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(Hansard)**

**Monday 1 October 2012**

**Lundi 1<sup>er</sup> octobre 2012**

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière  
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 1<sup>er</sup> octobre 2012

*The House met at 1030.*

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

*Prayers.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Minister of Natural Resources on a point of order.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Speaker, I'd like to take this opportunity, if I may, to introduce a special guest from Thunder Bay. We have Dr. Brian Stevenson, president and vice-chancellor of Lakehead University, here with us today; also Debbie Comuzzi, the new vice-president of external relations, returned back to Thunder Bay—Debbie, great to have you here; and also Richard Longtin, manager of alumni relations at Lakehead University. There's a reception this evening, I think, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. in rooms 228 and 230. All members of the Legislature are invited to be there. Welcome.

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

**Mr. Frank Klees:** I too would like to welcome special guests today: Effie Triantafilopoulos, Judy Tutty and Bill Parsons in the members' gallery. They're here from Mississauga South and they'll have an opportunity to hear the debate that is going on here today. Welcome.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Simcoe North.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I'd also like to welcome the Lakehead delegation because we have a beautiful campus in Orillia, Ontario, and also my executive assistant Mary Silk from Orillia and my executive assistant from Queen's Park, Gaggan Gill.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Timmins—James Bay on a point of order.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I'd like to welcome all the Liberal staffers back from the Liberal convention in Ottawa on the weekend.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Mississauga—Brampton South.

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** I would like to introduce my page Sashin Narayan's parents from the great riding of Mississauga—Brampton South. Sunita Narayan and Cameron Narayan are in the public gallery. I welcome them to Queen's Park.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** As we all know, when we do points of order, sometimes they are not points of order, and sometimes they are humorous. We'll flow with that.

MEMBERS' PRIVILEGES

Resuming the debate adjourned on September 27, 2012, on the amendment to the amendment to the motion by Mr. Leone arising from the Speaker's ruling of September 13, 2012.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Barrie has the floor.

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** Thank you for the opportunity to summarize some of my comments from Thursday.

We're still here today debating this because the Liberals are intent in denying they have done wrong by the hard-working taxpayer with their politically motivated decision to cancel the Oakville and Mississauga power plants—as well as by using every trick in the book to conceal the very documents that would expose the truth. It's embarrassing for this government that it has come to this, especially considering nothing like this has been seen in this Legislature for over 100 years.

We have been able to confirm from the thousands of documents, many of them redacted, that a combined total for the Mississauga and Oakville seat-saver programs is at least \$650 million. Unfortunately, this is likely to be substantially more, with the government being "pleased" if the costs of this cancellation do not exceed \$1.2 billion for the Oakville plant. Likely, this will be the case for Mississauga as well, doubling the cost.

Despite extensive redacting, we were able to piece a few details together. The energy policy decisions came from a campaign team, as surreal as that sounds.

We also discovered extended correspondences from their internal legal counsel pitching creative scenarios about how these cancellations can be justified away, or rather, how the Liberals might be able to get away with it. For example, for Mississauga, the Minister of Energy could issue a directive that may result in the revocation of Greenfield South's licence to generate electricity, but only if it can be connected to either "energy conservation, load management, energy efficiency or the use of cleaner energy sources including alternative or renewable energy sources."

Anyone can conduct a most basic research project and plainly see the range of those excuses for each plant's cancellation. If there was one legitimate reason, we wouldn't see this range at all. I do think there was one legitimate reason, and that's exactly what legal counsel warned the Minister of Energy about: public misfeasance. If it talks like a duck, if it walks like a duck, it's a duck. That's Occam's razor.

Squandering what could potentially be billions in failed energy projects for political gain is outright abuse of government power. And guess what? The documents reveal that the Liberals were afraid of that, too. I remind you that documents reveal that the former Minister of Energy actually asked legal counsel for a Coles Notes on tort misfeasance in public office, including defences. In other words, the minister wanted examples where another public office holder abused power and the possible defenses for those very offences.

It is disappointing that we're still here debating the contempt of this government. It seems pretty clear to me that they have contempt for parliamentary privilege through the continuous obstruction and delayed access to these power plant documents in the first place, the obstruction of committees and the significantly redacted files received last week. This is all courtesy of our current Minister of Energy, or rather, the Liberal fall guy, an outstanding character. This is not to forget the dreadful decision-making that led us all here in the first place by the former Minister of Energy.

I conclude by asking my colleagues opposite again if using their power to blow through potentially billions of Ontarians' tax dollars to save our Oakville and Mississauga colleagues' seats was worth it. Was it worth it to go from a minority government without seats to a minority government with seats? And therein lies the crux of the problem. This government has not yet realized that this is a minority government. The government has power, and it's distinctly drawn at serving Ontarians, not winning elections. It has also refused to believe that in fact, it is in contempt of the member from Cambridge's parliamentary privilege.

1040

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

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** When I was an altar boy, I could say the entire mass in Latin, but I had to rely on the initiative of the member from Mississauga—Streetsville as he said, "Audi alteram partem: Listen to the other side." I have a very strong feeling that's what all sides are now doing.

I congratulate members for being professional, for the transparent dialogue by all parties, and I can tell you that there are few exceptions.

As they are carrying on business in a professional manner, more orderly, it really reminds me of my days back on Ajax council and regional council. Because they were both televised, it would not be uncommon, on an ongoing basis, to have residents stop me in the street and say what a professional group of people the council of that day was and compliment me. I would in turn say to them that it's the entire body that makes it happen in a professional manner. In this Legislature, there is dialogue that is much improved. There is a level of congeniality, and I congratulate all three parties.

In referencing the power generation, we have to remember that OPG, Ontario Power Generation, is next door to me in my riding and many ridings throughout Durham, commencing with Ajax—Pickering, Whitby—

Oshawa, the riding of Durham itself and, of course, Haliburton. It's important to know that OPG has done a tremendous amount for our area and they're very significant—and pleased with the province's settlement with TransCanada Energy related to the cancellation of the Oakville plant. There are many things that will progress by that, and OPG will progress with the procurement analysis of their new nuclear project at Darlington. We continue to pursue this and other opportunities in Durham region.

All of my colleagues, regardless of affiliation, are wholeheartedly behind the Darlington project. We're anxious to see it go forward. Quite frankly, there has been an easing of the energy needs in this worldwide economy. It has slowed down the process, but Darlington needs to be continuing in their ongoing process, to proceed. All members of Durham, regardless of their affiliation, are wholeheartedly in concurrence with this. We come from one common bond, and that is to progress in Durham through energy.

When I talk about the plants, I'd like to start at the top, and that's with some comments from the Premier of Ontario, our leader of government, an upfront gentleman who stands up and says it like it is. Some of the items that he indicated were that when our government announced we were relocating a gas plant from Oakville to eastern Ontario, the total cost of the relocation would be \$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.

"Since 2003, we've rebuilt our electrical system. We've added 10,000 megawatts of new, clean generation, including six new gas plants, and 5,000 kilometres of transmission lines.

"That represents almost \$30 billion 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%"—I repeat: 90%—"with a corresponding 93% decrease in harmful sulphur emissions.

"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," of which Durham is a part, "so we planned these natural gas plants in Oakville and Mississauga.

"With time and the hard work of Ontarians, Ontario's ... future became more certain. It was beginning to look like the gas plants in Oakville and Mississauga might not

be as critical to our energy plans as we had previously thought.

“At the same time, opposition to locating gas plants in these communities was significant,” in some areas. “We listened carefully to the community,” which we were elected to do. “And we looked at the security of our energy supply and concluded that these plants could be located elsewhere....

“It is worth noting that both opposition parties,” as well as the government, “promised to cancel the Mississauga plant. They agreed with our decision. They understood there would be a cost to this.” I think that’s worth repeating: Both opposition parties and the government indicated they would make those cancellations. Those other than the government agreed with our decision, and they understood there would be a cost.

“In Ontario, we’re renewing 80% of our electricity system. This is a massive undertaking. It’s impossible to do it perfectly. But we’re working as hard as we can to get it right. We’re getting some great results.

“We all have cleaner air to breathe. In the summer of 2005, there were 48 smog days in the GTA. Last summer, there were only 12. This means kids with asthma can spend more time outside and seniors are at less risk of being hospitalized.

“On top of cleaner air, we have more clean energy jobs—20,000 so far and” well “on our way to 50,000. And homes and businesses have as much power as they need.”

Going back to cleaner air, and that this means children with asthma can spend more time outside, I can tell you first-hand that three of my nephews, now middle-aged men who live in the east end of Durham, all had serious asthma problems as infants and as they grew up. But at middle age, the oldest one came to me and said, “Uncle Joe, what’s this difference? What’s going on? Why haven’t you really emphasized it to the public?” I indicated to him, first of all, how pleased I was that his health had improved so much, but that we are focused on doing a good job and not focused on telling a good story. Perhaps we should have been.

Changes go on, and I’d like to just touch on a couple of questions that seem to be arising from the USB—universal serial bus—that’s been used for producing the files, some 36,000 pages. There was some concern about either blank pages or copying a two-sided sheet or some parts of text missing. I asked the IT lead person at my firm’s multi-manufacturing graphic department, and he said, “Although you have the potential, it could be a programming glitch. You should really deal with an IT expert.” I think anybody who is making statements should have done that in advance.

Some of the answers can be a laser copier sending through double copies. We have some expensive equipment, and if there’s static in the paper that will certainly happen, although I don’t see that as a regular occurrence. However, if the subject file has text on one side and is blank on the other side, then that’s what will be copied, one side with text and one side that’s blank. Again, that’s

common procedure. It’s not unusual, if you’re copying both sides of a page, that both sides would be copied.

If sections are missing, is the public aware that the government may only copy what was asked for, leaving blank areas because it was information pertaining to other items on another agenda? That makes sense to me.

**1050**

Again, my staff person, my number one person in the office who oversees the IT department, said, “Take it to an IT expert, because I cannot give you a professional comment on that. Check the programming for glitches. Again, take it to an expert.”

When I took an opportunity to speak to some of the members in the Mississauga-Oakville areas, I found it quite interesting in that it was not really an issue, except in a couple of candidates’ areas where there were some questions. Other than that, they hadn’t really heard anything at the door.

I can say that it could have made a difference of 500, 1,000, 1,500 votes. Who knows in these situations? I certainly don’t and wouldn’t want to put a figure to that. But I can tell you that in Mississauga South our incumbent government member had a 6,000 majority, with a 51% plurality vote of all parties combined. When you go to places like Etobicoke Centre, it was 8,000, with 51% to 52%; Oakville, almost 4,600 votes, or 48% plurality; Mississauga-Erindale, some 4,300 plurality, with 45% of the total vote; and it went on through Mississauga East-Cooksville at 4,200; Mississauga-Brampton South, some 5,000 plurality; and in Mississauga-Streetsville, almost an 8,000-vote spread. That’s 51.5% of the vote, compared.

I’d like to take a moment, if I could, Mr. Speaker—I don’t want to run shy on time here, but I would like to just make a couple of comments in reference to the Minister of Energy, the former Attorney General, Minister Bentley, and what he’s meant to our riding, and I hope I’m speaking for all of my members throughout Durham.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Point of order.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member, take a seat, please. Point of order from the member from Kitchener-Conestoga.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** For the last six weeks, the Liberal House leader has refused to reconstitute the standing committees of the Legislature. Therefore, I seek unanimous consent to reconstitute the standing committees—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I don’t think that’s an appropriate point of order.

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Throughout Durham, he has been a very common—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** As I suspected, there is a timeliness for putting these types of questions and this point of order. So I am going to ask that we refrain from doing so. When this debate is finished, the member then could appropriately put that question to the House.

I’ll recognize the member from Ajax-Pickering to continue.

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** Mr. Speaker, also on a point of order: When a situation like this occurs, could you please stop the clock? Is that a possibility? I just leave that for your decision, sir.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** That would be my prerogative, and I will keep that in mind as you continue.

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** Thank you for that, Mr. Speaker.

We have a distinguished lawyer, a gentleman who commenced classes and has assisted students, who has dealt with requests to turn over records on relocating the plants after the negotiations. I can tell you, as a distinguished lawyer, he went one step above and beyond his own personal expertise and sought legal expertise by commercial experts. That is because negotiations on closure of a building could be jeopardized with higher taxpayer costs if the files were made public before negotiations were completed. That's ongoing business and professional standards and safety measures, as we all know. Certainly, I do that as a business person on an ongoing basis. Files would be turned over at the end of the negotiations, and indeed they were turned over at the end of negotiations.

I can tell you, if it was the construction of the Durham Regional Courthouse, most of my fellow colleagues from Durham were there and were front and centre. I congratulate the minister for his efforts in that. At that time, the Ontario Attorney General, Mr. Bentley, was out for Durham Regional Police Services on many occasions and brought grants for Durham police to fight against child pornography and computer fraud; that's extra police money that was not there before.

I ask you to keep in mind a couple of terms: the term "confidentiality" and the term "non-disclosure."

In the summer of 2011, the minister gave Durham Regional Police Services some \$115,000 through Ontario's civil remedies grant program, which enables money illegally acquired to be redistributed by police services to victims of crime. Out and out, it was the second grant in two years the Durham police have received from the Attorney General—all very, very positive.

As the minister in his current portfolio, he has hosted many events in our area, a sellout at the board of trade as he brought forward new information. Minister Bentley has visited Veridian, which is the largest power assembler in that part of Ontario, to discuss the province's smart grid and its increasing intelligence and indicate some joint ventures.

One of the last ones that the minister spoke at was the Durham Strategic Energy Alliance held at the Ajax Convention Centre. It was a sellout. One of the items on the agenda was the Darlington new build, and that's something both I and my fellow colleagues want to see go forward.

I have a short thank you note which actually I just received Friday, Mr. Speaker. I want to say this because it pertains to all members of the Legislature. The individual was dealing with an ailing parent who, unfortunately, passed away last week. They were looking for a nursing home. It was almost impossible to do. There was a location made available—

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Point of order.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Chatham–Kent–Essex on a point of order.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** With all due respect to our member from Ajax–Pickering, the motion is not with regard to a character testament to the minister. The motion is about contempt and I would ask that he address—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Actually, the motion isn't a motion about contempt, for that correction. I have been listening carefully to the member, and he has been successfully bringing his points to the motions that we are talking about, so I will ask the member to continue.

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** Because I'm losing so much time with some questions, Mr. Speaker, I'll condense it as much as I possibly can.

In the end, the gentleman's father passed away. He made very positive, sincere comments to what our office had done. He spoke to me personally, thanking me in correspondence. But I have to tell you, when something like that happens, I don't feel it's me; I feel it's every single member of the Legislature, because every single member of the Legislature works extremely hard. I added a handwritten note that said, "I know all members of the Legislature regardless of party are dedicated individuals who work hard every day" for their residents.

There's a couple of things I would like to say. I won't be able to support this motion as it's currently written. I think there are some political games being played, and I don't want to see this gentleman have his integrity dishonoured.

The amendment and sub-amendment don't in any way make the motion more palatable. They seem to be tweaks. They're not making substantive changes, and I believe that's what an amendment must do. The government has informed the Speaker and the House that we intend to move a substantive amendment, an amendment that would make the motion more acceptable.

**1100**

I know we're debating the sub-amendment right now, Mr. Speaker, but I must say I wish I could get on with dealing with more substantive changes to the motion. I believe more substantive changes would improve this motion and, hopefully, allow us to get on with the important business that the people of Ontario are counting on us to move forward with.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you sincerely, fellow members.

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

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Speaker, on a point of order.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Point of order.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** My apologies to the member from Ajax–Pickering too, for interrupting him before.

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to reconstitute all the standing committees immediately, with the existing committee structures as they existed on September 9, 2012, and that said committees be reconstituted until at least August 31, 2013.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Kitchener–Conestoga is seeking unanimous consent. Do we have unanimous consent? I heard a no.

Further debate?

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I rise today in support of the motion before the House, tabled by my colleague the member from Cambridge, to hold the Minister of Energy in contempt of the Ontario Legislature.

This motion came about as a result of the ruling of the Speaker on September 13 that a prima facie breach of privilege had occurred, and ordered the Minister of Energy to turn over all documents by 6 p.m. last Monday, September 24.

In his ruling, the Speaker made some very astute observations—I'm complimenting you: "The House has never set a limit on its power to order the production of papers and records."

He also said, "The Standing Committee on Estimates was unquestionably entitled to request the documents sought from the Minister of Energy...." You can't get much clearer than that.

On the day of the Speaker's ruling, the Minister of Energy spoke to the media and stated that he would comply with the Speaker's ruling. However, in the days that followed, the Premier was expressing caution about what documents would actually be turned over. Meetings were held with the House leaders to arrange for the turning over of these documents. Unfortunately, that was a futile exercise.

The government House leader has tried to blame the opposition House leaders for being inflexible in negotiating the turning over of the documents. The truth is that the government House leader was trying to wiggle out of strict adherence to the ruling of the Speaker. He tried to negotiate conditions about how the documents would actually be turned over, including maintaining an element of secrecy. That simply is not acceptable to the PC caucus. It was not what the Standing Committee on Estimates had asked for. It was not what the Speaker had ordered in his ruling.

The government finally announced that they would turn over all requested documents as per the Speaker's ruling. However, it dragged out to almost the eleventh hour. Last Monday morning, the government House leader stood in the Legislature and trumpeted the fact that the government would be turning over all of the documents by noon that day, six hours earlier than the Speaker's imposed deadline. Wow, that's very proactive and responsive.

Anyway, the Minister of Energy even announced that the cancellation of the Oakville plant would only cost \$40 million, and that was a great deal for taxpayers. You gotta be kidding me.

In an Ontario Power Generation briefing for the then Minister of Energy in February 2010, it was stated: "The cost the supplier has incurred to date might be as much as \$100 million. The supplier has already ordered and paid for gas turbines."

In the same briefing, it was also pointed out to the minister: "The measure of damages that OPA would

likely be liable for would be the supplier's lost profits over the term of the contract, which would be quite a significant amount of money.

"With \$1 billion invested at a return of 8% or 9%, damages would be in the neighbourhood of \$80 million to \$90 million plus, for the cost for the already-purchased gas turbines."

How in the world can the Minister of Energy stand up in the House and talk about a figure of \$40 million and brag it was a great deal? The cost of the Oakville cancellation could be as high as \$450 million, if not greater. Based on a cursory review of the documents, this could include \$210 million for gas turbines; the \$40 million in unrecoverable costs, as bragged about by the Minister of Energy; and \$200 million for transmission lines. So how does \$450 million become \$40 million in the Minister of Energy's mind? I know it's been a long time since I've been in a math classroom, and I'm not sure of the current curriculum produced by the Minister of Education in teaching these days, but that doesn't make sense.

Last Monday, 36,000 documents showed up an hour late. Teams of staff members pored over a portion of the documents until well into the wee hours of the morning, and they're continuing to.

It quickly became evident that hundreds, if not thousands, of pages were missing and others were redacted or whited out or blacked out. For example, no documents whatsoever were produced which were authored by the Minister of Energy or any of his staff. So does the minister expect us to believe that, being the minister responsible for this file and overseeing the cancellation of these plants, he never wrote or signed a single document or letter to anyone or any organization? It absolutely makes no sense.

There are also time gaps within the documents provided. It also appears that information has been redacted prior to turning the documents over. Now, I know that the member from Ajax–Pickering just said it could be an IT problem—I mean, redacted—but, really, is it an IT problem? I don't think so.

**Interjection:** It's quite a problem.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** It's quite a big problem. That is the problem.

Anyway, this latter point was illustrated very effectively by the member from Nipissing in his comments in the House last Tuesday. He cited example after example of documents with large portions of information whited out. He even held them up for everyone to see, in case the Liberal government wasn't believing us. He gave countless examples of letters, documents and presentations which included page after page after page that were entirely blank. There might be a salutation and a "hope to see you in the morning" type of thing. Everything in the middle was gone.

In the sample of documents which researchers were able to review within the time frame, the member from Nipissing found nearly 1,000 blank pages. This is absolutely shameful. How can the government House leader stand up in this House with a straight face and tell us the

Ministry of Energy has provided all the requested documents? Again, unbelievable.

After all this and after the Speaker's ruling on September 13, we still don't have all the necessary information. The Minister of Energy has sealed his fate. He is unquestionably in contempt of this House.

A contempt motion, like the one we are debating, is not something to be taken lightly. It is an incredibly serious matter. You only have to look at the rarity of an action of this magnitude in Canadian and Ontario history. The last time something comparable to this occurred in the Ontario Legislature was 104 years ago, so we are all witnessing an historic event.

In our parliamentary system of government, contempt of Parliament is the most serious thing that a member of government or a government can face. It is a condemnation by his peers, by all of us. It is a statement of condemnation that the actions, in this case by the Minister of Energy, violated the fundamental rights of Parliament, which are essential to the workings of a democratic society.

Mr. Speaker, this has almost become tragic. There was no need for things to get this far. The minister had ample opportunity to deal with this issue in a constructive and respectful manner. He could have responded quickly and completely to the legitimate request of the Standing Committee on Estimates. The committee had a legal right to review all documents pertaining to the cancellation of these power plants and what that means for Ontario taxpayers.

Let's just take a few minutes to review the chronology of how we got to this regrettable point. In October 2010, the McGuinty government announced that it would be cancelling a gas-fired energy plant project to be built in Oakville. At the time, and until last week, no details were provided by the Ministry of Energy or the McGuinty government as to the financial repercussions of this announcement.

On September 24 of last year, during the waning days of the 2011 general election, the government announced that it would not be proceeding with the Mississauga gas-fired plant, which was already under way. This decision was made for purely political reasons, and we're not even sure it was actually made by the government.

The Minister of Finance stated on July 19, at a meeting of the Standing Committee on Estimates, "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."

So, basically, the Liberal Party high command made a decision which required a rubber-stamp approval by the real government.

On May 9, the Minister of Energy also appeared before the standing committee. During his testimony, he was asked various questions pertaining to the cancellation of the Oakville and Mississauga power plants. It would be a gross understatement to say that the minister was less than forthcoming. After repeated direct questions from my colleague the member from Nipissing,

who is our energy critic, about the cost of cancelling the Oakville plant and whether any interim payments had been made, the minister repeatedly refused to provide direct answers. He continued to cite the confidential and sensitive nature of the information as his reason for not providing the answers requested by the members of the committee.

**1110**

When the minister was pressed by the member from Nipissing on the cancellation of the Mississauga plant, he continued to stonewall. He would not provide any direct answers to questions posed to him regarding the cost of the cancellation or the details of penalty clauses in the contract. However, he did provide one rather enlightening statement. When asked when he was advised that the Mississauga plant would not proceed, he admitted to the committee that he first heard of the cancellation on September 24, 2011, during the heat of the provincial election campaign, when he read about it in the newspaper. Unbelievable. How could a senior minister of the crown, Attorney General at the time, not be included in the decision-making process of such a far-reaching decision? That in itself is unbelievable.

Perhaps it makes it a little easier to understand why the Premier was so quick to hang this particular minister out to dry by ordering him to ignore the requests of the Standing Committee on Estimates and face a charge of contempt with the ensuing legal consequences. This government's obsession with secrecy and withholding of information to expediently serve its own political purposes could well cost the Minister of Energy his political career and possibly even his licence to practise law. I guess someone has to be the scapegoat. It might as well—

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Point of order.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Mississauga–Streetsville on a point of order.

