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Tuesday 2 October 2012

Mardi 2 octobre 2012

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 2 October 2012

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 2 octobre 2012

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

NON-PROFIT HOUSING
CO-OPERATIVES
STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 2012
LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE
LES COOPÉRATIVES DE LOGEMENT
SANS BUT LUCRATIF

Ms. Wynne moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 65, An Act to amend the Co-operative Corporations Act and the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006 in respect of non-profit housing co-operatives and to make consequential amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 65, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les sociétés coopératives et la Loi de 2006 sur la location à usage d'habitation en ce qui concerne les coopératives de logement sans but lucratif et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Ms. Wynne, you now have the floor for debate.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm very pleased to be here to speak to second reading of Bill 65. Just before I begin, I'd like to do two things. First of all, I'd like to introduce, from the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada, some guests who are with us today: Dale Reagan, managing director; Harvey Cooper, manager of government relations; Diane Miles, manager of co-operative services; and Simone Swail, project manager, government relations. Thank you very much for being with us this morning. And my policy adviser, Nick Wall, is joining us as well.

The second thing I'd like to do is just note that I'll be sharing my time with my very capable parliamentary assistant, the member for York West, and he will be speaking in this hour.

As I said, I'm very pleased to speak on second reading of Bill 65, an amendment to the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006, and the Co-operative Corporations Act. First, I want to make clear why we need this legislation. Under the Co-operative Corporations Act, co-ops have a sometimes complex, sometimes costly and often time-

consuming eviction process. This eviction process is called the co-op tenure dispute resolution process.

Ce projet de loi, s'il était adopté, rendrait le processus de règlement des différends en matière d'occupation impliquant des coopératives de logement plus efficace, accessible et transparent.

Our proposed legislation would, if it's passed, allow for greater efficiency, accessibility and transparency to the co-op tenure dispute resolution process. I've heard from many of the representatives of the co-op housing sector, including the folks who are here today, and they all tell me the same thing. They say that the current process for terminating occupancy agreements for co-ops is too complicated. They say it is inefficient for these non-profit housing providers and their members. This is an issue that's been important to our government for some time.

The underlying reason why this is important is that we want to make sure that co-op housing in this province can function as efficiently as possible. We believe in the co-op model; we think that it is a very strong model of housing. Certainly in my own riding, and I know in ridings across the province, we have fine examples of co-ops where there's a very collegial and fine working relationship among the residents because of the model, but this eviction process, this dispute resolution process, is not in place.

As you may remember, my colleague Donna Cansfield, the MPP for Etobicoke Centre, introduced a private member's bill designed to help improve the co-op housing dispute resolution system in spring 2011. Regrettably, there wasn't enough time for Bill 198 to proceed to a final vote. The Ontario region of the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada has advocated to move co-op housing tenure disputes from the Ontario court system to the Landlord and Tenant Board.

Now, I want to just talk for a moment about who and what the Ontario region of the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada is. They're the main advocate in this province for not-for-profit co-op housing members and boards. Our government recognizes and appreciates the dedicated work of the Co-operative Housing Federation.

Nous partageons l'engagement de la fédération en matière de maintien et de promotion d'un secteur du logement coopératif fort.

We share the federation's commitment, as I've said, Madam Speaker, to maintaining and promoting a strong co-operative housing sector, so our proposed legislation

supports the co-op housing sector by making some of these long-needed changes.

So what are we proposing to change? Currently, the tenure dispute resolution process for co-op housing is governed by the Co-operative Corporations Act. Under this act, co-ops must go through a lengthy and oftentimes costly process in the courts to evict a resident. I can't stress enough that it is an onerous process, and that's why we are undertaking this change. We're proposing to amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006, and the Co-operative Corporations Act to move most co-op tenure disputes from the courts to the Landlord and Tenant Board.

We have to ask: How is this a desirable improvement on the existing system? What is this going to make better? First of all, let's talk about what the Landlord and Tenant Board is, because I think that will make it clearer why this is a good thing to do. The Landlord and Tenant Board is the body established under the Residential Tenancies Act to resolve rental housing disputes. Under our proposed legislation, co-ops would also be able to apply to the Landlord and Tenant Board to resolve tenure disputes. However, this could happen only when the dispute concerns grounds already provided for under the Residential Tenancies Act, or the RTA.

I want to emphasize that the Landlord and Tenant Board is an independent agency. It provides Ontarians with timely access to specialized, expert and effective dispute resolution. So the Landlord and Tenant Board has a lot of experience in this area and understands many of the issues that surround these residency disputes.

The Landlord and Tenant Board has offices across the province, so it is very accessible, and it gives landlords and tenants convenient access for resolving matters that profoundly affect their everyday lives.

Madame la Présidente, le transfert des expulsions des tribunaux à la Commission de la location immobilière rendra le processus de règlement des différends en matière d'occupation plus efficace, rentable et transparent, tant pour les conseils d'administration des coopératives que pour leurs membres.

Madam Speaker, moving eviction cases from the courts to the Landlord and Tenant Board would make the resolution of tenure disputes more efficient, cost-effective and transparent for co-op boards and their members. It would remove some of that onerous burden that exists in the current system.

The Co-operative Corporations Act provides a framework for housing co-ops to create their bylaws. A bylaw is created when it is passed by the co-op's board of directors and is confirmed by the members of that co-op at a general members' meeting. While there are many common bylaws shared among housing co-ops, there are also some that have passed their own unique bylaws.

Madam Speaker, as I mentioned, the proposed legislation would also amend the Co-operative Corporations Act. It would do this in two important ways. First, the Co-operative Corporations Act would be amended to clarify that when a co-op tenure dispute proceeds through

the courts, it would be judged on the facts of the case rather than an assessment of whether proper procedures had been followed by the co-op. The second key amendment to the Co-operative Corporations Act would see the streamlining of the internal decision-making process of the co-ops. It would do this by clarifying that decisions made by a co-op's board could be appealed to the co-op membership only if the co-op's bylaws expressly permit appeals.

0910

Ces modifications favoriseraient la transparence de toutes les décisions.

These amendments would promote the transparency of all the decisions. They'd be less costly for co-op boards and co-op members, not to mention less time-consuming for all concerned. We have to remember that in these situations, the people involved want to get these issues resolved as quickly as possible. That is because it affects their lives and it's an unhappy time, often, so you want to be able to move through the process quickly.

J'aimerais aussi souligner que les modifications proposées, si elles sont adoptées, offriront l'avantage supplémentaire d'accorder aux coopératives de logement et à leurs membres un accès à des services de médiation pour régler leurs litiges.

I'd also like to note that our proposed amendments, if passed, would have the added benefit of giving co-ops and their members access to mediation services to help them work out their differences. This could provide relief to the court system. I think all of us in this House could agree that if a mediated solution is possible, that is desirable, because what that means is that there's been a process whereby some common ground has been achieved, and that can make for a much more satisfactory conclusion. Our proposed legislation would offer co-op members involved in tenure disputes a process that's independent, transparent and affordable.

Notre projet de loi est le fruit de consultations exhaustives avec le secteur du logement coopératif au cours des trois dernières années.

For three years, we have been in consultation with the co-op housing sector. We've heard from them about their concerns, and our proposed legislation is a result of that process.

Madam Speaker, I hope that all members recognize the benefits of this proposed legislation and I hope that we will have support on all sides of the House. I know that these concerns have been expressed to all sides of the House, and I hope that in the spirit of partnership and our mutual goal to improve co-op housing in the province, there will be support for this bill. We only have to look at a few examples of the successful housing co-ops around the province to see the difference they make to our communities. I noted at the beginning of my remarks that I think we have co-ops everywhere.

For example, the Eastern Ontario Christian Senior Citizens Co-op in Ottawa: This co-op recently completed an extension made possible by support from the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program. The funding

helped to build 69 units for Ontario's most vulnerable people, including low-income seniors and persons with disabilities.

The construction of these units also served to stimulate the local economy by creating jobs, of course, and contributed to the strength of the community. From the library services to the in-house nurse to the event rooms for birthday celebrations, this co-op is a shining example of what a successful co-op can provide. I think that is a very important part of this discussion that we should note, that when we talk about housing, often we talk about bricks and mortar; often we talk about four walls and a roof; we talk about the shelter component. But if we think about the programs that are involved in the successful co-op or other successful models, those are supports and opportunities and space within a housing development that provide a community. They provide a place for people to come together and become a community. So those supports are very important to a successful housing development.

Il ne s'agit pas seulement d'un foyer; c'est une collectivité. C'est un endroit où les résidents se sentent en sécurité et qui leur permet de mener une vie productive.

It's not just a home; it's a community. It's a place where residents feel safe and secure and lead productive lives.

Another successful co-op is the Huron Pines cooperative in London. This project in northeast London opened in 2009 and provides comfortable, energy-efficient townhomes and apartments. The project was developed by a group of dedicated and committed Londoners eager to create a community designed for and targeted to singles, couples and small families. As with so many co-ops, the push for the co-op came from the community. It was made possible with assistance from three levels of government and support from Gethsemane United Church and the London Affordable Housing Foundation—again, a partnership of community members and organizations. Our government's affordable housing program helped to support the construction of 26 of these units, so government has a role to play.

Rappelons que cette coopérative de logement n'est pas qu'un simple abri.

Again, this co-op is much more than a building or just a shelter; it provides a stable and safe place for vulnerable Ontarians to build a good life for themselves and their families.

In another example, McLean Co-Operative Homes in Ottawa received funding from our affordable housing program for 63 affordable housing units. This co-op provides a home for seniors, recent immigrants and persons with disabilities. The units are designed for both families and single individuals.

The list of amazing co-op examples around the province goes on and on. As I said, I'm sure that every single member in this House today could come up with an example of a remarkable co-op in their own riding. But it's the residents of the co-ops, obviously, Madam Speaker, that make these terrific places. Co-op residents

don't just live in the co-op; they help to build the co-op community, and they take part in the life of that community.

Co-op housing provides safe, secure, affordable housing to many families. The sector provides a viable option for families and individuals with a diverse range of backgrounds and incomes. And that is a big conversation—it's a big, important conversation—within the housing sector; that is the mixed-income communities that I think are the healthiest kinds of communities. If we look at the redevelopments that are happening around the province, it's a focus on mixed income, people from different backgrounds, people with different vulnerabilities living together and creating that strong community.

J'accorde une grande importance au logement coopératif et aux personnes qui vivent dans ces collectivités et qui travaillent pour fournir ces habitations.

Co-operative housing and the people who live in those communities and work to provide those homes are very important to me and to our government, not just because I'm the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, but because I know that having a safe and decent place to live is vital to good health, personal success, raising children, caring for parents and having a well-balanced life. Decent housing is much more than a shelter: It provides stability, it provides security and dignity, it plays a central role in reducing poverty, and it creates a strong base from which to find a job and contribute to strengthening the Ontario economy. The sector is a key partner in supporting the availability of affordable and safe housing for families throughout Ontario.

These are the people for whom our government is taking strong action today. Our proposed legislation would help support co-op providers and the families and children who call co-ops their home.

I want to just talk for a moment about some of the things that we have done because, having said that we believe strongly in the importance of affordable and accessible housing, I want to talk about the progress that we've made on the housing agenda since we came to office in 2003.

Nous faisons une véritable différence dans le quotidien des familles qui travaillent et pour améliorer la situation des foyers les plus vulnérables de l'Ontario.

I believe, Madam Speaker, that we're making a real difference in the lives of working families and in the circumstances of Ontario's most vulnerable households.

Our government recognizes the role housing plays in supporting the growth and health of communities across Ontario, and that's in fact why we developed the long-term affordable housing strategy. It's the first of its kind in Ontario, and it demonstrates our commitment to having a plan, to working with municipalities, to working with housing providers and to working with communities to make sure that the needs of people across the province are met.

Now, Madam Speaker, I can predict—not that I have a crystal ball, but I am pretty sure—that at least speakers from one of the parties on the opposite side of the House

will say that we have not done enough. I will be the first to say that there is more that needs to be done, but we have made a huge advance, and having the long-term affordable housing strategy in place is part of that progress.

Our strategy supports our poverty reduction strategy, and it sets a strong foundation for a more efficient, accessible system for those who need safe, affordable housing. That's why we as a government plan to continue to support the co-op housing sector. It's why we believe that it's important that we keep the housing sector strong and keep the co-op housing sector strong: so that it can provide viable housing choices for Ontario families.

Madame la Présidente, un secteur du logement ontarien qui mise sur la diversité n'est pas complet sans un secteur du logement coopératif sain.

I believe that a housing sector that offers diversity for Ontario is not complete without a healthy co-op sector, and that's why I urge all members to support this bill. This legislation is another step we're taking to support affordable housing across Ontario, and as I have said, there's much more to be done.

0920

Social housing in Ontario is a public asset, valued in excess of \$50 billion, that will continue to deteriorate if the federal government does not become a full funding partner with the province and its municipalities. I think we have demonstrated since we came to office in 2003 that we are willing to work in partnership with the federal government. We have been able to do that; we're willing to work with all orders of government in order to continue to provide affordable housing. So I strongly urge all members of the Legislature to call on the federal government to become a full partner with us and our municipalities by providing sustained funding for affordable and social housing.

Madam Speaker, that is an issue I have raised at the national table with other ministers, who are working in the local government area. I'm hoping that I'll be able to have an opportunity to meet with Ministers of Housing from across the country—because, if the current funding commitment persists, by 2033, the federal investment in housing in Ontario will be down to zero. So you can see a clear trajectory downwards from here out over the next 20 years. We really need that commitment from the federal government in order to be able to continue to build affordable housing.

I talked about affordable housing—safe, secure housing—being fundamental in the quest to reduce poverty. One of the things I didn't speak to, but I think it's important, is that not only does it provide safety and security for adults and for children, but it also provides opportunities for kids to do better at school and the opportunity for adults to be in a safe, secure environment so that they can go out and find work. If you're worrying about where you're going to live, if you're worrying about the state of your home, it's very hard to have the wherewithal to go out and look for a job. All of that is contingent on having safe, secure, affordable housing.

I know that having a place to call home is the first step out of poverty. We've talked about that.

Pour les familles ontariennes, disposer d'un logement est une première étape qui permet de relever bien des défis auxquels elles font face.

Having a home is the first step in addressing many of the challenges that face Ontario families; having a home is the first step to accessing greater opportunities in life. It's a foundation from which people can build their lives so as to move from negative situations to better lives that contribute to a better tomorrow for us all.

We know that helping people to have safe, affordable and healthy homes is a complex issue. There is no simple, quick fix; we are aware of that. We need a range of opportunities. Today's proposed legislation is one more step our government is taking to support the co-op housing sector so that the co-op housing sector can be part of that continuum of opportunity.

Ce gouvernement a l'intention d'assurer la solidité du secteur des coopératives de logement pour qu'il continue d'offrir un choix viable aux familles ontariennes.

Our government plans to help the co-op housing sector to remain strong so that it continues to provide a viable choice for Ontario families. That's why we're taking this action today; that's why we're proposing this legislation. I urge all members to support this bill, and I want to thank the folks from the co-op federation for their advocacy and for their work in this sector.

Merci beaucoup.

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

Mr. Mario Sergio: Thank you very much, Speaker. It's good to see you in the chair.

I am pleased to be here in support of second reading of Bill 65, an amendment to the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006, and the Co-operative Corporations Act. This important amendment would improve the way non-profit co-operative housing boards and their members resolve disputes in Ontario. This proposed legislation would, if passed, bring greater efficiency, accessibility and transparency to the co-op tenure dispute resolution process.

There is no question that the current process for terminating occupancy agreements for co-ops is complex, costly and time-consuming for these non-profit housing providers and their members. This legislation is the result of significant consultation with the co-op housing sector over the past few years. The Co-operative Housing Federation has been a long-time advocate of legislation that would help decisions related to tenure disputes be fair to both co-ops and their members.

As you have heard, Speaker, the Co-operative Housing Federation represents housing co-ops throughout Ontario. I want to repeat the minister's message that we share the Co-operative Housing Federation's commitment to maintaining a strong co-operative housing sector in the province of Ontario.

The Ontario Region of the Co-operative Housing Federation is the voice of co-op housing in this province.

They concentrate on issues that have a provincial focus and affect only Ontario members.

As the minister stated as well, the proposed legislation would amend the Residential Tenancies Act, 2006, and the Co-operative Corporations Act to move most co-op tenure disputes from the courts to the Landlord and Tenant Board. This board is the body established under the Residential Tenancies Act to resolve rental housing disputes.

If passed, this legislation would mean that co-op providers and members would have most of the same protections, most of the same benefits and the same responsibilities afforded to landlords and tenants facing tenure disputes under the RTA. For example, co-ops will be able to seek resolution to disputes through the Landlord and Tenant Board for things such as arrears; persistent late payment of rent or housing charges; illegal behaviour; interfering with reasonable enjoyment; and wilful damage.

Tenure disputes based on grounds outside the RTA, however, would continue to be handled through the internal democratic co-op eviction process and the courts. For example, tenure disputes based on the following types of bylaws would continue to be resolved by the courts: violation of no-pets provisions; failure to fulfil co-op members' duties, such as shovelling snow or cutting the lawn; and any other ground not provided for under the RTA. This process needs to be retained because co-ops are governed democratically. Co-op members vote to establish bylaws that set out grounds for tenure disputes that are not provided for under the RTA.

The proposed legislation would also amend the Co-operative Corporations Act to streamline and to improve the current internal eviction processes of non-profit co-op housing. As the minister said, the Co-operative Corporations Act would be amended in two ways. First, the Co-operative Corporations Act would be amended to clarify that when a co-op tenure dispute proceeds through the courts, it would be judged on the facts of the case. The second key amendment to the co-operative housing act would see the streamlining of the internal decision-making process of co-ops.

As the minister noted, there are many benefits to this proposed legislation. The new approach would make the co-op eviction process more responsive and cost-effective. Streamlining the dispute resolution process mandated by the Co-operative Corporations Act would simplify the internal process and shorten the time required for resolution of these disputes.

Our proposed legislation, if passed, would utilize the expertise of the Landlord and Tenant Board and, in most cases, allow access to established infrastructure and procedures designed to deal with tenure disputes. It would be less costly for Ontario co-ops to use the Landlord and Tenant Board in most tenure disputes, in comparison to using the current court-based system for all tenure disputes. Having cases go before the Landlord and Tenant Board could also reduce the burden on the court system.

Current co-op law and policy regarding housing charges and other requirements of membership would remain the same, and the unique system of co-op housing would be recognized. Although co-op members would not have the right to make applications to the Landlord and Tenant Board, the rights of co-op members to use internal co-op processes and to apply to the courts regarding co-op issues would be maintained. Members would be provided with the opportunity to be heard by the Landlord and Tenant Board through a process that is transparent, accessible and routine. The Landlord and Tenant Board could provide for mediation and, as much as possible, try and resolve a tenure dispute prior to it proceeding to a hearing.

0930

The financially difficult times we are facing call for us to do things differently. The single most important step the government can take to strengthen the economy is to balance the budget. We are making the right choices to ensure that Ontario families are receiving the best possible services at the best value for tax dollars. All of us have a role to play in balancing the budget. Building a stronger Ontario requires strong action. We will make the right choices to protect the vital gains we have made together. The reality is that we must do more with less; the need is greater than the resources available. But if we work collaboratively and if we can be flexible, we can stretch those limited funds to produce greater results.

