such a way as not to prejudice the province in any way, and I would expect him to do so. That would be my ruling." When we talk about not prejudicing the province in any way, we're talking, again, about protecting taxpayers. That's what it's all about. We are entrusted with the public funds of this province, to spend them wisely, to put them to those key provincial programs, to make them efficient and effective and not to put that in jeopardy.

So the minister relied on the Chair's repeated statements in ruling that the minister was permitted to respond to questions and document requests from the committee members in a manner that protected the interests of the province and taxpayers, and all of our constituents—not just mine in Pickering—Scarborough East, or the minister's in his riding in London, but all Ontarians.

As a result, the minister wrote to the committee on May 30—we're going back to May 30 here—and advised the committee that he was exercising his discretion and would not be able to produce the requested documentation as it was confidential, subject to solicitor-client privilege, litigation privilege or of a highly commercial sensitive nature. Unfortunately, the official opposition ignored the flags that were raised by our Minister of Energy. They showed no restraint, Speaker—something we've seen so often.

On June 5, the member from Cambridge moved a motion to report to the House the minister's failure to produce all responsive records pursuant to the motion of May 16 and to kick-start these contempt proceedings.

The official opposition and the third party, in their attempt to vilify the Minister of Energy and score I don't know what kind of gains, will suggest that the minister is hiding something or concealing something. It's simply not true. We need to deal with the facts, Speaker, and the record shows that the honourable Minister of Energy, at all times, was trying to balance two important yet competing interests: supremacy of Parliament versus protecting taxpayers' interests.

Here's a very important point, Speaker: On July 10, the minister announced that the OPA had reached an agreement with Greenfield to relocate the Mississauga facility and that the government had accepted the OPA's recommendation to relocate the Mississauga facility to

the Lambton station in Sarnia. I, too, recall during the election, Speaker, that all parties—not just us; all parties—agreed that that plant should not proceed.

The legal matters relating to the Mississauga gas plant having been settled, the minister directed his ministry to provide the committee with all correspondence relating to the Mississauga facility that was responsive to the motion of May 16—we're going back to May 16—except for the records that were subject to solicitor-client privilege. Those documents were indeed provided to the committee. If any incorrect impression is being made that nothing was forthcoming, that is not true. If the minister was trying to hide or conceal documents, why would he have released them the moment he had a settlement with respect to the Mississauga gas plant? Again, I implore all members to deal with the facts of the case.

This brings us to the Speaker's ruling. As the negotiations regarding the Oakville plant were still ongoing, the minister was still not in a position to produce the document prior to the Speaker's ruling, and that was fairly recent. On September 13 of this year, the Speaker ruled that, while a prima facie breach of privilege had been established, he would set aside the matter and ask the three House leaders to take it upon themselves to find a path that could satisfy the request of the estimates committee. That's what minority government is all about: people and parties working together in the best interests of their constituents, and all of Ontario. I think that was an incredibly appropriate ruling for the Speaker to give, because that is the job of minority government. It's the job of opposition parties, both the official opposition and the third party, to work together and resolve these things. Quite frankly, that's what taxpayers demand of us, Speaker. They demand that of us, and I honestly think there would be little patience for a protracted, impractical delay of other important government business, and that is our job. That's why we've been sent here.

In the traditional procedure, when a Speaker apprises the House that this prima facie breach of privilege has been found, the member raising the matter is allowed to move a motion. In this matter, however, the Speaker exercised his discretion following the novel approach adopted by Speaker Milliken in the Afghan detainee matter, by setting aside his ruling in order to allow House leaders to devise a means where both their concerns are met, or in our case three House leaders. We've seen it before where the House leaders have come together and worked effectively, and I don't know for the life of me why that can't happen in this case too.

This approach was taken for a few reasons, and it's evident in the Speaker's ruling. The Speaker recognized the competing interests at play: the interests of the committee in exercising its parliamentary privileges, and the interests of the Minister of Energy in temporarily—this is very important—refraining from the disclosure of sensitive information in the midst of commercial negotiations, and the recognition of an opportunity for the three parties, through frank communication, to settle the

matter in a way that satisfied the request of the estimates committee.

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Again, I look back to the people of Ontario and what they expect of people in this Legislature. Quite frankly, they're not that fussy about rules and procedure and how it all works, but they do expect us to work together in the best interests of Ontarians and to move on in a practical manner when we can. The Speaker's ruling clearly laid out that this is a unique situation, unlike other cases, and it warranted a unique solution.

Again, I go back to, what is this all about? I think all of us are practical members. At the heart of this was the release of documents. I'm a new member, and maybe I don't understand absolutely everything, but I kind of get how it works. What was requested has happened; the documents have been released.

I'm scratching my head here, Speaker, wondering why this is dragging on. Why is the language so caustic? Why is the tone and tenor of the debate going to a fairly low common denominator? In my view, this should be over. We should be moving on. We should be talking about what's important to Ontarians. We should be standing here, working together, debating legislation that's important to the province.

In my last few minutes, I just have to talk about my observations of the Minister of Energy throughout this entire process.

My goodness, Speaker, it has been a long and protracted process. I'm very concerned that it will continue far beyond what it should; it will continue far beyond what Ontarians expect of us; it will continue far beyond what any of our constituents expect from each and every one of us as MPPs.

Past behaviour is a good indicator of future behaviour, and the Minister of Energy has an absolutely impeccable record. He is a man of integrity. He served as our Attorney General of this province for four years. He has been a well-respected and honourable member of the Legislature for nine years. He knows what he's doing, Speaker. Before he came to this place, he was a member of the Ontario bar, of the highest standing and reputation, for over 25 years. He opened community law clinics and taught law classes in his spare time. I've heard him talk in caucus about some of the excellent community work he has done to serve people in his riding and in Ontario. He always puts the interests of Ontarians first, and that is exactly what any good and honourable member would do.

It's a sad day when we really see that tone and tenor of the conversation go down, when I'm sensing more personal attacks rather than healthy and constructive debate. Ontarians absolutely deserve better.

I will proudly stand on this side of the House any day, any week, and support the principled actions of our Minister of Energy.

Having said that, where do we go now? I don't think the road forward is entirely clear. Are we debating this for hours? Is it going to be days? Is it going to be weeks?

I think that is a fairly unproductive use of time. It's an unproductive use of taxpayers' dollars. The time we're spending on this is time we're not spending on important government legislation. We're here to shape the legislation and programs related to health care, education, social policy, the environment, the economy. That's what Ontarians have asked us to do. Yes, it's a minority government; we need to work together. But the thought of spending hours, days, weeks or, God forbid, much longer than that on this, when in fact what's been asked has been delivered—the documents were requested; they've

been released. So, really, I think each of us has to be able to stand up to our own constituencies and explain what the heck is going on here.

I, for one, and my colleagues on the government side want to move forward constructively, productively and work together as we move forward.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): It being close to 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9.

The House adjourned at 1755.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre de Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Del Duca, Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Innovation / Ministre du Développement économique et de l'Innovation
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Attorney General / Procureur général
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of 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
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
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	
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
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
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
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	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Milligan, Rob E. (PC)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
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
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
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	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

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