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Speaker, this is going way over the top in allegations against a minister of the crown who has signed an affidavit claiming that he has turned over every piece of paper pertinent to this.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you. Having a seat is one thing, but stopping talking when I'm standing is also another part of it. That's not a point of order.

Member, proceed.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It's unfortunate the Minister of Energy is so little thought of by the Premier and the Liberal Party high command that he read about this major and controversial decision in the media. So yes, I think there is a bus involved and he's under the tire of it.

Basically, the Minister of Energy has become cannon fodder for the Premier. I can't even say that he is collateral damage, because he wilfully played an active role in the obstruction. He could have stood up to his boss and said that what he was being asked to do was—

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Point of order.

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



**Mr. Bob Delaney:** Speaker, if there was any doubt, it is now removed. The member has stated, in her own words, that a minister of the crown wilfully played a part and made an allegation that is without substance and merit. That is, in fact, making an allegation against a member. That is a point of order.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank the member for his point of order. I would ask all of us to stick to the intent of the motion and use as much restraint from raising the bar of anger as possible, and to keep the tone based on the motion. I appreciate the members to do that.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Energy, when asked by the committee, should have been allowed—and it was the Premier who was withholding him from producing the documents, which we all know and which you have ruled should be produced. Not thousands—I think I heard we're up to 2,000 pages as we go through them that are basically whited out.

The cancellation of the Mississauga and Oakville power plants was done for one reason and one reason only, and that was admitted by the Minister of Finance. At that point in the campaign, the Liberal high command realized that they were in a potentially precarious situation with regard to the Liberal-held seats that would be impacted by the building of the Mississauga power plant. The Liberal Party high command wanted to save those Liberal seats that otherwise might have been in jeopardy. So without even proper consultation with senior cabinet ministers—we already have the former Minister of Energy saying he read about it in the paper—the high command threw a Hail Mary pass and announced that the Mississauga plant would not proceed.

I can still remember the television stations sending camera crews in the days and weeks that followed, documenting the fact that the construction was continuing full bore despite the announcement. You could see the workers being interviewed as they were driving their big trucks into the plant. The communication on this important decision was abysmal, both internally and externally.

Unfortunately for Ontario and the taxpayers of this province, the Liberal campaign's Hail Mary pass actually worked this time. Unfortunately, the Liberal high command did end up saving five Liberal seats. Talk about a seat-saver special. The Premier has just said, I believe, in comments, "Well, that's just the price of doing politics." That's just absolutely unacceptable.

It is not without precedent with the McGuinty government, though. We all know the turmoil which the Minister of Energy has created across rural Ontario with his ideologically driven commitment to proliferation of industrial wind turbines across rural Ontario. Residents, farmers, municipalities and community groups across the province have said loudly and clearly that they do not want turbines next to residential areas and schools. The people of rural Ontario have repeatedly called on this government to announce a moratorium on further wind turbines, at least until proper health studies are com-

pleted. However, those pleas have fallen on deaf ears. Green is good in their eyes—if you can call it green—and damn the torpedoes.

Could it possibly be more than just a coincidence that most of these rural seats are held by the opposition? Could this government really be that callous and cynical? That's a rhetorical question to which we all know the answer. Of course they are that callous and cynical.

When a number of industrial wind turbines were being proposed along the shores of Lake Ontario off Scarborough, there was a similar hue and cry on the part of the residents. The difference was, in that case the five Scarborough ridings that were fighting the project were all held by Liberals. The McGuinty government and the Liberal high command knew that the five seats would be in jeopardy if those wind turbines were to be constructed. As a result, the project was shelved and five more Liberal seats were saved. Seat-saving specials seem to be a standard part of this government's operating procedure. Yes. So, really, what happened in Mississauga should come as no surprise. This government has a track record of making blatantly politically motivated decisions, regardless of the cost to taxpayers. Their actions are then followed by a code of silence.

What was that famous line from *The Godfather*? "It isn't personal; it's just business." Well, it is personal. It's our tax dollars, our sensibilities that are being usurped. It's very personal for all Ontarians. As depressing and shocking as all of this is, we should take consolation that as a result of what has come to light over the past few months, combined with the scandals and the mismanagement we have seen at the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Ontarians are now realizing what this Liberal government is doing running the province. I hope that next time—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Yes—they'll have complete faith, and totally convinced that they won't make the same mistake next time.

I was out doing a radiothon for my local hospital on the Friday, and they were just like, "All this money, up to \$650 million, for these two power plants—do you know how much health care that could have bought?" That was the number one thing that they asked on the radiothon. They're paying attention. Yes. And they mentioned many more scandals than the \$650 million. They went to eHealth. They went to Ornge. They said, "We're struggling to get adequate health care—especially rural Ontario, which has its challenges—and yet we see all this blatant disregard for taxpayer money, wilfully squandered by this government."

So the work of the Standing Committee on Estimates was clearly obstructed by the Ministry of Energy's continued refusal to provide all the relevant documents, which have been requested by committee.

We're still anxiously awaiting any committees to be struck because they haven't been in operation since September 10. The government says we're blocking all the good work that they're trying to do. Well, they

haven't struck the committees. There are about 30 pieces of legislation that are stalled. They're the ones holding up striking the committees. We want to get this place functioning. We want this to go to the committee on finance so we can ask further questions, because thousands of pages of whited-out documents are not helping us get down to the bottom of the question.

**1120**

We have a responsibility, in opposition, to make sure that this government is kept in line and taxpayers' money is spent wisely. When they yell at us that they didn't do anything wrong, that is absolutely not true. They are not providing the information that we as parliamentarians have the right to know, that the taxpayers have the right to know.

When this government goes on and on that it's all our fault and we're blocking their work, we all know that that is not accurate. The committees have not been struck. We still don't have all the answers to the \$650 million that the cancellation of these two power plants will cost—

**Interjection:** More to come too.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** —and more to come, as we say.

I certainly support and praise the member from Cambridge for bringing this contempt motion before the Legislature—and the Speaker's ruling—so that we can have an open debate and the taxpayers of Ontario, hopefully, eventually will get some answers from this government.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your time.

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

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Point of order.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke on a point of order.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** I want to recognize the Liberals for using the Hugo Chávez method of voting at their convention this weekend in order to get—

*Interjections.*

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

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I would ask for your order, please. Not helpful.

Further debate?

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** I rise in this House with disappointment that we find ourselves here today to discuss this motion. While I'm disappointed by the need to speak to this motion of contempt, I am proud to add my voice to those that support my colleague Mr. Bentley, a fine parliamentarian and a thoroughly capable minister.

I must say that I cannot support this motion as currently written. The opposition is playing political games and looking to dishonour a man of integrity. The amendment and sub-amendment don't in any way make the motion more palatable. They are just tweaks to the date; they don't make substantive changes. The government has informed the Speaker and the House that we intend to move a substantive amendment, an amendment that would make the motion more acceptable.

I know we're debating the sub-amendment right now, but I must say that I wish we could get on with dealing with more substantive changes to the motion. I believe more substantive changes would improve this motion and, hopefully, allow us to get on with the important business that the people of Ontario are counting on us to move forward with.

I wish to offer my respect, as well, to Colin Andersen, the chief executive officer of the Ontario Power Authority, whose integrity is being called into question by association with this motion of contempt.

What bothers me perhaps the most about why we find ourselves here today is the thinly veiled—if veiled at all—hyperpartisanship behind the contempt motion filed by the member for Cambridge. It has been said in this House, and I will say it again for the record, that members from both opposition parties made it clear, both in this House and in correspondence to the energy minister, that they opposed both the Mississauga and the Oakville gas plants. That sounds like consensus to me. I caution the opposition from accusing us of actions for partisan gain. We all know that the reason we are here today isn't really about the relocation of the power plant, and it isn't really about the cost to move it. What we are doing in this House today does not in any way benefit Ontarians or save them money.

The honourable member from Mississauga South told this House last week that his community was concerned about the particulate matter in the airshed. When the community came together to voice their concerns, the government of the day listened. In fact, in 2000 the Ministry of the Environment commissioned a Clarkson airshed study. These are from his report, and I found it very good information the other day. Results from that study were released between 2006 and 2008 and confirmed that the airshed was stressed.

The community took the next step. They gave of their own volunteer time to participate in the Clarkson airshed advisory committee. They pushed for a task force to examine the problems and provide the solutions.

Our government listened and formed the Southwest GTA Air Quality Task Force, under the leadership of Dr. David Balsillie, in 2009. They produced a report to the Minister of the Environment in 2010. The report made it clear that the local airshed was already stressed. It noted the need to think about the cumulative impact of multiple emitters. It reinforced local concerns about introducing new emitters to the airshed. This led the community to become the site for a new pilot project that would help model a national air quality management system.

Torontonians have supported getting out of coal and Torontonians have been very much involved with air quality and the closing of the coal-fired plants, so this was very important to them.

Through years of effort, science on their side and the recommendations of experts in hand, the people of Mississauga and Oakville worked hard to protect their local air quality, and they made great progress. As the member from Mississauga said last week, it was truly a

community effort, supported by several great local leaders, like Mississauga mayor Hazel McCallion; former ward 1 councillor Carmen Corbasson; current ward 1 councillor Jim Tovey; ward 2 councillor Pat Mullin; Oakville mayor Rob Burton—so the political side was firmly behind this. The community was united. City council was united, including all other councillors like Prentice, Dale, Adams, Parrish, Iannicca, Mahoney, Saito, McFadden and George Carlson.

Even so, electricity planners were saying that local demand for power was growing, citing and remembering the blackouts that occurred years earlier. The previous government knew this all too well. They had done little to secure the integrity of the grid. That's why the former PC government approved the environmental assessment to site a gas-fired power plant in Clarkson in the southwest corner of Mississauga, next to Oakville. But our government was always looking at ways to ensure that we had the generation capacity we needed, especially when we also wanted to stop burning dirty coal. Minister Sousa reminded this House of the Lakeview coal plant, which was on our waterfront for decades. It was the worst polluter in the GTA. The community rejoiced when our government tore it down.

This government decision, which is at the centre of this debate, was even supported by the leader of the PCs, Tim Hudak. I quote now Mr. Ted Chudleigh, the member from Halton: "The people of Oakville have told you they don't want the proposed gas-fired power plant ... and I agree with them." In the *Globe and Mail*, the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Hudak, said, "We've opposed these projects in Oakville and Mississauga." Now, they're against the government decision.

During the campaign, the Ontario Liberal Party made a commitment that, if re-elected, the government would relocate the Mississauga facility to another location. The community was very pleased. After years of hard work, one of the parties had clearly been listening and had taken their concerns seriously.

But the question remained: Where did the other two parties stand? They responded to our announcement by saying that they too would make the same commitment. The *Globe and Mail* cites Mr. Hudak: "We've opposed these projects in Oakville and Mississauga." Having finally been awoken to this issue, the PC candidate in Scarborough—Agincourt even went further when he told the *Mississauga News*, "Only Conservative leader Tim Hudak will cancel the Eastern Power gas plant slated to be built on Loreland Avenue." The Leader of the Opposition went to Mississauga to talk about how they would cancel the power plant.

This was well covered the other day by the member for Mississauga South. He went into all the details of it. There was agreement at the political level that the people of Mississauga and Oakville had supported air quality all along and that there would be extra stresses on the air quality in their region—highly urbanized—whether it's from cars, trucks, energy producers or industries. These urban airsheds do get stressed, and this was the case, and the science was what they were using.

They even robcalled the people of Sherway to tell them that only the Hudak PCs would cancel the power plant. They were asking the people of Mississauga to vote for them so they could cancel the power plants themselves.

This twisting and turning by the PC Party was clearly seen in the community for what it was: a last-ditch attempt to do anything, say anything to try to win a seat. After six years and half of an election campaign of silence, the people of Mississauga were not fooled by this sudden conversion.

Shortly after being re-elected, our government announced the relocation of the Mississauga facility, as promised. We listened to the community. Following through on the commitment made by all three parties, OPA and the proponent reached a deal to relocate the plant.

Despite the facts, despite the context, despite what has been said on this matter by members of all sides of the House—it doesn't get more partisan than that.

Let's look at the facts of the matter we have before us: The Tories asked for documents, and we made the case—a strong case—that providing those documents would compromise our ability to negotiate with TCE. This occurred at the public accounts committee, but it was more in the estimates committee. We went through this in the public accounts committee, and the member for Willowdale spent considerable time speaking to the issue: that these were commercial discussions going on, that these were huge teams on each side, that there was a real reason not to give those documents forward. There was support from the Auditor General as well.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** It being 11:30, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1131 to 1300.*

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

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** I rise today to wish Angela Whitehouse a happy and healthy 70th birthday. As she relaxes with family and friends and reflects on life's many blessings, my wish for her is that she can have many more rewards to come. Happy birthday, Angela.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Very short and brief; thank you. It's not a point of order, but I think we'll accept that.

A point of order, the member from Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm very pleased to rise today and congratulate Dr. Peter Zakarow on his 80th birthday. He is a very active jogger—and physical fitness. He keeps current in events locally, municipally, provincially and federally. I wish him and Marianne a healthy and happy 80th birthday, and all of the year long.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Timmins—James Bay on what I suspect would be a point of order.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Yes. I just want, again, to welcome back the Liberal staff from the Liberal convention, being back on Monday; it's great to see them back.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I was doing my best to avoid that.

Having said that, the member from Ottawa–Orléans has the floor.

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Thank you, Speaker, and to the member from James Bay—wherever, thank you. We're happy to be back.

We were talking about the minister's appearance before the estimates committee when I left. I think I was just about to quote the member from Beaches–East York on what he said about the estimates committee and the minister answering questions during the very tough negotiations between our government, the OPA and the TCE:

"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."

That was something that's been said in here quite often, and it deserves repeating. The Minister of Energy attempted and did strike an effective balance between the committee's authority to ask those questions and request those documents and the need to protect the public interest in the midst of highly sensitive commercial negotiations and litigations.

Mr. Speaker, as elected officials, we must balance the supremacy of Parliament with the public interest. Our government did just that.

We can talk about how best this issue is resolved for Ontarians, about public interest, and I commend you, Mr. Speaker, for following the precedent set by your federal counterpart—the three House leaders to meet and come to an agreement to achieve a solution in the best interest of Ontarians—without breaching privilege, without compromising negotiations and without risking further cost to Ontarians in a decision that had already been taken. In your words, Mr. Speaker, "I ask that the three House leaders take it upon themselves to find a path that can satisfy the requests of the estimates committee."

In my view, our House leader met in good faith. We offered paths; we came to the table with solutions and were open to suggestions on how to proceed. We were met only with demands, and in my opinion, it was not in the interest of Ontarians that the opposition refused our suggestions, refused to offer counter-ideas, ignored the consequences of their demands and may have had the taxpayers of this province paying a little more as a result of not being able to reach agreement. The negotiations, of course, had to be brought to an end and the documents delivered, the 36,000 pages of documents that complied with the requests of you, Mr. Speaker.

We followed through, yet they admit that though we stand here and debate the supposed contents of these documents, smearing the minister with contempt, they are hypothesizing what may or may not be contained in the documents received. These are truly low standards

that they have set for themselves as parliamentarians. They seem to enjoy the wallowing of unfairness as they feel they have the votes to unjustly try to destroy an excellent lawyer, an excellent MPP and excellent minister.

There was never the intent to withhold the information beyond the time negotiations were complete. With the other plant and the completion of negotiations, the full cost of the cancellation was made public. Our government took full responsibility.

The minister said time and time again that, once negotiations were complete for the Oakville gas plant, he would make all the information available, and I question as to why the opposition refused to wait.

What we are speaking about here is not whether or not the minister is guilty of contempt of Parliament because he has met the requirements as established by the Speaker by delivering all the documents—36,000 pages—but whether this Parliament can be used by the two parties opposite to make this about something else. We shall see.

The level that we have taken the Legislature in in going after this minister is troubling to me. You have your documents. You received them on time as established by the Speaker. This should be at an end.

The presentation by the member for Mississauga South shows how and when the decision was made, but now we have to get to the other major considerations of this. I'd like to read something that was in the Mississauga newspaper, I believe. It's a recent article. It's from Scott Kletke, Lakeview Ratepayers Association. The title is "NIMBY Offends Us."

"Recent articles and editorials regarding the cancelled Greenfield generation plant in Mississauga have misrepresented the facts. This can't be ignored. If left to stand, they'll come to be accepted as truth.

"The initial proposal to build a new generation facility was opposed by the city of Mississauga, the area residents and all local provincial politicians. The only reason the project was allowed to proceed, after city council rejected the plan, was because the developers appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board, who then approved the project despite overwhelming opposition.

"The OMB is the root of the problem. The ability for one unelected OMB adjudicator to overturn municipal planning policies is outrageous. If the city's planning policy had been respected, it wouldn't have been necessary for the Liberal government to cancel the plant and incur the \$190-million price to move the plant."

That's a new issue. I hadn't heard that the OMB had got their nose in there and had further complicated that whole process, which was a long process.

The member from Scarborough–Agincourt came up with some information that I guess we all knew, but that was the history of the way some governments have gotten into difficulties. If you run a big business, that's part of the issue, part of the problem. The member from Scarborough–Agincourt clearly shows that the history of this Legislature abounds in decisions that were made and

were changed, and there were costs that followed to the taxpayers. That's unfortunate, but it happens.

She talked about, in 1991, that the NDP government "cancelled the Red Hill Creek Expressway. This proposed expressway is located in the region of Hamilton-Wentworth. For 25 years, the region has been trying to build this expressway. Only three months after the NDP took office, it cancelled the Red Hill Creek Expressway. This construction project was approved by a joint board decision in 1985." It goes on to say that, "The NDP government of the day spent \$70 million" when they cancelled that project. So that's just part of it.

The member for Scarborough–Agincourt also reminded the Legislature that, on July 11, 1995, in an interview with the *Toronto Star*, the former Chair of Management Board, the Honourable Dave Johnson, indicated the cancellation of the Eglinton and Sheppard lines in the city of Toronto, even though the government of the day had spent approximately \$260 million. The mayor of Toronto at the time, Mr. Lastman, commented that the building of the two additional subway lines would create 27,000 jobs. Hence, the former PC government not only failed to create jobs in the city of Toronto at the time, but had also failed the people of Toronto on public transit.

So we're not pleased that these gas plants were planned for a long time and they were cancelled, but the decision-making was based on scientific information which the people of Toronto demanded.

We know that the cost of closing coal was high. Coal, if you do not include the health costs, is a cheap energy source, but if you add in the mercury, arsenic, sulphates and the CO<sub>2</sub> contribution to our atmosphere and the huge contribution to climate change and the destruction of your environment, then coal is expensive indeed.

So we have constructed a lot of green power, and gas plants are part of that solution. But even with gas, these people in Oakville and Mississauga supported the province getting out of coal. They were also concerned with pollution from gas burning. There was concern that the airshed for Mississauga and other parts of Toronto would be impacted. The gas plants will operate for at least 50 years. So, once they were completed, the residents' air quality would be impacted for a very, very long time. So this decision, in the long term, is an excellent one.

**1310**

Urban air quality, as we know, is innately less clean because of all the transportation and industrial emitters in large cities. And the people were right, the opposition parties were right and moving the gas plant was right. It would have been much better if the planning phase had picked up the concerns of residents earlier, but as we've seen in the past, it is our citizens who we must protect, and air-quality concerns are very high on the people's list, and that is a welcome attribute to the people of Mississauga and Toronto, generally.

On air quality, we can never waver. As an engineer, a consulting engineer for 30 years and soon to be a 50-year member of Professional Engineers Ontario, I want to

address that matter as well. I believe we have to listen to the experts on this, and I acknowledge I am not one of them. We have dealt with why the gas plant was cancelled. We have dealt with the facts that all governments have made decisions that ended up with taxpayers' needless costs. In hindsight, the gas decisions to move should have been made much earlier. We have heard that, and the minister and our government have acknowledged that. What we are dealing with in this contempt motion is purely that he did not provide the documentation required in a timely fashion.

We have seen from the estimates committee and the public accounts committee that there were questions that the minister could not answer. He could not produce those documents as the province and OPA were in the midst of extremely detailed negotiations for the relocation of plants. What would be ongoing negotiations? Well, they were speaking about many millions of dollars. The teams on each side would have included several lawyers, accountants, energy planners, engineers, energy specialists, estimators and economists. These were large negotiating teams. The Auditor General knew how important and complex these negotiations were, the Chair of the estimates committee knew how important these documents were, yet committee members from both opposition parties took the position that we give the other side all our information during those negotiations.

There was concern by all—and I've not heard this fact, but my guess would be that as a result of the opposition parties forcing that early negotiation completion and the ability to release the documents, I would think that this cost the province of Ontario dollars. Did the opposition cost this process a great deal of money? I expect the negotiations could have been more successful if we had more time. So the minister delivered and met the Speaker's timeline, and this motion should be withdrawn. Thank you, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further debate. The member for—

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** Stormont.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):**—Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** Thank you, Speaker. There's been much debate on this issue over the past few days, and I believe that it's time to review the issue for the people who may be watching this at home for the first time.

Why the regular proceedings of this House have been pre-empted: On August 27, fellow PC MPP Rob Leone asked the Speaker to rule on a point of order, citing that his parliamentary privilege had been breached by the Minister of Energy for refusing to follow a May 2012 order issued by the estimates committee compelling the minister to table all documents related to the cancellation of the Oakville and Mississauga power plants.

On September 13, Speaker, you returned your decision that the minister must release all documents by 6 p.m. on Monday, September 24, or risk being in contempt of this Legislature.

Members opposite have cited solicitor-client privilege and not being in the public interest as reasons why these documents should not be released. Mr. Speaker, you were very clear—crystal clear, in fact—that these were not acceptable reasons for failing to release documents to the committee, and that failure to do so would be a breach of privilege. The ruling reflects one of the basic principles of our democracy: the opposition’s role to hold this government to task and to account, but the withholding of information from us hinders our ability to do so.

We of the Legislature—and I’m sure the people of Ontario—are wondering why this minister is ignoring the will of the House and his legal responsibility, and risking his own personal well-being in withholding these documents. There’s no acceptable reason to withhold information any longer. It’s time to table all the documents, complete without redactions and omissions. The people of this great province deserve no less.

On Monday, September 24, over 36,000 documents were delivered, with literally thousands of pages missing, redacted, whited out, reference attachments omitted or, worse, entire documents and chains of reference materials and correspondence simply not included as part of the package.

To put this into perspective, in spite of the volume of documents delivered, there was no correspondence or documents from the Premier or from the member from Scarborough Centre, who was the Minister of Energy when these decisions were made, or their staff. I know that it’s hard to believe, but it’s a fact; not an email, not a memo, not a letter.

There are only two conclusions that you can take from this: first, that the Premier or the minister or their staff were not involved in any of the decisions concerning the cancellations of these plants. But does it seem possible that there’s so little oversight over this ministry? It’s truly hard to believe, but when you consider the magnitude of the waste—over \$640 million—maybe that’s the answer: no direction and no oversight from this government. But that would mean that the Ontario Power Authority made all the decisions without direction from the elected representatives of the people. The second possibility is that they are withholding documents and are not following the will of the House. Even in what was delivered, there are clearly missing documents and documents that were heavily whited out and missing information.