As we know, Speaker, our government introduced a new budget for the province that makes some tough decisions. We aim to balance the budget and eliminate the deficit by 2017-18. To reach our target, our government proposes to reduce the growth of program spending and contain costs by \$17.7 billion over the next three years. The choices were difficult. We are in different times, with a vulnerable global economy. We all face difficult realities. Expenditures have to equal revenues, and revenue sources have to be sustainable, which is why we must work together to be innovative in our approaches and to find ways to stretch the funds we have.

Co-ops have a history of stretching funds. They make efficient use of their members' resources. Speaker, I have been talking about co-op housing, but co-operatives take many forms and operate in all sectors of our society. Last year, the Premier wrote in a letter to the Ontario Co-operative Association that "Co-operatives boast a proud history of enriching our communities, strengthening our society and building our nation."

Their importance is recognized by the United Nations, which has declared 2012 the International Year of Cooperatives. The 2012 slogan for the campaign is "Co-operative Enterprises Build a Better World." The campaign is intended to raise public awareness of the invaluable contributions that co-operative enterprises have made towards poverty reduction, employment generation and social integration. The campaign highlights the co-operative business model as a strong and potent alternative means of doing business and furthering social economic development.

In the spirit of the International Year of Cooperatives, I would like to acknowledge the wide range of co-operatives that exist in Ontario. From the local credit union to housing co-operatives and agricultural co-ops, they all play a critical role in supporting strong communities.

Co-ops are a way for a community to have control over the economic, social and cultural activities that affect the daily lives of community members. Co-ops take on many different forms. They can be: agricultural, housing, credit and other financial services delivered through credit unions, groceries, education, telecommunication, insurance, utilities and many more. This just reaffirms the importance that co-ops play in our society. Co-operatives play a unique role in improving our communities, building communities and strengthening our economy.

The community-based management style is at the foundation of all co-ops. When people manage their own resources, they take pride in their ownership. They unite to help the community that they have created. The values of honesty, openness and concern for the wider community are the engine that fuels the co-op movement.

There are about 1,300 co-ops in Ontario. These are a strong part of the economy of many communities throughout our province. In fact, an International Labour Organization report provides compelling evidence that co-ops are more resilient than other business models in times of economic crisis.

The report entitled *Resilience of the Co-operative Business Model in Time of Crisis* notes that the global financial situation and ensuing economic crisis have had a negative impact on the majority of enterprises. However, it also highlights that co-operatives from all over the world are demonstrating strong resilience to this crisis. It notes that financial co-operatives remain financially strong, consumer co-operatives see less turnover and worker co-operatives are seeing growth as people choose the co-op model to deal with our new economic reality.

The report reviews historical evidence, as well as empirical evidence, to demonstrate not only that the co-operative model of business survives crisis but also why co-operatives are sustainable. They help maintain the livelihood of the community. It is remarkable when you think that more than 1.4 million Ontarians are members of at least one co-operative.

There are several key principles that guide all co-ops. These can be found in the Statement on the Co-operative Identity that was adopted at the 1995 General Assembly of the International Co-operative Alliance held in Manchester on the occasion of the alliance's centenary. The statement was the product of a long process of consultation with thousands of co-ops around the world. They define a co-operative as "an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise."

"Co-operatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, co-operative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

"The co-operative principles are guidelines by which co-operatives put their values into practice."

The Statement on the Co-operative Identity notes a number of these principles:

(1) Co-operatives are open and voluntary organizations. They are open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership. There is no discrimination on the grounds of gender, social status, race, political affiliation or religion.

(2) Co-operatives are democratic organizations. They are run by their own members. These members actively participate in making decisions. Individuals serving as elected representatives are accountable to their membership. Co-op members have equal voting rights—that is, one member, one vote—and co-operatives and other levels are organized in a democratic manner as well.

(3) Co-op members contribute to and democratically control the capital of their co-operative.

(4) Co-operatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their co-operative autonomy.

(5) Co-operatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and employees. This is to help them so that they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-operative. They reach out to the general public to inform others of the benefits of co-operatives.

(6) Co-ops believe in co-operation among co-operatives. Co-operatives work together through local, national, regional and international structures. This helps strengthen the co-operative movement.

(7) Co-operatives have a concern for community. Co-ops focus on their members' needs and also work for the sustainable development of their communities.

0940

Speaker, co-op housing in particular contributes to the greater good of society in so many meaningful ways in communities all across the province. It creates employment. It promotes social inclusion and social responsibility. It develops leadership and develops a sense of community. It develops a commitment to partnership. And co-op housing increases a community's sustainable economic capacity. The fact is that co-op housing helps us build communities we can be proud of. The members who live in co-ops are the ones responsible for running their co-op.

Co-ops have played a vital role in our affordable housing system for over 40 years. In Ontario, there are about 550 non-profit housing co-ops. These co-ops provide affordable housing for some 44,000 households,

which represent about 125,000 Ontarians, including some of our most vulnerable citizens. Co-ops can take the form of medium-sized apartment buildings or townhouses.

People who live in co-op housing come from every walk of life. Co-op housing provides a home for people of many different backgrounds, people of many different income levels and people with many different needs. It provides homes for medium- to low-income families, new immigrants, seniors, people with disabilities and members of the aboriginal community. The diversity and community focus of co-op housing is what makes it unique and strengthens this province.

Our government plans to help the co-op housing sector remain strong. We want to see it continue to provide a viable choice for Ontario families. A housing sector that offers diversity for Ontario is not complete without a healthy co-op sector. Our government recognizes the need for affordable housing in its role in supporting the growth and health of communities across our province of Ontario. That is why it is important to recognize the role the Co-operative Housing Federation plays in the housing system in our province.

Many of the same values are at the foundation of co-op housing as well. At the 2009 Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada annual meeting, the delegates adopted a set of common values for Canadian housing co-ops. These values highlight the fact that Canada's non-profit housing co-operatives are dedicated to developing strong housing communities that operate under the control of the resident members for their mutual benefit on a not-for-profit basis. As a movement, they are united by a strong commitment to uphold and promote these agreed-upon values. They include:

(1) The international co-op principles will guide the way they govern and run their housing co-ops.

(2) They will continue to operate their co-ops on a not-for-profit basis as it is fundamental to the future and their commitment to those in need of housing in Canada.

(3) Co-ops strive to house members with a mix of incomes.

(4) Housing co-ops will treat their employees and other providers of management services fairly and value the contribution they make to their communities.

(5) Co-ops are inclusive communities. They promote diversity by encouraging a membership of differing backgrounds and abilities.

(6) A commitment to environmental sustainability will guide the operation of housing co-ops.

(7) Co-ops will strive to provide a high-quality living environment for their members and do their best to respond to their changing needs over time.

(8) The right of members to live in their co-ops is protected as long as they respect the bylaw rules and policies that they have together agreed will govern their housing.

Madam Speaker, just as with other co-ops, co-op housing is member-governed. The people who live in co-ops are the members of the co-op, not tenants. Many of those who help run co-operatives are volunteers. The people they serve are their neighbours and their friends.

They are responsible for the decisions that affect these people's everyday lives. The role of volunteers in today's modern society cannot be underestimated. They play a huge part in the running of our communities. These volunteers come from all walks of life and are of all ages, and they help run co-ops. They build a better community for us all.

The members who live in co-ops are the ones responsible for running the co-op. Each member has a vote, and every year, members elect a board of directors from the membership. Members make the big decisions about how the building will be maintained and how the business of the co-op will be managed. Most co-ops hire staff to do the day-to-day work. Members work together to keep their housing well-managed and affordable.

Co-op housing plays a very special role in communities all across our province. Co-op housing has a long history in Canada. It goes back as far as the 1930s, when, among other co-operative initiatives, the Nova Scotia Antigonish Movement promoted co-ops that built homes for their members. When the construction of these homes was finished, the homes were sold to the members and the housing co-operatives were dissolved. There were building co-operatives similar to this formed in Quebec between the 1920s and 1940s. The earliest student co-op in Canada was the Guelph Campus Co-op, which started up in 1913 as a retail co-operative and later went on to develop student housing and other services.

Organized lobbying began in the 1960s to gain government support for co-op housing, and 1968 marked the birth of the Co-operative Housing Foundation of Canada and the beginning of their advocacy for co-op housing. The work of this group paid off. From 1973 to 1992, the government helped finance thousands of co-operative housing units through three successive co-op housing programs. From the mid-1980s on, the three largest provinces in Canada—Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia—also set up their own development programs to finance housing co-operatives.

It was at this time that the co-operative housing movement started to develop with the appearance of regional associations and development groups. These organizations worked with the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada to provide education, development and management services to an expanding number of Canadian housing co-ops. It is this long history that shapes the housing co-op movement today.

The fact is, co-op housing has helped us build communities we can be proud of. Co-op housing helps support people from diverse backgrounds and provides an affordable option for many low-income Ontarians. Housing co-ops frequently cost less to operate. Who calls co-ops home? They are families, women, single parents, seniors, visible minorities, new immigrants, people of aboriginal ancestry and disabled persons. As the minister has said many times, decent housing is so much more than just a shelter. It provides a strong foundation from which to find a job, raise a family and contribute to the strength of Ontario. It plays a key role in breaking the

cycle of poverty. We recognize the need for affordable housing and its role in supporting the growth and health of communities across Ontario.

0950

This proposed amendment supports our poverty reduction strategy and sets a strong foundation for a more efficient, accessible system for those who need safe and affordable housing.

December 2011 marked the third anniversary of the poverty reduction strategy. Much has happened since December 4, 2008, the date our Ontario government announced its first five-year poverty reduction commitment.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: That's working well.

Mr. Mario Sergio: Yes, but, especially in light of ongoing economic turmoil, much more needs to be done in order to meet the target. This government has focused its efforts primarily on children and families, but we have also taken steps to create opportunities for those most adversely affected by the economic downturn and to build the economic and social foundation to achieve our poverty reduction goal.

From 2008-09, the first year of the poverty reduction strategy, 20,000 children moved out of poverty. This means over 4% fewer children living in poverty. Poverty rates for single-mother-led households dropped from 43% in 2008 to 35% in 2009. The number of children living in households that could not afford two or more essential items has dropped from 12% in 2008 to less than 9% in 2009.

The report also focused on the costs associated with poverty in Ontario. This government, which has invested greatly in education, is aware that children from low-income families tend not to do as well in school as their peers. They often fall behind, drop out in greater numbers, and face higher rates of poverty as adults. The cost of poverty in Ontario has been estimated to be as high as \$13 billion per year when health care, criminal justice and lost productivity are taken into account.

Regarding Ontario's goal of reducing child poverty by 25%, Premier McGuinty stated that there is no shortage of evidence that if we don't address this problem in the early years, the cost will only be greater later on. Clearly, we cannot afford to ignore that nearly 1.7 million Ontarians live in poverty.

Our government recognized the need for affordable housing and its role in supporting the growth and health of communities across Ontario. This is why we developed the long-term affordable housing strategy, the first of its kind in Ontario. Our long-term housing strategy supports our poverty reduction strategy and sets a strong foundation for a more efficient, accessible system for those who need safe and affordable housing.

During our consultation on the strategy, we heard that the existing housing system was too complicated and created obstacles for those in need. Those who delivered the housing programs told us that because of the system, they were unable to develop the best possible services to those in need. Our strategy transformed the affordable

housing system. Our strategy focused on four key pillars: putting people first, creating strong partnerships, supporting affordable options, and accountability.

The long-term affordable housing strategy provides municipalities and housing providers with greater flexibility to deliver housing services, recognizing that communities have different housing needs. Their increased flexibility helps ensure that their resources are located to meet local needs and to improve outcomes for people. It helps make sure services are accountable and on the right track.

Speaker, the federal and provincial investment in the Affordable Housing for Ontario agreement that Minister Wynne announced on November 8, 2011, continues the goals set out in the long-term affordable housing strategy and the work that this government is doing to help address the housing needs in this province.

Our investment in the affordable housing for Ontario program, with the federal government, will create over 5,000 new jobs and will build or repair approximately 7,000 affordable housing units over four years in Ontario. That's about the size of a town like Hanover or Acton. The program represents a combined investment of \$481 million from the government of Canada and the province of Ontario. Ontario continues to build new affordable housing and repair existing units for Ontarians with housing needs. This is in addition to the province's overall investment of over \$2.5 billion since 2003, which has translated into the construction and repair of more than 270,000 housing units and the provision of 35,000 rent supplements and has increased over 57,000 jobs across our province.

The objective of the investment in affordable housing for Ontario program is to improve the living conditions of Canadians in need by improving access to affordable, sound, suitable and sustainable housing. This is one step towards helping Ontario families open doors to a safe, healthy and prosperous future. The investment in affordable housing for Ontario program will provide funding to create and repair affordable housing and provide rental and down-payment assistance to make housing more affordable.

The future of housing depends on sustained funding. While we are pleased that the federal government has made a short-term commitment to affordable housing through the Investment in Affordable Housing for Ontario agreement, the future of housing depends on permanent, sustained funding to increase the supply of affordable housing and improve the condition of the existing social housing stock. Ontario needs a long-term funding commitment from the federal government that is fair to Ontarians and will help meet the needs of Ontario families. We know that a lack of affordable housing increases pressure on social programs and hinders economic growth. We encourage all members of the Legislature and our housing partners to work with us to call on the federal government to make a long-term housing funding commitment. Our government has been hard at work to tackle the pressing issues of ensuring affordable

and safe housing in this province now and in the future. But we need the federal government to be a full partner with us to achieve these goals.

If history teaches us one thing, Speaker, it is that we must work together to achieve better results. Our government has heard that there are frustrations with the current system. I want to assure the co-op housing sector that we are listening. We must be deliberate in our actions so that we can plan and invest in tomorrow. We must work together.

By strengthening the co-op housing sector, we are supporting affordable and safe housing for families throughout our province of Ontario. The proposed legislation is just one more step to help strengthen the co-op housing sector so that it can continue to provide a viable choice for Ontario families. Together, we are making a real difference in the lives of working families and for Ontario's most vulnerable households. This new process would be a win-win-win for co-op housing providers, their members and the justice system as well.

Speaker, I urge all members to support this important piece of legislation to help support co-ops and their members. I have to add that I'm also very grateful to see members of the co-op family here; they have been very actively engaged in promoting the benefits of this legislation. They've been advocating for the benefit of their members, and I have to say, Speaker, that on a number of occasions, I have been invited to attend some of their functions, and their membership is looking very, very—

Interruption.

Mr. Mario Sergio: Yes—to the actions of this House. As a matter of fact, at one of their do's, I was told, "Don't come back anymore unless you deliver on your promise."

Well, today, Speaker, I have to say that if it wasn't for their tireless, really dedicated commitment to making this possible, we wouldn't be here today. I think this is something that all the members of the House share, Speaker, and that all the members of the House would like to see. It's no gain for us personally, but it's a gain for all of us indirectly. It's a gain for those living in and serving on the co-ops. It's a gain for the justice system. It's savings for the government. It does great justice to the co-op management providers, and their residents as well. There is no downside to the effect of this legislation.

1000

To the justice—to the hard work that they did over the many years, Speaker—I indulge myself in saying thank you for the time that you have allocated for me to speak on this issue that I have participated in over the many years. It's good to see that finally it's coming to fruition. I would like to ask the members of the House, on behalf of all the members of all the co-op units in Ontario, to support this legislation. I thank you, Speaker.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I'd like to welcome the members of the co-op housing community and commend them for their patience. I know that you've been waiting a long time because of procedural issues here, and I know that

our leader, Tim Hudak, would show great respect as well. I'm looking forward to our member, Mr. Clark, in terms of being critic on this. His remarks will be fair and reasonable; I'm sure of that.

I did listen to the minister. I think we certainly are in agreement with removing this from a court process. A costly wrangling in the courts costs people money, and having a dispute resolution with the Landlord and Tenant Act—I found the Landlord and Tenant Act a bit unbalanced at the time as well. It needs to be restructured so that it's fair to both parties in the discussion. I would say that right now in my riding I get more complaints from landlords, because it isn't fair. There have been quite a few media pieces talking about the inordinate abuse that some landlords take, which spoils it for all those people who are renters, who can't afford to own.

But I would say that the member from York West was reasonable in his remarks, and all I can say is that if people act reasonably and deal with the facts as they are and keep the partisanship out of it, you'll find that you'll get a better solution. This is what we're looking for: a process that's reasonable and fair and listens to both sides of the discussion. At times that happens here in Queen's Park—and I was a bit disappointed today, earlier, that the Premier said there should be a free vote. In many cases they are free votes. We vote for the difference between right and wrong as we see it. We always try to vote for things that are truthful. It's the same process here in Bill 65. I think it would be the right thing to help co-op housing, because affordability is a big issue—

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

Ms. Cindy Forster: Thank you, Speaker. Thank you to the co-ops for being patient and for being here again today, and for being so tenacious about this. The wheels of democracy are slow, as you know. It was about a year ago, I think, that you were initially in my office to talk about this bill, and it isn't the first time that this bill has been before the Legislative Assembly, so it is a long time coming. It certainly will improve the efficiency as well as the costs to co-op housing, as well as to tenants.

The NDP certainly has support for this bill, but we also have support and have introduced a number of other housing bills over the year that we're going to be re-visiting during this term.

The minister spoke this morning initially to this bill and talked about that members on the other side of the House probably were going to say that the government has not done enough, that at least one of us was going to say that. I would say that probably 50 of us are going to say that as we get to speak to Bill 65. What the government really needs to do is to develop long-term funding strategy targets for affordable housing, because the list has increased from 156,000 households waiting at the end of December 2011 to 170,000 households waiting, so an increase of 14,000 households waiting in a period of less than a year.

I look forward to debating this issue some more over the next few days, and hopefully we'll get this passed really soon.

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

Mr. Jeff Leal: I did appreciate the remarks this morning by my colleagues the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the parliamentary assistant, the member from York West.

Of course, we have a long history of co-operatives in the province of Ontario, be it farm co-ops, insurance co-ops or indeed housing co-ops. I certainly want to acknowledge Mr. Cooper. I remember him when he, at the first opportunity, late after the election of 2003, during the co-op information day here at Queen's Park, was talking about the very issues today that are in the proposal in Bill 65.

I'd just like to get on the record, Madam Speaker, that just recently we had a fire at a co-op in Peterborough, the Leta Brownscombe co-op in the north end of Peterborough. You could see the spirit of the people in the co-op, who banded together, working with the city of Peterborough and indeed the ministry, to repair the damage that was done in a very serious fire. Thank goodness there was no loss of life that occurred. But that, I think, is emblematic of the kind of spirit that we have in the co-operative movement in the province of Ontario.

It's interesting to note: I think this bill is an opportunity for all sides of the House to co-operate, to make sure that we can indeed pass this legislation. I noticed in the spring of this year that the member from Leeds-Grenville, the member from Welland, the former very-articulate PC critic on housing, Ms. Savoline, and indeed the leader of the third party, Ms. Horwath, have all generally supported the kinds of changes that are being proposed in Bill 65. It's an opportunity for all of us to come together, move this forward and get it passed in the best interests of the co-op movement in the province of Ontario.

Indeed, I think the remarks this morning, the two-minuters after the speeches by both the minister and parliamentary assistant, bode well for the future, that we get this particular bill passed.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: It's a pleasure to provide a couple of minutes of comments and observations on the introduction and the lead speech by the government for Bill 65.

I also want to take the opportunity, as the other members have, to welcome representatives from the co-op industry here today. These people are very, very patient with government. We've been—"we" meaning collectively members of the Legislative Assembly—talking about this change for about five years, so I think we all agree it's about time. In a minority Parliament, it's nice and refreshing to actually have a piece of legislation that has support from all three parties. So I appreciate and welcome you to the chamber this morning.