I believe that any reasonable person would conclude that this is clearly against parliamentary procedure and your ruling, Mr. Speaker.

On Tuesday, September 25, the member from Cambridge moved that this House direct the Ministry of the 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 and that the matter of the Speaker’s finding of a prima facie case of privilege with respect to the production of the 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 was on September 9, 2012, and that the committee be authorized to meet at the call of the Chair and shall report back its findings and recommendations no later than November 19, 2012.

Speaker, this is just another failure of this Liberal McGuinty government to act in the best interests of the public and not for selfish self-interest. I’m very specific when I say “the Liberal McGuinty government” because I don’t want to paint past Liberal governments with the same brush, as I’ve never seen such a lack of regard for the people they serve, only trying to cling on to power at whatever cost.

If you are shocked and disgusted with the cost of \$640 million, one wonders what’s in the documents they are so desperately trying to keep from the opposition and from the people of Ontario.

We see that it’s not just the people of Ontario who are being thrown under the bus; it’s now one of their own. The current Minister of Energy is being sacrificed to avoid further document releases. He’s putting the McGuinty Liberal Party first, which may be commendable, but at what cost? The cost of his own career in politics, his professional career, but more importantly, at the cost of the people of Ontario, who are paying the bill: \$640 million and rising.

Let’s just look at half of this seat-saving deal: the Oakville power plant cancellation. The House was told by the McGuinty Liberal government that the cancellation cost of the Oakville power plant was \$40 million. Then, with the heavily censored documents, with information clearly whited out, blank letters and documents with only a title on them, the cost is clearly over \$450 million—11 times more than was disclosed by this government.

Let’s think what we could do with that huge amount of wasted dollars. How many new or expanded hospitals and long-term beds could we build? How many miles of public transit, highways and bridges could we construct, and the good-paying jobs that come along with these massive infrastructure projects? But no, this money was wasted, and now this government and this minister are not following the parliamentary procedure that requires them to release these documents. The longer they refuse to give these documents and table them, one has to wonder what the true cost is.

**1320**

I’ve heard from the members opposite who have said that they’re not pleased to rise to discuss this issue, and probably they shouldn’t be. They’ve been caught red-handed. But then, promptly, they take an easy tangent away from the real issue, that of the fundamental issue of accountability. They talk of self-serving excuses of why they should not have to disclose the documents, such as solicitor-client privilege, and the negative impacts of obtaining a deal to compensate for damages with the contractor, who was well on their way to completing their contract with this government. But parliamentary privilege and the subsequent ruling by you, Speaker, are very clear—crystal clear—that the rights of this House

supersede both of these issues. The minister and the McGuinty Liberal government are not above the law, and that is what this is all about.

We, on this side of the House, are carrying out our duty to our constituents: holding this government accountable for the unjustifiable waste of scarce taxpayers' dollars.

Speaker, it's bad enough that this government has wasted more than \$640 million and counting on these cancellations, but it is also becoming clear that the subsequent relocation makes no sense for technical as well as the obvious bad economic reasons. The power is needed in the high-growth areas of the western GTA, not in Sarnia and Bath, hundreds of kilometres away.

As the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington pointed out, the existing Lennox plant is currently less than 1% utilized. Yes, that's less than 1%. So how could this be? With 2,100 megawatts of power sitting there unused, why would we be adding almost 1,000 more? It's simple physics. The power is not needed in eastern Ontario but in the GTA, hundreds of kilometres away. So adding 50% generating capacity to Lennox will do nothing but just leave more unused capacity—and when the generators cost more than \$1 billion, it's expensive unused capacity.

The answer is to build new transmission lines to the west end of the GTA, at a cost of \$210 million. Why wasn't that the decision that was made when the cost of \$1.2 billion was highlighted for the cost of new generators in Oakville? Does this make sense? Hardly. But how can we trust this government and their latest estimates?

In addition to the costs of the transmission lines, there need to be new power corridors negotiated all the way from eastern Ontario, through the city of Toronto, through First Nations territories. There are huge power losses that go along with this—with transporting power over those long distances. But obviously it must not have made sense or they would have done that in the first place. Getting another power corridor through those areas of Oshawa, Pickering and through Toronto is an enormous nightmare that likely can't be done when this power is needed.

Speaker, it's not just a matter of the money that needs to be scrutinized, but it's also the new locations and the need to stop these projects. If they are only a continuation of wasting more money, more of our taxpayers' dollars, it's just indeed another expensive mistake.

Over the past few days, I've heard members opposite give their reasons why they feel that they are above parliamentary rules that have endured centuries of scrutiny and have served not only our great province of Ontario well, but also our great country of Canada, as well as many other great democracies throughout the world.

I have heard how great a member this minister is and of the contributions he has made, and I don't dispute any of these claims. But amid all this admiration, I haven't yet heard a hint of remorse for the \$650 million in

taxpayers' money that has been wasted, or any unease by these Liberal members at letting their colleague the Minister of Energy take the fall for the actions of this McGuinty Liberal government, or that he may very well have not had anything to do with it.

I think most people here and in the province know exactly who was involved in these decisions: the very people that the Minister of Energy is protecting. But, Speaker, this is not the point here. He is refusing to release documents that he is legally required by parliamentary procedure to release. It is that simple; no more, no less. It's the law. Would you ever condone tampering with or withholding evidence by a public body? I don't think so. It's not the way our democracies function; it's not the way Ontario works.

Speaker, it's time for the Premier and the former Minister of Energy to appear before this House and explain why this current Minister of Energy is being made to lay his career and his reputation at their altar. It's time for the members opposite to stand up and tell their colleague to do the right thing and to produce all the required documents. If they are truly interested in transparency, as they tell you, the people of Ontario need to know. Stand up and be heard. Tell the Minister of Energy to put partisan policies aside. Turn these documents over and allow the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs to review the file. Do the right thing.

I urge the Minister of Energy to weigh his options. His boss, Premier McGuinty, is on the way out. This government, exhausted, discredited and devoid of vision, is rolling to the end of the line. It isn't worth laying down his career and his reputation for. If there's a conflict between loyalties to this government and to the people of London West, the choice should be easy and obvious. His constituents will pay for the bill of the Mississauga and Oakville power plants as much as mine. Ontarians deserve to see the bill that they have no choice but to pay, whether their MPP is a cabinet minister or a backbencher.

These scandals drowning the McGuinty government force me to look back at some of my political role models. Politicians of the highest moral stature from our region, such as Senator Bob Runciman, John Cleary, Jim Brownell and Noble Villeneuve, come to mind almost immediately.

Politics and government call upon us to act responsibly and humbly in the interest of the long-term benefit of our great province, despite our disagreements. Where the current Liberal Party sees its own political expedience, I see the problems of debt and attitude to public money that need to be rectified if we are to prosper again.

My frustration with the present government stems from a deeply held belief that we in Ontario have been blessed with bountiful resources, enviable workforce skills and an entrepreneurial drive second to no other province or region.

McGuinty's current focus is to look good on the evening news. I say we need a government that unleashes Ontario's potential and gives Ontarians the honest, trustworthy and responsible government that they deserve.

Speaker, it's time for this government to live up to its requirements and live up to what the people of Ontario expect.

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

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** I rise today, as many others have before me, to speak about the motion on the floor. A number of members have spoken before me on this motion, so, Speaker, at the risk of sounding a bit repetitive, I'll speak to the motion as well.

The motion on the floor, of course, refers to the production of documents as requested by the committee on estimates in their examination of the Ministry of Energy. I had the opportunity to sit in on a number of meetings of the standing committee when this discussion began.

Between May 9 and July 11, the Minister of Energy appeared before the standing committee for the purpose of answering questions regarding the 2012-13 estimates of the Ministry of Energy. While the minister answered questions relating to a number of issues, the committee members from the official opposition spent considerable time asking the minister questions relating to the two gas plants that were to have been built in Oakville and Mississauga.

**1330**

The first motion by the member from Cambridge came forward on May 16 of this year. The first motion was discussed at that time, and as we have heard, the Chair of the committee, the member for Beaches–East York, ruled, “They have the right to ask for the documentation. The minister has the right to decline either giving that documentation or giving voice to that documentation during his answering of the questions.”

He continued to say, “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.”

On May 16, it was also brought forward that the issue of gas power plants in Oakville and Mississauga was before the public accounts—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I apologize to the member for Windsor West.

I'm hearing a lot of noise from one corner of the House, and I would ask them to come to order.

I return to the member for Windsor West.

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** Where was I? The gas power plants were before the public accounts committee, and the suggestion was made that we didn't need two committees reviewing the same issue. That was not acceptable, and the initial motion went forward.

We've heard over the past number of days the chronology of events for both the Mississauga and Oakville plants, details of which were outlined in the minister's letter to the standing committee dated May 30, 2012. I will quote from the minister's letter wherein he refers to “the sensitivity of commercial interests that are at stake” and that “disclosing any more at this time would significantly prejudice the province's interests.”

The minister's May 30 response to the standing committee reflected the sensitive nature of the information. The letter was four pages and outlined the chronology of events with respect to both plants. He referred back to the chair's ruling of May 16 and stated that “these very commercially sensitive negotiations have been carried out on a without-prejudice basis. Thus both the government and the OPA have legal obligations to not disclose the content of those negotiations at this time.” This response was in keeping with the Chair's ruling.

The CEO of the OPA also responded to the request on May 30. Mr. Andersen, in his letter, refers to a response that he provided to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts on the same issue dated May 16. His response to both requests was, “There is commercially sensitive information that has been provided to the OPA in without-prejudice negotiations and legally privileged information, the disclosure of which would significantly damage the position of the OPA.” In short, it would not be in the best interests of Ontarians to release sensitive information through the negotiation period.

On July 11, 2012, the committee passed a motion asking the Chair to write a letter to the Speaker and draw attention to a possible matter of contempt and a breach of the ancient parliamentary right. I should note that in the period between the original motion in May and this motion, attempts were made to modify the motion to respect the ongoing negotiations, none of which were acceptable to the opposition and third party members on the committee.

Speaker, what also happened on July 11 was that the minister provided the committee with a letter, also dated July 11, which stated that the OPA had reached an agreement to relocate the Mississauga gas plant, and as such he asked the ministry to file the requested correspondence with the committee. If the minister was trying to hide anything or if he was anything but transparent, would he have provided this update to the committee and asked the ministry and the OPA to start gathering documentation? At all times through the proceedings—and I was there—the minister was answering questions, some of which required balancing taxpayer interests and parliamentary requests.

I listened with interest when my colleague the member from Guelph outlined what occurred in the Standing Committee on Public Accounts—again, Speaker, there were two parallel processes on this issue, one in estimates and one at public accounts. Public accounts had the benefit of having the Auditor General present, and seemed to proceed in a civil and respectful manner. The members of the public accounts committee were asking essentially the same questions and referring the matter to the Auditor General. We have heard, Speaker, that the Auditor General voiced concerns about information that may be commercially sensitive or subject to client-solicitor privilege.

I wonder if the opposition members of the estimates committee were aware of the progress or discussions taking place at public accounts. I'm sure they were. I'm



sure the member from Cambridge didn't bring forward his motion and comments without discussion with his colleagues. Was he not advised at the time that public accounts—the Auditor General was reviewing this issue? Do they not trust the Auditor General, or was that process not public enough or fast enough to their liking?

Speaker, we know what has transpired since July 11. The motion from the Standing Committee on Estimates came forward for review. The member for Cambridge raised a point of privilege with respect to the tabling of documents. At that time, the negotiations regarding the Oakville plant were still ongoing, so those documents had not yet been produced. The Speaker, in his wisdom, ruled on September 13 that the three House leaders were to meet and try to come up with a solution to the request from the Standing Committee on Estimates. Unfortunately, the opposition and the third party were unwilling to consider the government's proposals or engage in any serious discussions to solve the impasse. Ultimately, on Monday, September 24, a large number of documents related to the Oakville and Mississauga power plants was released. There were also letters of transmittal from both the Minister of Energy and the OPA indicating that all documents related to the original May 16 request of the committee were released. Apparently, these letters of transmittal or attestations were not sufficient for the opposition.

Much has been said about our decision during the election to relocate these projects, Speaker, 11 days before the election. According to CBC News on September 26, 2011, "Hudak sharply criticized the ... Liberals' plan ... to halt construction of the ... power plant." The Leader of the Opposition also spoke of "the sanctity of the contract," but then, somehow, there was a bit of an about-face with the Progressive Conservatives during the election. Having been silent and disengaged on the issue for years, on October 5, the following headline was in the news: "Hudak Vows to Scrap Mississauga Power Plant." This was the day before the election. "Progressive Conservative Leader Tim Hudak pledged to get rid of" the plant, saying "That's right. Done. Done, done, done." I wonder how that decision was made. Was it a last attempt to gain seats? The official opposition, the Progressive Conservatives, are also on record as saying during the election that they would cancel all contracts under the Green Energy Act, not just the Mississauga and Oakville plants. What would have been the cost of that? Where would those cuts have come from?

Last year, the PC Party was very clear on where they stood with a number of contracts and green energy. Quoted in an article in the Windsor Star—my hometown—on May 11, 2011, entitled "Ontario Pledge Threatens Local Green Jobs" the PC leader, Tim Hudak, in a speech to the Ontario Power Summit, indicated that "a Conservative government would end a \$7-billion 'sweetheart deal' with Korean renewable energy giant Samsung and kill the province's FIT—feed-in tariff—program." Let me be clear here. The deal was for Samsung to invest \$7 billion in Ontario. The Leader of the

Opposition repeated this through the election and was unapologetic about the loss of jobs that would be directly impacted by this view. This wasn't just about Samsung. This was about all the contracts and all the jobs created in the green energy industry, many in my riding of Windsor West. So much for the sanctity of contracts. When the Leader of the Opposition spoke to this motion, he stated "Taxpayers have been ripped off.... It is going to cost jobs." What would have happened if he was on this side? What would have been the cost of all the contracts he was going to terminate and the jobs that were created?

Speaker, I always listen intently when I take my seat in this House, so I was here when a member of the opposition last week stated, "Congratulations for destroying our coal-based electricity-generating economy." Now we really know where the Conservatives stand. They would continue with coal burning and its impact on the health of our province. There have been many statements over the last few days about parliamentary procedures and history. Frankly, I won't take any lessons from the opposition on parliamentary protocol. The opposition members sit here and speak of the importance of parliamentary protocols and procedures when they repeatedly—not only in this debate—disrespect House members by questioning their integrity.

They ask for documents; they receive documents. Now they are questioning the integrity of the minister by questioning the attestations signed by the minister, a duly elected, respected MPP and minister of the crown.

**1340**

Speaker, just like at budget time when they decided they were going to oppose the budget without any attempt to work with us on the budget, they decided they were going to move this motion, even before the documents were provided before the Speaker's ruling. I was reading it on Twitter before we heard it in the House, before the ruling was made.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I apologize again for interrupting. Now there's noise coming from another corner of the House. I would ask all members of the House to please come to order so as to allow me to hear the member for Windsor West.

I return to the member for Windsor West.

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** Thank you again, Speaker—again, the respect shown for their fellow members.

This is another attempt by the opposition to prevent the governing, to prevent the business of the Legislature, to prevent this minority government from working. They can go out there and say that nothing is being done, when the truth of the matter is, they are directly impeding good co-operative governance by ringing bells, stalling debate and essentially voiding our parliamentary system. I ask you, Speaker: Are these acts by the opposition in the best interests of Ontarians?

I will take no lessons, again, from the opposition on parliamentary decorum or procedure. I may not be a political science professor, as the member from Cambridge reminds us that he is, but I was a student of political

science, and I was taught that there stands a history of parliamentary respect, which is often not evident on the opposition side. How many times have they had to be reminded, when a government member is speaking, such as now, to be—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I'm afraid I'm going to have to once again ask the official opposition and the third party to come to order so as to allow me to hear the member for Windsor West.

The member for Windsor West.

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** Thank you—when a government member is speaking, to be respectful, as we are towards them when they are speaking, at all times.

We know that the OPA made the original decision on where the plant would be located, Speaker. The opposition indicates the decision to relocate the plants was done outside the OPA. In a tweet, the member from Nipissing stated: "Liberal staff interfered with OPA—drove costs of cancelled power plants..." But they would have done the same. So which is it? Had we continued with construction, then we would have been hearing the opposition say we're not listening. In fact, right after the election, there were questions brought forward in the House to the minister about trucks still on the site and why construction hadn't stopped.

This is just one more matter about the opposition doing just that: opposing. Since they're not on this side, I guess they don't have to be accountable for their promises or statements.

I accept that we are government, so we had to make the decision. I also believe and agree that the public has the right to know, and the details are in the large number of documents that have been released.

I've heard comments about standing up for taxpayers. I ask the opposition: If you were government, how would you stand up for taxpayers? By cancelling contracts across the province? By eliminating full-day learning, firing teachers or privatizing health care? How would that be?

Even with all these delays and despite the rhetoric, Ontario remains one of the most competitive jurisdictions in the world, with a strong education system and a jurisdiction that has done better in the recovery from the recession than any other area. I know that the opposition would rather ignore what others are saying, but Ontario is strong, and Ontario is a leader.

I've heard many members from the opposition suggest that we are not taking this seriously, that we are trying to hide information. Speaker, we absolutely take this seriously. We also take our role to protect the province and protect our taxpayers through very sensitive commercial negotiations very seriously. The minister has been transparent and accountable in all his actions and statements throughout this. Yes, there were costs to relocating the plants. Those costs were unavoidable. Yes, they could have been used for other services—nobody is denying that. But ultimately the opposition has received documentation which outlines what the costs of the relocation

will be. I will say again: They asked for documentation; documentation was received.

I will repeat what many of my colleagues have stated: The Minister of Energy has done nothing wrong in his representation of the Mississauga and Oakville plants. I stand as a proud member of this government, with members who stand up for their constituents, a leader who supports his members and all Ontarians, and a Minister of Energy who is principled, transparent and accountable—a minister who we know served as Attorney General for four years, has been a member for nine, a member of the Ontario bar for over 25 years; a minister who always puts the public's interests first.

The opposition has said that this is not about the minister, yet the motion brought forward to the Speaker says that the minister has refused to comply with an order from the standing committee. I guess the opposition doesn't recognize that their actions and statements are very personal statements. I will repeat: The Minister of Energy has responded to questions, has provided the documentation and is principled, transparent and accountable.

I cannot support this motion as it is currently written. I cannot support a motion that attacks a member's personal integrity. The government has put forward an amendment that will focus the work of any review of this matter on the information and how it will be shared, and remove any personal or partisan commentary. I believe that more substantive changes would improve this motion and hopefully allow us to get on with the important business that the people of Ontario are counting on us to move forward with, and the reason that we are all here. Speaker, thank you.

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

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I rise today to speak to the amendment to the amendment to the motion put forward by my colleague from Cambridge.

The member from Cambridge is a thoughtful and intelligent individual. He has a Ph.D. in public policy and knows, from both an academic and practical point of view, of these ideals that are enshrined in this Legislature and the importance of upholding them. So I commend him because he has recognized the genuine threat that this whole obstructionist debacle poses to these ideals and has taken action that will reinforce our commitment and faith in this legislative body.

We are elected to represent the people of this province, and as the official opposition it is absolutely necessary for us to hold the government to account. To carry out our duties to the people of Ontario, we as MPPs are bestowed certain privileges. We have a system whereby these privileges are recognized as inherent and fundamental to the work we do as legislators.

In an ideal world, of course, it would be enough to simply create rules by which we're governed, post them, and hold everybody to the honour system. I do believe that every member of this Legislature, when elected, comes here with every intention of serving the people of Ontario with honour and with integrity. Invariably,

though, we will face instances where these rules are breached—instances where members will act in contradiction to the principles of this legislative body.

I will concede that the situations in which these breaches occur can be complicated. As members, we must contend with matters that require the balancing of multiple interests. However, we're always required to return to the principles of our Westminster parliamentary system as a means to guide us. These principles act as a check on our behaviour so that we remain committed to our ultimate goal, and that is to serve the people of Ontario.

As with any set of rules or guiding principles, we need to be able to punish transgressors by recognizing and punishing those who defy our legislative principles. We serve to not only elucidate these principles but deter others from making similar mistakes. After all, how many times have you heard of people being pulled over for speeding, their excuse being that they didn't know what the speed limit was? In almost all these cases, the police officer will simply say, "Now you know," and write your ticket.

This is why I feel that this motion of contempt is so important. We need to be able to not only hold the government as a whole accountable, but also those members who violate the rules that allow us to do our job in this House.

This also makes me resent suggestions made by certain members opposite that have served to try to mitigate the gravity of this situation. The Speaker of this House found there to be a *prima facie* breach of privilege. In other words, the Speaker has ruled that the members of this House have, in some form, been denied their inherent rights to conduct the business of this province. And given that the business of this province is to serve the people, our denial of these rights ultimately hurts the people of Ontario.

1350

It's bad enough that the whole gas plant fiasco from which this contempt motion ultimately stems will cost the people \$640 million, but the government has used every trick in the book to attempt to keep these costs under wraps. This is not a decision for the government to make, however. The estimates committee, when fulfilling their duties to the people, requested the documents that contained this information because they recognized that people should understand the magnitude of this government's decision. The people need to know that the cost of having a government say one thing and do another can be very high. The people need to know when their elected officials make bad decisions, because the people can then change and choose to elect someone else in the next election. This is how our system works, and any attempt to withhold or cover up, as the government has done, is an affront to our democracy.

If I may say something to those across the aisle, these are not personal attacks. For the last few days, members opposite have essentially read through the minister's resumé and told us—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** We've got a long way to go before 6 o'clock. There is going to be order in this House this afternoon.

I return to the member for Elgin–Middlesex–London.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Thank you, Speaker.

For the last few days, members opposite have essentially read through the minister's resumé and told us how much integrity he has. I'm not questioning whether the minister was a good lawyer when he practised, and I believe that most members hold integrity as one of their highest values. The question is whether or not the actions of the minister warrant a ruling of contempt. We already know there exists a *prima facie* point of privilege, and throughout the thousands of documents released in response there is strong evidence that we're still being denied the whole story.

Whether the minister provided sound legal advice in his past career as a lawyer is quite simply not relevant. What is relevant is, why did we receive numerous redacted documents? Why did it take so long to receive documents that outlined hundreds of millions of dollars of costs to the taxpayer for cancelling the power plants? Why does it seem that we conveniently don't have the direct emails from the former Minister of Energy and the Premier regarding the plant cancellations, even though most anecdotal evidence suggests that the plant cancellations were directed by the government?

These are the relevant questions. Understandably, they are questions the Liberal government is uncomfortable answering, but I hope the party opposite recognizes that the more they drag this out, the more they put up roadblocks to the truth, the deeper they dig themselves in this hole and the worse it's going to be.

To hide on the part of the Liberals has led down this path where it is now necessary for us to refer the matter to the Standing Committee on Finance. It is necessary for us, as the representatives of this province, to get to the bottom of this. Holding committee hearings on this matter will allow us to ask the tough questions in an attempt to extract information that the party opposite might not like us to see. It also gives the province an opportunity to hear from the bureaucrats who are in the middle of this whole debacle. It is clear in reviewing the thousands of documents and emails that the employees of the OPA were completely caught off guard by the government's surprise decision to cancel the power plants. The government's decision on both occasions threw the OPA into turmoil, requiring them to reverse course on projects that were already well under way. This is possibly the worst and most inefficient way to make decisions in government.

From the beginning, the PC Party cautioned the government on building these power plants in such a densely populated area. We advised that perhaps the government could pursue other options to provide power to the southwest GTA. Of course, the government rebuffed our concerns and went ahead anyway. They worked with industry to find acceptable sites and then tendered the contracts. Once the contracts were awarded, the long,

costly process of filing for permits and obtaining approvals then began.

Throughout the process, the government did not second-guess their decision. They were committed to the two projects. But of course, as the 2011 election got closer, the pressure within the five ridings affected by the two plants began to grow. Despite the years of planning, the approvals, and the beginning of site preparation, the government suddenly reversed course on their commitment to the plant in Oakville.

When going through the documents, senior bureaucrats raised the obvious question among themselves, and that was, "What do we do about the contracts?" We need to understand that the OPA had signed a 20-year power purchase contract with TransCanada Energy for the Oakville power plant. An arbitrary decision to unilaterally cancel a contract is not without penalty. A major corporation does not invest all this money over a number of years into a future plant location and just walk away from it when the government decides it doesn't want to honour its contractual obligations. Clearly, the people of Ontario were going to be on the hook for the economic value of the contract despite the abandonment of the power plant's construction.

In fact, documents revealed that Susan Kennedy, director of the corporate-commercial law group at OPA, advised her colleagues in a briefing document of the following: "The OPA may terminate the contract only if there's a supplier event of default. TransCanada has not committed a supplier event of default. As such, there's no current basis on which to terminate the contract. Damages for a contractual termination by OPA," which would be a contractual breach, are estimated to be \$1.4 billion. That's \$1.4 billion; that was the possible cost of the cancellation being thrown around early in the proceedings. Despite the convenient lack of emails we received from the former minister, I do imagine he read that briefing.

In fact, documents from the Minister of Energy's legal department reveal the following: "My sense is that the minister's office is prepared to accept the procurement and transaction risks associated with a contemplated decision to terminate the Oakville contract." And he recognizes that there will be significant costs in doing so. This would seem to indicate that the former minister was prepared, at one point, to commit \$1.4 billion to his government's seat-saver program.

These are the kinds of things we endeavour to find out with this contempt motion. We need to have the ability to probe further into this mess because the people of Ontario deserve to know why their government was prepared to commit \$1.4 billion toward a decision that would achieve nothing of value for the province.

We do know, from the proceedings of the estimates committee earlier this spring, that the Mississauga power plant cancellation was directed by the Liberal campaign team, which in and of itself is a frightening proposition. We also know that the decision to cancel this plant cost the average ratepayer a 1.4% increase on their hydro bills this past year.

It's astounding to me to think that the Liberal campaign team could make such a decision that would affect the amount people pay on hydro bills. It really is a shame. At this point in time, we know that the taxpayer is on the hook for at least \$640 million between the two cancelled plants—\$640 million, and what do we have to show for it? I don't really know the answer to that question. It seems that we've gotten nothing for this money except a couple of Liberal seats in Mississauga and Oakville.

When such a horrendous misuse of taxpayers' funds occurs, it is necessary that we get the full story behind it. We need the taxpayers to know what motivated these decisions. We need them to know how it will affect their hydro and/or tax bills. This government owes the people of this province an explanation, but they've been incredibly reluctant in offering such an explanation. That is probably the most troubling aspect of all of this. How bad must the truth be that the government can't even fulfil their minimum commitment to be transparent to the people of Ontario?

That's why we've tabled this contempt motion. We, on this side of the House, remain committed to our duty to the taxpayer—even if the government side insists on putting their self-preservation ahead of transparency.

I do need to be careful, though. It would appear that not all members opposite share their government's position on this matter. A Toronto Star article last week quoted one of the senior Liberal cabinet ministers saying of the gas plant issue: "We've got to get out of this. This is embarrassing." The article also mentioned that some members were saying the whole debacle was a shame.

It would appear that there are members opposite who do want to do the right thing. There are some members who realize that withholding these documents violates parliamentary privilege. There are some members opposite who want the government to come clean and abandon its misguided efforts to cover up the key facts of this issue. It's nice to see that some members of this party opposite share a commitment to the truth and share a commitment to the people of Ontario. It's nice to see that some members of the party opposite are ashamed, as are we, that we had to pursue such drastic measures to try to get a straight answer on these costly power plants.

It is unfortunate that the leadership of the governing party does not share this view and are instead intent on silencing members who speak against the government's actions. This is another reason why our party's motion is so vital. Even certain members of Premier McGuinty's government would like to know the truth as well. Referring this matter to the Standing Committee on Finance is the best way in which we can get to the bottom of this matter.

At the end of the day, our commitment to the people of Ontario needs to be the sole guiding principle of our decisions.

**1400**

I think it is abhorrent that the Premier does not seem to take the gas plant boondoggle seriously. He tried to placate everyone last week by saying that of the 17 plants

the Liberal government has undertaken, they got two wrong—two wrong at a cost of \$640 million. I think most people who make a \$640-million mistake would show more contrition, especially given the fact that the \$640 million belongs to the people of Ontario. And I must say that \$640 million in wasted taxpayer money should never, in any sense, be equated to some measure of success, as Premier McGuinty seems to consider it. But, alas, the Premier continues to show how out of touch he is with average Ontarians.

We know that the OPA reached a memorandum of understanding with TransCanada that will allow the company to build a facility in Lennox, which is a couple of hundred kilometres from where the OPA originally determined there to be a need for energy. I understand that TransCanada had a legal contract with the OPA and that they expect consideration for the lost economic value of that contract, and while OPA is legally compelled to provide that consideration, I can't help but think of how procuring the Lennox plant in this manner will affect the bill for the taxpayer.

The area around Lennox was identified in the long-term energy plan as a location that would eventually need increased capacity. This was to occur much later, around 2018, I believe. The OPA therefore gave the Lennox contract to TransCanada as consideration for the lost economic value of the Oakville contract. The OPA's hands were no doubt tied, but awarding the Lennox contract in this way precludes a competitive procurement process. In essence, the Lennox plant has become a sole-sourced contract.

Further along those lines, you can bet that the highly paid corporate lawyers at TransCanada would not have advised their bosses to accept the OPA offer if they did not reasonably expect to recover substantially all of the lost economic value of the Oakville contract. Otherwise, they would have been well within their rights to take the case to court or arbitration.

What I'm getting to is that the government's decision to cancel legally binding contracts is having ripple effects, Mr. Speaker, ripple effects that will no doubt fall on the shoulders of the Ontario people. Had the long-term energy plan been followed and an RFP put out for the Lennox area a few years down the line, I would bet that the value of the contract would have cost the taxpayers less than what they'll have to pay now. Essentially, by cornering the OPA into making a deal with TransCanada after they cancelled the Oakville plant, the government will ensure that we end up paying more to construct the Lennox plant than we might have otherwise had to. These are the hidden costs that Premier McGuinty hopes nobody notices.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is no way to govern. This is no way to manage taxpayers' money. We have a duty to ensure that every dollar we spend gets the most for the taxpayer, because we understand that the people of Ontario work hard for their money. People don't mind paying a little bit of tax, provided they get something out of it. But let's review this government's \$640-million decision.

By ending two legally binding agreements, the government will waste \$640 million. The people of Mississauga will get a skeletal structure of the would-be power plant and maybe one day they'll dub it the "boondoggle statue." We get a plant built in Lennox for more money than we otherwise would have paid for it. And there's still no additional energy capacity in the southwest GTA.

In spite of all of this, the government continues to downplay the severity of their politically motivated decision. The Premier actually made comments implying that these contempt proceedings were fun for the PC Party. I can assure the Premier that this is not fun for anyone. It is not fun when a government makes a politically motivated decision that will cost the taxpayer hundreds of millions of dollars. It is not fun when, in the process of asking questions about these decisions, Premier McGuinty's government employs every obstructionist trick in the book. It is not fun when the Speaker finds there to be a breach of privilege. It is not fun that when a legitimate contempt motion is brought before the House, Premier McGuinty and his team continue to downplay its significance. For too long we've had a government that shows little respect for the people of Ontario.

We need to remember that a point of privilege was brought before the House of Commons in Ottawa over the Afghan detainees issue. Again, the government party cited solicitor-client privilege as justification for keeping certain documents from public view. However, the law clerk, Mr. Rob Walsh, had this to say: "Solicitor-client privilege, in my view, is an important privilege. It is one the committee obviously should respect but not necessarily be governed by. It is a principle that relates to the legal rights of people...."

"But that's in the context of legal rights, legal proceedings. There are no legal rights at issue here. These are not legal proceedings. These are parliamentary proceedings."

If everyone recalls, when Speaker Milliken ruled that there was a prima facie breach of privilege, the government immediately complied in turning over all related documents. They understood the gravity of the ruling, because they had an abiding respect for the principles of parliamentary procedure and what they represent. They understood that the very foundations of our democracy depend on these principles, and they did what they needed to do to uphold it.

It is a travesty to see Premier McGuinty make light of these proceedings, and it's a shame that over 2,000 of the documents provided to us were redacted. This motion is a matter of principle, Mr. Speaker, a way to show the people of Ontario that the government will be accountable even for its bad decisions.

The cynical way in which Premier McGuinty has handled this matter will serve no other purpose than to further disillusion people toward the honourable role that the public service plays in their lives. That is why I encourage everyone here to refer to their conscience. We need this matter to go to the Standing Committee on Finance so that we may finally get the answers we need

to adequately hold this government to account. This is an opportunity for all of us, and I hope that everyone here will make the right decision.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate? I recognize the member for Don Valley East.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** It's my pleasure to rise today to outline my opposition to the motion put forward by the member from Cambridge.

I don't support this motion, and before I outline my opposition to the motion, I'd like to take a few minutes to address why we are here today, why each of us—the MPPs, the political staff, the clerks, everyone who makes this Legislative Assembly work—shows up every day. We are here because we believe that our political system works, and we're here today because we believe in local democracy and that the functions within this House contribute to the betterment of the communities we represent.

This week will mark exactly one year ago that the people of Don Valley East entrusted me with the responsibility to serve as their member of provincial Parliament. I, along with other members of the House, knocked on doors, participated in debates—well, most of us participated in debates—and connected with voters to ask them for their support. I put my name forward and asked the residents of Don Valley East for their vote. I was successful, and I'm grateful for my community's support and their belief that I can represent their interests at Queen's Park.

I put my name forward as a Liberal, but more importantly, I put my name forward as a member of provincial Parliament, because I believe in the legislative tools that we have access to in this House and how those tools enable us to be the agents of change to help improve the lives of Ontarians. I put my name forward because I believe that what we do in this House is honourable, something that, to me, is among the most esteemed and privileged work anyone can do.

However, I'm quite saddened by what I see happening in this House over the last week. It has shaken my belief in the process. The tools found in this House are now being used in a disappointing way to compromise the rock-solid reputation of one of my colleagues, the honourable Minister of Energy, someone whose conduct, character and reputation I admire deeply.

I disagree with the official opposition's move to grind this Legislative Assembly to a halt, and I regret they have chosen this course. What we have seen in the past week is nothing more than an exercise in political gamesmanship, an exercise that, at its core, is simply a character attack on my honourable colleague the Minister of Energy, a man of unquestionable integrity, a man who holds the deepest desire to improve the lives of the people of Ontario.

Even worse, this exercise is keeping us from doing the work we need to do in this chamber for Ontario families, which is debating and passing the legislation they want to see moved along in Ontario.

The opposition spent all spring holding up the healthy homes renovation tax credit, a strong piece of the plat-

form that the Liberals were elected to bring forward in government, something that helps create jobs, helps our seniors stay at home and helps to grow our economy in Ontario. Last fall, the bill formed a significant part of our platform, and Ontarians sent us back here with a mandate to move forward and make sure it gets implemented. That is why I believe it's important that we get this bill passed, that we continue with the work we've been sent to do in this Legislature.

I cannot tell you how many people—I spoke about this a few months ago—in my riding of Don Valley East were supportive of this initiative. The healthy homes tax credit is part of our broader strategy to address senior issues. It's part of our strategic plan for seniors in this province.

What's quite attractive about the healthy homes tax credit is that it complements our addition of three million more personal support care hours each year. These are real benefits to Ontario seniors and I think we should be talking about this rather than changing the channel—what we're seeing the official opposition trying to do.

**1410**

I can tell you that when I'm out in my community talking to residents, they're quite disappointed with what the official opposition is doing and, in addition to that, the fact that the third party is sitting silent. The party who claims to be the defender of those who are taken advantage of is sitting silent and doing nothing to support the minister's reputation. Silence is loud.

I can tell you that when I'm out in the community, people are telling me this, Mr. Speaker. People in my riding, especially seniors, want their government to move on, to help ease the tax burden on health care costs and to give them a fair shake and to support this sector of our economy. In this context, I'm surprised that some members of the opposition are not supporting this bill, given how specifically designed it is to help seniors reduce costs to our health care system and to grow our economy. I can tell you, in my riding, that when I go to doors and community events and when I meet with residents, they're overwhelmingly supportive of this bill. The support I'm getting for this bill is probably due to the fact that, in Don Valley—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I have to ask the member for Don Valley East to confine his remarks to the subject that we're debating, the actual motion.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's important for us to point out that we have business to do in this House, and by going down this path, what the opposition wants us to do is really not allowing this government to move forward, and I think the residents of Ontario overwhelmingly supported this government to move forward. But instead of doing the right thing, which is proceeding with the debate, we have to sit here all spring and listen to the bells being rung, which is really filibustering.

I sat in committee for months and I heard bells continue to happen, and it was an attempt by the opposition to slow things down. This is a continuation. We had a

slowdown in committee. We're having the House halt in order to stop progress in this province. It's shameful, and I expect that this is just a continuation to really undermine the progress of this great government and also to tarnish the reputation of the Minister of Energy.

I've done a bit of research, and this is the 15th time a motion like this has been brought to the House; and in the last 15 attempts, they've all failed. All of this is sensationalism. It's posturing, and it will amount to a political footnote. We have lost weeks of time to get things done for the people of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, we have complied with the Speaker's orders and we've handed over over 36,000 pages of documents to the party. My colleague the Minister of Energy has a distinguished record in this Legislature and in his community of London West, and it's a completely unnecessary process, to really smear his reputation.

The Minister of Energy's entire career is an example to all members of this House, including the opposition.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I apologize to the member for Don Valley East. I will ask the opposition members to please come to order and allow me to hear the member for Don Valley East. I have to be able to hear him.

The member for Don Valley East.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before entering politics, upon starting his legal career, the minister was a noted law professor and a successful attorney who helped start a community legal clinic in his own riding. This legal clinic was set up for some of the neediest people in our province. The legal clinic helped Ontarians get the legal help they needed in relation to the issues around social services, retirement income and tenants' rights. I'm thankful for a member like the Minister of Energy for doing the type of work he's done in his community.

Neighbourhood Legal Services in his riding of London and Middlesex are really a strong piece of the social fabric, and it's a living, breathing piece of my colleague's strong legacy as a real community builder.

The minister's social consciousness carried through the last election in this Legislature and through his role in different ministries. When the minister was in aboriginal affairs, my colleague fought for First Nations people, to strengthen their communities, especially up in the north. As Attorney General, my colleague tackled some of the most pressing issues of the day. He has quite a notable resumé, and I know that his efforts around the criminal justice system resulted in a reduction in the number of days and appearances to complete criminal court cases. As energy minister, he has shown the same resolved commitment by charting a smarter energy future for Ontario while improving our environment.

Throughout his career, he has shown a steadfast commitment to fighting for Ontario families and fighting for less fortunate people in our society. Through his leadership, he has made a remarkable impact by improving the lives of Ontarians. This is a minister who

has consistently achieved great results for the betterment of this great province.

Mr. Speaker, we want Ontarians to view politics as a positive exercise. Over the last seven weeks, we've seen what the opposition has done: They've created a myth that the Minister of Energy attempted to conceal or hide documents from the Legislature. This is simply not the case. We know that in May and in June, the minister went to the estimates committee and spent a considerable amount of time speaking to the members about the two gas plants. If anyone knows anything about negotiations or contracts, we know that the minister was placed in a very difficult situation. He was asked to answer questions regarding ongoing legal proceedings and confidential negotiations. It's difficult for a minister of the crown to answer questions while in this process because he or she has to protect the public interest. He, unlike other members sitting here today, has a very unique responsibility. This was captured well by the Chair of the committee, who stated, I believe the quote was, "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."

The minister wrote the committee in late May and advised them that he would exercise his discretion because the documents were highly confidential and could place the province at a disadvantage. But the official opposition was not in the mood for an objective, balanced conversation. They were simply intending to undermine the minister.

On June 5, the member from Cambridge moved a motion, and this motion has brought us to where we are today. The official opposition and the third party have resorted to cheap political posturing by telling the public that the minister hid or concealed these records. This is simply not the case, Mr. Speaker. We want them to show interest in participating in the democratic process, and we want them to step up for their communities that they represent here at Queen's Park. Mean-spirited attacks on one's character like what we're seeing here today will reinforce people's negative views and reinforce those dominant stereotypes that exist concerning political parties, politicians and everyone included in this process. Mr. Speaker, the PC Party's attempt here to damage the reputation of the Minister of Energy is not surprising. We've seen this before, over the past eight years, and in particular especially in the last campaign in 2011.

The troubling fact is that the PC Party's playbook is starting to look like US-style Tea Party politics that we're seeing in the south. This playbook preaches the politics of divisiveness, the politics of division. It shouldn't have a place here in Ontario. This is the same party that pitted Ontarians against one another with the foreign workers—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I'd ask the member for Thornhill to withdraw his unparliamentary remark, without reservation.

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** We didn't hear that.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I withdraw.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I heard; I heard it.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Yes, I did.

I return to the member for Don Valley East.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** Mr. Speaker, being an immigrant and a visible minority myself in this—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** A point of order, the member for Parkdale–High Park.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I point to standing order 13(b), that the decisions of the Speaker are not debatable or subject to appeal. The member from Don Valley East is doing just that.

1420

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I return to the member for Don Valley East.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I was saying, in the last election, when we heard from the PC Party about the foreign workers, I was disturbed. Coming from an immigrant family and being a visible minority myself, I was deeply offended by that. It's the same party that refused to distance itself from their campaign release of a disgraceful pamphlet which mainstream media outlets pointed to as borderline homophobia. They pushed out negative messages through various radio media, through leaflets. Mr. Speaker, when I first heard and saw some of these documents, I was ashamed—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I'm going to have to caution the member for Don Valley East. It's important that his language is temperate. So I would ask him to keep that in mind as he continues with his remarks.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** I felt sad that we'd reached a point in Ontario's political discourse where this sort of thing could actually receive a stamp of approval from political parties—

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** The cover-up continues.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I'm going to ask the member for Lambton–Kent–Middlesex to withdraw his unparliamentary comment.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I'll withdraw the word "cover-up." Thank you, Speaker.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** You can't do that?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The appropriate way is to say, "I withdraw."

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I withdraw.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you.

I return to the member for Don Valley East, who has the floor.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** We need to move together as a province, we need to move together as a Legislative Assembly, to stop this type of politics.

The fact is that these divisive tactics both failed very miserably. These petty gestures which attempted to shape public opinion to their mould had the reverse effect. It turned people off and succeeded in only lowering the discourse of politics in this province.

Mr. Speaker, it's unfortunate that the lessons have not been learned on the side opposite. Recently, the PC Party continued with this pattern with the budget, when they voted against their own beliefs in committee for a perceived political gain. The party opposite is doing the same thing with this motion here today that we're debating. The political opportunism and divisiveness will not work in this province, and the longer it goes on, the more the likelihood increases that the public will catch on to the flawed nature of this pursuit.

The tactics that we're seeing being used today are not new. They have been used in many political forums in the past. And there are common traits that political parties who resort to this type of political manoeuvring have. It is clear that when you run out of ideas, when you're not effective as an opposition, when you continuously fail at the polls because your platform does not reflect or connect with the majority of Ontarians, you go to another tactic. It's clear—

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Point of order, the member for Thornhill.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** According to standing order 23(b), you have to stick to the subject when you're debating. This member is talking about platforms of other parties and whether or not we may or may not have said something in the past. This doesn't relate in any way to the motion under discussion.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Point of privilege.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I'm advised that you have to give notice of a point of privilege before one can be considered.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Thank you. I will get notice.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Don Valley East must have his remarks be germane to the motion before the floor. I would ask him again to ensure that his remarks are indeed speaking to the motion.

**Mr. Michael Coteau:** I can go on and on, but I won't. I'll switch it up a bit and talk about what we need to do.

I think we're spending way too much time on this debate. I think that what it's doing in this House is stalling progress. I was sent by my riding to come in here and to be an agent of change and to join many people in this House who want to represent their community well to ensure that we keep continuing to move forward. We have an economy to continue working on. We have a green energy plan that we need to continue to work on. We have so many different initiatives that we want to continue to add to. The party opposite is using many tactics to stall this progress.

Just to wrap up, Mr. Speaker, over the last year, as a new member of provincial Parliament, I heard bells for months. Many hours were lost in this House, and the filibustering continued. Today we continue to see it happen with this motion. It's a waste of taxpayers' dollars; it's a waste of our time as legislators. But mainly it stops progress. There are so many things we can be



doing out there in the community and in this House to move Ontario forward.

I oppose this motion, and I support the Minister of Energy and his work. I believe that the work he has done in the past and the work he will do in the future will continue to contribute to this great province and move us along.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate? The member for Prince Edward–Hastings.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to get back to talking about why we are here and why we've gobbled up four days of legislative time. It has nothing to do with election platforms from over a year ago. It has more to do with the behaviour of this government since the last election, the lack of action by this government and the secrecy that has occurred on some very, very important issues.

This is about the accountability of this government. This about the defiance of that government in ignoring a Speaker's ruling. This is about the contempt shown by this government for both this House and the taxpayers of this province when it comes to two cancelled gas plants for political gain. It has nothing to do with election platforms from more than a year ago.

I'm not even sure if the member opposite even spoke about why we're here. It has everything to do with \$650 million of taxpayers' money that's been piddled away to keep five or six Liberal seats. That's what this is about. It's all about politics; it's not about good government policy.

The Speaker ruled back in May that our member from Cambridge had his privileges breached because the government didn't turn over documents that were required so the official opposition could do their job. That's what this is all about.

I know the Premier hasn't taken part in any of the deliberation on the motion by Mr. Leone, but I do know that the Premier is a fan of Shakespeare—that has come to my attention—and I hope my colleagues will forgive me a bit for paraphrasing. I know the member who just spoke was paying tribute to the minister and what a great career the Minister of Energy has had when it comes to law. It almost seems like we were attending the funeral of the minister. It was almost as if it was some kind of speech on the life of the energy minister.

This is the Shakespeare quote I would like to share, and I hope it makes it back to the Premier as well: The minister is an honourable man; so are they all honourable men. Come I to speak the truth's funeral today. That's Shakespeare.