I also want to remind members that next month, on October 17, we have the annual co-operative housing day, so you all get a chance to tell them to their face how we're going to make sure that Bill 65 gets piloted

through this place. Maybe by then, the government House leader will have some committees organized so we can actually move the bill forward and have some public hearings and some public comment. So they're very patient.

I also want, in the little bit of time I have left, to let members know that there is co-operative housing in 95 of Ontario's 107 ridings, so it's very important. It affects 90% of MPPs in this place. Co-ops provide a very valuable mix in our communities. I know I have in my community the Seaway housing co-op and the Shepherd's Green Co-operative, and I want to thank them for their commitment.

We look forward to further debate. Welcome to the Legislative Assembly.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for York West, you have two minutes to respond.

Mr. Mario Sergio: It's very encouraging to hear the comments from all members of the House. It's a wonderful spirit of co-operation that pervades in the House today, and I wish it would continue for many, many days and years to come.

I think the members of the co-operative federation would go back today not only happy but happier if we were to see the approval move forward today. But knowing how the legislative agenda works through the House here, there is a bit more work. Yes, they have been very patient in dealing with this issue. It will be good to move it forward—I sense that there is strong support from all members of the House, which is good—for further input, and hopefully bring it back as quickly as possible.

I hope that during the consultation process, indeed, not only will we see further comments from the co-op federation and membership at large themselves, but from the general public for any input to make it even better, to strengthen it and bring this to a head.

There is no question about it, Speaker: This serves the co-operatives and their members very well. It's something that should have been done moons ago, but it's here now. And I have to say, again, to all members of the House: Thank you for your support, and to the members of the co-op federation for being so faithful to their membership and for working hard to see that indeed this will come to happen.

Madam Speaker, it was good to have your time. I thank you very much. On behalf of the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada, I want to thank all the members for participating in the debate.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

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

The House recessed from 1012 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'd like to introduce retired Admiral Dan McNeil and Ian Raven, the Elgin Military Museum

director. Both are here for a meeting with Mr. Chan about Project Ojibwa, the sub we're bringing to Port Burwell.

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: It's my pleasure and honour to have with us today a former parliamentarian who served with distinction, from my riding of Northumberland—Quinte West, Dr. Doug Galt; his lovely wife and good friend, Cathy; and Rose Mary and her husband, Hastie. Thank you very much.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I want to introduce some representatives we have here from Lakehead University of Thunder Bay satellite campus in Orillia: the president and vice-chancellor, Dr. Brian Stevenson; Debbie Comuzzi, vice-president of external relations; and Richard Longtin, manager of alumni relations. Welcome. Lakehead is a great university—a new law school is coming there next year.

Mr. Mario Sergio: Visiting Parliament today, we have a class from St. Gerard Majella school. I have no idea if that is the class or if they are still wandering through our beautiful building here. However, I wish them a good stay, good enjoyment, good visit, and I welcome them to Queen's Park.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure for me to introduce a grade 5 class from St. Christopher school in my riding. They're touring the Legislature, and they'll be here in a few minutes.

Mrs. Julia Munro: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce to the chamber a constituent of mine: Mr. Peter Seemann. Welcome.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I would like to introduce a grade 5 class from St. Bernard school in the great riding of York South—Weston.

Mr. Frank Klees: Speaker, I just want to say that the member from York—Simcoe pre-empted my introduction of Mr. Peter Seemann, so I'd like to do it again.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Consider it done.

We have with us in the Speaker's gallery today a delegation from the finance portfolio committee of the Gauteng Provincial Legislature of South Africa. We welcome them to our House today.

I also beg your indulgence, as my voice is leaving me, and given the situation of today, I would hope and ask that the members provide me with a little leeway so that they can hear my rulings and hear me speak. I will do my best without imposing any kind of restrictions on you. The Speaker has a few rulings—or I have a few rulings.

ANNUAL REPORT, ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSIONER OF ONTARIO

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table the 2011-12 annual report from the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, entitled *Losing Our Touch*, Part 2.

The member from Beaches—East York has given me written notice of his intention to raise a point of privilege relating to the lighting levels in the legislative chamber. I

will deal with this point of privilege without hearing from the member, as standing order 21(b) permits me to do.

I believe that he may now know that the matter he raises does not fall under the defined head of "privilege" enjoyed by the members of this House. Any member seeking to draw attention to any failure or deficiency of equipment or furnishings in this chamber may do so by advising the Sergeant-at-Arms, the Clerk or myself privately.

I'm also prepared to rule on another. The member from Nickel Belt has given me written notice of her intention to raise a point of privilege relating to the question of whether a witness who gave testimony to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts on the Ornge air ambulance issue is now being intimidated or retaliated against as a result of that testimony.

In her notice, the member advises me that the public accounts committee as a whole had considered and was concerned by this matter and had earlier taken steps to begin to deal with it prior to the lapsing of the committee's membership on September 9. In the interim, the file has evolved, and the member now seeks to bring the matter before the House in the face of the unavailability of the committee to deal with this new information.

I want to advise the member from Nickel Belt that I will deal with this point of privilege without hearing from the member, as standing order 21(b) permits me to do. Notwithstanding the member's stated conundrum that, while committee matters need to be dealt with in committee, there is currently no committee membership to do so. Nonetheless, it must be the committee that deals with this matter first. If I were to presume to rule on this matter now, I would effectively be substituting my judgment for the committee's, which would have intimate knowledge I don't have of all the nuances involved. I would also be substituting my judgment for that of the House, which is first entitled to receive reports from committees on such matters and to determine the method of dealing with them.

I acknowledge that the current committee situation is unusual. However, I have to assume that committees will eventually be struck. At that time, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts may wish to deal with the serious issue that the member has raised with me.

For these reasons, I must rule that the proposed point of privilege is premature.

I thank the members for their points of privilege.

Mr. Frank Klees: Point of order.

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

Mr. Frank Klees: Mr. Speaker, I have heard your ruling, and of course we accept it. At issue, however, is the employment of an individual who came before a committee of this House. There is no question that he is in jeopardy of losing his job for no other reason but for the fact that he had the courage to come forward to speak to our committee. I believe that this—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): While I appreciate the member's comments, I have made my ruling. As such, the issue is to be dealt with at committee.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr. Tim Hudak: Premier, you've spent Ontario into a huge hole. In fact, you've increased the cost of public services by 46% when it comes to wages and benefits, despite the economy crawling along. We, for about a year now since the election, have expected some legislation to deal with this. You brought forward a proposal last week. Can you tell me on what page of your proposal last week, when it comes to collective bargaining for government unions, you actually use the words "wage freeze" in that proposed legislation? What page?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, I want to thank the honourable member for his question, but I want to talk about the elephant in the room. I want to talk about a motion, Speaker. They closed off debate, Speaker. We'll take this opportunity to speak to a very important motion.

The fact of the matter is—

Interjections.

1040

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): As I've already acknowledged, I'm having some difficulty with my voice. It's obvious that some of you are not having difficulty with your voice, and I would ask you to tone it down. From this point on, I will identify individual members.

Premier?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, there are two separate matters that will be treated in the motion we'll be voting on momentarily. One of those would refer the matter of the gas plant relocation to a committee. We support that wholeheartedly, and I want to be very clear on that, Speaker. But there's a secondary issue that is without precedent in the 220-year rich history of this Legislature, and that is the matter of contempt moved against the Honourable Chris Bentley. I'm saying to my honourable colleague that he should retract that part of it, Speaker, so that together we can vote on a motion that sends the appropriate matter before a committee.

Interjections.

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

Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Well, Premier, in response, let me address the true elephant in the room.

Interjections.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: Point of order, Speaker.

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

Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Speaker, that kind of stage management we just saw was so incredibly disrespectful to the members, to the matter at hand and the taxpayers who have to foot the bill.

Here's the real elephant in the room, seeing the attitude of government members. We're talking there about a \$650-million minimum payment from taxpayers to

move power plants to save Liberal seats. Here's the issue I have: There's no contrition—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Economic Development and Innovation will come to order. The Minister of Finance will come to order. The member from Peterborough will come to order.

Mr. Tim Hudak: So here's the sad issue: There is no contrition, no regret, no apology from the Premier, despite spending \$650 million and then burying documents. You know what that tells me, Speaker, because there's no apology, no contrition? If he gets the chance, he's going to do it all over again, and we won't apologize for holding you to account.

I'll ask the Premier again: Could you please direct me to the page of your proposed bill that actually says "a wage freeze" for collective bargaining in the province?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, Speaker, I want to make it perfectly clear that we are more than happy to refer the matter of the gas plant relocation to this committee. That is not an issue for our government.

Our concern is this: The heavy hand of the majority opposition of this Legislature, Speaker, seeks to use the power of this Parliament against one honourable individual. This is without precedent in 220 years of parliamentary history. I say to my honourable colleagues: While it is within their rights to do so, no other Parliament has ever chosen to do so, because it is fundamentally wrong. I ask them to acknowledge that, Speaker. I ask them to refer the appropriate matter to a committee.

Interjections.

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

Final supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Again, it's regrettable the Premier didn't show any of that kind of emotion when he stood up for defending the interests of taxpayers in the province of Ontario, who are on the hook for \$650 million.

Let me ask the Premier one more time—and I think I've been very clear, Speaker—if the Premier could point out on exactly what page of his proposed bill where he says it will bring in a wage freeze—those words, "wage freeze"—or even zero, when it comes to collective bargaining for government unions in the province of Ontario. I can't find the page. Perhaps the Premier will actually point that out for me today.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, I want to remind my honourable colleague that in 1995, the PC government cancelled the Eglinton and Sheppard lines, at a cost of \$260 million. There was no movement among the opposition members or the Parliament of the day to send this to committee or to move on contempt.

I want to remind my honourable colleagues that since 1792, through the War of 1812, the industrialization of our province, the First World War, through Prohibition, the Great Depression, the Second World War, a series of minority governments and coalitions in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s which saw government held by all three parties, through the advent of the Internet, through globalization and then our most recent recession, no

Parliament has ever moved contempt in the way that this one has, and to move beyond that to seek punishment of an individual member.

What they're doing is reprehensible. It is shameful. It is out of keeping with the standards to which we should all adhere.

Interjections.

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

New question.

ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Premier, Speaker. The—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We will get through this. And just before you continue, I've already mentioned you by riding.

Leader?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Premier, Speaker: Perhaps the Premier shouldn't have ordered the minister to bury the documents and then thrown him under the bus—

Interjections.

Mr. Tim Hudak:—so spare me the phony outrage.

I ask the Premier—again, I've asked him several times to point out exactly on what page he uses the words “wage freeze” in his proposal from last week. The Premier refuses to answer that question because those words are not actually in the proposal.

Let me ask the Premier then again: Recently you signed an agreement with 1,200 MPAC employees, the tax assessors in the province, that gives them an 8.5% pay raise that goes until December 31, 2015. Premier, are you going to freeze their wages now or are you going to give them an 8.5% pay increase and then freeze them in 2015 or not at all? Which does your bill actually do?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, I believe that in their heart of hearts, there are many members of the opposition who understand that they have stepped over a line which should govern our behaviour. I believe that in their heart of hearts, there are many members of the opposition who understand that there is something bigger in this place, something that transcends partisan lines, something that speaks to our duty and tradition and honour and fundamental respect that we share for each other.

To that end, Speaker, I want to put my honourable colleagues on notice that we will be shortly seeking unanimous consent to ensure that we refer the appropriate matter off to committee for consideration—that is the matter of the gas plants—

Interjections.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty:—shortly, Speaker, I said—and we will be hiving off that part that has to do with contempt, because my honourable colleagues understand that it is in the public interest that we do so. I ask my

honourable colleagues to consider that and to ready themselves for that motion, seeking unanimous consent.

1050

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: The Premier uses the term “crossing the line.” I'll ask the Premier, did it ever occur to you that spending \$650 million of taxpayer money to save Liberal seats, then obstructing the work of the Legislature by burying documents—Speaker, if that's not crossing the line, I don't know what is. We're proud to stand up for Ontario taxpayers.

Perhaps I could get a response from the Premier to the questions that I've addressed to him. Premier, your agreement with MPAC will give an 8.5% raise to the union workers at MPAC. It expires in 2015. So let me ask the Premier again: Are you freezing MPAC's wages at the current rates, are you planning to actually give them an 8.5% increase and then freeze their wages, or do you plan on just kicking this can down the road?

Our view: an across-the-board wage freeze for all of us immediately; no exceptions, no special deals. It will save us \$2 billion. Why don't you take the Ontario PC plan, since you don't seem to have one?

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Premier, before I come to you, the Minister of Finance will come to order—second time.

Premier.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: So many of the assertions made by my honourable colleague in his question are without foundation in fact, but I will return to the important motion that we're all facing today.

I ask my honourable colleague—in addition to considering that motion we'll be putting forward, seeking unanimous consent to refer the appropriate matter to committee—if he will permit his colleagues a free vote in the matter before us so that we can all exercise our own conscience, as I call upon all honourable colleagues and as I appeal to the better angels of their nature, again understanding that while there is a public interest to be found in considering the matter of the relocation of the gas plants, there is none to be found in the small, petty, partisan and vindictive approach related to the pursuit of a contempt motion.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Again, the Premier references better angels of nature. It's too bad he didn't seek out any of those angels when he spent \$650 million to move hydro plants out of Liberal ridings to win seats. He looked for no guidance from angels when they buried documents that obstructed this Legislature.

I want to say I'm darned proud of the members of the assembly on the PC side who have already stood on their feet, with great, passionate speeches, to hold this government to account and stand up for what's right and stand up for taxpayers in our province.

Let me get to my question again, Premier. TTC workers were recently awarded a 6% pay increase. That will go until March 31, 2014. Could the Premier please describe to me exactly how your proposal impacts on the TTC workers? We've seen the city of Toronto have to contemplate fare increases or service cuts to make up that \$100 million that was outside any kind of pay freeze. How does your bill exactly deal with this TTC 6% increase?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Back to the matter of the motion and back to the issue of the unprecedented pursuit, on the part of a heavy-handed majority opposition, of a contempt motion against a member of the government: I say to my honourable colleague that he and I, together with the leader of the third party, share a heavier responsibility, I would argue. It is to help set the tone, help establish the tenor and help achieve a certain standard.

Hon. Dwight Duncan: That's what leadership's about.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: That's what leadership is fundamentally all about. I would encourage my honourable colleague to speak to his colleagues within his caucus and help them understand that we will come and we will go. We will do the best that we can as participants in this magnificent process, but our turn and our time will come to an end here.

Recognizing that, we also understand there's something bigger than any one of us. There's the matter of tradition and honour and respect. They have clearly crossed that line. They are failing to adhere to that tradition.

I ask him to set the appropriate tone, the appropriate standard, on behalf of his colleagues.

MEMBERS' PRIVILEGES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. Earlier this morning, the Premier asked that I make today's vote on whether to send the breach-of-privilege motion to committee a free vote. Well, I plan to do that. Can the Premier tell us, though, the last time he granted his MPPs a free vote?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I appreciate the question, Speaker. I appreciate the commitment to a free vote, but it has been said that some events in life should not be left unremarked.

Yesterday, the NDP, in a dramatic departure from 20 years of principled history, decided they were going to support a closure motion in this Legislature. Interesting; very interesting. They did so as part of the heavy hand of a majority opposition because it served their interests.

I think it is remarkable, it is noteworthy and, frankly, it is unprincipled for that member to have supported that closure motion, which cut off debate, which would have permitted more members of the government here to speak to a very important motion. I ask her to look at herself in the mirror and understand why she led that departure.

Interjections.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, we were respecting the opposition member whose motion it was, who decided that enough debate had occurred, and so we decided that we were going to support their decision.

The people of Ontario are very tired of a Premier who thinks that rules apply to everyone but himself, his party and his government. It's this Premier who allowed his campaign team to spend hundreds of millions of dollars in a purely political move. The people will be paying for those costs for years and years to come.

Now this Premier has the gall to claim that he doesn't want this to be political. Does he really expect anyone to take him seriously?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: I appreciate the honourable leader of the third party's interpretation—

Interjection.

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

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: —but I prefer my own particular representation.

I want to remind my honourable colleague—she may or may not remember this, but I sat over there in the back row in 1991, and I recall in those days when the NDP government decided in 1991 to cancel the Red Hill Creek Expressway. That had been the subject of a broad community effort in Hamilton for some 25 years. It had been approved by the previous government in cabinet. It had been taken to the Superior Court of Ontario, in fact, as well, and that decision was upheld. But that government of the day, the NDP government, cancelled that, at a cost of \$70 million. Just as the PC government cancelled the subway, that NDP government cancelled the Red Hill Creek Expressway. They said that it was in the public interest to do so. The opposition of the day—we believed them, and we allowed them that.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Premier has played politics with the people of Ontario, and the people of Ontario are the ones now paying the price. The Premier played politics when he cancelled the plants. The Premier played politics when he refused to disclose the details. The Premier played politics when he shut his energy minister out of all of the discussions. Does he really expect anyone to believe that he is now above narrow partisan politics when for years he has relentlessly put politics over any sense of principle whatsoever?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, when it comes to the cancellation of the gas plants, both Hansard and the broader public media record will make it perfectly clear that we and the opposition are in violent agreement. We have all agreed that those plants should be cancelled.

What I'm saying to my honourable colleague is that the appropriate thing to do in the circumstances now is to refer to committee those matters that are specific to the relocation of the gas plants. I think in particular we should be looking at the appropriate standards for siting new gas plants and we should be looking at ways to better reconcile two competing interests. What do we do when it comes to making public documentation which could compromise taxpayer interests? I think that's an important consideration for the committee.

1100

But to the matter of pursuing contempt, I cannot understand why the leader of the third party and her caucus are so bent, so determined in pursuing a contempt motion, something that is without precedent in the rich 220-year history of this Legislature.

POWER PLANTS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is to the Premier—but I think the Premier needs to know that the appropriate thing to do is to give up the documents when they're requested by the opposition. That's the appropriate thing.

This weekend, the Premier said that the energy minister shouldn't be blamed at all for the private power boondoggles in Mississauga and Oakville, especially since the decision to break the contracts wasn't even made on his watch—this is what the Premier said. Is the Premier ready to accept some responsibility himself, then, for his role in this mess?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Again, Speaker, we have the support of both opposition parties when it comes to the relocation of these gas plants.

I want to return to the matter of the motion at hand and I want my honourable colleagues opposite to confront the stark reality of what it is they're about to do. What they're saying they want to do is pursue a contempt motion against one honourable colleague in this House. That is the Minister of Energy, the Honourable Chris Bentley. This is an MPP who works hard on behalf of his constituents. This is a minister of the crown who does his very best on behalf of the people of Ontario. This is a distinguished member of the Ontario bar. This is a father and this is a husband.

The members opposite seek to use the heavy power of a majority opposition against one individual, honourable colleague. It is without precedent in 220 years. I suggest to my honourable colleague that it is wrong and she should admit so.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, whether the Premier likes it or not, what we are simply doing is our job: holding this government to account. We have to do that because this is what people see. They see a Liberal Party, facing plunging polls, making a political decision and hiding the cost of that decision until after the election.

It's clear that the current energy minister isn't solely responsible for this mess. In fact, it's clear that the en-

ergy minister at the time of the cancellations wasn't even making the decisions either. Is the Premier ready to step up and take some responsibility, or will he be blaming everybody else but himself?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: My honourable colleague says that using the full force of this Legislature against one honourable colleague in pursuing a contempt motion is just doing her job. Then I say respectfully to my honourable colleague that she doesn't understand the job.

There is nothing wrong with highly charged, energized and even electric partisan debate—there is nothing wrong with that. In fact, that serves the greater public interest. But when you use the full force of the Ontario Legislature, a Legislature representing 13 million Ontarians, against one individual member in pursuit of a contempt motion as a matter of petty, partisan, shallow, self-interested, mean-spirited politics, that is fundamentally wrong. That is not in keeping with our jobs.

Interjections.

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

Final supplementary, please.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Thank you, Speaker.

With all due respect to the Premier, I think it will be the people of this province who decide who knows how to do their job.

The Premier says he wants to make the tough decisions. The Premier says he wants to avoid easy politics. Yet when he's faced with a tough political decision on gas plant contracts that he signed, he quietly cuts the deal, and he did everything he could in the meantime to ensure the public didn't know about the multi-billion-dollar cost involved.

At what point is he going to stop trying to deflect the blame everywhere else, take some responsibility and let the Legislature actually do its job?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, every once in a while, on rare occasions, we are given the opportunity to more fully consider what we're doing here, what we're all about, to whom we are accountable and, in particular, what it is that we owe to each other. I would argue that we owe each other a fundamental respect, a fundamental understanding that we all work hard, that we all do our very best, that we all uphold the ideals that inspire our efforts and inform our thinking.

But we also understand there's a certain line which we should never cross. It's a line that has been respected by 220 years of Parliaments that have served in this Legislature. I suggest to my honourable colleagues that they are crossing that line today, Speaker. I ask them to think carefully before they vote on today's motion; they understand the consequences both in terms of the departure from tradition here and the unprecedented consequences this would have for one of our honourable colleagues.

MEMBERS' PRIVILEGES

Mr. Rob Leone: My question is to the Premier. Premier, to the untrained eye, it has become impossible to determine whether your decisions of late are calculated

or reek of indifference. Your energy minister initially refused to produce documents requested by a standing committee of this Legislature. When a prima facie breach of privilege had been established, your government dug in its heels before handing over blank, incomplete and heavily redacted documents at the 11th hour. Time and time again your government has refused to reconstitute committees to get on with the business of this Legislature.

Premier, which is it? Are you indifferent or calculated? Are you just the puppet master pulling strings behind the scenes, or have you just stopped caring about the province of Ontario that you were elected to lead?

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the government House leader.

Interjections.

Hon. John Milloy: It's always good to be liked, Mr. Speaker.

Let's review the last couple of months. The Minister of Energy appeared in front of the estimates committee and made a case about two competing interests in terms of the documents that were in question. You ruled, Mr. Speaker, that government House leaders should sit down and find a way forward. I came forward to my fellow House leaders with two pathways forward and a willingness to discuss, a willingness to compromise, and they said forget it. They didn't care about taxpayers' interests. They didn't care about any of the competing interests that were going out the window.

Then what happened? We had a debate here in this Legislature where I gave notice to you and to the House leaders across the way, to every member of this Legislature, that we wished to come forward with an amendment, an amendment which would have charged the committee to look into the gas plant issue, to look into this issue of competing interests in front of committee. What they did was reprehensible: They shut down debate. They did not allow us to participate. They did not allow us to move that amendment.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Rob Leone: Mr. Speaker, the funny thing is, no one believes that government actually respects taxpayers. While we think that \$650 million squandered on gas plants that aren't going to be built or haven't been built yet, to buy seats instead of building hospitals, roads, bridges, schools, providing MRIs and cancer treatments—the reality is the reason why this contempt motion has been put forward is because they withheld documents and kept Ontarians in the dark. All the while they haven't apologized. They haven't said, "I'm sorry." They haven't done anything to show that they aren't in contempt of this Legislature.

My question to the Premier: If he has suddenly become sympathetic to the procedures of the Ontario Legislature, why does he remain determined to prevent the

opposition from seeking the truth? What are you afraid of?

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, what we saw yesterday was a display of cynical, vindictive partisan politics on the part of the opposition.

We gave notice to all members of this House that we wanted to move forward with an amendment to the motion, an amendment which would have charged the committee to look into a number of matters related to the gas plants but, at the same time, would not have targeted an honourable member of this Legislature. The opposition did not even have the decency to allow us to introduce that amendment and allow us to have debate here. I think if anyone wants to apologize about the vindictive nature of this, it's that honourable member and his party across the way, along with their friends in the New Democratic Party.

1110

POWER PLANTS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Premier. As details leak out on this government's secret, private gas plant deals, it looks more and more like it's throwing good money after bad. We now know this government has signed a string of sweetheart deals with private energy companies, promising them billions of ratepayers' dollars, even if they don't produce a single watt of energy.

Will this government ask the Auditor General to take a look at its secret gas plant deals or will it continue to shovel Ontarians' hard-earned cash into the pockets of those private energy companies?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Christopher Bentley: Speaker, as my honourable colleague would know, the auditor's already looking at Mississauga, and the auditor had said at public accounts with respect to the other matter, that he would wait until negotiations were concluded. That's exactly what's happened.

Let's be clear on where we've come: There were brownouts and blackouts in 2001, 2002 and 2003. We made sure that we could bring on new generation to keep the lights on. The templates of those contracts are all public. They're up on the website. We've been very clear in what we're doing. We're going to make sure the people of Ontario have clean, reliable power at an appropriate cost.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Well, Premier, let's look at where we are now. As part of the Oakville cancellation deal, energy giant TransCanada is guaranteed revenue of \$3.3 billion over the next two decades for its eastern Ontario power plant, no matter how much power it produces.

It's the Auditor General's job to determine whether Ontario is getting value for money. Why won't this government direct the Auditor General to examine these secret sweetheart deals with private power companies?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: Speaker, there is no news here. In order to make sure we have the power for the hot days and the cold days, you have to have power generators who are prepared to produce, so you enter into long-term contracts with them so they'll build the facility, run the facility and produce. We have those long-term contracts with both publicly owned and privately owned—that's a fact. There's nothing new here.

At the end of the day, Ontarians expect that families and businesses will have reliable power, clean power, and that it will be there when they need it. The only way to ensure that is for these long-term contracts to be put in place to make sure that when the switch goes on, the power's there—the power that we need. That's why Ontario had reliable power over the past six or seven months, and many other jurisdictions in North America did not.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

Mr. Michael Coteau: My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Speaker, improving care for mental health and addiction patients and reducing the stigma surrounding mental health are two goals that this government is working very hard to accomplish. Our commitment to improving mental health care for Ontarians includes better quality patient care, as well as better access to facilities which provide that care. We know that well-funded facilities mean better care for patients.

As a member for Toronto, I know that the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health provides critical support for those Ontarians, young and old, suffering from issues related to mental health and addiction. Through you to the minister: What is being done at CAMH to improve access to quality patient care?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the member from Don Valley East for this very important question.

CAMH does remarkable work for people facing mental health and addictions challenges. I was very proud in June to join staff, clients, community members and neighbourhood members to celebrate the official opening of the second phase of the CAMH Queen Street redevelopment project. It has helped to build a new kind of hospital, one that reflects the 21st-century approach to treating mental health and addictions. We have come a very long way in changing the attitudes and opinions about care for mental health and addictions patients in this province. This latest redevelopment helps drive this change by providing more treatment in a community setting. We know it's vital for people facing mental health and addictions challenges to remain part of the community. It helps battle stigma and it speeds up recovery.

Importantly, the redevelopment of CAMH supports the goals of our action plan for health care, particularly when it comes to mental health.

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

Mr. Michael Coteau: Thank you, Minister. I know that this is just one of the many exciting developments for mental health in Ontario.

We know that one in five Ontarians experiences a mental illness or addiction issue in their lifetime, meaning that all of us are impacted in some type of way. This is why we continue to invest in this area. Given that CAMH is on Queen Street and it's just minutes away from the Legislature, I'm sure that many of us are curious about what we might see next time we walk by.

Speaker, through you to the minister, what physical improvements are part of this latest redevelopment project?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you again. I do invite all members of this Legislature to visit the new CAMH; I know you'll be very, very pleased at what you see.

The latest CAMH redevelopment has revitalized the neighbourhood along Queen Street West. The physical structure has been transformed from an outdated institution into a welcoming, inclusive and healing-focused environment. In particular, I would urge you to keep an eye out for three new buildings, for new streets, green space and affordable housing. As always, I would like to thank all of the community partners who made this redevelopment a reality, as well as all of those remarkable front-line workers and all who made this project a reality. The new CAMH serves as a model for our action plan for health care in its focus on patient-centred care. It's just one more way that we're providing the right care at the right time in the right place.

POWER PLANTS

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is to the Minister of Energy. Minister, the government House leader continues to insist that we have received all of the Mississauga and Oakville documents, yet we have countless examples of covered-over documents. Let me draw your attention to an email from your senior communications adviser. It states, "I'd appreciate if you could look at the copy and see if there are any inaccuracies." But, Minister, the rest of the copy has been blanked out. It's been covered up here. I can go to another; it says, "Rick may not completely agree with the third option." Speaker, the third option is a slide about where they were going to locate something, but sadly, it, too, has been covered over; it's been covered up.

So my question to the minister is: What is so damning on these redacted documents that they—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You can't say indirectly what you tried to say directly in one of the comments. But I would only offer you a caution: The way in which you worded it could be interpreted two different ways.

I will be more forceful if it continues. Thank you.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My final question is: What are you hiding in these documents?

Hon. Christopher Bentley: The ministry prepared the documents and provided the documents that were responsive to the motion. The ministry prepared them according to the procedures that they've long used, and I understand the Ontario Power Authority did exactly the same thing. There are, as has already been said, many double-sided pages in the documents that were the result of double-sided photocopying when there was nothing underneath. But once again, the ministry prepared the documents according to the procedures that they've long used.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Back to the minister: There's nothing double-sided about this document. It's an email that has been clearly redacted. But in the few documents that aren't whited out, we learned some dramatic news. Here's a slide that states that "the province would be pleased if the ... negotiated solution (in Oakville) does not exceed \$1.2 billion." It's followed by one that states that TransCanada, the Oakville proponent, rejected the government's settlement proposal of \$712 million.

So, Minister, the entire business world is waiting to hear the secret of how you settled a \$1-billion dispute, in your own words, for \$40 million—and, quite frankly, nobody believes you.

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Interjections.

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

Hon. Christopher Bentley: There you have it, Speaker. There you have it. We negotiated hard on behalf of the people of Ontario to move the plants, to stop construction—which all three parties support—to relocate the plants to make sure that we got electricity out of the result. We've ended up with one in Lambton, which has long been an energy centre; another one is going to Lennox, long an energy centre, and the cost of that has been out for those to see—in the case of Oakville, \$40 million down and a 20-year contract for the same 900-megawatt facility, using the turbines that had been procured for the other one. That's the bottom line—and all the negotiations concluded in the agreement we've got on Oakville.

MEMBERS' PRIVILEGES

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is for the Premier, if somebody can get his attention. I'll just wait for him to take his seat. I know he's doing something else.

Premier, you've gone out of your way to try to characterize this vote today as being a vote of contempt. You know as well as I do that this vote is about striking a committee to look into this issue. So my question to you, Premier, is a very simple one. Under standing order 118, the members of the committee—the majority—can request that the committee meet, and you have up to 10 sessional days to call the committee. Are you going to stall, for 10 sessional days, this committee being struck?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: The government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Again, I think that any reasonable person who is watching what happened yesterday would realize the vindictiveness of the opposition.

Mr. Speaker, we gave notice through all House leaders that we were prepared to support a motion which would allow this committee to look into aspects of the gas plant issue, to look into this whole issue of balancing interests in front of a committee. Instead, what happened is, debate was cut down in this Legislature. Debate was stopped in this Legislature.

As the Premier referenced earlier, considering the long and proud history of the New Democratic Party—who like to remind this Legislature that they don't favour time allocation; they don't favour closure—I think it was a sad shock for all of us to see debate in this Legislature stopped by the opposition.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, the shock, Mr. Speaker, is the taxpayer getting the bill; that's the shock.

Under standing order 118, you have up to 10 sessional days to have this committee meet. My question was very specific: Do you plan on stalling the creation of this committee by 10 sessional days? Yes or no?

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I'm not going to presume how the vote is going to go in the next half-hour.

Second of all, I have great respect for the Chair of the committee and the members of the committee—that they will govern themselves according to the rules that are outlined in this motion.

Again, I think it is very, very important that we put on the record the fact that we gave notice to this House. We gave notice to you, to the government House leaders, to every member, that we were prepared to reach a compromise motion, which would allow the committee to look into many aspects of this situation, to look into the challenges of governing both the public interest, the taxpayers' interest and the rights of committees to get documents. Instead, debate was shut down in this Legislature so they could move forward with a motion which is attacking an honourable member of this place.

ÉDUCATION POSTSECONDAIRE

M. Shafiq Qaadri: Ma question s'adresse à la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones. Nous avons célébré récemment la journée des Franco-Ontariens et des Franco-Ontariennes. J'espère que tous nos amis francophones et francophiles partout en province ont passé une belle journée officielle.

Le gouvernement McGuinty présente un bilan solide en ce qui concerne les affaires francophones en Ontario, et nous avons de la chance de compter sur une ministre aussi dynamique que la ministre Meilleur pour répondre aux besoins des francophones.

Cependant, pour assurer que la francophonie reste une part entière de notre patrimoine et continue de prospérer,

main dans la main, avec la majorité anglophone, nous devons continuer à investir dans le système d'éducation, notamment pour assurer l'accès des francophones aux institutions postsecondaires.

Est-ce que la ministre peut me dire ce que le gouvernement fait pour favoriser l'accès des francophones au niveau postsecondaire?

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: L'accès au système d'éducation, c'est-à-dire en français, au niveau postsecondaire est un élément clé du développement de la communauté franco-ontarienne. C'est la raison pour laquelle le gouvernement reconnaît l'importance de donner aux élèves francophones accès à une plus grande gamme de programmes postsecondaires en français, en investissant dans le secteur postsecondaire.

Au mois d'août 2011, le gouvernement a adopté la politique d'aménagement linguistique pour le secteur d'éducation et de formation postsecondaire afin d'améliorer l'accès et la qualité des programmes de langue française, ainsi que d'encourager la participation et la rétention des étudiants. C'est pourquoi nous avons augmenté le financement de l'éducation postsecondaire en langue française de plus de 66 % entre 2003-2004 et 2010-2011.

Pour 2011-2012, ce financement ciblé s'élevait à 85,5 millions de dollars, et nous en voyons les résultats : la proportion des jeunes ontariens de 25 à 34 ans qui détiennent un diplôme universitaire est maintenant plus élevée chez les Franco-Ontariens que chez les Anglo-Ontariens et même les Québécois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

M. Shafiq Qadri: Merci, madame la Ministre. C'est une réponse encourageante. Je suis heureux d'apprendre que le gouvernement continue d'investir dans nos institutions postsecondaires de langue française. Nous devons rester engagés aux côtés des jeunes francophones pour assurer qu'ils ont accès à l'éducation dont ils ont besoin pour trouver de bons emplois et continuer à vivre dans leur langue en harmonie en Ontario.

Je me félicite de tous ces investissements, mais quels sont les résultats? Est-ce que la ministre peut nous éclairer sur la présence et le poids des étudiants francophones en Ontario? Que fait-on pour faciliter l'accès des francophones au niveau postsecondaire?

L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Au ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités.

L'hon. Glen R. Murray: Merci, monsieur l'Orateur. Comme la ministre responsable des affaires francophones l'a dit, nous avons augmenté le financement de l'éducation postsecondaire en langue française de plus de 66 % depuis 2003.

Il convient de souligner que depuis le lancement du programme de réduction de 30 % des frais de scolarité en Ontario en janvier 2012, plus de 200 000 étudiants et leur famille ont constaté une réduction de 30 % des droits de scolarité. Ce nombre inclut une majorité de jeunes francophones ontariens comme les 1 218 étudiants inscrits à des programmes à temps plein du Collège Boréal et de La Cité collégiale, et environ 1 500 étudiants

francophones de l'Université d'Ottawa et de l'Université Laurentienne qui ont aussi reçu la subvention. Cela signifie qu'au moins 2 700 étudiants francophones en tout ont bénéficié de la subvention du programme de réduction de 30 %.

MEMBERS' PRIVILEGES

Mr. Rick Nicholls: My question is to the Premier. Premier, last week we learned that the Liberal campaign's seat-saver program was going to cost taxpayers \$650 million. Today you called for a free vote on this motion. Each Liberal member should recognize that a vote against this motion is a vote against government transparency, a vote against government accountability, a vote against parliamentary privilege, and most importantly, Mr. Premier, it's a smack in the face of the hard-working people of Ontario, who deserve to know the true cost of the Liberal seat-saver program.

Premier, do you think that taxpayers should be on the hook for \$650 million on your Liberal seat-saver program?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, it's always good to remind the honourable member of some things some of his colleagues have said. The member from Halton, in this Legislature, said, "The people of Oakville have told you they don't want the proposed gas-fired power plant ... and I agree with them." The member from Haldimand-Norfolk wrote a letter to the Minister of Energy: "The potential for future alternate generation at Nanticoke to replace that slated for the proposed and disputed Clarkson plant should receive ample consideration." The Leader of the Opposition told the Globe and Mail on September 25, 2011: "We've opposed these projects in Oakville and Mississauga." The member for Halton: "I was pleased when it was cancelled."

1130

Mr. Speaker, there's an equal list of quotations from the third party, the New Democratic Party. All parties of this House agreed that the Oakville and the Mississauga plants should not proceed.

Discussion took place at the committee, as we've gone over, and 36,000 pages of documents have been delivered to committee members.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Back to the Premier: I'm pleased to see that you have, in fact, given your caucus the option to vote in favour of government transparency, and I'm sure that they will do the right thing. I'm confident that our caucus is united and we'll be voting in favour of this motion because we are concerned with your blatant disregard for government transparency and accountability.

Today's vote is a vote against political interference by the Liberal campaign team. Today's vote is a vote against the government's failed transparency. Today's vote is about sending this issue to committee to get to the bottom of yet another Liberal scandal.

Premier, why do you feel that holding the government to account on behalf of the hard-working people of Ontario is unjustified?

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, members on this side of the House are going to vote against this motion. We're going to vote against this motion because we do not agree with the vindictiveness of the opposition. We do not agree with the partisan and cynical approach that's put forward. Most of all, we do not agree with an attack upon an honourable member of this Legislature, the Minister of Energy.

We have come forward to the table over and over again with a way forward when it came to the documents, with compromise and co-operation. We also came forward several days ago with a way in which we could amend the motion in front of this Legislature so that the committee would be seized with very, very important matters related both to the gas plant and the balance of public interests. Mr. Speaker, this opposition would not even allow us to debate that motion. This opposition put a muzzle on this Legislature.

ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier. The government's decision to impose contracts on teachers is creating turmoil in our schools. In my riding and across Ontario, the government's scheme is hurting students as extracurricular sports, clubs, field trips and parents' nights are all cancelled or being delayed.

Why is the government planning to expand its already-failed strategy to other sectors when this government will only bring similar turmoil to hospitals, universities and day cares as well?

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: To the Minister of Education.

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I am proud of the decisions that this government has made to keep dollars invested in our classrooms. The agreement that we reached with more than 55,000 teachers across the province, if fully implemented, will save this province \$2 billion and avert \$473 million that would need to be pulled out of our students' classrooms.