I've sat here for the last four days of deliberations, and I can't help but think of that speech from Julius Caesar every time a government member gets up and raises the minister's honour in the House. Very few members on this side have actually brought up the minister when it comes to this. It's about the accountability of that government, and that's why we're here today. The minister's honour is not at question. I don't need to be reminded of the man's resumé every time a member from the gov-

ernment gets to their feet and parrots the same talking points, as we heard a few minutes ago, delivered to them by the Premier's staff.

It was interesting that when the Speaker asked the member to get back on point, it took a long time to try to find what that point was and remember where we were. They'll do anything they possibly can not to talk about the issue at hand here, because what has happened with the government has been indefensible. They have no defence for withholding the documents from the official opposition. It was quite evident in the ruling that came from the Speaker that they were withholding the documents. The documents were finally turned over, but the documents were tampered with. They were redacted. They were whited out. We didn't get the documents we required to do our job on this side, and that's why this motion is continuing.

I'm not sure if the members from the government side missed out the day the energy critic, Vic Fedeli, our member from Nipissing, stood up in the House and read a couple of dozen or so of pages that were sent over the previous night. As he read the items, "Oh my goodness, there's nothing on that page. Oh, there's nothing here; it's been whited out. Oh, it's been redacted." It's quite clear to the members on the government side, if they were paying attention and had come out of their hypnosis, that the pages were not turned over as the House leader and the Minister of Energy said they were.

**1430**

It would be more appropriate to direct my criticism not at the Minister of Energy, but at the former Minister of Energy, who is actually the Minister of Economic Development and Innovation now, and his total incompetency, if he actually even was given the opportunity to work on the energy file—I mean, that has come to light now. Who was really running the show over there? Was it the minister who actually was making decisions, or was it the Liberal campaign team, or was it the Premier's office? We're not exactly sure. I almost feel a bit sorry for the Minister of Energy and the former Minister of Energy, now the Minister of Economic Development, because maybe they're getting dragged through the mud here for decisions that they were never entrusted to make because the Liberal campaign team or the Premier's office are calling the shots. It's quite a scary thing for the people of Ontario when you consider that fact.

The ministers over there are entrusted with making decisions that will affect the day-to-day workings of our province, but are they really doing that? Who's actually making the decisions over there? It's been quite clear, from testimony at the estimates committee from the Minister of Finance, that the decision was a political decision. It wasn't made for good energy policy; it was made to save those Liberal seats in Mississauga and Etobicoke and Oakville. Anyway, I think the Minister of Economic Development and Innovation probably deserves to be on the same roasting spit as the Minister of Energy currently is.

As much as the government may wish to deny its existence, Mr. Speaker, we do have this thing called min-

isterial responsibility, and the minister holds the file. It was his responsibility to hand over all those documents, and even though the delivery was made, there were all the redactions and missing documents in those files that should still be turned over. The fault for that action lies specifically with the Minister of Energy, and that's why we're debating this motion here today.

It should not have come to this, Mr. Speaker. The government could have avoided this at many turns throughout the process. The government chose not to, and that's why we're here.

Over the last four days that the House has been sitting, the members on the government side have raised the minister's history as a lawyer. They brought up everything in his resumé except for his LSAT score. But really, it's not about his resumé; it's about the fact that he did not do what was required of him: turn over those documents. No one here is contesting the fact that the minister is a good lawyer. No one here is contesting that the minister has a good personality. I've met him on several occasions, and he is a nice gentleman. But the fact is that somebody has encouraged him or has given him his marching orders not to do what was required by the Speaker of this House, and now he's paying the price for it in the court of public opinion, as is the government, and the taxpayers of Ontario are being stuck with a \$650-million bill to save those six Liberal seats.

The fact is that the people of Ontario could have used a good lawyer a long time ago. The people of Ontario could have used an advocate willing to stand up after eHealth to cross-examine this government on how so much money could have been wasted for so little return. The patients at Ornge could have used a good lawyer or an advocate willing to stand up and ask how so much money could have been wasted and so little pain spared. I know on the Ornge matter that the members of the government side like to refer to our member from Newmarket–Aurora as Atticus Finch every time he stands up. He's been a strong advocate for the people who have been wronged by the Ornge fiasco, and he's trying to get answers on that file. Unfortunately, the government doesn't have the committees sitting in this House so that we can continue to get the testimony at the Ornge hearing at public accounts that the people of Ontario so rightly deserve. Unfortunately, we can't get the government to decide to reinstate the committee on finance so that we can look to find out if the government and the minister are in contempt on this file.

We deserve better than to have the truth hidden behind a redaction. This government does not get to tell the House what is relevant to the scope of inquiry. No member should ever again read a page that says "63 pages redacted; not relevant," as we did this week. We are the people's representatives here in the official opposition. We will decide what's relevant.

The government has two options at that point: It can produce the documents, or it can face the contempt charge in this House, and that's what the government has chosen. The government has chosen contempt. I say to

the government members that choosing contempt will not save you from the truth on this issue. It will come out at committee, and you'll continue to live through this until we get it to committee and through that procedure as well.

The greatest risk to the reputation and to the honour of the member from London West doesn't come from the official opposition, and it doesn't come from the third party either. The greatest risk to the reputation and the honour of the member from London West comes from the occupant of the Premier's chair. It's the Premier who has chosen to make the energy minister wear this, for some reason. It's the Premier, whose House leader tried to delay the discovery of the true cost of these failed power projects by trying to delay the release of the documents since May. It's the Premier and his campaign team, whose callous disregard for the public trust in Oakville and Mississauga has brought us to this point.

It's the responsibility of Her Majesty's loyal opposition—and I feel I should stress "loyal opposition"—to hold the ministers of the crown to account, and that's what we're trying to do by bringing in this motion today. It has nothing to do with divisive politics; it has everything to do with standing up for the taxpayers of Ontario, who have lost \$650 million, and who knows how much more, by the cancellation of these two projects.

Over the last few days, the members of the government have questioned both our right to oppose and our loyalty to this province. I'd remind them, especially the member from Don Valley East, who spoke moments ago, that it's my job and it's our job to stand up in this place when the government spends \$650 million on a hole in the ground in Mississauga and another one in the ground in Oakville. It just doesn't make sense for us not to stand up and question the government when something like that happens. I think the people at home—they're watching right now and they're saying, "Absolutely."

A Liberal campaign team should not be the ones making decisions that affect how much old Mrs. Smith up in North Hastings is paying for her electricity bill. You know who's going to pay for that \$650-million boondoggle of cancelled gas plants: It's going to be our seniors, who can least afford it, and our most vulnerable citizens.

We deserve transparency in government, and we have not received it from this government. We deserve full disclosure from this government, and we haven't received that either. When the government acts in defiance of the House and of a Speaker's ruling, it's our job to hold them to account.

I'm forced to ask if the members of the government side are simply so used to their government wasting taxpayers' money that \$650 million fails to unnerve them when it's put next to the \$2 billion that they wasted at eHealth and the \$1 billion that has been wasted at Ornge. Maybe \$650 million is just a drop in the bucket there. Let's not forget the over \$4 billion annually on the feed-in tariff program that's being wasted by this government.

The Speaker has given a ruling that the minister hand over all the documents, and the minister has failed to

comply, and that's why we're here today. The people of Ontario deserve to have the minister be held to account when information is withheld from their elected representatives. In this case, information has been withheld. That's been quite clear, if you've been paying attention for the last week or so. The people of Ontario deserve to have the minister held to account when the government wastes \$650 million.

We can argue that the member from Scarborough Centre should be the minister held to account in this case. That's the current Minister of Economic Development and Innovation, as I mentioned earlier. I don't find it shocking, by the way, that the member from Scarborough Centre has yet to be heard from on this as well, and I would look forward to hearing from the Minister of Economic Development and Innovation, the Minister of Energy and the Premier, all of whom have been absent without speaking on this matter. I'm sure that the member from Scarborough Centre will have ample chance to face the music when he's brought before committee on this issue, should we get there.

**1440**

The Premier, too, shouldn't be above scrutiny on this matter. He has repeatedly tried to hold himself out as above accountability to the taxpayer. We've seen it on Ornge. The Premier should be compelled to appear before the committee on this issue as well, as it has quite clearly been a decision that was made by the campaign team and the Premier's office and not necessarily the cabinet. The Premier should be forced to answer questions about when the decision to cancel Mississauga was made, who was consulted about the decision, what campaign operatives made the political calculation, and why the current Minister of Energy admitted to the estimates committee that he found out about the decision through the media, instead of with other elected officials around a cabinet table. It's disgusting to know that the current Minister of Energy found out that the plants were being cancelled through the media and not by sitting around the cabinet table where these decisions are supposed to be made. That's where Ontarians have entrusted that these decisions should be made, around the cabinet table. We've seen this occur many times, where the ministers and the cabinet ministers are not making the decisions. All you have to do is look back at the G20 as well. Many of the cabinet and many of the caucus had no idea that that decision had been made.

Most of all, and perhaps this will be of interest to the government members of the committee, the Premier should be forced to answer why he sacrificed the honour of the member from London West over this issue. Government members have stood in this House for the last four days that the Legislature has been sitting and extolled the virtues of that member, and I'm sure they'd like to know the Premier's motivation for throwing him under the bus on this issue.

Again, the cost of this scandal: \$650 million—\$650 million—\$650 million.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's more.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** And it's going to be more than that. This is a lot of money.

TransCanada actually turned down a settlement for \$721 million. They turned that down, yet the Minister of Energy stood here a week ago today and said that this was only going to cost taxpayers \$40 million. He stood here and said that this is only going to cost the taxpayers of Ontario \$40 million, yet, as we found out from the documents that we got, TCE turned down a settlement for \$721 million in this case. And we're supposed to believe that it's only going to cost \$40 million? Give me a break. I was born at night, but it wasn't last night. I know the people of Ontario are far more in tune than to believe that it's only going to cost \$40 million when TransCanada has said they turned down \$721 million—completely out to lunch.

Six hundred and fifty million dollars is what we have found out so far that it's going to cost to cancel the gas plants in Oakville and Mississauga. That's what we've uncovered. That's roughly \$130 million per Liberal seat saved; \$130 million to save those Liberal seats. Now that's a waste of taxpayer money, if I've ever heard it. With that much being wasted, surely somebody has to be held accountable for that.

The Speaker has ruled that all documents be turned over in this matter, and they obviously haven't been. Someone has to be held accountable for that, too. The government must be held to account, because every government member who stands up and defends this decision is as complicit as those who made the decision. I'm guessing that, of the 53 or so who are over there, there might have been 50 who were actually aware that this gas plant was being cancelled. Do you think I'm high or low on that? Probably 50 had no idea that that gas plant was being cancelled during the election campaign last year.

The minister has to be held accountable because ministerial responsibility is the best tradition of our democracy. The Premier has to be held accountable because, ultimately, he has brought this on this government. When I first got here, the Minister of Energy was one of the first ministers I met on a walk home one night. I don't need to be told about the minister's honour. I've talked to the minister several times first-hand. But he has to be held responsible for not doing what the Speaker said he had to do, which was to turn those documents over—and I don't blame the minister for that. The minister was taking his marching orders from the Premier's office. That's where this comes from. It comes from the Premier's office. If anybody should be held in contempt, it should be the Premier, who's not here, and unfortunately, he's thrown his minister under the bus.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member knows full well that we're not to make reference to the absence of any member of the House.

I return to the member for Prince Edward–Hastings.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to remind those on the government side and everyone here in the House and anybody who

might be tuning in to watch this debate this afternoon that this isn't about the Minister of Energy. This is about the accountability of that government. This is about the defiance of that government in ignoring a Speaker's ruling. This is about the contempt shown by this government for both this House and the taxpayers of Ontario. It's a damn shame. It's a damn shame.

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

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I rise today to speak to a very serious motion that has been brought forward by the Progressive Conservative Party, a motion that has brought the work of this Legislature to a grinding halt.

I have listened closely to the debates on both sides of this House, and I am taken aback by the language that is used to characterize my friend and my colleague. I am enormously disappointed. I am sickened. I am outraged by the attempt at character assassination from the members opposite, members particularly of the PC caucus.

There is a long-standing tradition in this Legislature, in other Parliaments internationally, that we are given the distinction of being called "honourable members." That represents that despite our political differences, we respect one another as individuals. We respect the voters who sent us to this place. I can tell you that the attempts by the opposition to discredit an extraordinarily honourable person are a low point in my nine years in this Legislature. I think we could look back in history here and we would understand that this is a low point for far longer than just the nine years that I have been here.

I have an advantage because I have known Chris Bentley for many, many years. He represents the riding next door to mine. I know how much he is respected—indeed, admired—by the people of London. He does not deserve to be treated this way. I am very pleased to be able to stand up and talk about the Chris Bentley I know as a man of integrity, a man of honour, a man of purpose. He is someone who is always putting the interests of Ontarians first. There are many examples that I can use about his experience, before he was elected, that demonstrate to me the quality, the calibre of this human being.

He was the founder of something called Neighbourhood Legal Services. It's a legal clinic that provides support to clients of very modest means. He has been a champion for women and children who are dealing with issues of domestic violence and abuse. He has practised law; he has an impeccable reputation. He is exactly the kind of person that we should celebrate, not disparage as is being done by the people across this aisle.

Since he's been elected, he's done some very, very good things. I'm thinking about the family medical leave provisions, the amendments to the Employment Standards Act that pave a way for those of us who need to take time off work to care for a loved one, to have that ability and be able to care for the people that we love. Our jobs are protected. He's done exceptional work, as I say, here and before he came here, to support the safety of women and children who are victims of violence.

1450

Now, I know that this issue before us is a question of whether or not documents have been tabled. Well, I know the request was made, Speaker. I also know that that request has been complied with: 36,000 pages of documents have been delivered and have been made available. Speaker, this is purely political gamesmanship. Any reasonable person would understand that a government has to do its due diligence to ensure that documents that have been requested do go through a proper check to ensure that taxpayers' interests are protected. After all—

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Point of order, the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Mr. Speaker, I've sat here for days and listened to this diversion about a personal attack on Mr. Bentley. This is not about that. She's going through all the things—a litany of things he's done has nothing to do with what we're dealing with. It's about the ruling on not disclosing the papers—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you. I return to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** If the member opposite had been listening to what I was saying instead of just running off the way he is prone to do, he would know that I am talking about exact—the 36,000 pages of documents that have been delivered. Speaker, this issue is about pure political gamesmanship. I think it is outrageous and does us all a discredit.

As I was saying, it is important that taxpayer interests were protected. There were very sensitive negotiations under way. The Auditor General acknowledged that. The Speaker acknowledged that. It would have been entirely irresponsible to release documents prematurely.

I can tell you that our government is fully committed to complying with substantial requests made by committees. We firmly believe in transparency and accountability. We have acted on that. In fact, we have done more than any party in this Legislature when it comes to making government more transparent and accountable. Let's think back to 2003, Speaker, when we came to government. Leading up to that election, you might remember that the PC Party failed miserably in the transparency test when it came to revealing details of the fiscal situation of this province. They characterized it as though "The books are balanced. We're in good shape financially." When we took office, we actually discovered a hidden deficit—a secret deficit of \$5.6 billion. The headline in the Toronto Star—I'm going to quote, Speaker. In October 2003, the headline in the Toronto Star said, "Outgoing Tories Outright Lied." That's a quote, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I have to ask the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to take some care to ensure that her remarks are temperate and not inflammatory.

When I'm standing, you have to sit down, I have to add. At the same time, I think I have to remind the mem-

ber that it's important that the content of her remarks relate back to the motion that's being debated this afternoon.

The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, upon discovering this hidden deficit, we rolled up our sleeves. We got to work. We got the books back to balance. We ran surpluses for three budgets in a row and, more importantly, we changed the way pre-election finances are reported, so that never again will a political party in power be able to hide the fiscal situation of this province for its own political advantage.

So today, Speaker, the auditor signs off on the legitimacy of pre-election finances so that the people of this province will never be fooled again the way the PCs did back in 2003—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I apologize for interrupting, but I also have to ask the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to withdraw her unparliamentary remark of a few seconds ago.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I withdraw.

Speaker, let's look at FOI compliance rates. Look at the Ministry of Energy FOI compliance rates: The compliance rate for the Ministry of Energy was 95.8%. That's not perfect, but it's pretty darn good when you compare it to what the compliance rate was back in 2003 when the PCs were in office: the number was 28%. A 28% compliance rate when they were in charge; 95.8% when we are in charge. I will take no lessons from the opposition regarding our commitment to transparency.

I think we should consider the record of the sponsor of the current motion, the member from Cambridge. He speaks of having an interest in private sector job creation. Yet when he had the opportunity to vote for the south-west economic development fund, he voted against it. The work of this—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Again to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care: I have to again remind her that her comments need to have some reference at least to the debate that we're engaged in on the motion. She's bringing in a lot of additional information and not really tying it back, I have to say, to the motion. I'll ask her to do it again.

I return to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm very pleased to speak to the motion, Speaker, and I have done that. I have said that the request has been complied with. I don't know that there's a lot more to say about that.

But what I would like to talk about is all of the work that is being held up by this purely political gamesmanship. Let's just have a look at what we would like to be working on—what we are not working on because of this ridiculous activity of the members opposite. These are the bills we would like to be discussing; instead, we are discussing this motion: Bill 30, the family caregiver leave; Bill 2, the healthy homes renovation tax credit; Bill 36, Security for Courts, Electricity Generating

Facilities and Nuclear Facilities Act—we think that we should be talking about that.

We should be talking about the Education Amendment Act, dealing with concussions. We should be talking about the Ambulance Amendment Act, Bill 50, that deals with issues related to Ornge. I know members of the opposition would like us to continue to get Ornge back on track, but they're not letting us do that. They're blocking our—

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek on a point of order.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Speaker, the minister keeps talking about being held up. This whole place is being held up because they won't strike committees. I don't know why she's making statements like that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That's not a point of order, and the member for Hamilton East—Stoney Creek knows that full well.

I return to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The Non-profit Housing Co-operatives Statute Law Amendment Act: We'd like to be talking about that. We'd like to be talking about the Ontario Electricity System Operator Act, Bill 75. We'd like to be talking about Bill 82, the Wireless Services Agreements Act, and we would very much like to be talking about Bill 100, the Great Lakes Protection Act. All of this work has come to a grinding halt because of the purely political gamesmanship of the party opposite.

The people of London North Centre sent me here because they wanted me to do a job: to represent their concerns, to make changes to make their lives a little bit better. We are doing that work, but I do believe that some of that work has to happen in this House. We are being prevented from doing that work, just like we were being prevented from doing that work when the bells were ringing time and time and time again.

Speaker, there's an issue in Cambridge that I know is of importance to the people of Cambridge, yet the member from Cambridge is not focused on that issue. I can tell you that Kathryn McGarry is talking about this issue; I can tell you that citizens of Cambridge are talking about this issue—and that, of course, is the issue of the Cambridge hospital. He actually voted against the budget that moves that project forward. People of this—

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** Point of order.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Point of order: The member for Barrie.

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** Given all this talk about documents, I'd like to know if the minister will table the documents she's withholding from the estimates committee.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That's not a point of order; it was a point of interruption.

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I will ask the House to come to order, first of all. Second, I will ask the Minister of Health again to resume, but I remind her of

the need to bring her remarks back to the subject at hand, which is the motion before the House.

The Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, the motion before the House is a bit of a phantom motion, because the Minister of Energy has complied with the request to release the documents; 36,000 pages of documents have been tabled. That work is done; there's a lot more work to do.

1500

This House, this Legislature, is not just a place where we pass laws. It is also a place where members of the community can come and have their voice heard and be acknowledged. Today should have been the day when we were talking about community health centres, because we're kicking off Community Health Centre Week. Members of the AOHC, the Association of Ontario Health Centres, were here today. It was an opportunity to celebrate the work they do, caring for people who often have challenges accessing other parts of our health care system. They represent more than 100 primary health care organizations, 73 community health centres, aboriginal health access centres, community family health teams, nurse practitioner-led clinics—people delivering care to the people of Ontario.

I would have liked for them to be able to come to the House today and hear us talk about the work they're doing, celebrate the work they're doing. But, no, we can't do that today, because the opposition thinks it's more important that we discuss this bogus motion. I think they're not just doing the members of this Legislature a disservice; they're doing the people of this whole province a disservice.

There are many issues, as I said, bills that are before this House that I think we should be debating and that I think we should be passing, but we're being prevented from doing that. Of course, Bill 50 is a very high priority for me. This entrenches greater oversight of our air ambulance system. It will allow us to ensure that taxpayers get the very best value for their money. The opposition is blocking that progress.

I know that the healthy home renovation tax credit will make a difference for seniors who need to put in a wheelchair ramp or renovate their bathroom or make their hallways a little bit wider or the door frames a little bit wider so they can stay home as long as possible. But members of the opposition are making seniors wait for this. I think that is just wrong. We want to move forward with the healthy home renovation tax credit.

You know, Speaker, it has been nearly one year since Ontarians went to the polls. They—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Point of order, the member for Chatham-Kent-Essex.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Thank you, Speaker. With all due respect to the member, I don't believe she's actually speaking to the amendment to the motion, and if she wants to go on and on and attack us with regard to—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I understand your concern, but I would return to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and again ask her to relate her remarks to the motion.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Speaker, back to the motion: As I've said, the documents have been tabled. That work has been done.

The members opposite are preventing us from moving forward on other priorities, priorities that they pretend are important to them. When they have a choice—do they want to play political games or do they want to move forward on important items that improve quality of life?—they are choosing political gamesmanship over service to their communities.

I think it's wrong. I think it's very unfortunate. It is not in the tradition of the Progressive Conservative Party of John Robarts or Bill Davis, where honourable members were treated with respect. There would not have been an occasion in those days when there would be a contempt motion that suggested that a member of this House was not telling the truth.

Speaker, the people of this great province sent a minority government to this Legislature. I think the people want that minority government to work. They do not want to see this kind of game being played when other priorities—urgent priorities—cannot be moved forward because you are running out the clock.

I think it is a very sad day in this province when the good old Progressive Conservative Party—a party I actually was a member of for a few short years in my life, before I got wiser. I was a member of the Progressive Conservative Party in my foolish youth. That party, that old Progressive Conservative Party, would not have tolerated this kind of activity.

You know, we've got big challenges. We're coming out of a global recession that is really putting our families and our government under some pressure. We've got a plan to get back to balance, to protect the gains we've made, to make sure that our kids get the best possible education, that our seniors get the possible health care, that we keep our wait times down low, that we increase and improve access to primary care. There's a lot of work under way. I don't think we can afford this ridiculous waste of time. I want to see us move forward.

The people who sent me here sent me with very clear instructions: "Focus on jobs. Focus on the economy. Make sure health care is there when the people I love need it. Make sure my kids get the education so they can be the very best they can be." I think the members opposite were sent with the same marching orders, but they are ignoring the wishes of their constituents by grinding this wonderful place to a halt.

Speaker, I am honoured to be a member of this Legislature, but I have to say, I have been tested in recent days when I look and see what the members opposite are doing to this place. Thank you.

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

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I recognize the member for Timmins-James Bay on a point of order.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Mr. Speaker, the standing order says that a member can't impugn motives on to another. We have not been debating this motion for the last four days. We want to get to the vote. If anybody is filibustering, it's the government, at this point.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That was not a point of order.