On this side of the House, we stand for the continued efforts to move forward with the gains that we've made: to keep our class sizes small, to keep our test scores growing, to keep our grad rates going. What we have asked from our partners in education is to take a pause when it comes to pay increases. I would urge the members opposite to join with us, to join with the Premier and I, who are asking teachers to raise their issues with us, continue with extracurriculars for our students and not put them in the middle of this debate.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, my question again is to the Premier. The government created a problem and now it's blaming the teachers for a problem they created.

Students should be able to focus on learning at schools, but this government has chosen to pursue a self-serving, hard-line scheme that has undermined peace in our schools and, more importantly, has ended up hurting students the most.

When we already know the government's scheme is creating turmoil in our schools, why is this Premier insisting on following the same broken approach, which will only hurt Ontarians who rely on hospitals, universities and daycare?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I am proud of the record of this government when it comes to support for the education system and particularly for our teachers. I'm proud that, on this side of the House, we've had platform after platform that has focused on what we can do to improve the education system, and that is in stark contrast to the third party, who had no education platform at all.

Each and every year we have sought to improve education, invest in our teachers, invest in our classrooms, to keep young teachers employed. If we were to take \$473 million out of our classrooms, we would see young teachers and support workers—10,000 of them—fired. That is not what we want.

Again, I urge the third party: Join with our government. Ask our teachers to be part of the solution, to keep our kids out of this and to allow extracurricular activities to continue right across the province.

ABORIGINAL CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Mr. Bill Mauro: My question is for the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. We know that aboriginal youth under the age of 25 represent more than half of the aboriginal population in this province and that youth are often among the most vulnerable in our province. We also know that recreation is a powerful tool in supporting the development of life skills in youth and has been shown to lead to improved health, well-being and education levels.

In 2010, our government announced a partnership with Right to Play and developed the promoting life-skills in aboriginal youth program to help empower youth in First Nations communities on-reserve.

Can the minister update us on the progress of this program and the impact it has had on aboriginal youth across the province?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Everyone in this House would agree that if aboriginal people—aboriginal youth—in this province are to have a bright future, the needs and challenges of aboriginal youth need to be addressed. So I think it's a wonderful thing that in 2010, the Honourable Brad Duguid and then, later on, the Honourable Chris Bentley, when they were Ministers of Aboriginal Affairs, invested in and supported the Right to Play program, and all of the private partners who are part of that.

The program is targeted at engaging and motivating young people through sport and play—uses sport and play as a tool to build confidence—but also the leadership skills that are developed as part of the Right To Play

program are absolutely portable and essential to young people going forward.

So far, our government has contributed \$1.5 million towards this program, and I recently announced that the province will be pledging an additional \$1 million a year for the next three years for the continuation and the expansion of PLAY.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Bill Mauro: Thank you, Minister. To continue the progress, we believe it's important to keep an open dialogue with the aboriginal community, especially those that make up the younger generation. Aboriginal youth in this province often face unique challenges and can offer a unique perspective for decision-makers when looking into what we can do to help them prosper and succeed.

Speaker, through you to the minister, what are we doing to ensure that the work we are doing to support youth across the province actually responds to the unique needs of the youth living in First Nation communities on-reserve?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We've seen how the PLAY program has worked, and that's why it's being expanded. There are now 39 First Nation communities and 1,000 aboriginal youth who are involved in the program. But it's necessary for us to continue to listen, particularly to young people, and hear what their concerns are.

For example, when I was in Kenora in the summer, I had the opportunity to meet with the Treaty 3 youth council, which is a group of bright, talented young people, and I was so impressed at their depth of knowledge and their concerns about the future of all of their communities.

One of their biggest concerns was education and the funding disparity between on-reserve education, which is funded by the federal government, and off-reserve education, which is funded by the provincial government, and the transition between the two, because most young aboriginal people have to come off-reserve and go into provincial schools. The basis that they're getting on-reserve is not what they need. They talked to me about the challenges they come across when they face post-secondary.

So we are listening. We are engaging with youth, and that is the way that we'll know how to move forward with that.

ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is for the Minister of Health. On July 19, the estimates committee made a simple request of the minister. The committee asked her to provide, no later than August 29, all documents related to the Liberal scandal-plagued eHealth program from 2009 to 2012. For two months, the minister failed to respond to the committee's request, and she even ignored the clerk. But, finally, two months later, the committee got its response: No, they're legally sensitive and eHealth is way too busy not building a diabetes registry to find them.

I know the health minister thinks she has escaped the spotlight for now, but I have to ask: Is she willing to travel down the same path as her leadership rival, the energy minister, or has she learned from the past few days that you can't escape the will of this House?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to answer this question, and let me read from the letter that was sent by myself to the Chair of the Standing Committee on Estimates:

"The ministry is committed to full co-operation with the committee's requests. I assure you that we respect the authority of the Standing Committee on Estimates to call for information in its course of work."

The letter goes on, and I believe the member opposite was sent a copy of this letter, so he knows of what I have written, but I will happily read it into the record:

"EHealth will respond to the committee directly. However, eHealth estimates that the time to retrieve and review all of the potentially responsive documents is 420 person-days. This is a time-consuming task. It requires the production of thousands of documents. We understand that it will not be possible to complete such an extensive search and review in the short time frame that has been provided."

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): At this moment—I thank you for your indulgence—I'd like to welcome and introduce, in the Speaker's gallery, former MPP Phil Gillies from Brantford, in the 32nd and 33rd Parliaments.

The Premier on a point of order.

Hon. Dalton McGuinty: Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the motion by Mr. Leone arising from the Speaker's ruling of September 13, 2012.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do we have unanimous consent to put the motion forward? I heard a no.

The member from Timmins–James Bay on a point of order.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, under standing order 28(f), I just want to give notice to the House that, unfortunately, Mr. Bradley cannot be here today because he's in the hospital with a hernia, and we are declaring that we will pair with Mr. Bradley, in fairness.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank the member for that point of order.

Just before I deal with deferred votes, there was some concern about a few things that were said today in the House. I confess that I did not hear some of them as a result of what was happening in this House. At any time—and I repeat myself—at any time, if a member feels that they may have said something that they should not have said or have said something unparliamentary in the heat of the moment, it's always a point of order for them to correct the record and withdraw. Thank you.

DEFERRED VOTES

HEALTHY HOMES RENOVATION
TAX CREDIT ACT, 2012
LOI DE 2012 SUR LE CRÉDIT D'IMPÔT
POUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT DU LOGEMENT
AXÉ SUR LE BIEN-ÊTRE

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

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

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

The division bells rang from 1144 to 1149.

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

On May 9, 2012, Mr. Bradley moved third reading of Bill 2, An Act to amend the Taxation Act, 2007 to implement a healthy homes renovation tax credit. All those in favour of the motion will please rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Duncan, Dwight	Miller, Paul
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Fife, Catherine	Milloy, John
Balkissoon, Bas	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Moridi, Reza
Bartolucci, Rick	Forster, Cindy	Murray, Glen R.
Bentley, Christopher	Gerretsen, John	Naqvi, Yasir
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Gélinas, France	Natyshak, Taras
Best, Margaret	Gravelle, Michael	Oraziotti, David
Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Piruzza, Teresa
Broten, Laurel C.	Hoskins, Eric	Prue, Michael
Campbell, Sarah	Jaczek, Helena	Qaadri, Shafiq
Cansfield, Donna H.	Jeffrey, Linda	Sandals, Liz
Chan, Michael	Kwinter, Monte	Schein, Jonah
Chiarelli, Bob	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Colle, Mike	MacCharles, Tracy	Singh, Jagmeet
Coteau, Michael	Mangat, Amrit	Sousa, Charles
Crack, Grant	Mantha, Michael	Tabuns, Peter
Damerla, Dipika	Marchese, Rosario	Takhar, Harinder S.
Del Duca, Steven	Matthews, Deborah	Taylor, Monique
Delaney, Bob	Mauro, Bill	Vanthof, John
Dhillon, Vic	McGuinty, Dalton	Wong, Soo
Dickson, Joe	McMeekin, Ted	Wynne, Kathleen O.
DiNovo, Cheri	McNeely, Phil	Zimmer, David
Duguid, Brad	Meilleur, Madeleine	

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed to the motion, please rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Jackson, Rod	Nicholls, Rick
Bailey, Robert	Jones, Sylvia	O'Toole, John
Barrett, Toby	Klees, Frank	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Chudleigh, Ted	Leone, Rob	Pettapiece, Randy
Clark, Steve	MacLaren, Jack	Scott, Laurie
Dunlop, Garfield	MacLeod, Lisa	Shurman, Peter
Elliott, Christine	McDonell, Jim	Smith, Todd
Fedeli, Victor	McKenna, Jane	Thompson, Lisa M.
Hardeman, Ernie	McNaughton, Monte	Walker, Bill
Harris, Michael	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Hillier, Randy	Milligan, Rob E.	Yakabuski, John
Hudak, Tim	Munro, Julia	Yurek, Jeff

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 68; the nays are 36.

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

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

Third reading agreed to.

MEMBERS' PRIVILEGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We now have a deferred vote on Mr. Leone's motion from the Speaker's ruling of September 13, 2012.

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

The division bells rang from 1153 to 1158.

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

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.

All those in favour of the motion, please rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Armstrong, Teresa J.	Hudak, Tim	O'Toole, John
Arnott, Ted	Jackson, Rod	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Bailey, Robert	Jones, Sylvia	Pettapiece, Randy
Barrett, Toby	Klees, Frank	Prue, Michael
Campbell, Sarah	Leone, Rob	Schein, Jonah
Chudleigh, Ted	MacLaren, Jack	Scott, Laurie
Clark, Steve	MacLeod, Lisa	Shurman, Peter
DiNovo, Cheri	Mantha, Michael	Singh, Jagmeet
Dunlop, Garfield	Marchese, Rosario	Smith, Todd
Elliott, Christine	McDonell, Jim	Tabuns, Peter
Fedeli, Victor	McKenna, Jane	Taylor, Monique
Fife, Catherine	McNaughton, Monte	Thompson, Lisa M.
Forster, Cindy	Miller, Norm	Vanthof, John
Gélinas, France	Miller, Paul	Walker, Bill
Hardeman, Ernie	Milligan, Rob E.	Wilson, Jim
Harris, Michael	Munro, Julia	Yakabuski, John
Hillier, Randy	Natyshak, Taras	Yurek, Jeff
Horwath, Andrea	Nicholls, Rick	

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed to the motion will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Nays

Albanese, Laura	Dickson, Joe	McNeely, Phil
Balkissoon, Bas	Duguid, Brad	Meilleur, Madeleine
Bartolucci, Rick	Duncan, Dwight	Milloy, John
Bentley, Christopher	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Moridi, Reza

Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Gerretsen, John	Murray, Glen R.
Best, Margaret	Gravelle, Michael	Naqvi, Yasir
Broten, Laurel C.	Hoskins, Eric	Oraziotti, David
Cansfield, Donna H.	Jaczek, Helena	Piruzza, Teresa
Chan, Michael	Jeffrey, Linda	Qaadri, Shafiq
Chiarelli, Bob	Kwinter, Monte	Sandals, Liz
Colle, Mike	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Coteau, Michael	MacCharles, Tracy	Sousa, Charles
Crack, Grant	Mangat, Amrit	Takhar, Harinder S.
Damerla, Dipika	Matthews, Deborah	Wong, Soo
Del Duca, Steven	Mauro, Bill	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Delaney, Bob	McGuinty, Dalton	Zimmer, David
Dhillon, Vic	McMeekin, Ted	

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DiNovo, Cheri	McNeely, Phil
Duguid, Brad	Meilleur, Madeleine

Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Zimmer, David

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those opposed to the motion, please rise.

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Jackson, Rod	O'Toole, John
Bailey, Robert	Jones, Sylvia	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Barrett, Toby	Leone, Rob	Pettapiece, Randy
Chudleigh, Ted	MacLaren, Jack	Scott, Laurie
Clark, Steve	MacLeod, Lisa	Shurman, Peter
Dunlop, Garfield	McDonell, Jim	Smith, Todd
Elliott, Christine	McKenna, Jane	Thompson, Lisa M.
Fedeli, Victor	McNaughton, Monte	Walker, Bill
Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Harris, Michael	Milligan, Rob E.	Yakabuski, John
Hillier, Randy	Munro, Julia	Yurek, Jeff
Hudak, Tim	Nicholls, Rick	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 53; the nays are 50.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I wish to advise the House, pursuant to standing order 28(f), that the members for St. Catharines and Timmins–James Bay were paired for this vote.

The ayes being 53, the nays being 50, I declare the motion carried.

Motion agreed to.

AMBULANCE AMENDMENT ACT
(AIR AMBULANCES), 2012
LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LES AMBULANCES
(SERVICES D'AMBULANCE AÉRIENS)

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

The division bells rang from 1203 to 1208.

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

On April 25, 2012, Ms. Matthews moved second reading of Bill 50, An Act to amend the Ambulance Act with respect to air ambulance services. All those in favour of the motion, please rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Duncan, Dwight	Miller, Paul
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Fife, Catherine	Milloy, John
Balkissoon, Bas	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Moridi, Reza
Bartolucci, Rick	Forster, Cindy	Murray, Glen R.
Bentley, Christopher	Gerretsen, John	Naqvi, Yasir
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Gélinas, France	Natyshak, Taras
Best, Margaret	Gravelle, Michael	Oraziotti, David
Bisson, Gilles	Horwath, Andrea	Piruzza, Teresa
Broten, Laurel C.	Hoskins, Eric	Prue, Michael
Campbell, Sarah	Jaczek, Helena	Qaadri, Shafiq
Cansfield, Donna H.	Jeffrey, Linda	Sandals, Liz
Chan, Michael	Kwinter, Monte	Schein, Jonah
Chiarelli, Bob	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Colle, Mike	MacCharles, Tracy	Singh, Jagmeet
Coteau, Michael	Mangat, Amrit	Sousa, Charles
Crack, Grant	Mantha, Michael	Tabuns, Peter
Damerla, Dipika	Marchese, Rosario	Takhar, Harinder S.
Del Duca, Steven	Matthews, Deborah	Taylor, Monique
Delaney, Bob	Mauro, Bill	Vanthof, John

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 68; the nays are 35.

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

Second reading agreed to. Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I would ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): So ordered.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Timmins–James Bay on a point of order.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, the standing orders say that we're supposed to have committees, but the government refused to call a motion to create our committees, so we're in a bit of a conundrum here. Will the government please strike the committees?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That has been ruled on before.

The bill is referred to committee.

This House stands adjourned until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1213 to 1500.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

WORLD HABITAT DAY

Mr. Steve Clark: It's an honour to rise this week as we celebrate World Habitat Day 2012, a day to recognize the desperate need for adequate shelter. Even 27 years after the United Nations proclaimed the first Monday in October as World Habitat Day, the need is greater than ever. Sadly, this is not only the case in faraway countries. The lack of adequate housing is something that 1.5 million families in Canada struggle with daily.

The theme of this year's World Habitat Day—Many Homes, One Community—reminds us that the surest

path to healthy communities and a strong economy is to build more homes. It's not a complicated concept because we know a safe and secure home is the cornerstone for a successful life. For a child, home is the foundation to success at school and a lifetime of opportunity. For an adult, it unlocks the door to employment and the stability of meaningful work.

As we recognize we have much more to do, I want to acknowledge Habitat for Humanity, one organization truly making a difference. Its 50,000 outstanding volunteers are changing lives because they don't talk about the problem, they roll up their sleeves and build homes to solve it.

In Canada alone, over the past 25 years, they've provided homes for more than 2,000 low-income families. That's thousands of lives turned around through the dream of home ownership. I've seen this happen in my own riding of Leeds–Grenville, where Habitat for Humanity Thousand Islands will celebrate the completion of a three-townhouse project in Prescott this month.

At this time, I urge everyone to follow Habitat for Humanity's lead and commit to become part of the solution.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Ms. Cindy Forster: I want to talk today about the community start-up and maintenance benefit. On January 1, 2013, the benefit, relied upon in urgent situations in Ontario by the most vulnerable—preventing homelessness—will be gutted. The sudden halting of the community start-up fund for those forced on to social assistance due to unemployment or disability has been done so quickly that Ontario's municipalities have no time to plan a strategy to deal with the increased pressures of homelessness.

Slow economic recovery has highly impacted municipalities like Niagara, which has resulted in increased workloads for social services departments across this province. The already underfunded homelessness program will not be able to address the new pressures created by those cuts—and those cuts are 52% in the region of Niagara.

The loss of these benefits will, in turn, put more pressures on other services in local communities like shelters, transition houses, hospitals, food banks and social housing providers. More troubling, these cuts are being made prior to the release of the final report on the social assistance review. The cuts undermine the important review process and any reform that arises from that review.

The Minister of Community and Social Services needs to visit municipalities like Niagara and others in this province to see first-hand the impact that these cuts will have on communities.

AIR-RAIL LINK

Mr. Mario Sergio: The new rail link between Pearson International Airport and Union Station is off to a good

start. By 2015, the rail line is going to be in place in time for the Pan Am and Parapan American Games.

The air-rail link will operate across a 25-kilometre route, with an extension already under way connecting the Kitchener line to Toronto Pearson International Airport. This extension is creating and supporting some 1,200 jobs, will remove some 1.2 million car trips from our roads in the first year alone, and will ease congestion and contribute to cleaner air.

Speaker, 25 kilometres in 25 minutes: This is the travel time between Union Station and Pearson International Airport. It's part of Helping Ontario Moving. Our commitment of investing \$35 billion in infrastructure will help communities in the GTA to create jobs and remain strong. It is vital to keep the economy moving, to offer and support investing in our infrastructure and to create jobs for our families today and a strong economy in the future.

I thank you, Speaker, for your time.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

Mr. John Yakabuski: Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise in the Legislature today and talk a little bit about our pages and the page program. Today, of course, I'm thanking the pages who will be leaving at the end of this week.

It's a wonderful program that approximately 140 grade 7 and 8 boys and girls from across the province of Ontario participate in each year. It's a unique experience where they have an opportunity to meet other students from across the province and learn first-hand about the Ontario Parliament and the legislative process.

They provide many helpful duties for us as members of provincial Parliament and officers of the House, and it's a great experience for them as well. In fact, pages go on to make other significant contributions. As we know, currently there are two members of the Legislature—the government House leader, Mr. Milloy, and the member for Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, Mr. McNaughton—who served here as pages in the past.

I've had 13 pages since I've been a member here: Conor Kyte, Emma Dobson, Loreena Dobson, Morgan Brodofske, Joe Kyte, Daniel Muzzi, Sean Kyte, Vanessa Van Decker, Giselle Groskleg, Chloé St. Amand, Bernadette McCann, Abigail Groskleg, and today, Patrick Kyte.

I want to talk a little bit about Patrick Kyte. I don't know for sure if this is historical, but I believe it is. The Kyte family, who Patrick is the youngest boy of—currently, he's now the fourth member of that family to serve as a legislative page in this House, and I do believe that is the first time in history that has happened.

I've had a great opportunity to learn things myself from the 13 pages I've had, so I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the pages, past and present, who have served this House. I thank them for their services, and a particular thanks to Patrick Kyte and his brothers, who I believe have made history.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I offered my indulgence because it was the pages, because I like them.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Mr. John Vanthof: The Northlander left Union Station at 8:40 a.m. Just out of the station, we saw empty factories and the ever-looming construction cranes for more office buildings and condos. They soon gave way to tree-lined suburbs, then farm fields and the occasional tractor doing fall tillage. The fields became smaller as we came closer to the Canadian Shield. The fall reds and yellows and the blue waters were brilliant. Washago, Gravenhurst, Bracebridge, Huntsville are destinations that don't immediately come to mind when you think of the Ontario Northland.

In the North Bay rail yards, we met long freight trains heading south, cars loaded with lumber from Tembec, newsprint from Resolute and strand board from Georgia Pacific. Then through Temagami, an area unrivalled in the province for its natural beauty; Cobalt, a town famous for its silver, which was discovered through the construction of the railway.

Next the Little Claybelt, past large farms and grain elevators equal to any in the province; through Englehart, home of the 701 and the Georgia Pacific mill; more forest, then the greater clay belt, through fields of grazing cattle around Matheson.

The sun went down as we entered the boreal forest, and at 8:45 p.m., we arrived at our last stop, Cochrane, home base for Canada's largest gold mine, Detour Lake and Tim Horton's hometown.

At every stop, people were waving, some crying, not believing that this day had come. A ride on the Northlander is a lesson in Ontario's past and present, but sadly, not its future. The ONTC was commissioned by leaders who knew how to build and unite the province. It is being torn apart by a government that seems intent on dividing the north from the south.

CARIBOU CHARITY RIDE

Mr. Bill Mauro: Speaker, on Sunday, September 9 of this year, the fourth annual Caribou Charity Ride took place, and I, along with 400 other cyclists, was pleased to participate in this fundraiser for the Northern Cancer Fund. Cyclists could choose between a 50K or a 100K bike ride that began at the Nor'Wester Hotel and coursed its way through beautiful Oliver Paipoonge.

1510

This year's ride raised over \$38,000 for the Northern Cancer Fund, the money going towards research and equipment, and 100% of the money staying in north-western Ontario.

I want to thank all of the volunteers who put in countless hours to make this year's ride such a success. I know they are hard at work already preparing for next year's Caribou Charity Ride.

During our lifetimes, nearly everyone will be directly or indirectly affected by cancer. This Caribou Charity Ride was created to give all people—mothers, fathers, grandparents, teens, friends and cancer survivors—the motivation to challenge themselves while contributing to finding a cure. This event inspires a healthy lifestyle, while promoting cancer awareness and hopefully empowering those affected by the disease.

Speaker, again, I thank the people of Thunder Bay and surrounding communities for once again supporting a very worthwhile cause, while combining exercise, enthusiasm and volunteerism to empower and enrich the lives of so many of our friends, families and our neighbours.

JOSH NELSON

Mr. Rob Leone: I rise today to speak of a courageous young man by the name of Josh Nelson, of Cambridge.

On June 20, 2003, at the age of nine, Josh was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumour. After enduring a 10-hour surgery, seizures, a stroke, a post-surgery syndrome that left him unable to walk or talk, 31 radiation treatments and 52 weeks of chemotherapy, it became clear that Josh was a fighter.

It took years for Josh to regain his mobility, and although his surgery has left him in a wheelchair, he does not consider himself to be handicapped. To quote Josh, "I don't like it when people label me as 'handicapped' because the definition of the word handicapped is 'something that puts someone at a disadvantage by a physical or mental defect.' That definition may describe what people see at first glance, but I am so much more than that. I can make my disadvantage my advantage and my disability my ability. So I tell people that I am handicapped instead."

Josh is now a nine-year cancer survivor. He has not taken this title lightly. He has been invited by several community groups to share his story of hope and inspiration and has participated in many community events to help support a cause that's close to his heart.

In 2010, Josh rode a tandem bike across Ontario with the Sears National Kids Cancer Ride and raised over \$20,000. In 2011, he set his sights higher and did the same thing across Canada, raising over \$85,000.

On September 13, I was pleased to present Josh with one of 14 Diamond Jubilee Awards. He earned his award.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: Speaker, 2012 marks significant milestones for the nation of Trinidad and Tobago. September 24 marked 36 years as a republic and is observed by a public holiday on the twin islands annually. On August 31, 2012, the nationals of Trinidad and Tobago celebrated a golden anniversary: 50 years of independence from colonial rule. On Sunday, September 23, the Church of the Nativity in my riding of Scarborough—Rouge River held a special service and a narrated cultural show on the history and growth of the island's arts,

culture, music and the world-famous Carnival festival, to recognize these milestones.

The twin islands are known worldwide for the origin of the Carnival festival, steel pan music and calypso. Over the last 50 years, there have been many achievements, the most recent being that the nation is the western hemisphere's largest supplier of liquefied natural gas and one of the Caribbean's largest and most industrialized economies. The European Union Council on Tourism and Trade has awarded the nation the best tourist destination for 2012.

Mr. Speaker, as a native from Trinidad and Tobago, I am proud of its accomplishments and would like to wish every national of Trinidad and Tobago a happy 50th anniversary.

AGGREGATE EXTRACTION

Ms. Sylvia Jones: One year, one month and one day ago, on September 1, 2011, the then Minister of the Environment announced the proposed Highland Companies quarry application in my riding of Dufferin–Caledon would be obliged to hold an environmental assessment.

On November 29 of last year, I questioned Premier McGuinty about the EA for the proposed quarry. I asked for assurances from the minister, Jim Bradley, that the public would be consulted on the terms of reference for the EA. The public and I are both still waiting for that consultation.

The Environmental Assessment Act requires the proponent to develop the terms of reference for an EA, but more importantly, the public must also be able to actively participate in crafting those terms of reference.

Dufferin–Caledon residents want to know why, after over a year, there has been no further action from the Ministry of the Environment. The ministry's promise to undertake an EA for the proposed 2,400-acre quarry garnered the attention of the entire province. The unfortunate part is that it seems to have only garnered the attention of this government during an election campaign.

Again, I am asking for the Minister of the Environment to follow through, something we have seen far too little of. We want the EA to begin so residents can have some assurance that this application will be reviewed through an environmental assessment process.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

HEALTH STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT (HEALTHY DECISIONS MADE EASY), 2012 LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT DES LOIS EN CE QUI CONCERNE LA SANTÉ (DÉCISIONS SANTÉ SIMPLIFIÉES)

Mme Gélinas moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 126, An Act to enact the Skin Cancer Prevention Act, 2012 and to amend various statutes with respect to health matters / Projet de loi 126, Loi édictant la Loi de 2012 sur la prévention du cancer de la peau et modifiant diverses lois à l'égard de questions relatives à la santé.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have introduced a similar bill quite recently, but what I've done is I have rolled into one bill a few of the ideas that I had put forward. The first one is on healthy decisions for healthy eating, where the number of calories and sodium would be posted on the menu board in big restaurant chains. The second one is on the Ombudsman Act, where the Ombudsman would have oversight of a health facility. The third one is the Skin Cancer Prevention Act, which would regulate the use of tanning beds. The fourth one is on the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, which would ban flavoured cigarillos and flavoured tobacco products, and prohibit the distribution of new tobacco products and smokeless tobacco products. I have rolled them all up into this new bill, and I hope it will move forward through this House.

PETITIONS

AIR QUALITY

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm pleased to present petitions from across Ontario. Just a few names: Derrick LeDrew from Kleinburg, as well as Derrick MacLean from Kleinburg, as well as Darren Martin from Cambridge. That's just one or two.

"Whereas collecting and restoring old vehicles honours Ontario's automotive heritage while contributing to the economy through the purchase of goods and services, tourism, and support for special events; and

"Whereas the stringent application of emissions regulations for older cars equipped with newer engines can result in fines and additional expenses that discourage car collectors and restorers from pursuing their hobby; and

"Whereas newer engines installed by hobbyists in vehicles over 20 years old provide cleaner emissions than the original equipment; and

"Whereas car collectors typically use their vehicles only on an occasional basis," for four or "five months of the year;

"Therefore, be it resolved that the Ontario Legislature support Ontarians who collect and restore" older "vehicles by amending the appropriate laws and regulations to ensure vehicles over 20 years old and exempt from Drive Clean testing shall also be exempt from additional emissions requirements enforced by the Ministry of the Environment and governing the installation of newer engines into old cars and trucks."

1520

I am pleased to sign it, support it and present it to Leo, one of the pages on their last couple of days here.

UTILITY TRANSPORTATION VEHICLES

Mr. John Vanthof: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the use of all-terrain vehicles (ATV) is legal on schedule 2 highways in northern Ontario; and

“Whereas many residents of Ontario have switched to utility transportation vehicles (UTV); and

“Whereas the use of UTVs in schedule C of the Highway Traffic Act is allowed north of areas in far northern Ontario and unorganized territory; ...

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

“Therefore, be it resolved that the government of Ontario direct the Ministry of Transportation to enact legislation to allow the use of UTVs on class 2 highways throughout northern Ontario.”

I fully agree and send the petition down with Zakhar.

ELECTORAL REFORM

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

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

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

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

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

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

I fully support this petition and give it to Parnika.

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. Steve Clark: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the price of gas is reaching historic price levels and is expected to increase another 15% in the near future, yet oil prices are dropping; and

“Whereas the McGuinty government has done nothing to protect consumers from high gas prices; and

“Whereas the high and unstable gas prices across Ontario have caused confusion and unfair hardship to Ontario drivers while also impacting the Ontario economy in key sectors such as tourism and transportation; and

“Whereas the high price of gas has a detrimental impact on all aspects of our already troubled economy and substantially increases the price of delivered commodities, adding further burden to Ontario consumers;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and urge the Premier to take action to protect consumers from the burden of high gas prices in Ontario.”

I’m pleased to affix my signature and send it to the table with page Mathilde.

MINING INDUSTRY

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that comes from all over Sudbury and Nickel Belt:

“Whereas there has not been an inquiry into mining practices in Ontario for 30 years;

“Whereas there were eight deaths in Ontario mining properties since January 2011;

“Whereas mining technology has significantly changed how mines operate in Ontario;

“Whereas ownership of the mining sector has become international;

“Whereas environmental issues have been identified in workplace diseases in community health from mining operations;

“We petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to commission an inquiry into the state of mining in Ontario and into the Ministry of Labour’s enforcement of the Ontario Health and Safety Act and regulation 854, that is the regulation for mining. Such an inquiry will reinforce best practices and identify issues for improvement.”

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

RADIATION SAFETY

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas subsection 6(2)8 of the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act identifies dental hygienists as persons deemed to be qualified to operate an X-ray machine; and

“Whereas dental hygienists in independent practice need to be able to prescribe X-rays and to be designated as radiation protection officers in order to provide their clients with safe and convenient access to a medically necessary procedure, as is already the case in many comparable jurisdictions;

“We, the dental hygienists in independent practice, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To express support for the motion filed on April 17, 2012, by the member from Richmond Hill that asks the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to establish a committee consisting of experts to review the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act (1990) and its regulations and make recommendations on how to modernize this act and bring it to 21st-century standards, so that it becomes responsive to the safety of patients and the public and to include all forms of radiation that are currently used in the health care sector for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes.”

I agree with this petition, will sign it and send it to the table with page Jenna.

OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Ontario Ombudsman, who is an officer of the Legislature, is not allowed to provide trusted, independent investigations of complaints into the areas of hospitals, long-term-care homes, school boards, children’s aid societies, police, retirement homes and universities; and

“Whereas Ontario is the only province in Canada not allowing their Ombudsman to investigate any of these areas; and

“Whereas people wronged by these institutions are left feeling helpless and most have nowhere else to turn for help to correct systemic issues;

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

“Grant the Ombudsman the power to investigate hospitals, long-term-care homes, school boards, children’s aid societies, police, retirement homes and universities.”

I will affix my name to this petition and I will give it to page Ethan.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Mr. John Vanthof: I have a petition here, hand-delivered to me, from the good people from Washago.

“Whereas the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission provides services which are vital to the north’s economy; and

“Whereas it is a lifeline for the residents of northern communities who have no other source of public transportation; and

“Whereas the ONTC could be a vital link to the Ring of Fire;

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

“That the planned cancellation of the Northlander”—I guess “the cancellation” of the Northlander—“and the sale of the rest of the assets at the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission be halted immediately.”

I fully agree, sign my signature and give it once again to page—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Richmond Hill.

RADIATION SAFETY

Mr. Reza Moridi: I have petitions today to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas there are risks inherent in the use of ionizing, magnetic and other radiations in medical diagnostic and radiation therapy procedures; and

“Whereas the main piece of legislation governing these activities, the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act (HARPA), dates from the 1980s; and

“Whereas neither the legislation nor the regulations established under the act have kept pace with the explosion in imaging examinations, including image-guided procedures used in cardiology, radiation therapy, ultrasound, orthopaedics etc.;

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

“That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care establish, as soon as possible, a committee consisting of experts to review the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act (1990) and its regulations and make recommendations on how to modernize this act to bring it up to 21st-century standards, so that it becomes responsive to the safety of patients and the public and covers all forms of radiation that are currently used in the health care sector for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes.”

I fully agree with these petitions. I sign them and pass them on to page Sydney.

PROTECTION FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas supported-living residents in southwestern and eastern Ontario were subjected to picketing outside their homes during labour strikes in 2007 and 2009; and

“Whereas residents and neighbours had to endure megaphones, picket lines, portable bathrooms and shining lights at all hours of the day and night on their streets; and

“Whereas individuals with intellectual disabilities and the organizations who support them fought for years to break down barriers and live in inclusive communities; and

“Whereas Bill 23 passed first reading in the Ontario Legislature on December 6, 2011;

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

“That the members of the Legislative Assembly vote in support of Sylvia Jones’s Bill 23—the Protecting Vulnerable People Against Picketing Act.”

I of course support the petition, affix my name to it and give it to page Jasper to take to the table.

1530

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Mr. Michael Prue: I have a petition that reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas servers and bartenders in Ontario earn \$8.90 an hour, far less than the minimum wage”—excuse me, I ran up the stairs;

“Whereas tips are given to servers and bartenders for good service and to supplement the lower wages they receive; and

“Whereas Ontario law allows for owners and managers to pocket a portion of servers’ and bartenders’ earned tips or total sales; and

“Whereas thousands of servers across the province have asked for this practice to stop;

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

“Support the swift passage of Bill 107, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act with respect to tips and other gratuities and thereby end the practice of ‘tip-outs’ to management and owners.”

I agree and would affix my signature thereto and give it to page Parnika.

ELECTORAL REFORM

Mrs. Liz Sandals: I have a petition concerning the prevention of electoral fraud in Ontario.

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

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

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

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

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

I support this petition. I will add my name and hand it to Patrick.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Victor Fedeli: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario government’s plan to cut more than \$1 billion in medical funding will impact my doctor’s ability to provide care for me and my family, and is a serious risk to health care in our community and across the province,

“We,” the 250 undersigned, “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Reverse the recent unilateral cuts to medical funding, and negotiate in good faith with doctors for an agreement that will protect Ontario health care.”

I agree. I will sign this petition and give it to page Katherine.

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition from the people of Nickel Belt—actually, mainly from the people of Hanmer in my riding—and it reads as follows:

“Whereas there are a growing number of reported cases of abuse, neglect and substandard care for our seniors in long-term-care homes; and

“Whereas people with complaints have limited options, and frequently don’t complain because they fear repercussions, which suggests too many seniors are being left in vulnerable situations without independent oversight; and

“Whereas Ontario is one of only two provinces in Canada where the Ombudsman does not have independent oversight of long-term-care homes. We need accountability, transparency and consistency in our long-term-care home system;”

They petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario “to expand the Ombudsman’s mandate to include Ontario’s long-term-care homes in order to protect our most” valuable—that’s “vulnerable”—“seniors.” They’re very valuable also.

I support this petition and will give it to Roberto to bring to the table.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ONTARIO ELECTRICITY SYSTEM
OPERATOR ACT, 2012LOI DE 2012 SUR LA SOCIÉTÉ
D’EXPLOITATION DU RÉSEAU
D’ÉLECTRICITÉ DE L’ONTARIO

Resuming the debate adjourned on September 19, 2012, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

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

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

Mr. Bill Walker: It's my pleasure to speak to Bill 75. This act aims to change the Electricity Act to allow for the merger of the Independent Electricity System Operator, IESO, and the Ontario Power Authority, OPA. We do not believe the OPA should be merged; we want it abolished. We want to eliminate the waste and bureaucracy. We want to save taxpayers' money. The OPA is synonymous with big bureaucracy, higher hydro bills, waste and mismanagement. No tinkering with amalgamation will ensure energy security or protection against increasingly unmanageable costs.

It actually brings me to another very similar bureaucracy that's wasteful, and that's the LHINs. Again, they want to tinker around the edges. They don't want to make fundamental change to actually improve the delivery of services to Ontario residents. Due to the dire fiscal position the Liberal government has placed our great province in, we need real change. It is time for a strategic energy plan, as opposed to the costly experiment—that being the Green Energy Act—that has been thrust upon the people of Ontario by the current Liberal government.

Facts: Seven years ago, the OPA was formed as a 15-person transitional body tasked with managing Ontario's energy supplies. Today, it's a mega-bureaucracy responsible for failed energy plans. It is big bureaucracy. Today the OPA is a mega-bureaucracy, 235 people strong; a third of the people make over \$100,000 a year, and the CEO rakes in about \$600,000-plus a year—unheard of. Furthermore, its expenses have risen from \$14 million in 2005 to almost \$80 million today. I would ask: Truly, what value are we getting out of that \$80-million expense?

We'll move on to hydro bills. Ontarians pay some of the highest electricity rates in the country, even though Ontario suffers from a problem rare in the world: a surplus of electrical energy. Aegent Energy Advisors estimate that a household with a \$110 monthly hydro bill will see a 58% increase over the next five years. This is going to amount to a \$768 yearly increase by 2016. Our suggestion is, we eliminate it and give the realized savings to the taxpayers via hydro bills, or, at the very least, pay down the enormous debt, a debt that has been doubled under this government's administration.

Management and waste: The Auditor General said that we lost \$1.8 billion exporting surplus power to Quebec and the United States in the past year. I would suggest

it's worse than that, because we're actually paying them to take our surplus power. Furthermore, the surplus also costs us when it forces nuclear shutdowns, like the one at Pickering's Unit 6 in early September that was off-line for two days, at an estimated cost of \$1.5 million.

It gets worse. Because of this real push to go to renewable energy in the form of wind power and solar—both of which, I might add, are intermittent power supplies that they cannot guarantee—they have to have the backup systems ready to roll. You have to have the nuclear, and you have to have the gas plant still running in the background, just for those times of potential peak. It's hard to fathom, Speaker.

There are a number of issues that I have to share with the House today, and with those people watching at home. The rural backlash against industrial wind turbines—health, democracy at stake. In my riding alone, 5,300 people have signed one petition, just to stop wind turbines on the Bruce Peninsula. I'll be presenting that petition here to the House in the next couple of days, Speaker. It's unfathomable that they want to put 270 of these on the beautiful Bruce Peninsula, arguably—certainly, I'm a little bit biased—one of the most beautiful, natural, pristine areas of our great province and our great country. They want to put these things up. And again, at what cost? What's the real value to them?

There are lawsuits already being faced. We spent four and a half days in here talking about a lawsuit and how much it's going to cost the government in regard to gas plants. In this case, Trillium Power Wind Corp. is in court suing the province for \$2.25 billion—billion dollars, Speaker—for four offshore wind projects derailed by a moratorium the government imposed in February 2011 on offshore developments. Interesting. Those four developments, in urban areas, were cancelled; however, the Liberals will not even entertain a moratorium for rural Ontario. It's hypocritical. They move gas plants after listening to the people in Oakville and Mississauga, but the people of rural Ontario have been screaming at the top of their lungs. My colleague from Prince Edward county, my colleague from Huron-Bruce and the leader of our party, Tim Hudak, have all placed bills in front of this Legislature saying, "Just slow down. Put a moratorium."

1540

The federal government just came out with a health study, and they still won't entertain that, even though potentially there are risks to the people of Ontario.