I now return to debate. I recognize the member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Thank you, Speaker. Similar to most of my colleagues who have risen in this House to speak to this matter, I am saddened and, in fact, I'm embarrassed that members opposite have been led down the garden path and in fact have to defend a matter when the decision was made by a campaign team. It wasn't even made by them, duly elected members, and now they have to defend it.

I am proud, however, to stand up for democracy, to stand up for the taxpayers of Ontario, to hold a government that has lost its way and takes its role for granted to account. That is my job and that's the job of everybody in opposition in this House. I stand proudly with my PC colleagues in seeking the truth on behalf of those we answer to, the taxpayers.

I'm troubled. I'm disappointed—the flagrant disrespect for the people for selfish, seat-saver, political gain reasons—that this decision was made. I'm disappointed that there has been no remorse for wasting \$650 million—and that's a minimum number; it's probably going to go over the billion—and depriving Ontarians of health care and education. We hear it all the time on the opposite side, that it's their priority. Just think of the services that are not going to be provided because of yet another waste.

I'm troubled by the cavalier attitude. There has been no sincere apology from one member when they've stepped up to speak, no action to make amends other than the shallow, "We should have done better." After nine years, that's getting a little—in fact, that's getting a lot tiring.

There's a culture of secrecy. Deals are signed with no accountability. Think Ornge. Think Samsung. And now we, you and I, the taxpayers—eHealth—are paying for that and will continue to pay. There's a blatant disregard for the integrity of this House, trying to spin rather than accepting accountability and responsibility.

The Minister of Health just said this is a bogus motion. Speaker, I go back and reflect on your words. This issue before us is a very serious matter, and you ruled, in your ruling on the point of privilege that was put forward by my colleague Mr. Leone from Cambridge, that there is in fact a prima facie case of privilege.

I want to also quote from your conclusion:

"The Standing Committee on Estimates was unquestionably entitled to request the documents sought from the Minister of Energy, and in the end the minister had an obligation to comply with the committee's call for those documents. The committee did not accept the minister's reasons for withholding the documents and persisted in its demand during an extended period of time.

"I am therefore satisfied that a prima facie case of privilege has been established."

It seems your colleagues on the Liberal bench are actually challenging your wisdom, Speaker, and your ruling. On behalf of my colleagues, Speaker, I want to thank you for that ruling, because at the heart is the ability of this chamber, the members of this Legislature, to do their job.

**1510**

The reason we're debating today is not because of any individual's character or reputation. It is specifically because a committee of this Legislature attempted for months to get important documents that it felt were important to do its work and the Minister of Energy repeatedly refused to produce those documents. The committee relied on this House and the rules of procedure to have access to that, and unfortunately, that's what it took. We would not be here today if the Minister of Energy had simply complied with the request of that committee months ago and provided the documentation that involved a multi-billion-dollar transaction in this province. Multi-billions of dollars are at risk in the green energy policy of this government.

Speaker, it's shameless: Blame the opposition and try to spin your way out of this rather than do the honourable thing and accept the consequences. You made the decision. Now accept the consequences. This is about open transparency and accountability, fundamental tenets of our society and this sacred House.

Speaker, my sons, Zach and Ben—Zach is 18 and Ben is 15. Every day—well, not every day; they're not really that bad kids—but often we have chats about what they need to do and to make decisions.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Chip off the old block.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Correct.

Everyone has the right and privilege, because of those who went before us, to live in this great province and this great country and make our own decisions and not be told what to do. But every decision has its consequence.

What type of model are we showing here when the members opposite continue to make decisions and won't step up? As my colleague from Chatham-Kent-Essex says, when you mess up, fess up. Just stand up, be honest to the Ontario taxpayer and say, "Look, we terribly messed this up. It's going to cost you \$1 billion, and we're sorry." It's not going to absolve them, but it certainly would go a long way in showing leadership. That's something that's sorely lacking on the other side.

Make amends. What are you going to do to fix it, rather than blaming Conservatives as far back as Confederation for all the ills of today? Just step up and be sincere. Tell them what you need to—

**Interjection:** It must have been Mike Harris's fault.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's absolutely no doubt Mike Harris's fault.

It challenges me, Speaker, because I think they need to look in the mirror. That's what I do every day, and say, "When I leave that House each day, did I do things that the people who sent me here would they are proud of me? Would I be proud of me?"

I'm not certain. Most of those people had no decision-making ability on this. They probably weren't even consulted, and now they have to stand there. They can go home and say to their taxpayers—the people who are or are not going to return them to this House—that they did the right thing; they did the honourable thing.

Speaker, I need to share with you—this isn't just me. This is a constituent of mine, Andre from Owen Sound: "The release by Chris Bentley of some documents regarding the Oakville gas plant got my attention. The Liberals know they could not possibly reveal another \$200-million screw-up. If I am right, they will fight releasing the specifics with more energy than the Samsung details. My wife, a lifelong third-generation Liberal, said to me, 'McGuinty should be forced to resign.' Ontario cannot take any more of this." That's a constituent's words, Mr. Speaker, not mine, and unsolicited, I might add.

This government is contemptuous. They seem to think they're above the law, using words like "bogus motion," which you in fact ruled was a legitimate motion. They think they have the right to just govern as they wish. They forget that the people of Ontario sent them a very strong minority message: "Go there and do the right things. You're starting to mess up. In fact, you've done a lot of mess-ups. You need to go there and do better. You need to be held accountable."

The Minister of Health said in this chamber that if it is the will of the people, we will form and set up a select committee on Ornge. We're still waiting for that, Speaker. Not only are we waiting for that committee; we're waiting for every committee that we have. And they have the gall to tell us that we are holding up legislation; we are holding up this House. The people need to know the truth. This spin cannot go on. The Premier has not even appeared, and says, "I'm above it. I'm not coming to your committee." The standing committee is still waiting for him to appear so that we can get to the bottom of the truth.

The HST: There was a vote in this House. My colleagues from the third party and our party in the opposition voted and defeated the Liberals on the HST. But did they listen to us? Did they move that legislation forward? No, Speaker, they did not. That is contempt.

I offer another constituent, Jim from Owen Sound, who I believe says it well: "I just want to say, in regard to the recent decision by the Liberal Party to move the gas-fired plant that was well into construction and has been cancelled and will now be moved east, that it looks to me that it was only done for political gain and to buy Liberal voters to gain seats. I hope the opposition pushes for a criminal investigation into this travesty of a waste of taxpayer money; money that should be repaid by the Liberal Party if found guilty. This supposed \$40-million move is going to wind up costing Ontario taxpayers \$100 million to \$200 million. I hope the contempt motion goes through."

Speaker, you wonder why there's such apathy of the voter. You know, their political skin is more important

than the needs of their constituents. They suggest they are here to present and represent and provide services. How, in good conscience, can they, while continually wasting billions of dollars, go back to their taxpayers and say, "I'm doing the right thing for you"? Think of health care. Think of the knee replacements, the cataract surgeries, the MRIs that are not going to happen. Think of the kids who aren't going to get the services, those handicapped kids and mentally challenged kids who need services and counselling that won't go because we go and say, "Sorry, there's no money at the trough."

Just think of the contempt and the blank pages. After we had to force them, they sent documents upon documents. My colleague Mr. Fedeli from Nipissing just randomly pulled out a sheaf of papers and started to turn them. The bulk of them were blank, whited out or redacted. That's not being sincere: "We want to work together and do things and move forward." That's contempt for this House. It's contempt for the people of Ontario, Mr. Speaker. It's simply unacceptable.

If they were really sincere, the Liberals would not have sent blank, whited-out and redacted documents. You know, it's becoming a trend of hiding. Think eHealth. Think Ornge. The Minister of Health stood here and said, "We've changed." Think of the reporting we had to do. Think about how they've changed reporting for Ornge. Everything beyond the first line is hidden. It's hidden in documents, Mr. Speaker, that we can't even get access to. Then again, if we had that select committee, we'd still be trying to get to the bottom of that on behalf of the Ontario taxpayer.

I also want to bring to light that a taxpayer, Nigel from Durham—and he has already sent this, actually, to Dalton McGuinty, Chris Bentley, Dwight Duncan, Tim Hudak, Andrea Horwath, myself, Scott Stinson, Johnathan Jenkins, John Tory, Steve Paikin and Ryan MacDonald, so I'm not sharing anything here that isn't public. He is very, very distressed, and in fact sent a letter to Yasir Naqvi, the president of the Liberal Party of Ontario:

"Dear Mr. Naqvi:

"Please find attached an invoice issued on behalf of the taxpayers of Ontario for \$259,900,000, inclusive of HST." Now, this is not a prop and this is not a joke. This man was very serious and took his time—and he goes on to elaborate all the reasons. He uses words that concern me as well: "Failure to remit payment will result in contributing to an already dangerously high annual deficit and accumulated provincial public debt which your regime already managed to double as a result of fiscal mismanagement and incompetence since assuming office." You know, it's scary. "Unfortunately, our democracy seemingly does not require the same guiding moral principles in the public sector as it does in the private sector."

Mr. Speaker, I had hoped to present both these letters directly to the Premier and the finance minister, just in case somehow it got caught up in the snail mail. But if I could, I'll have a page direct those to their offices, since they are not able to accept it hand-delivered by me today.



Mr. Speaker, I go on and on. This is just the hypocrisy of democracy. They continually say, when they stand to rise, that we are holding up—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I'm going to ask the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound to withdraw his unparliamentary remark.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Withdraw, Speaker.

They continually say that we're holding up the House. I need to remind them, unfortunately, that they are the government. They have the ability to set up committees. They have the ability to move things through this House. It is they who are holding up democracy, not this side of the House—neither the opposition nor the third party.

I'm afraid to use that word again, Speaker, but I have to. They said, "We listened to the people of Oakville, and we listened to the people of Mississauga." Well, I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, and if you look at the electoral map from the last election, they sure aren't listening to rural Ontario and they certainly aren't listening to the people of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound who have said, "We do not want these expensive, experimental wind turbines in our backyard."

What about the horse racing industry, Mr. Speaker? "We listen. We really want to listen and do the right thing." Well, they're decimating an industry and taking 30,000 to 60,000 jobs with them. Speaker, it's just unfathomable that they can say that with a straight face and actually have it recorded in Hansard for people to hear and read many years from today.

All they need to do is step backwards and truly speak with sincere words, "We want to work together. We want to do the right things," rather than trying to cling and hang on to power. This rhetoric of working together—a Liberal campaign team made this decision, not even democratically elected representatives. Those unfortunate people who aren't in the main cabinet probably weren't even aware of this. Now they have to defend it. It's unfathomable.

1520

**Interjection:** Who's steering the ship?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Who is steering the ship? Absolutely.

The poor caucus members over there—they weren't probably even asked for their opinion, and now they have to stand in this House, and more importantly, they have to go back to their home ridings and stand in front of those people who truly will be their judge and say, "Yes, I support exactly what your government did. I support you and your government wasting \$640 million of my hard-earned taxpayers' money." Speaker, I'm glad it's them and not me, because in good conscience, I couldn't do it.

They continually stand here, again, and suggest that we're dishonouring their member. In fact, I think most of us hold Minister Bentley in high regard. The unfortunate part is, as many in this House have said, they've thrown him under the bus. They're all standing, espousing—it's like he's gone. It's like they've already found him guilty and now they're trying to backpedal and soft-pedal as

much as they can to save their own tarnished image, not his. They're not sincere in his image; they're trying to save the Liberal brand, and that's inappropriate, because he is a good man.

What I find interesting is, now current Economic Development Minister Duguid just seems to be sliding through all this. He's not here. He's not having to stand up and defend any of this message—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I have to remind the member that it's inappropriate to make reference to the absence of any member in the House during the course of debate.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** My apologies, Speaker. I withdraw. I didn't really realize—that just slipped out, Speaker.

But, you know, he is sliding through all this. He was the one that was on that file when these decisions were made. He is the one that should be taking the heat right beside Mr. Bentley, at the very most. What about our finance minister? This is a guy who has doubled our debt in eight years. It took the rest of Confederation—what he has unfortunately done in eight years. He's going to have a \$411-billion deficit staring him in the face, and they want to stand in this House and say, "We got you a \$40-million deal, and it's a darn good one, too." Come on. These people have to be held accountable as well. I don't want us to walk out of this chamber without those two people having their hands in that cookie jar and getting rapped just as much as anyone else.

Then I go on to waste—\$650 million and climbing. How many nurses? How many long-term-care beds? How many home care visits, MRIs, hip surgeries? How many special-needs kids could have been helped? How many people with mental health could have been helped, Speaker, if we had this? Ornge—we just keep going. There's a bit of a trend here. We're wasting billions on gas plants. We're wasting millions and billions on Ornge and eHealth and the Green Energy Act. Let me not even get started on what that's going to cost us over the next 20 years. Right now we spent, in the last year, half a billion. We paid the States and Quebec to take our surplus energy, and yet they're—"Damn the torpedoes, we're going straight ahead because we made this." Have a little bit of civility. Be humble and step back and say, "We've messed up yet again, and we'll turn"—

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Fess up.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Fess up and mess up.

In my own home riding, the great residents of Markdale and area fundraised for \$13 million. For six or eight years, that money's been sitting in the bank for a new hospital. It's basically crumbling around them, and they come to the minister—I accompanied them to the minister at ROMA, and what she said was, "I'm sorry, but there's no money." Well, how do you explain that to those hard-working people who gave of their sweat equity, their savings, whatever they had to do to support their local hospital, because health care is so important? And you say to them, "There's no money, but we'll just slip this \$650-million boondoggle under the thing and just drive on, because we want to talk about the healthy homes renovation tax credit"?

Good God, Speaker. People are having a hard time paying their hydro bills, their heating bills. Now this is going to be added on to their bills yet again, and they have the audacity to say, “We have no money but we’re doing great things for you. Let’s look at our record.” Speaker, come on, let’s be serious. They’re decimating the horse-racing industry. Hanover Raceway, in my riding, is probably going to end up closing because of, again, a decision that was made without any thought process, without any conscience of what the real—and then they have this disingenuous thought: Health care or horses? How disingenuous can you even be?

The Derby school is in fear of being closed right now. You know why, Speaker? Because they don’t have enough money to pay the bills. The government told them they need to look at it and shut down. Well, what if we had just a smidgen of this \$650-million waste—and climbing? What if we had the billion-dollar eHealth boondoggle? What if we had the eHealth money that they’ve wasted over the last years?

**Interjection:** OLG.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** OLG—it’s almost laughable, if it wasn’t so severe and shocking to the people that have to pay the freight.

Many people in my riding are barely hanging on. We’re saying that we have to cut back our teachers, but yet they’re going out and wasting \$650 million and trying to make it look good—that they’re onside; that we’re the bad people obstructing this House and holding up progress. It’s absolutely—it is contemptible. They’re out of touch.

A couple of speakers this afternoon—and I won’t name them, because they’ll probably have to answer to their own taxpayers—they’re talking about the healthy homes renovation tax credit. So I can get that \$20 grab bar; that won’t even pay the freight on what this year’s tax bill is going to be for the first part of this boondoggle. They’re talking about the healthy homes renovation tax credit as being the pillar of their whole mantra. What about \$640 million? That’s what the people of my riding are saying—not one person has come to me saying they want this healthy homes renovation whatever it is. They’re talking about \$640 million being wasted and how they’re going to pay.

They talk about, “I want this to be a better place; I want to work with the opposition and the third party to do better things.” Well, this is not the way to show it, Speaker. They need to be stepping up; they need to be admitting that they made terrible, terrible financial decisions. They’re not competent to manage this province anymore, and they need to fess up.

The Don Valley East member said, “We’re going to be agents of change.” Well, I can tell you, they’ve accomplished that goal. They’ve changed this province from being the absolute engine of the economy to being the laggards that have to continually go to the table—to the feds—with their hand out. It’s absolutely disgusting and the reason why most of us stepped up and said we will run for office, because we need to turn this province around.

It’s all about trust and integrity, and I think they’re lacking on that side. It’s all about open transparency and accountability. They haven’t apologized one iota for this. They haven’t made any amends. You can’t get integrity and trust and accountability without taking those actions.

Speaker, they are in contempt, and they are even in contempt for challenging your ruling. You offered that this was a legitimate ruling, and they continually stand on that side of the House and argue that you made a bad decision—unacceptable. Two different thought processes, contradicting themselves, hypocrisy and waste—the unending waste that they continue with is one thing that is unacceptable. We’ll stand here as long as we have to to defend it.

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I must once again ask the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound to withdraw his unparliamentary comment.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I withdraw, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate. I recognize the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** I rise today to speak to the motion moved by the member from Cambridge, which 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...; and

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

The Speaker ruled that the motion that the member from Cambridge moved is debatable and amendable and that it has precedence over and will displace consideration of all regular business until it’s disposed of.

Speaker, I will be voting against this motion, and I’m disappointed that this motion has displaced the regular business of the Legislature. We’re not discussing, as I would have hoped we would, some of the important legislation to improve public services here in Ontario.

Last week, we were supposed to have third reading on the healthy homes renovation tax credit, something that would, if passed, improve Ontarians’ lives and help our seniors. I was eager to vote on that important piece of legislation.

As well, we’ve been unable to discuss the Family Caregiver Leave Act in the Legislature, which would, if passed, provide job-protected leave to help hard-working Ontarians care for ailing family members, but that legislation is also not moving forward either.

The point of the debate this week and last week is due to the fact that there were discussions in front of the estimates committee about the cancellation of two planned gas plants—appropriate discussions—and the

fact that the Minister of Energy was asked to provide certain documents. The Minister of Energy did not refuse outright. He brought forward concerns that many of these documents had in fact the potential to negatively impact and violate solicitor-client privileges as negotiations related to the Oakville power plant and its potential location were being discussed, and that to release these documents of a commercially sensitive nature had the potential to cost taxpayers significantly more money and jeopardize those negotiations. The Minister of Energy argued that the issue was not whether the information would be released but when.

In fact, 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”—the documents—“in my opinion, it could be damaging to the province’s negotiating position.”

**1530**

There was considerable debate at committee. The Chair himself, the member from Beaches–East York, in fact acknowledged that there were competing interests. Ultimately, the Speaker made a ruling that there were commercial confidences at play and that there was solicitor-client privilege at play. He realized that although the committee had an absolute right to those documents, there needed to be an opportunity for House leaders to sit down, discuss the matter and move forward.

On September 25, this House was advised that the Minister of Energy and the Ontario Power Authority had, as required, tabled documents related to the Oakville and Mississauga power plants. There were attestations, signed by Colin Andersen, chief executive officer of Ontario Power Authority, and the Minister of Energy, pointing out that all documents that were requested were produced. Letters of transmittal from both the minister and the OPA indicate that what was tabled comprised 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 all those requisite documents.

Speaker, I’m saddened that we’re actually debating a motion of contempt for any member of this House but particularly for the highly respected and distinguished member for London West, and a distinguished member of the legal profession. I believe in a tradition that believes that when a member of this Legislature says something in the House, their word is accepted. All members of this House swear an oath of office, and members of the executive council swear an additional oath to be vigilant, diligent and circumspect in the performance of their duties. The Minister of Energy has served honestly and faithfully and to the best of his ability. His position has always been to act in the best interests of Ontario.

A member’s word is truth in this Legislature. That is something that goes back generation after generation. I believe that what is at stake are the traditions of this Legislature. It’s about the fact that we recognize that

each of us here is an honourable member who is doing his best; that when each of us stands in this place, appears before a committee or tables correspondence in this House, it reflects the truth. It’s about the fact that we’ve met all the requests of the Standing Committee on Estimates and we have met the ruling of the Speaker.

The opposition, as is its right, demanded to have produced documents related to the relocation of the proposed natural-gas-fired electricity plants, which spokespersons for both opposition parties agreed should not be built. Speaker, it’s my understanding that there were discussions at House leaders’ meetings, not on whether the Speaker’s ruling to produce the documents would be sustained, but on 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 agreement with the company might be reached.

Instead, the opposition wanted much more. I think in this case they chose to denigrate the reputation of a member of the government, an individual who has served this Legislature extremely well, a person who is a distinguished member of the legal profession in the province of Ontario, widely respected in that regard, and someone who has fought for fairness and for due process his whole professional career.

There are lots of motions that are quite legitimate in this House, but when motions of this kind come forward that are personally directed at someone, I think it leads to the breakdown of the Legislature and the way it functions best for all of us. I don’t think they’re particularly productive. I don’t think they’re good for the democratic system.

I think I’ve watched over the last few years and months a deterioration of how this Legislature functions. When I see motions of this kind come forward, I get worried. I see other motions that I think are quite legitimate, and I can see that the debate will be robust in this House on many occasions. But when I see these kinds of motions, which are so very personal—for instance, a motion of contempt—then I think of the member of the Conservative caucus when they asked their questions when question period was still occurring, when they pointed out that the Minister of Energy—they were gladdened by what the consequences of a contempt motion could be to his political career and his legal profession career.

Speaker, I’m not a lawyer, and I would venture to guess that a number of speakers I have heard in this debate who have spoken to this motion are not lawyers either, yet many of the members appear to have aspirations to that career and that profession. Members of the standing committees have extraordinary powers to subpoena and to summon witnesses, and they can compel those witnesses to submit evidence in the form of records or documents in order to assist them in their deliberations. I’ve been struggling with the debate I hear in this House because I fear a rush to judgment by a group of people with the power of a court with none of the checks and balances.

I must say that in my own riding, my personal policy is not to attack the opponent. I'm proud of that record and of the respect and the friendships that I've been able to accumulate over the years—people like Premier Bill Davis. I remember the first time I spoke to Premier Davis. It was in November 2003. The phone rang on election night. I picked up the receiver and I spoke to the person on the other end, and it was Bill Davis. He was offering his congratulations on my having won my seat in my first provincial run—

*Interjection.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I apologize. The member for Parkdale–High Park.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** On a point of order, 19(b): “The ruling of a Speaker is not debatable.” The Speaker has ruled there has been a breach of privilege. That is not debatable in this House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** As a matter of fact, the Speaker has ruled that a prima facie case of privilege has been established. It is up to the House to make the final decision. That's why we're debating this motion.

I return to the Minister of Labour.

**Hon. Linda Jeffrey:** Thank you, Speaker.

I remember that evening in November 2003 when Mr. Davis called me. He's an icon in our community and across Canada, and his name graces our local courthouse. He was the longest-serving Premier of Ontario, and there he was, making a personal call to me, a Liberal, to offer his genuine congratulations and advice on the new role that I was about to assume.

I'd never met anyone like Mr. Davis, an individual who sees politics as an honourable calling and manages to cross party lines effortlessly, making friends and developing strong alliances wherever he goes. Over the years, I've learned how much Mr. Davis and I have in common through our informal chats. We both want what's best for Brampton and Ontario. He has generously continued to offer advice, and he calls me quite regularly. I see him at a variety of events, and whenever he gets the opportunity, he finds a way to point out publicly how philosophically misguided I am.

He's a brilliant politician with a great sense of timing once he's given a microphone. Mr. Davis is someone I respect. He recently celebrated 50 years of public service. Over the last few years, I've learned how diplomatic he is, how extraordinarily gifted he is in remembering details about events that have shaped our province. He's a gentle man. He's very humble about his accomplishments.