It's hard to imagine that they can do this and justify \$2.25 billion. Just think of the things we're not going to be able to get. I have the Markdale hospital in my riding. They came to the table after raising \$13 million locally for their new hospital. The current hospital is crumbling around them. They come to the Minister of Health, and she says, "I'm sorry, but we have no money." How can they say that and then waste this type of money? Over \$1 billion—and that figure's probably going to be low—was wasted on the mothballed Mississauga and Oakville gas plants.

We've had a lot of discussion here in the last couple of days about this. It's just unfathomable how the government on the opposite side can stand up and say how well they're doing and how great this is for our province. They actually slapped themselves on the back for a \$40-million deal. It's not their money. If they were going to pay this money back—a different story—we'd be having a totally different conversation, but this is just getting out of hand.

Excessive subsidies are just the order of the day: \$7 billion to Samsung alone; 20-year contracts that pay twice what it actually costs to produce electricity through the FIT program, and that's again being very conservative in our estimates. Some people are saying it's going to be two to three times more.

What about the false job promises? They promised 50,000 jobs. I'm going to ask them honestly to give us a number that's factual and actual, not this purported "20,000, and we're growing every day." We want to know, in black and white, with a report, where those jobs are and exactly how many people have actually created employment through this Green Energy Act.

Hydro rates are hurting families, businesses and investment. In my backyard, I have people coming every day. I have my mom, who's on a very fixed income. She can't fathom having to pay 58% more over the next few years for something that's as critical to her as her home heating and hydro bill. It's unfathomable. Yet today, we learn of \$750 million in Ornge that we've talked about. We've talked about \$650 million through the gas plants, which will probably end up being a billion. They keep going down the road with this untenable reality of more power, when we're actually paying the States and Quebec \$1 billion to take our surplus.

I toured in my backyard Chapman's Ice Cream. It's the biggest independent ice cream producer in the country—

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Great ice cream.

Mr. Bill Walker: Great ice cream, as my colleague from Orangeville says.

They rely on hydro to power their business. They need it to heat a lot of their raw chemicals and their raw resources, and then they obviously need, once that ice cream is made into its great-tasting final product, to be able to freeze that. Just think of what a 58% increase might do to a business like that. Can they afford to continue with those types—would they even want to continue?

This is a great story. This business burned to the ground a few years ago. The owners, David and Penny Chapman, stood up and said, "You know what? We're going to guarantee every one of our workers a job, regardless of whether the factory's rebuilt on time. We're going to guarantee them they will not miss a paycheck." It's a great success story, and you know why, Speaker? Because they employ 600 people in a very small rural area, and they knew what would happen if that happened—to have to leave our community.

But these rates—they cannot go without hydro. They have to have hydro. A 58% increase: Just think of your home budget—if it was to increase 58% every year, if you could truly afford to manage that. It scares me to think of the jobs that may be lost if this government keeps going the way they are.

I don't want to sound like a broken record. I'm just trying to put out the facts so people can really make a sound judgment of their own. But there's growing skepticism over the Green Energy Act. The Society of Professional Engineers gives it a thumbs-down. That should tell you something—to quote—"the erratic nature of renewable power generation, as wind turbines generate electricity only when the wind is blowing and solar facilities when the sun is shining."

I know they take a lot of credit for a lot of things, and Premier Dad thinks he controls everything, but I don't think he's got the market on the sun and wind yet—a lot of hot air at times, but not the sun and the wind, Speaker.

As a result, the Ontario power grid is forced to keep other generators, as I've referenced—nuclear, gas plants—in operation, primarily there just in case we need them. We're paying for that just-in-case power. We've got a surplus. We're actually letting water flow over the falls in Niagara Falls—2 cents a kilowatt—but we don't utilize that. We go and pay 15 cents, or in the case of solar, 62 to 80 cents, depending on when the agreements were signed. It's absolutely ludicrous.

I'm not a bean-counter, but I think I can see the math here, and it's not very good. It's no wonder we're in the deficit situation of \$15.3 billion that we are, Speaker.

Despite this, the OPA and the Liberal government are forging ahead with their plan to dump an additional 10,700 megawatts of renewables into the grid by 2018. I look at these young pages in front of me and think, what are we setting up for them? We're going down a road, regardless of need, because we said we would do something, even if it's costing the taxpayers of Ontario billions of dollars that they can't afford and don't have. What's going to happen down the road?

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

Mr. John Vanthof: Once again, it's a pleasure to comment on the remarks made by the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. I disagree with him on many issues, but there's one that I fully agree with: Chapman's makes fantastic ice cream. They use 100% Canadian milk, and you know what? This is Agriculture Week, and companies like Chapman's should be saluted because they use fantastic local product and make a fantastic ice cream. And that's where our similarities are going to stop.

Bill 75, the Ontario Electricity System Operator Act, is going to combine the IESO and OPA. On that point of the bill, I think we could be in agreement, because we believe that—we actually would like to go farther. We believe combining agencies, especially agencies that buy electricity and that regulate electricity, would make

sense. It should lead to less duplication. It should lead to less problems like we've been having.

On the whole, that part of the bill makes sense, but there's another part of the bill that doesn't make sense, Speaker. That part of the bill removes even more public scrutiny from the electrical system, because now an electrical plan has to be submitted to the OPA, and the public has a right, if they so choose, to comment on it. With Bill 75, that right will be removed because it will be a ministerial plan. We've just gone through a big debate about what happens when we have politics getting involved too much in electricity. There is a risk that that could become an even bigger problem with this bill. That part of this bill is just a non-starter. Removing public scrutiny is causing us huge problems in this province, and we have to stop.

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

Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti: It's a pleasure to have two minutes to make some comments on the comments or the speech given by the member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. I wasn't sure that he was addressing the bill, Bill 75.

I think the member who just spoke before me made it clear that the bill amends the Electricity Act, 1998, by amalgamating the Independent Electricity System Operator and the Ontario Power Authority and by continuing them as the Ontario Electricity System Operator. It goes on to list other—which I think are good amendments.

At the end, the purpose of the bill I think is to save money. We know that, in the past, when we do work intelligently and put a bill forward that does amalgamate or bring things together, we can save money. We proposed to implement a similar phased approach that successfully merged GO Transit and Metrolinx, and Infrastructure Ontario and the Ontario Realty Corporation. Those mergers were a successful initiative to save taxpayers' money and provided better services to Ontarians.

Furthermore, we expect these savings to be up to \$25 million annually in administrative and other similar costs. We can cut out some of the administrative requirements when we have all these different electricity boards and agencies out there—so you amalgamate them to save money. As I said earlier, we've done it in transportation and in the realty corporation and Infrastructure Ontario.

I think we should stick to the bill. It's a good bill. It deserves to go to committee to be debated further. I think we have to take a little bit of the invective out of the conversation and the debate here today and focus and debate really what this bill is that we're dealing with today and what the purpose of the bill is and what we plan to achieve. I think the member should reply why he's being so invective about something that is so simple.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Prince Edward-Hastings.

Mr. Todd Smith: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's a pleasure to speak on the comments made by my colleague from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound. I will match

his Chapman's ice cream with my Reid's Dairy ice cream and the castle that everybody sees when they're driving through Belleville on the 401 in eastern Ontario.

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I would like to address some of his comments, though, on the bill today. He did call it tinkering, I believe was the way he put it. Tinkering around the edges: That's not going to solve the problems in Ontario. That's what this bill does.

The member opposite just spoke of the money that's going to be saved. The money that's going to be saved by passing Bill 75 as it currently stands is \$25 million, while the government on the other side just blew 650 million taxpayer dollars away on political moves to relocate two gas plants for the sake of saving those Liberal seats in Mississauga, Etobicoke and Oakville. The \$25 million that's going to be saved if this bill goes through is a drop in the bucket to the \$650 million we've seen wasted by that government in their political decisions.

The member from northern Ontario who spoke on behalf of the NDP talked about the political interference that has been occurring. Sometimes you wonder who's actually calling the shots over on the other side of the floor. There's a minister who sits there sometimes in name and title only, but is he the guy who's actually making decisions? I think we've learned, because the Minister of Finance enlightened us during our estimates committee, that no, indeed, it's not the Minister of Energy who's making these important calls; it's the Liberal campaign team that's making these calls. We sit here and we debate these bills that are put forward by honourable members in this House on the government side when really I wonder how much power these ministers actually have when it comes to controlling what's very important to our province: our electricity grid.

There are a lot of questions that need to be answered before this bill goes ahead, too.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's a pleasure to rise and comment on the remarks made by the MPP for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound and to comment on this bill as a whole. A lot has happened since this bill was first introduced. We have learned quite a lot. The fundamental problem with a significant part of this bill is the removal of the public's opportunity to comment on, to present witnesses to and to analyze the power plans of the government of the day.

Right now, the government is supposed to put together a power plan, take it to the Ontario Energy Board and allow it to be examined. That has not happened. If that approach had been in place, the plant in Oakville would never have gone forward. The plant in Mississauga would have been stopped. We would not have had to deal with the cleanup—and I think the figure's right, the \$680-million figure. That's what we're talking about. We're not talking about \$40 million, as big as a number as that is; we're talking about much larger numbers.

It is clear now from going through the documents, even though they are partial, even though they are

redacted, that this is a highly politicized process, that of power planning, that intervention happens apparently from the Premier's office down into the whole process. It is an entirely politicized event. The removal of public opportunity to scrutinize the plans—to analyze, to critique and perhaps give the government of the day a little of the wisdom of the people of this province is going to be excised. Getting rid of waste and duplication: no problem; let's do that. But removing public scrutiny: That is going to have to be taken out of this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Bill Walker: Thank you, Speaker. And thanks to my colleagues from Timiskaming–Cochrane, Scarborough Southwest, Prince Edward–Hastings and Toronto–Danforth, and a special shout-out to my colleague from Timiskaming–Cochrane. He's a proud dairy farmer. I was reminded by our deputy critic of agriculture in our caucus meeting just recently that it's Agriculture Week. So thank you to our farmers. He told us to thank every farmer that we see, and I'm going to do that today.

I'm also pleased to take up the torch for the Chapman's versus Reid's ice cream wars. Bring it on, Mr. Smith from Prince Edward.

Mr. Todd Smith: Ice cream war.

Mr. Bill Walker: We will have an ice cream war, sir.

Interjection: We need a taste-testing.

Mr. Bill Walker: Exactly. Maybe we'll do that. So we can bring some fun and enlightenment to this.

Back to a more serious matter: A number of colleagues have talked about that oversight and public scrutiny in this bill. How could the Oakville and Mississauga gas plants have gotten to the point of being a \$650-million sinkhole, a wasteful sinkhole, if the OPA was doing their job? It was talked about a merger in savings. We're saying, "No, no, no. Don't merge. You want real savings? Get rid of that whole bureaucracy that's not adding an iota of value." He talked, I believe—my colleague opposite—of \$25 million. I believe the number is about \$80 million if we just wipe it out altogether, so why would we not do that? Why would we not just go and do the actual tough lifting and make the tough decisions? They want to talk tinkering. We are \$15.3 billion in the hole this year because of their tinkering mentality. We need to make significant change. We need to do the right things and show leadership and action.

This is a bureaucracy that has just ballooned. It was supposed to be transitional. It's now become another silo and an entitlement culture that they seem to promote, and we just can't afford it. The taxpayers of Ontario have had enough, Speaker. We have to get rid of things that are not providing value to the taxpayers of Ontario.

If they can allow something like this to happen with that oversight, that's just terrible. They should be embarrassed about it. We need to get rid of this bureaucracy and the layers of administration that provide absolutely nothing. We need to be spending dollars on true things

like health care and education that they so proudly talk about all the time.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business, such that Madame Gélinas assumes ballot item number 71 and Mr. Prue assumes ballot item number 67.

Further debate?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It is an honour to rise on behalf of Dufferin–Caledon residents and comment on the important issue of reforming Ontario's energy sector. I just wish there was something more substantial to comment on than what we are discussing here today.

The bill before us is Bill 75, which is titled An Act to amend the Electricity Act, 1998, to amalgamate the Independent Electricity System Operator and the Ontario Power Authority, to amend the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998, and to make complementary amendments to other Acts—quite the mouthful, Speaker.

Unfortunately, while this government seems to have broken its habit of catchy bill titles, it's certainly stuck to its ways of window-dressing legislation. I say that because this bill really doesn't do anything to help families and job creators reeling from skyrocketing hydro prices in Ontario.

This government has consistently manipulated the energy sector in our province time and time again for its own political needs, with dangerous results for Ontario families and taxpayers. All Bill 75 does is tiptoe around the edges of the convoluted fiasco that is the Ontario energy sector in 2012. In essence, this bill amends the Electricity Act to allow for the merger of the Independent Electricity System Operator and the Ontario Power Authority. This bill would therefore create a new super- or mega-agency as a result of the merger.

The Ministry of Energy claims that this merger will save money. It hasn't happened with any other merger we've seen. Speaker, considering that the Ontario Power Authority started out as a 15-person transitional body seven years ago and is now a 235-person permanent entity, let's just say I have my doubts that creating even bigger bureaucratic entities will lead to savings. In fact, Speaker, the OPA's expenses in 2005 were \$15 million. Today, that number has ballooned to \$76.4 million. Moreover, today over 80 people earn in excess of \$100,000 at the OPA, and its CEO earns a whopping \$570,000. And remember, this was set up as a transitional body.

The fact is, by boasting about grouping bureaucrats under one roof and creating one big mega-agency, this government has shown it doesn't get how badly mismanaged Ontario's energy sector truly is. More important, however, is the fact that Bill 75 also puts more power in the hands of the minister. If the proceedings this morning did anything, they proved that no one in this chamber is above the scrutiny of the Ontario public.

We've seen countless examples of how things end up when this government mixes its political agenda with a

lack of proper oversight: the Samsung deal, the Ornge scandal, the eHealth disaster, the power plant fiasco, and the list goes on and on.

But the real shame here is that, through it all, this government has shown absolutely zero regard for Ontario residents in its decisions. But then again, I suppose, why would they? As I've said before, it's the Liberal way: Someone else should have to pay.

1600

The last thing Ontarians need is more political interference from the minister, from the Premier and from the Liberal campaign team in Ontario's energy sector. Rather than enhance the power of the minister, what this government ought to be doing is enhancing the power and say of local residents.

But as we all know, this government has shown a remarkable contempt for local municipalities when it comes to the energy sector. All of my colleagues know what I'm referring to. It is, of course, the government's heavy-handed approach—to borrow the phrase from the Premier—to the green energy projects. This approach removed all municipal planning powers with regard to the development of renewable energy generation.

Speaker, the municipality is the expected avenue for residents to voice concerns with zoning and rezoning issues. When you take away the power of municipalities to heed their citizens' will, you are essentially eliminating the ability of local residents to plan their communities. So now we have communities that have been forced to accept wind and solar farms, regardless of whether they wanted them or not.

What I'm trying to illustrate here is that rather than create another mega-agency that will undoubtedly function in a culture of heavy-handed secrecy, just like its predecessors, we should first and foremost be respecting the will of local councils and representatives. But alas, this government has stubbornly pursued its green energy experiment, and Ontario hydro ratepayers have footed the bill.

The issue is, now the Minister of Energy sets up and introduces Bill 75 by creating this new mega-agency. While I am definitely a fan of trimming excessive bureaucracy, the problem for Ontarians isn't the acronym that describes a government body. The problem for Ontarians is the cost of their hydro bill, plain and simple. So while the party opposite may holler and shout and call Bill 75 essential and utterly important and all the rest, the cold, hard truth is that they're spinning a \$25-million savings while they willingly throw away \$650 million, and all these costs will eventually find their way onto our Ontario residents' hydro bills.

You see, Speaker, these countless wind farms are paid some of the highest subsidies in the world to generate power the province has not needed. This is because the Liberals granted wind and solar producers guaranteed access to the grid. They guaranteed that whenever wind is produced, it will be bought and placed on the grid, whether we need it or not. The problem is, to accept the energy, which can often come at times when we don't

need it, like at night, the government stops making some of our traditional energy or produces surplus power. Consequently, we must then pay the US and Quebec hundreds of millions of dollars to take our excess power. All of these costs get passed on to the ratepayer, and so we see skyrocketing hydro costs that force companies to close or move.

This past weekend, I was at the Orangeville home show in my riding of Dufferin-Caledon. I love the home shows as an opportunity to highlight local businesses and a chance for them to promote their goods. But it also affords me an opportunity to see what people are concerned about and are talking about, and it's a great way to connect with consumers and residents.

You know what I heard when it came to hydro? Let me start by saying what I didn't hear. I didn't hear residents say, "Sylvia, you and the PC caucus absolutely have to support Bill 75." I didn't hear, "Sylvia, the number one issue in my mind is the creation of the OESO to replace the OPA and the IESO." No, Speaker, what I heard was, "How does the Premier think I can afford a 40% increase in my hydro bills?" What I heard was, "Why is the Minister of Energy taking orders from the Liberal campaign team?" What I heard was, "Why was \$650 million of taxpayers' money spent on saving Liberal seats?"

That's the problem: Bill 75 won't do anything to help Ontarians who simply want relief on their hydro bills. It won't do anything to help municipalities that have been effectively cut out of planning of their own communities. In my riding of Dufferin-Caledon, the municipalities of Mulmur, Mono, Melancthon and East Luther Grand Valley have all passed resolutions at council, demanding that their right to plan their own community be respected by this government. Sadly, their calls have gone unanswered. That's why Bill 75 is typical of this Liberal government's approach, because it skirts the real problems in Ontario's electricity sector in favour of the quick, seemingly marketable fix. Bill 75 fails to address the real concerns Ontario families and Ontario businesses have with the province's energy sector, and for that reason I will not be supporting it.

In closing, I would just like to note that when the Auditor General says we've lost \$1.8 billion exporting surplus power to Quebec and the US and that within three years' time Ontario will have the highest energy rates in North America, I think we need solutions that are bolder than a bureaucratic reshuffle.

I think what we need to do is go back to the drawing board and start figuring out why OPA was put there in the first place. If it was a transitional body when it was set up with 16 staffers, then (a) why does it still exist, and (b) why can't we move forward and actually start solving the energy issues—and there are a myriad of them in Ontario—and deal with the issues, instead of window-dressing with Bill 75, which will do absolutely nothing to give any kind of relief or comfort to the business owners and to the homeowners who are trying to pay their hydro bills right now?

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'm happy to add my comments to Bill 75, Ontario Electricity System Operator Act.

On the one hand, this bill can be understood to be a small step towards consolidating the hydro planning functions that were scattered between different hydro agencies with the breakup of Ontario Hydro 12 years ago. Further, it also removes some of the waste in the system due to overlapping responsibilities.

On the other hand, while the integrated power system plan's long-term energy planning process was far from perfect, it did provide a much more formal guarantee of stakeholder and public participation in the planning process. The process of eliminating the real public accountability from a portfolio that is crippled by the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars in backroom deals is highly problematic and, even more to the point, undemocratic.

Changes must be made to this bill to preserve public scrutiny over public dollars. I don't know a single Ontarian who believes that we should be entitled to spend their hard-earned tax dollars while we silence their input. Tax dollars are not meant to be used like our own personal ATMs. The government has a responsibility to propose fiscally sound strategies and solutions that will make life more affordable for the people of Ontario, yet here we are, my caucus and I, asking again and again for this government to show the people of Ontario the respect they deserve.

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

Mr. Reza Moridi: It's a pleasure to rise in this House and speak on Bill 75 and in response to the member from Dufferin-Caledon, who spoke about this bill—she spoke about everything, actually, except the bill, but she spoke about mismanagement of the electricity system.