Mr. Davis is the kind of politician I aspire to be some day. He's a true pragmatist in the sense that he seeks opportunities to join good policy with good politics. As a member of provincial Parliament, Mr. Davis earned the respect of Bramptonians, and he has had the honour to represent them. Later, when he served as Premier, Ontarians from across this province came not only to respect him but to genuinely like him, which explains his popularity as a speaker.

When I look at the career of the Minister of Energy, I consider him also to be a man of great integrity like Mr. Davis, not only in the House but in his personal life and in his legal profession. He served as the Attorney General of this province for four years—a very difficult job. 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 he taught law classes in his spare time. I've watched him debate, in caucus and in cabinet, and he's very measured and thoughtful in the arguments that he puts forward.

The unfortunate nature of the debate around this motion is that it has become personal, causing pain and anguish to the minister's family, and for that, I am truly saddened. It's not the kind of politics I signed up for. The Minister of Energy has conducted himself with integrity, and he deserves our respect, which I know this side of the House has for him.

I think it's time to elevate the level of debate, which used to be the hallmark of this Legislature. The people of Ontario expect us to work together and put forward positive new ideas. They want us to find a way to keep working, always in their best interests. While strong partisan debate is part of a healthy democracy, the mean-spirited and groundless accusations I've heard over the last few days that have been made against my colleague the Minister of Energy are not. The Minister of Energy is one of the most decent and honourable colleagues I've ever had the honour to work with. He's a man of great integrity. Every day he works hard to do the right thing for Ontarians. What the opposition is trying to do to the Minister of Energy dishonours them and it dishonours this Legislature.

**1540**

As honourable members, our job is to do the work for the people, and for nine years we've done that as the government. We haven't done everything perfectly. It's a democracy and it's right for people to ask questions, and no one can question that we give our best. We all work hard every day here. We all try to listen. We learn and we keep moving forward.

In the spirit of putting forward positive suggestions, it's my understanding that the government has informed the Speaker and the House that we intend to move a substantive amendment, an amendment that would make the motion more acceptable. I know we're debating a sub-amendment right now, Mr. Speaker, but I must say, I wish we could get on with dealing more with substantive changes to the motion.

I believe more substantive changes would improve this motion and hopefully allow us to get on with the important business that the people of Ontario expect and are counting on us to move forward with.

Speaker, the fact of the matter is, this is a very simple situation. Documents were requested, flags were raised, the debate and the discussion ensued and the documents in their entirety have been provided to this Legislature.

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 built in this House. It's time to move on.

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

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** A number of speakers have mentioned this, but it really is unfortunate that we're having to debate this motion for so many days because there are so many things that we should be spending our time on. It's sad, really, but unfortunately sadly necessary because we need to make sure the people understand what this government has been up to with their tax dollars, and \$650 million have been wasted in the process.

It's almost become commonplace for scandals to hit this government, with one after the other after the other. I think the people of Ontario have gotten a little bit inured to it. It's almost like that's what they're expecting, but they shouldn't have to expect that. They deserve better from their government. We've had a government demonstrating complete indifference to their well-being and feeling that they can do anything they want with impunity as long as it wins them the next election.

We've seen the spectacle of eHealth. The scandal now stands at \$2.4 billion, and we still have yet to see any indication of a working system of electronic medical records. We hear the Minister of Health talk about the fact that a number—millions—of Ontarians have electronic health records. All that means, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that they have digitized health records that are still sitting in their doctors' offices. They're not connecting it to anything. They're not connecting to hospitals; they're not connecting to pharmacies; they're not connecting to anything else. We have a situation where we've got billions of dollars being spent with nothing to show for it.

The Ornge scandal has yet to be tallied, but it's going to cost taxpayers at least \$300 million, and there's still some question, unfortunately, about whether some people have paid for this with their lives. Unfortunately, we're still waiting to find that out from the coroner.

As if the public needed any further evidence of this government's disregard for their tax dollars, the tab for cancelling the two gas plants in Mississauga and Oakville so far has come in at \$640 million—all of that just to save two Liberal seats.

It's a privilege to be chosen by your community to represent them here at Queen's Park and to be charged with the responsibility of spending tax dollars in a responsible manner. But this government has yet to make it through one year, since last year's election, without abusing that privilege.

Perhaps the most unfortunate feature of these scandals is that the McGuinty Liberals fought the public at every step of the way, trying to cover up the scandals they've created. They've blanked-out, whited-out or redacted thousands of documents. They've told the media—and, sadly, their own constituents—that this is a good deal for them. They've billed Ontarians hundreds of millions of

dollars for a decision that they admit was made mid-election, in consultation with the campaign team, to save their seats—not out of a sense of what's good public policy but simply as a seat-saver. So, I think that there's something that we need to bring forward that deals with the question of privilege.

I'd just like to read from the statement that was made by the Speaker on September 13, on the issue of what the system of privilege was, what was being claimed and how this government really has no right to have prevented all the documents from coming to the public's attention by whiting them out, by simply ignoring them, by not allowing them to be brought forward. This is what was said in the Speaker's statement on September 13 of this year:

“On May 30, the minister responded to the request” for disclosure “by indicating that it would not be appropriate to disclose the correspondence because the files were confidential and because many of them were either subject to solicitor-client or litigation privilege or else highly commercially sensitive; their disclosure would tend to prejudice ongoing negotiations and litigation. The Ontario Power Authority responded in a similar vein on the same day.”

Then it goes on and we come to the Speaker's ruling declaring that there was a prima facie case of privilege. He said this:

“In practice, standing committees may encounter situations where the authors of or officials responsible for papers refuse to provide them or are willing to provide them only after certain parts have been removed. Public servants and ministers may sometimes invoke their obligations under certain legislation to justify their position. Companies may be reluctant to release papers which could jeopardize their industrial security or infringe upon their legal obligations, particularly with regard to the protection of personal information. Others have cited solicitor-client privilege in refusing to allow access to legal papers or notices.

“These types of situations have absolutely no bearing on the power of committees to order the production of papers and records. No statute or practice diminishes the fullness of that power rooted in House privileges unless there is an explicit legal provision to that effect, or unless the House adopts a specific resolution limiting the power. The House has never set a limit on its power to order the production of papers and records. However, it may not be appropriate to insist on the production of papers and records in all cases.”

Then it goes through and indicates some situations where it might not be appropriate to produce these public records or documents in certain situations. But, again quoting from the Speaker's ruling, “In the case at hand, the Standing Committee on Estimates made a production order despite the arguments made by the minister. My response to the government House leader's claim that the committee did not turn its mind to the reasons for non-production proffered by the minister is,

“—First, it was not obliged to do so.

“—Second, the documents could have been offered to the committee under conditions that would both satisfy the needs of the committee and the minister: for instance, being received in a closed session without public disclosure, or in an acceptably redacted version. The Chair put forward this notion on one occasion, and it was passed by without comment by any member.

“—Third, the government House leader in his written submission repeatedly points to what a difference a clear motion would have made to the Minister of Energy’s ability to fully respond to the committee’s request; that is, a motion that explicitly expressed the committee’s request even for documents that are highly commercially sensitive, for which solicitor-client privilege is claimed and/or are subject to litigation privilege. It is claimed that the minister could have and would have complied in that scenario. During the time in question, the minister could have requested the committee to pass just such a motion, making it explicit that it still demanded the requested documents, notwithstanding the minister’s wish to withhold disclosure for reasons stated in his May 30 reply to the committee’s original request. The record does not show that the minister proactively did so.

“The Standing Committee on Estimates was unquestionably entitled to request the documents sought from the Minister of Energy, and in the end the minister had an obligation to comply with the committee’s call for those documents. The committee did not accept the minister’s reasons for withholding the document and persisted in its demand during an extended period of time.

“I am therefore satisfied that a *prima facie* case of privilege has been established.”

But that’s not what happened. We still ended up with a government that was refusing to bring these documents forward, and it’s very clear from the Speaker’s ruling that there was no factual way, no legal basis on which they could have done so. So I think, at the end, what we really should be expecting from the McGuinty Liberals is an apology—actually, several apologies. I’m asking them to apologize for three things in particular.

**1550**

First, I think they should be apologizing to the people of Ontario for privileging political gain over the well-being of the province they were elected to serve. This decision does not serve the purposes of building a stronger, better Ontario. It’s a decision that would see families, single parents and Ontario’s next generation foot the bill in order to see the Liberals win another election, and that certainly speaks to the true character of this government, I would say. It would rather see them re-elected than to spend tax dollars in a way that would benefit all Ontarians.

Secondly, I believe the Liberal House leader should apologize to Ontarians for telling them that the Liberals had provided all of the documents and that none of them had been redacted. The House leader, again, stated: “There was absolutely nothing redacted” from the documents. Well, I think we’ve heard, from the comments that have been made by many members of this House,

particularly the member from Nipissing, who tried to read into the record some of the responses that we received, but page after page was either whited-out or totally redacted—we all know it’s untrue, and we believe that the House leader should apologize to the people of Ontario for this.

Third, the people of this province, I believe, need an apology from the Minister of Energy. We’ve heard a lot about the character of the Minister of Energy and how we are apparently sully his character—

*Interjection.*

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** Absolutely not the case, I would say to the minister opposite. I would say that I do know the Minister of Energy to be an upstanding person of very strong character. He’s a fine lawyer, and as a member of the legal profession, I can say that he is very well regarded in the legal community. However, his own party has hung him out to dry in this situation. He’s been the subject of all kinds of criticism from all kinds of people, and yet the members on the other side say they’re standing up for him, all the while talking about how we are the ones that are bringing him down. It’s his own party that’s doing that by hanging him out to dry and leaving him to take the blame for this monumental boondoggle of \$650 million wasted.

The apology that we would expect from the Minister of Energy is to apologize for withholding the documents from the Legislature and deliberately trying to cover this up from not only the members of this Legislature, but the people of Ontario. He should also be apologizing for telling Ontarians that the cost of cancelling the gas plants was “a ... good deal for taxpayers.” Really, how can that possibly be the case? The minister must fully know that this is absolutely not the case. This could not be a good deal for taxpayers. Throwing \$650 million to the wind isn’t good for anybody—and that could be used for a lot of things. This could be used for many things in health care—certainly something that I hear about both in my riding and as the PC health critic. I hear from people all the time in my riding about how they’re unable to find a family doctor; how they’re unable to find home care for their parents; how they’re unable to find a long-term-care placement; how they’re unable to access emergency services, including emergency mental health and addiction services; how people with developmental issues are not able to find services in my community and how we don’t have a plan for that; how we need to have a plan for jobs and the economy; how we’ve got 600,000 Ontarians out of work right now. We’re not seeing any of that come from this government—nothing at all. We’re just seeing waste after waste after waste of tax dollars.

Instead of having new power plants, taxpayers will have spent \$640 million, which is going to be tacked on to the province’s \$300-billion debt—\$300 billion and growing. We’ve got a deficit right now of \$15 million, and that’s going to double in the next year unless drastic action is taken by this government. But again, we see no indication they’re prepared to do anything.

This weekend, the Liberals had their convention, and a lot of speeches were being made, including one from the

Premier. The Premier didn't have a whole lot to say, other than a bunch of platitudes. He said, "We've come a long way together. Only one way to go, now: forward. For families. For hope. For Ontario." Well, I would suggest to the Premier: You'd better get going, because there's no hope for a lot of Ontarians. We're in a very bad situation, with 600,000 people out of work. Hardly compelling words from the Premier—also, completely devoid of substance and ignoring the billions his government has wasted under his tenure as Premier. What does the Premier have to say about the \$4 billion his government has accumulated in scandal-related spending? Well, he's decided to spend millions of dollars on friendly eHealth consultants instead of building a patient-centred health care system. He's decided to spend millions lining the pockets of strategists and consultants instead of developing a world-class air ambulance service.

We hope that the hearings into the Ornge scandal will come forward, that we will get the committees settled in this Legislature soon, because there's much more to come, Mr. Speaker. We've barely seen the tip of the iceberg in the Ornge matter. There are so many more questions that have yet to be answered.

The Ornge scandal saw Liberal insiders develop a complex legal scheme to hide millions of tax dollars and a communications scheme to conceal it instead of protecting Ontarians and saving lives. Now the Premier himself is using the public purse to save his political career, billing Ontarians \$640 million for a couple of seats in Mississauga and Oakville.

Beyond these scandals, we've seen unprecedented public sector growth, unprecedented increases in spending, unprecedented unemployment numbers, and an economic decline—all under the Liberals' so-called economic stewardship. Ontarians deserve to know what the Premier has to say about the doubling of debt that has occurred under his watch and the billions we now spend on interest payments. I think it has been said before, but it's worth saying again, Mr. Speaker: With the money we are spending right now on interest payments, we're spending \$10 billion a year on money that we've borrowed in order to keep this government going. It's the third-largest expenditure in government after health and education, and it's probably going to increase because this government shows no sign of stopping with their unprecedented spending.

But that money could go a long way towards delivering health care, towards improving our justice system, towards building infrastructure, towards job creation, getting people back to work. Ontarians deserve to know how this government and this Premier plan to put 600,000 people back to work. Where are his plan for job creation and his plan for economic growth?

You're not going to hear anything about that. What you will hear are carefully crafted speeches meant to take your attention away from the scandal and Ontario's fiscal crisis and towards the brighter future that he's been promising for the last decade but that certainly we haven't seen any indication is coming any time soon.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Going downhill, not uphill.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** Yes. As my colleague says, we're heading downhill, not uphill, and we're going fast.

The reality is that things keep getting harder and harder for the people in this province. It's harder for families to make ends meet, and we're getting into a worse and worse economic situation.

We've already had several credit downgrades. We know that the international credit rating agencies and bond rating agencies are literally breathing down the neck of Ontario, waiting to see what this government is going to do in order to move forward and to bring economic health back to this province. But we're still holding our breath, and frankly, I'm not expecting too much.

Meanwhile, the Ontario PC Party, on our side of things, is not sitting back and letting things slide. We've proposed bold new ideas to create jobs and to kick-start our economy. I'm proud of what we've done on our team. We've focused on lowering the costs of doing business by cutting taxes, red tape and hydro bills, becoming partners to businesses rather than policing them. We've heard from business after business about how the red tape and regulation that this government has imposed over the last 10 years is literally killing them, putting them out of business and forcing them to go to other jurisdictions. And that's just counting, Mr. Speaker, the businesses that we have now. What about the businesses that never even looked at Ontario as a jurisdiction in which to do business, the businesses from international jurisdictions that are looking to locate in North America, in Ontario, in another province in Canada or in the United States? Because of, among other things, the high cost of energy, high corporate taxes, the high cost of doing business with the red tape and regulations, a lot of them are just saying, "Forget about Ontario. We're going to go to Alberta, Saskatchewan, British Columbia or a US jurisdiction."

We've got to turn that around. That's why we think it's so important that we bring provincial regulations into the 21st century, developing, among other things, labour laws that reflect the needs of business in 2012—not, as our leader, Tim Hudak, has mentioned, labour laws that were designed for the 1940s.

**1600**

We've also talked about reforming health care. We've proposed the elimination of LHINs and putting money into front-line health care instead of expensive bureaucratic administration. Mr. Speaker, the Ontario PC caucus and members of the opposition stand in solidarity with hard-working Ontarians and taxpayers. We believe it's a privilege to be elected to this House and a duty which demands that individuals ask themselves what is in the best interests of Ontarians, not what is in the best interests of your party.

The Liberals have failed in this duty time and time again. They failed when they tried to cover up the billions wasted at eHealth, they failed when they tried to cover up millions of dollars wasted at Ornge and they failed when they tried to cover up the latest scandal, buying seats at the taxpayers' expense.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Shame.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** It is shameful. We really need to turn the corner. We need to bring transparency and accountability back into government. We need to take a look at the latest decisions that have been made with respect to the power plants. Locating a power plant in eastern Ontario when we need power west of Toronto makes no sense. No matter how they try to slice and dice it, it makes absolutely no sense. They talk about how it's only going to cost \$40 million to build the plant there. Absolute nonsense. You've got \$200 million worth of transmission lines that you're going to have to build to have any hope of bringing that power to where you really need it.

Instead of creating policy based on good, sound public policy—what you need, energy where you need it—we're creating a situation where we're just locating it somewhere that suits their purposes, that makes them able to crawl out from under a scandal, hopefully untarnished from their position. But what we as the official opposition were elected to do here is bring this government to account. That's what we intend to do, and that's why we believe this motion is so important.

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

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It is a pleasure to join the debate this afternoon. I, too, have sat here and listened to members from the other side with their version—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I have to be able to hear the member for Oakville. I'll ask the official opposition to come to order. If they don't allow the member for Oakville to give his remarks, I'm going to have to take more direct action.

I'll return to the member for Oakville.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** Thank you. Speaker, I was going to start my speech another way, but I think I'll read something instead, if you don't mind. It says:

"Despite requests from the Oakville community, the Liberal government has not changed the location of the proposed Oakville generating station.

"Ontario's Ministry of the Environment recognizes that Oakville-Clarkson airshed is taxed and incapable of accepting additional pollutant loadings.

"In June 2010, this concern was echoed by Dr. David Balsillie in his action plan for the Oakville-Clarkson airshed. In his fourth recommendation, Dr. Balsillie wrote, 'All applications for certificates of approval for new or modified industrial activities which will increase emissions within the airshed must be considered in light of the current capacity of the airshed. This recommendation would also apply to the issuance of a certificate of approval for the power plant.'

"While the Liberal government remains silent on Dr. Balsillie's recommendations, Halton residents are living with the reality of a taxed airshed which may be unable to handle additional toxic pollutants from the proposed Oakville generating station.

"Haldimand county has expressed an interest in hosting this gas-fired power plant at the Nanticoke site, which provides a viable clean alternative.

"Therefore, today in the Ontario Legislature, Halton MPP Ted Chudleigh asked the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure: 'I have listened to the people of Oakville, and I agree with them. Will you listen to the people of Oakville, change your mind and move the location of this power plant? ...

"I am asking the minister to consider moving this plant. He has the facts. He has a clean alternative. If he adds a bit of common sense he'll see the location of his proposed power plant needs to change."

That's a news release from my colleague in the House, the member from Halton. When the community—his community and my community—was faced with a proposal that came from the Ontario Power Authority that an almost 1,000-megawatt natural-gas-fired power plant be located within 400 metres of daycare centres, of schools, of residences and shopping. I did what any other MPP would do in this House: I stood up and I supported my constituents. I took the concerns of the people of Oakville down to the decision-makers at Queen's Park, the same way that my colleague from Halton did in representing the people in his riding that live in north Oakville.

The advice that was given to the government of Ontario at that time, in my opinion, was flawed information. This was not a safe site, in my opinion. It was not a healthy site. It was a site that needed to be moved.

The residents at the time were also saying that the timetable that had been proposed by the Ontario Power Authority—that the energy was not needed within that time frame and, again, the advice that they had been given by the Ontario Power Authority was not the advice that the government should follow. I brought that information down to the people at Queen's Park here and spent a good year to a year and a half of my life trying to convince people that the people in my community of Oakville were right and that the people that had provided the information from the Ontario Power Authority had this site in the wrong location.

Go back a few years, before I was MPP for Oakville. The gentleman who was MPP for Oakville at this time occupied your seat, Mr. Speaker. That was Gary Carr, the member from Oakville at that time. He was faced with a similar situation. On Winston Churchill Drive, right on the border of Oakville, within hundreds of yards of residential communities, the party opposite proposed to put a 700- to 800-megawatt site. Mayor Burton was not mayor at that time. Mayor Burton was the head of a residents' association who knew that that site was wrong as well. He brought down 15,000 signatures to the government of the day and was told that wasn't enough: "We're not changing our mind. We don't care if it's a good site or not. We're building it."

In this case, what happened is that because of the lobbying of members in this House that the site be moved to a safer site, it was moved. The Premier of the day, the



Premier we have in this House today, Premier McGuinty, had the courage to make the right decision and move the site. There are members over there, Speaker, who would build this site in the same location today, and those members who know anything about the siting will know that that site would not qualify for a two-megawatt wind turbine, yet the rules at the time would allow for an almost 1,000-megawatt natural-gas-burning plant. It was simply time to take a second look at it.

The Premier of the day, I think, expressed the right sentiment. He said, “We’re going to listen to the people who are directly affected by this. We’ve had information from the experts. In this case, we think that the information provided by the people from Oakville is a route we should follow.” I think it was the right decision. I stand by that decision. I think the motion we are debating today that is trying to cast aspersions on the Minister of Energy at this time is simply ill-placed. I will not support it. I have nothing but respect for the Minister of Energy. I have nothing but respect for those who made this very courageous decision to move this plant based on the interests of constituents and not special interest groups.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I recognize the member for Cambridge.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I am pleased to join this debate on the amendment to the amendment of my motion that I moved last week.

I want to say “congratulations.” I’ve heard and listened intently to the debate that we’ve seen on this side of the House. I’m very proud of the comments that have been made by the members of my party in this debate. They are doing this issue justice. I want to thank them and congratulate them for what they’ve done.

You know, Mr. Speaker, five of my most favourite words in our Constitution are “peace, order and good government.”

**Interjection:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** That’s right. People who know me know I like to enjoy a toast now and then to the good, fine words of “peace, order, and good government,” but I think it’s worthwhile to stop and think about why our founding fathers stopped at good government; why they didn’t ask for great government, or why they didn’t ask for, even further than that, perfect government.

**1610**

The reason we can’t have perfect government is, if we had perfect government—a government that did everything that everybody wanted—we wouldn’t have a need for democracy. We wouldn’t have a need to have debate. We wouldn’t have a need for an opposition to oppose that government. So our fathers of Confederation thought that good government was sufficient because perfect government is simply not attainable.

All governments make mistakes. Certainly when we were in government, I was proud of the accomplishments that we made: 1.1 million new jobs; we balanced the books; we paid down the debt. But also, Mr. Speaker, we would be remiss if we didn’t acknowledge that even our

government—our good government—did in fact, make mistakes as well. These are mistakes that I know members of the government like to point out all too readily. When they have nothing good to say about themselves, they often point to the flaws of our own government, and I’m here to suggest that there were.

We made mistakes; we weren’t perfect. Certainly the last time we talked about the Magna budget in this House, six days were devoted to a debate on the prima facie breach during the Magna budget. We know that during the Walkerton inquiry, where people died, we investigated the problems of Walkerton. The same thing went for Ipperwash, Mr. Speaker. These are certainly mistakes that our government have made, and we’ve had and made those mistakes part of our learning experience. They were humbling moments, moments when we actually acknowledged the fact that we were in fact not perfect.

During this debate, listening to members of this House, members of the government, talk about this experience in particular, there’s not a word of contrition. There’s not an apology. There’s not an “I’m sorry” for squandering \$650 million of taxpayer money. They seem to approach this business—

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** They’re proud.

**Mr. Rob Leone:** —as something they can be proud of. In fact, they say this with pride and honour that they have squandered \$650 million—not to build new schools, roads or bridges, not to provide more cancer treatments or MRIs but to build absolutely no power plants; \$650 million simply squandered, Mr. Speaker. We can’t, as members of this Legislature, reward that behaviour. We can’t simply let this go untouched.

Mistakes do happen, and when they happen, it’s the obligation of Her Majesty’s loyal opposition to stand tall, to stand firm and demand accountability, demand responsibility of the faults of that government, and that’s what we are doing here today. We’re being honourable, we’re being responsible and we’re acting in the public interest.

I note that, in listening to the debate—and I’ve been paying very close attention to this debate, Mr. Speaker—the Liberal talking points are, in my view, exceptionally weak. I have listened with intent and interest to see what the Liberal members in this Legislature might say about this motion that we put forward. I have to say that I remain fundamentally disappointed in the members of the government and their complicit approach to the situation.

One of their favourite talking points is that the Minister of Energy is a good guy. I have no reason to believe that he’s not. In fact, I know that he’s been a distinguished member of this Legislature and has represented his constituents with honour.

But our members aren’t talking about whether the Minister of Energy is a good guy. We’re talking about the fact that 650 million tax dollars have been squandered to build absolutely no power plant. We’re talking about the political motivation behind spending all of this money. We’re talking about a government that’s grown old, tired and has lost touch with the realities of hard-

working Ontario families. Most importantly, we're talking about a motion that's brought before this House because the government has not been truthful, or totally truthful, in releasing the documents that it has offered. Certainly, we've seen the documents, 36,000 pages, and we've gone through them. We note that there are gaps in time where no information is present. We note that the former Minister of Energy has not authored any documents related to power plants, power plants being one of the major issues in that ministry. How possible is it that the former Minister of Energy has not authored a single document? It also has been pointed out by members of the opposition that a lot of the pages are whited out, blacked out, redacted and not available for public viewing.

The reason why we're sitting in this Legislature today is that on May 16, the estimates committee demanded the truth. They demanded information that today, on October 1, we still don't have, and we're entitled to that truth, Mr. Speaker.

Unfortunately, I didn't hear any government member talk about how they could have used that \$650 million better, if there were any projects in their constituencies that could have benefited from increased funds. I know they exist. I know the problems in Ontario are significant, where that money could have been used for a better purpose. But because we've used \$650 million of scarce money, those issues have gone unresolved.

I heard intently today the members for Windsor West and Don Valley East, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Labour talk eloquently about the Minister of Energy, but they failed to acknowledge—not even a word, not even an “I'm sorry” at the fact that they have squandered \$650 million of our tax money, the money that hard-working Ontario families give to this government to get some public services back. There was not even an act of contrition, Mr. Speaker, to say that this was wrong, that this should never be tolerated and that we should get to the bottom of this mess.

Even though we do find \$650 million and the vast amount of money that has been spent on this issue to be contemptuous—we certainly feel it's contemptuous and a lot of members of the opposition have spoken to this—I think what we have to remember and what we have to acknowledge is that it's not so much the value, although the value is important, but it's that this Legislature has been left in the dark, that we don't have the information available to us to hold that government to account. Accountability, transparency and responsible government—the hallmarks of our democratic institutions—have been ignored by a government that once again has become too tired and has lost touch with the realities of hard-working people.

Mr. Speaker, I noticed that on the weekend the Liberals had a love-in in Ottawa with their Premier, a Premier who has sat by while money has been squandered, while scandal after scandal has mounted, where we have these power plants, where we have Ornge, where we have eHealth, where billions of dollars have been lost for

no benefit to the public. And while he was at his love-in, talking about this issue, he impugned our reputation. He suggested that we were somehow acting dishonourably. That is something that's truly shameful, because if the Premier truly had great intentions about this institution, if he truly respected it, why did he choose Oakville and Ottawa to make these disparaging comments than sit in his chair and do that right here in this Legislature?

Funny how protecting the honour of this Legislature, the honour of this institution, is so important to this Premier. If that is the case, Mr. Speaker, why did the Premier allow this Legislature and that cabinet to be left in the dark about the moving of the Mississauga gas plant when that decision was made by his campaign team?

This is about respecting this Legislature, respecting the institutions that are the foundation of our democracy. We, as the opposition, have to stand tall and stand firm, to make sure that our democracy supersedes any political motivation by the government to keep us in the dark.

1620

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Rob Leone:** My colleague from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex says that it's politics over people on that side of the House, and I can't disagree.

Mr. Speaker, another comment that the Liberals have consistently made is that somehow we are blocking legislative business from proceeding. What they fail to understand is that this is legislative business, and this matters to the people of the province of Ontario, who want to know exactly why they've kept us in the dark about \$650 million of tax money that's going to build absolutely nothing. This speaks to the heart of what we're supposed to do here. The heart of our legislative institution is to hold that government to account, yet they don't care. They think it's not important. Well, we're here today to say that this is important, and the people of Ontario deserve to know the truth.

I listened intently when the Minister of Health was making comments about me. Certainly, I understand the game of politics very well and know that I've drawn some attention to myself. She talks about my voting record, particularly with respect to the budget. She used the name of the Liberal candidate in Cambridge in this place—dishonourably, I think, but nevertheless she made the comment.

I want to be very clear to the people of Cambridge about this: I voted against a budget that allocated \$650 million to power plants that aren't going to be built, instead of building Cambridge Memorial Hospital.

Mr. Speaker, there are thousands of examples in the province of Ontario where members in this House could make the same comment, but never has a member of the government stood up for their constituents and said, “I could have used that money better.” I know that each and every member of the opposition who stood and talked to this issue said that that money could have been put to better use, and it will be put to better use when we get rid of that government.

I want to mention something that I talked about earlier, when I moved this motion. In fact, this is a histor-

ic moment. We have been tasked with deciding something that hasn't been done in this Legislature for 104 years.

Someone came up to me to tell me that usually when you call a moment historic, it's historic for good reason, and how can we actually talk about this instance being historic when we see that money has been squandered, when a government is hiding from the truth, when the Legislature itself is left in the dark?

In a sense, that person is right. We were left in the dark. The government has squandered hundreds of millions of dollars. They're tired. They're out of touch. They don't know the realities of hard-working Ontario families.

But in another sense, this very much is a historic moment. This is a historic moment for this Legislature, because I believe that people will look upon this day as the day that the opposition took this Legislature back. This is the day that the people of Ontario will look upon our work here as taking power back from a government who thinks that they still control this place as if it was their own majority. They've grown tired. They've grown out of touch with the realities of hard-working families, families who work hard, who play by the rules—they balance their books. Ontarians demand better from their government, a government that's grown so out of touch with the realities. We have to say, as an opposition, that enough is enough.

Mr. Speaker, we've had fulsome debate on this issue. In fact, we've spent 24 hours. As such, I move that the question be now put.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I wish to inform the House that I'm going to recess now to consider the question that I have to decide.

*The House recessed from 1625 to 1644.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Given the fact that 66 members participated in this debate and the House has debated this matter for approximately 21.5 hours, I allow the motion to be put.

Mr. Leone has moved that the question now be put. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

I heard many noes.

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

*The division bells rang from 1645 to 1715.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Mr. Leone has moved that the question now be put. All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be counted by the table staff.

Clark, Steve	MacLeod, Lisa
DiNovo, Cheri	Mantha, Michael
Dunlop, Garfield	Marchese, Rosario
Elliott, Christine	McDonell, Jim
Fedeli, Victor	McKenna, Jane
Fife, Catherine	McNaughton, Monte
Forster, Cindy	Miller, Norm
Gélinas, France	Miller, Paul
Hardeman, Ernie	Milligan, Rob E.
Harris, Michael	Munro, Julia
Hillier, Randy	Natyshak, Taras
Horwath, Andrea	Nicholls, Rick

Shurman, Peter
Singh, Jagmeet
Smith, Todd
Tabuns, Peter
Taylor, Monique
Thompson, Lisa M.
Vanthof, John
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Yakabuski, John
Yurek, Jeff

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** All those opposed to the motion will please rise one at a time and be counted by the table staff.

#### Nays

Albanese, Laura
Balkissoon, Bas
Bartolucci, Rick
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Cansfield, Donna H.
Chiarelli, Bob
Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Crack, Grant
Damerla, Dipika
Delaney, Bob
Duncan, Dwight
Flynn, Kevin Daniel

Gerretsen, John
Gravelle, Michael
Hoskins, Eric
Jaczek, Helena
Jeffrey, Linda
Kwintar, Monte
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
Mangat, Amrit
Matthews, Deborah
Mauro, Bill
McMeekin, Ted
McNeely, Phil

Meilleur, Madeleine
Milloy, John
Naqvi, Yasir
Oraziotti, David
Piruzza, Teresa
Qaadri, Shafiq
Sandals, Liz
Sergio, Mario
Sousa, Charles
Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 53; the nays are 37.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I declare the motion carried.

We will now deal with the main motion. On September 25, 2012, Mr. Leone moved 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.

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

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

I wish to inform the members of the House that I have received from the chief government whip a request for a deferral of this vote. As such, the vote will take place tomorrow at the normal time of deferred votes.

*Vote deferred.*

#### Ayes

Armstrong, Teresa J.
Bailey, Robert
Barrett, Toby
Bisson, Gilles
Campbell, Sarah
Chudleigh, Ted

Hudak, Tim
Jackson, Rod
Jones, Sylvia
Klees, Frank
Leone, Rob
MacLaren, Jack

O'Toole, John
Ouellette, Jerry J.
Pettapiece, Randy
Prue, Michael
Schein, Jonah
Scott, Laurie

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### AMBULANCE AMENDMENT ACT (AIR AMBULANCES), 2012

### LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES AMBULANCES (SERVICES D'AMBULANCE AÉRIENS)

Resuming the debate adjourned on September 24, 2012, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 50, An Act to amend the Ambulance Act with respect to air ambulance services / Projet de loi 50, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les ambulances en ce qui concerne les services d'ambulance aériens.

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

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me. It's great to be here to speak to Bill 50, which is An Act to amend the Ambulance Act with respect to air ambulance services. We've spent a lot of time over the last four or five days speaking of a Liberal debacle, which was the cancellation of the gas plants in Oakville and Mississauga. After being able to read the documents that we did receive from the Ministry of Energy, we have learned that the total cost is only rising on that debacle and that decision to move the gas plants. It's now at \$650 million and rising.

That's on the gas plant debate. We're now back to talking about Bill 50, which was created as a result of another Liberal boondoggle, and that was the Ornge air ambulance disaster, which has resulted in countless hundreds of millions of dollars wasted.

Not just dollars wasted, though, on our Ornge air ambulance service; we're talking about a real lack of oversight from the Ministry of Health when it comes to the safety of the Ornge air helicopters, and that's another thing that should be kept in mind. While the gas plant debacle wasted tax dollars on moving gas plants for political reasons, the Ornge air ambulance debacle had nothing to do with saving Liberal seats. The Ornge air debacle had everything to do with a lack of accountability and a lack of oversight by the Ministry of Health when it came to this file.

The interesting thing about this is that it did put human life in safety. There are a number of different coroners' inquests that could be coming from the Ornge ambulance disaster as well. There have also been countless hundreds of millions of dollars that have been wasted as a result of this. The government blindly defends an organization that was siphoning scarce health care dollars into a web of for-profit companies.

This happened. We know this happened. We saw a \$1.4-million salary go to the former leader at Ornge and its web—I know you'll recall our member from Newmarket–Aurora standing up on several different occasions and showing the schematic; it looked like a tangled cobweb of workings between profit and not-for-profit

agencies within Ornge. It was incredibly difficult to understand where the money was going and who was responsible for what when it came to the Ornge way of doing business. Clearly there were many, many Liberal insiders who were involved in that organization as well. We heard from many of them at committee.

The other thing to keep in mind when it comes to the public affairs committee and the work that they were doing in looking into Ornge: The Minister of Health on several different occasions, maybe in the neighbourhood of 16 or 20 different occasions in the House, stood up and she said, "If it's the will of the Legislature to form a select committee on Ornge, then I will abide by that." And we actually had a vote in this Legislature not dissimilar to the one which we had just a few minutes ago, and the will of the Legislature was quite clear that we wanted and needed a select committee into Ornge to try and get to the bottom of who was actually pulling the strings there. How much money was wasted? How dangerous was this for people requiring that service in the province of Ontario?

The government has continued to stall. They won't respect the will of the Legislature when the official opposition and the third party teamed up to vote for that select committee on Ornge; we're still waiting for that select committee on Ornge. So once again, the government hasn't followed through on its promises, but that's no surprise when it comes to the government on the opposite side of this hall.

It's very simple that Bill 50 is proof of this deep cynicism and proof of a failed leadership at the Ministry of Health.

Let's take a quick look at Bill 50: The bill's single biggest weakness is a so-called whistle-blower protection section, and we have had a number of whistle-blowers who have blown the whistle and talked about the improprieties that were going on at Ornge. Bill 50 fails to protect some of those very people who are in the best position to report fraud, waste and abuse, and also health and safety violations, which did occur in these helicopters. And you'll recall that people requiring cardiac treatments were unable to have CPR because the gurneys that were inside of these vehicles were placed too high and the health care workers and the paramedics who were on board these helicopters couldn't provide that life-saving service. So it fails by not providing across-the-board protection for whistle-blowers.

Secondly, it fails by imposing limits on the individuals who are protected and whom they can approach with information. So why should we believe, after the first fiasco, that anything has actually changed at Ornge, or will change, as a result of Bill 50?

What's needed is a process that will not only safeguard the whistle-blower but will also instil confidence that their concerns will be taken seriously. The Ombudsman should be engaged to assist in developing that process and should be integral to a formalized whistle-blower reporting process, if this is to have any meaningful effect in cleaning up the problems at Ornge.

There were a number of red flags raised by Ornge whistle-blowers, as I mentioned; they warned the Ministry of Health about Ornge deceit. Over four years ago, in 2008, they told the province that the publicly funded organization, Ornge, was handing out money at will. The whistle-blower put his issues in writing to provincial officials and was interviewed by investigators in November of that year—2008—almost four full years ago. And the health ministry told him the next month that everything was fine; all of the problems had been solved.

Ornge's Dr. Chris Mazza paid \$144 million to the Italian helicopter company for 12 helicopters—the AgustaWestland model. Even though these helicopters were flagged for safety concerns and the deal personally enriched Dr. Mazza to the tune of about \$6.7 million—that's on top of the \$1.4 million he was paid in salary. We also heard about the loan that was given to him. The story had been well documented over the summer months, but perhaps a lot of people weren't paying attention over the summer months when the public accounts committee was looking into all of the problems that existed at Ornge—also, I should point out, a public accounts committee that is yet to hear from the Premier, who has failed to answer questions on Ornge and failed to answer specific questions about his connections with Dr. Mazza and other Liberal insiders who were involved in that organization.

**1730**

Seven hundred million of taxpayers' money has been spent on Ornge since 2005 and there is a yet-to-be-determined number on the millions of dollars that may have been used for personal gain at our air ambulance service, at Ornge. Shady real estate deals have come to light as well.

It didn't really come to light until a story in the media. Mr. Klees, our member from Newmarket–Aurora, of course, has been the lead on this for the PC Party and he's done a fabulous job in trying to hold the government to account, but they're not answering questions and instead put Bill 50 out there as the be-all and end-all to curing the problems at Ornge. Mr. Klees and the public accounts committee are trying to get the answers to what is wrong at the Ornge air ambulance service. I'm afraid, in the short amount of time that I have left, Bill 50 is not the answer. We're debating legislation that's nothing less than a defence by the minister to cover the fact that she failed in her oversight responsibilities. We see through it and we know the public will see through it as well.

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

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak about Bill 50 for a few minutes. I think, given some of the comments that the member made, that it is important to sort out that there have been extensive hearings at the public accounts committee on the subject of Ornge. We've sat for days and days and days. We've heard from dozens and dozens of witnesses. That investigation into what happened at Ornge is certainly ongoing.

We're at the stage now where the legislative researcher is beginning to try and capture what we've learned, but it's a lot of information that the committee has received and now has to try and make some sense out of. I think that's important to understand.

I think it's also important to understand that Bill 50 is just part of the minister's response. It's the part of the minister's response that needs to be in legislation, but one of the things that the minister did was immediate. She got rid of the old board of directors, she put new senior management in place, and the first thing that the new board, the new senior management, did was deal with the issue of the interior configuration of the helicopters. Those helicopter interiors have been reconfigured with the approval of Transport Canada in a way which allows CPR to be now done properly for patients. I just want the people of Ontario to understand that, because of the actions of the minister, those helicopters are now safe.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's my pleasure to comment on my colleague from Prince Edward–Hastings. He always stands in this House and brings passion and conviction to what he's talking about. He does his homework; he does his facts.

This is one of those ones again: It's too little, too late. "We will do better," is what we continue hearing, particularly on this health file. "We will do better." Unfortunately, in health emergencies, you don't always get a redo; you don't always get a second chance. This is just a fine example, very similar to what we've been debating in this House for the last four days. There's been a lack of oversight. Things are going wrong on the other side, and the only reason, I believe, they brought this one again, an act to amend, is because the media caught on. The media figured out that there were things going on behind the scenes that needed to be delved into. We, as the opposition, had also brought that to the floor, and now we're actually doing it.

This bill is about oversight. It's about making sure that there's more there. We should have had this in the first place. If they'd take time to do things right the first time, we wouldn't be wasting numerous resources, money, finances. You know, \$750 million, as my colleague has appropriately pointed out, limits the health care that people get. That limits the schools and the educational opportunities. They just want to sweep everything under the rug: "Oh, I'm sorry. We made a mistake." In fact, they don't even often say "sorry" in the situation of the gas plants. It just looks very, very similar to what we've been talking about for the last four days.

We've asked for a select committee. The minister, in this House, said, "If it's the will of the people of this House," and what did she do? We're still waiting for that one.

But the most glaring deficiency of this bill is the actual whistle-blower protection. People on the front line have stepped up. They've given up a career because they saw

wrongdoing and they were prepared to step up. The minister hasn't done that. The Premier hasn't done that, or the minister would have actually either resigned or been forced to resign over this Ornge fiasco boondoggle. Now we're into the gas plant. It's just a trend that we see too often, Mr. Speaker. We're going to hold their feet to the fire every step of the way and get the truth for Ontarians, as they so deserve.

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

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** The point I would make to what was said is that you would hope at one point the government would start to learn something from what's happened. We understand that these decisions were made. You can stand in the House or stand outside the House and speculate as to why the government did it. That's a whole other thing. But I think what the public expects is that at one point a government says, "Okay, I get it. I understand that what happened is not acceptable to the public and I'm going to change the way I do things."

I guess that's what I'm having the largest amount of trouble with in listening to all of this. I hear what the government says in their speeches today. I was at the Liberal convention in Ottawa on the weekend, where I got to hear the Premier speak and got to listen to his scrums after, and I really get the sense that the argument that the government puts forward is, "If only we can keep on explaining that what we're doing is good for people, then they're going to vote for us."

At one point, you have to say to yourself, "Well, hang on. Maybe it's a question that what you're doing, people don't like," and that you need to do something to change your way so that in fact you do what the people have sent us here to do, and that is to do the right thing. Is doing a \$650-million seat-saver program the right thing? I think the answer is no. I know the answer is no, and I think what the public would want to see is the government to say, "We've made an error and we accept it. I'm sorry, and we're not going to do it again," and move on.

But what I hear is essentially the government saying, "We're just going to keep on saying—if we can only explain what we did and why we did it, how lucky we all are as Ontarians, people will buy it." I just think at the end of the day it tells me that the government needs to go back and do a little bit of thinking. People expect from their politicians—they know we're not perfect. They know that all sides of the House make mistakes, that all governments don't get it right all the time, but when you do it wrong, you should admit you're wrong and move on.

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

**Mr. Phil McNeely:** Bill 50 was the subject of discussions when Carol McKeogh, the deputy director, legal services branch, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, gave her evidence at the committee. Bill 50 was well discussed there, and the evidence included a statement that she had not been involved in the original Ornge agreement. She first got involved in providing legal ser-

vices for the ministry in connection with Ornge—she's very experienced. She's the most experienced person there, but she was chosen partly because of experience and partly because of time. She said that she prepared the amended performance agreement between the ministry and Ornge, and the amended agreement was signed by both parties on March 19, 2012. She said that the next part, of course, was to have Bill 50, and she prepared Bill 50 herself. She was involved in the development of Bill 50, this bill. The proposed legislation, in her words, would provide the province many of the same provisions for intervention in the public interest which currently exist for public hospitals and the Public Hospitals Act. She concludes that the amended performance agreement and the proposed legislative changes were introduced in response to the issues at Ornge identified by the Auditor General. The Auditor General was at that meeting as part of the public accounts meeting.

Three important changes were then identified by Ms. McKeogh. She gave this evidence under oath, that this was a very important agreement, that it should be brought in.

We always get—we got it right from the beginning, but never with any evidence—that there wasn't whistleblower protection. Well, section 7.7 of Bill 50 is the whistle-blowing protection. That's the same whistle-blowing protection that's in there for hospitals, etc., and it's quite detailed. It's in the bill. This is a bill that's required now to go with that new performance agreement, the new changes that were made by the minister at Ornge.

So Bill 50 is needed. We should support it and we should get it through to get it approved.

1740

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes the time we have for questions and comments, and so I return to the member for Prince Edward–Hastings for his reply.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** I appreciate that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I'd like to thank the members from Guelph and from Ottawa–Orléans for their comments; my colleague from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound as well, who's the deputy critic on the health file for the official opposition; and the member from Timmins–James Bay as well.

I especially appreciate the remarks from the member from Timmins–James Bay from the third party as he said that when you make a mistake—and obviously there's been a mistake by this government; there have been many, many mistakes by this government over the last nine years, but they fail to even recognize when they make a mistake.

Our member from Chatham–Kent–Essex always says, "When you mess up, you fess up." I have that ingrained in my left ear, because he yells it often at the Minister of Health when it comes to this particular situation with Ornge. But the government just fails to have any humility when it comes to making mistakes.

Obviously, there has been a huge mistake made when it comes to the Ornge file. Somebody missed the boat—

big time. That's been very, very clear. We're just still trying to determine exactly how much financial collateral and how much human collateral has been expended because of the lack of oversight at Ornge. That's what this Bill 50 is for. It was put out there to try to take the attack off from our member from Newmarket–Aurora, but obviously it falls very short in trying to do that.

It just seems like we're jumping from scandal to scandal to scandal with this government: the gas plant scandal, the eHealth scandal, the Ornge scandal, the feed-in tariff scandal—where does it all end? It's time for the government to show some humility and apologize to taxpayers in Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate? I recognize the member for Thornhill.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** This is one of those bills that comes along, I think, too frequently—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** You've already spoken to this bill—it comes along frequently all right. I'm sorry; I've been advised that you've already spoken to second reading of this bill; therefore, I can't allow you to speak again.

Further debate? The member for Elgin–Middlesex–London.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Thank you, Speaker—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate? The member for Kitchener–Conestoga: Has he spoken to this bill?

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Nice try. Further debate: The member for Halton?

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** He's already spoken as well. We do keep records.

One last time: Further debate? The member—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Sarnia–Lambton has already spoken to second reading of this bill as well.

Ms. Matthews has moved second reading of Bill 50, An Act to amend the Ambulance Act with respect to air ambulance services. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say “aye.”

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

I wish to inform the House that I have received a deferral notice from the chief government whip, and as such, this vote will be deferred until tomorrow at the time of deferred votes.

*Second reading vote deferred.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Orders of the day. I recognize the government House leader.

**Hon. John Milloy:** I move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Mr. Milloy has moved the adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1745.*

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