I would like just to remind her about her party's history when it comes to the electricity sector in this province. I would like to just remind the member from Dufferin-Caledon that when her party was in office, just on the nuclear side, they mismanaged the nuclear power stations where the regulators shut down two of three reactors. When they were in office, the supply of electricity came down by 6%, while the demand increased by 8%. And when they were in office, they imported electricity from the United States. When they were in office, they purchased electricity at \$2.43 per kilowatt hour and they sold it for 4.3 cents to the consumers. They created a stranded debt when they were in office. They started burning coal—actually, burning coal, when your party was in office, increased by 128%. So this is the background of your party when you were in office.

When it came to management of the electricity system, the party opposite started by privatizing Ontario Hydro at that time, and when the privatization failed, they broke down Ontario Hydro into six corporations and they deregulated the price of electricity. When deregulation

didn't work, they brought back, again, regulations, and that also increased the stranded debt.

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Given what's been happening with the current contempt discussions, to me, talking about Bill 75 presents an opportunity to talk about how very bad this bill is. It strips a great deal of information that is public now and only seems to enhance the culture of secrecy that this government is becoming famous for.

The legislation is merely a \$25-million excuse to put more power in the hands of the minister and put him and his secret agency above scrutiny. We all know how that has played out, first of all with regards to the Samsung deal, followed by Ornge, and now we find ourselves in the same position when it comes to learning—still trying to learn—the true costs of the Oakville and Mississauga power plant closures.

The documents show that the OPA clearly takes its marching orders from the minister's office and from the Premier's office. There is absolutely no final decision that would ever come out of the OPA that does not have political input, if you will, from both the Premier's office and the minister's office. Then the documents have further shown us that they are told to hint that this is their own decision, without any political interference. Those documents will bear that out.

This Bill 75—all it does is consolidate even more power in the hands of the minister, promote the culture of secrecy this government is known for and allow for even further political interference in the technical decisions and the fundamentals that should be driving energy policy in Ontario. It does nothing to help the 600,000 men and women who woke up today without a job.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Kenora-Rainy River.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I'm pleased to stand up and join some of the discussion on the member from Dufferin-Caledon's comments on this particular bill. I agree with her when she says that we really need more than a bureaucratic shuffle. Nothing, in my mind, could be more true. We have too many bureaucracies in our energy system right now, and they are just far too costly. I know I've previously stood up and said that of our seven or eight energy bureaucracies we have in Ontario, we're spending about \$14 million on just the top executive salaries. There's a way that we can trim a bunch of money right out of the system.

I agree with her that this bill, Bill 75, won't do anything to help people who are struggling to pay their hydro bills. I know a couple of years ago in Kenora-Rainy River, we had a number of people who came out on a very cold and blustery winter day—and I should say that the people in northwestern Ontario are generally very positive; they generally don't like to really cause a fuss, but they had just completely had it. Their hydro bills are through the roof. So many people, despite working full-time jobs, just aren't able to make ends meet. They

weren't able to pay their bills. So people came out in droves—and I swear, it must have been the coldest day of the year—to express their frustration.

I think we really need to respect where they're coming from, and we need to do something to really address these skyrocketing costs. This bill sadly doesn't do any of that. I had high hopes coming to this Legislature. I thought we could have an opportunity to really make some changes that would fundamentally help people. This bill falls drastically short.

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

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I appreciate the feedback from the members from London–Fanshawe, Richmond Hill, Nipissing and Kenora–Rainy River.

As I was looking over this legislation—of course, if you are merging two, then we are going to have to deal with severance costs and severance issues. I was reminded of a smaller experience that we had—

Interjection.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: You're getting ahead of me, there—with finance staff, who earned \$45,000 a year. They were severed, given a buyout package, and the next day they were back on the job with the federal government. Of course, they were earning \$45,000 a year.

At this OPA, there are 87 people earning over \$100,000 a year. The severance costs are going to be substantial, and for what gain? I have not heard anyone on the other side of the House explain to me where that gain is going to happen. I see a merger. I see costs related to severance. I see more bureaucracy, and I do not see any opportunity that actually improves the lives of Ontario residents, who are already hurting and literally crying poor over their energy costs.

At my time at the home show this past weekend, it was without a doubt the number one issue. Energy is what people are talking about. At home shows, it used to all be about health care and gridlock. This weekend, I can tell you, people wanted to talk about energy. Why is it so costly? Why are they throwing away money? Why are they not actually doing anything that's going to assist people?

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

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I am eager to speak to Bill 75, unfortunately not because I support it, but because it must be clearly stated how wrong this bill is. Bill 75 is yet another do-nothing, empty piece of legislation. It's another bill that would simply grow the size of government without fixing the problem that it claims to be solving.

Energy costs are soaring in this province with no end in sight. Nothing at all in this piece of legislation would do anything to help alleviate the pain that hard-working Ontarians are going through right now because of the price of hydro.

Speaker, I also rise during a time when a minister of this government is charged with contempt of Parliament. This is perhaps the first time ever that a minister of an

Ontario government has been charged with contempt of Parliament. This is a sad day indeed for all of Ontario. On the heels of all of this, this bill gives the Minister of Energy more power and more authority at a time when this government has so utterly violated the trust of the people. It is just simply the wrong time to hand them more power.

Whether it's Ornge or eHealth or cancelled power plants or even MPAC, it seems that there is an unending stream of mismanagement and deceit coming from this Liberal government, scandal after scandal after scandal. The people of Ontario are wondering, "When will it stop?" I hope soon, for the sake of all of us.

People are hurting in Ontario right now. The young people, the families, seniors, students—you name it; people are hurting. Over 600,000 Ontarians are unable to find work. The debt is exploding by the day, and we are spiralling towards bankruptcy, and what does this government do? It gives us another bill that has a fancy-sounding name but accomplishes absolutely nothing. Actually, Speaker, I shouldn't say that. Bill 75 does accomplish something: It gives us bigger government, more bureaucracy and, yes, even more red tape.

Days ago, Gordon Miller, the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, a non-partisan officer of this province, released a scathing report entitled *Losing Touch*. In his report, the commissioner slams the government for its record of secrecy. Allow me to quote: "Various ministries persist in hiding environmentally significant decisions from public scrutiny...."

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Bill 75 would give more power to the Minister of Energy—no pun intended here, by the way, Speaker—the same minister who has been charged to have been in contempt of Parliament. This legislation would give more power to this Liberal government, the same government that has been criticized for being secretive by one of its own commissioners. Is this some sort of joke? Well, Speaker, if it is, I must tell you that the people of Ontario certainly are not laughing.

Instead of focusing on how to help Ontarians tackle the high costs of hydro and energy, the Liberal government is giving us Bill 75. The Auditor General has reported that by 2015, the cost of hydro in Ontario will be the highest throughout North America. This bill will do nothing whatsoever to lower those costs. It will simply amount to bigger government and entrust more power and authority to a minister who has lost the trust of this Parliament and the people of Ontario.

Speaker, this government is bereft of ideas; it's that simple. Bill 75 is just another example of this. Perhaps if they didn't have to spend so much time explaining away their scandals, they'd have more time to come up with some ideas on how to help this province.

In my riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex, people are hurting. We have lost over 10,000 jobs since this Liberal government took power in 2003. Perhaps the members opposite should one day come down to Chatham–Kent–Essex and meet with the hard-working middle-class

Ontarians—you know, the people that this government has been ignoring for the past decade. Maybe if the Liberals actually paid attention to the middle class and small business owners, we wouldn't get bills like this one, that kill jobs, grow the size of government and, yes, increase the debt.

Just last month, throughout Ontario, we lost 57,000 private sector jobs, yet 33,000 jobs were added to the government payroll. At a time when we're \$411 billion in debt and have 600,000 Ontarians desperate for work, growing the size of government and debt is insanity. Yet this is what the Liberals are doing. Bill 75 would lead to the creation of a brand new super-agency. By merging the Independent Electricity System Operator and the Ontario Power Authority, a.k.a. OPA, all that we will be left with is twice the government, twice the bureaucracy and, yes, twice the red tape.

How anything in this piece of legislation would cause energy costs to decrease is simply beyond me, Speaker. This is a serious step in the wrong direction for the province. Smaller government, not more, is what Ontario needs. More accountability, not less, is what this government owes to the people. Clearly, this side of the House cannot support this legislation.

It is time for change, and the PC Party will put Ontario back onto the road of prosperity instead of bringing it to the brink of disaster, like this Liberal government is doing. This government has lost the trust of voters and this House. Big government, broken promises, scandals and job-killing legislation are all this government is able to give us. It is time for new leadership.

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

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Madam Speaker, I would like to join in this debate on Bill 75. I think it's always important to start off with what makes sense in the bill. I think it makes sense to amalgamate. I think if it will provide us with greater efficiencies and some cost savings, that makes sense; let's do that. I think no one really disagrees with that broad concept of reducing costs and improving efficiencies. But what we've seen today and what we've seen over the past year is that what Ontarians are very concerned about is efficiencies and waste of precious resources when it comes to our taxpayer dollars.

We can avoid wastage and we can avoid inefficiencies if we ensure that on all levels of development, when it comes to electricity, we have adequate public scrutiny. Public scrutiny is paramount, because we are here to serve the interests of the public, and the public should have a direct voice and input into decision-making that impacts their communities.

We have seen what happens when we don't have proper scrutiny, in the gas plant scenario. The public was not consulted appropriately, and at the eleventh hour, after some polling and some last-minute protests, the Liberal government decided to do the right thing and listen to the public. But doing it at the eleventh hour was the problem, and wasting precious resources was a problem. If this consultation was done ahead of time, if

the public had a voice, if there were proper and adequate public inquiries, public forums where the community could have input into where these gas plants were built, we wouldn't have this wastage. We wouldn't see millions of taxpayer dollars being wasted.

That's the crux of the issue when it comes to public scrutiny, and that's definitely missing in this bill. I'd like to see some amendments to ensure that there is adequate public scrutiny involved in these decision-making processes.

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

Mr. Reza Moridi: It's a pleasure to respond to the honourable member from Chatham–Kent–Essex.

I just want to mention that since our party came to office in 2003, in terms of management of the electricity system in Ontario, we didn't have blackouts, we didn't have brownouts, we didn't have the generation capacity going down. What we have done is absolutely remarkable when it comes to our resumé in terms of management of the electricity system as a government.

The numbers speak for themselves. You know, at that time, we had four nuclear reactors shut down. We have refurbished four nuclear reactors and we are in the process of refurbishing another four nuclear reactors. We will be building two more nuclear reactors in Darlington in the future.

When it comes to building power lines, we have built 5,000 kilometres of power lines, which is the distance from here to Vancouver. These are major achievements of this government when it comes to the electricity system.

On the project starts, I'm just going to say a few words about our projects in the hydro sector.

We are building the biggest tunnel in Niagara Falls, which is going to produce electricity for 100 years for 160,000 more homes; this is a major achievement. We are building a hydroelectric power facility in the Lower Mattagami with 400 megawatts of capacity. These are the things that this government has done; these are the things we are doing in terms of the electricity sector.

But on the other side, when the Conservative Party was in office for eight years, they absolutely did nothing with the electricity system. Our electricity system was basically in instalments. The capacity came down, the demand came off—

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

Mr. Steve Clark: I just want to take this opportunity to thank the member for Chatham–Kent–Essex for his very thoughtful comments regarding Bill 75.

You know, he made some very sad comments about what's happened to his beautiful riding since the McGuinty government took over. I was particularly struck by his comment that they've lost 10,000 jobs since this government took office. It's a tragedy.

I have to tell you, Speaker, I know no one has done it yet, but I am going to take up his offer. He's invited the McGuinty government to come to his riding, to meet his

constituents, and although none of them—I appreciate that the member for Richmond Hill is carrying the weight over there this afternoon; I think he’s the only one that’s speaking to this bill. I want to take up the invitation from the member for Chatham–Kent–Essex. I would love to visit his riding and I would love to see those hard-working constituents.

1630

I think, really, for this government to bring the motion for Bill 75 to the floor this afternoon, especially with what happened today, the fact that we’ve got a \$650-million scandal—I remember my colleague, my neighbour, the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington, who I think has done a great job in eastern Ontario this weekend, talking about the issues with that Lennox plant: the fact that it’s at 1% of capacity and now we’ve got another plant that’s being built beside it and we’ve got to spend hundreds of millions of dollars for transmission lines.

This is ridiculous, that a government is so out of touch—for us to have this debate all of last week and the vote today. For them to bring this bill forward—without a motion for committee, without changing the way they’ve done business—just shows how out of touch the McGuinty government is on the energy file. We should be helping Ontarians. We should be showing them that we are confident and that we understand their needs. This bill does nothing to do that. You should be ashamed of yourself.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Madam Speaker, I rise to respond to the remarks from the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex, but I want to say that it was the remarks of the member from Richmond Hill that were most telling and illuminating, because again the member, who knows this issue and knows it well, did not speak to the fact that sections of this bill remove huge areas of public scrutiny.

The point that was made by the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex was that we can’t afford to let the government run around unscrutinized making power decisions. I have never heard a defence once from the government, in any context, of their desire to cut scrutiny of power planning. I listened to the speech by the minister when he introduced the bill. I listened to the member from Richmond Hill when he split time with the minister. I have listened to subsequent commentary. Never has the bill actually been defended. We hear all about the government’s listing of what it sees as its achievements with power—I have a very different understanding of what was done—but they don’t speak to the bill. They don’t speak to what’s really in there. What’s the reason? What’s the reason for the government to cut public scrutiny of power planning? Why is it that the public won’t be able to call witnesses or question witnesses at the Ontario Energy Board when power planning is brought forward? Why does the Liberal government want to turn off the lights for Ontario, put us in the dark when it comes to power planning, put it in this bill and make

sure that, for decades to come, the public is dealt out? It’s a recipe for making \$100-million, billion-dollar mistakes. This part of the bill has to be cut out.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. I’d ask the member to respond. Two minutes.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I would like to thank the members from Malton, from Richmond Hill, from Leeds–Grenville, as well as from Toronto–Danforth for their comments. I had the opportunity, and I appreciated listening to them very intently, but again, Bill 75, the Ontario Electricity System Operator Act, doesn’t do anything other than just give the Ministry of Energy more power and, of course, increase the size of government.

By defeating this bill, we will in fact take away the temptation that this government might have to create even more secretive deals. We want to eliminate that temptation. We need to get those energy costs lower in this province, not higher. The energy experiments that this government has been doing over the last four or five years—when I take a look at the IWTs, industrial wind turbines, down in my area. By the end of 2013, we’ll have close to 500 industrial wind turbines unless we can put a stop to them some way, somehow. I certainly hope that that happens, because those industrial wind turbines are at a cost of \$5.3 million each. That’s what it’s costing the companies. This government, Speaker, has, in fact, granted large subsidies on the backs of the taxpayer to pay for those industrial wind turbine experiments that they have. This all comes at a time when this government has wasted over \$650 million of taxpayers’ money. How did they waste it, you might ask? Simple. They wasted it on cancelling the Oakville and Mississauga gas plants.

Speaker, in good conscience, I honestly cannot support Bill 75.

Mr. Todd Smith: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Point of order.

Mr. Todd Smith: I would like to welcome somebody in the west gallery. It’s a very special day. It’s my 13th wedding anniversary, and I have a surprise visitor. My wife, Tawnya, is in from Belleville, so I’d like to welcome her for the first time to the Legislature.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): It’s not a point of order, but we welcome you and congratulate you on 13 years.

Further debate?

Mrs. Jane McKenna: It’s my honour to rise today in the House and speak to Bill 75. This legislation, which is sometimes called the Ontario Electricity System Operator Act, looks to amend the Electricity Act by amalgamating the Independent Electricity System Operator and the Ontario Power Authority into a single body, the Ontario Electricity System Operator, which will look after both market and procurement functions.

To the layperson, that sounds like an accomplishment, maybe even a noteworthy one. But in truth, once you start peeling this onion, it reeks. Once again, critical inspection exposes it as just another of this government’s window-dressing solutions.

When he first chaperoned this legislation into the public eye, the Minister of Energy proudly announced—boasted—that it would save Ontarians up to \$25 million a year. To the average Ontarian, \$25 million a year sounds impressive enough. But, again, once you size it up in relation to the province's energy sector, or in the context of this government's spending on the whole, you come to understand that \$25 million is only a drop in the bucket.

This is really not much more than a cosmetic fix that will do nothing substantial to change the way that this government operates. Because it doesn't meaningfully alter this government's structural inefficiencies, this merger won't generate any real savings for ratepayers or taxpayers. The province currently spends \$1.8 million more an hour than it takes in, so the savings will vanish 14 hours after it appears. To put that into perspective, when we opened rotations on Bill 75, we were sitting at around seven hours of debate. The tab for this government's reckless spending just goes up and up and up. So, yes, this is a half measure—less than a half measure, really.

We in the Ontario PC caucus don't think that the Ontario Power Authority should be merged with the Independent Electricity System Operator; we believe that the OPA should be discarded altogether. The OPA was formed almost eight years ago as a 15-person transitional body created by the Liberal government to manage Ontario's energy supply.

The Canadian Press had this to say about the Ontario Power Authority back in the summer of 2004: "The Ontario Power Authority, a new organization responsible for the province's long-term power supply, will 'depoliticize' the electricity system and won't just represent another level of bureaucracy, Energy Minister Dwight Duncan said Tuesday.

"There's been a misconception that this is somehow going to be a massive bureaucracy," Duncan said. "I don't think that that's the case at all."

Yet today, the OPA is almost 16 times larger than it was when it started, a 235-person permanent entity where 87 people earn over \$100,000 a year and the CEO earns over \$570,000 a year. That sounds an awful lot like another level of bureaucracy to me. In just eight years, the OPA has managed to burn through over \$375 million in expenditures. Its expenses have risen more than five-fold, from \$14 million in 2005 to \$76.4 million today. Far from depoliticizing the electricity system, it has made it intensely political. After all, short-term partisan interests overruled the OPA's planning for power plants in Oakville and Mississauga.

1640

The OPA contracted with TransCanada power for a natural gas plant at Oakville's Ford plant site and with Eastern Power for Mississauga's Greenfield South plant. Both deals were, of course, scrapped by the Liberals, who overruled the OPA and decided that the plants were not needed. The OPA's opinion, on the other hand, has been that even with aggressive conservation measures, Ontario needs new generation to ensure adequate and

reliable electricity supply to the area. The Ontario Energy Association has agreed, saying, "The Oakville plant would have been a very important source of electricity for the GTA. What is even more troubling is the message this sends to investors and producers, who may see this as an unfair change of the rules and evidence that Ontario is simply not a safe place to invest in."

Bill 75 is simply moving bureaucrats from one suite to another and creating one super-agency. The move suggests that the government still doesn't recognize the severity of Ontario's debt crisis.

The legislation also makes mention of how the minister is to go about submitting an energy plan for the province's long-term energy needs, but it's vague as to how often, or when, the minister is required to do this. Ontario does need an energy plan—yesterday.

The government needs to revisit all its energy policies, which the Auditor General tells us will send electricity prices for Ontario families skyrocketing by 46% by 2015. That's thanks, in part, to this government's green energy policy, a policy that was, as we know, extensively critiqued in the Auditor General's 2011 annual report. Much of that criticism was aimed squarely at a policy that used 20-year contracts packed with lavish subsidies to entice energy generators to build infrastructure like windmills and solar arrays. Not only do they pay out lavish wind and solar subsidies, but they also guarantee that whenever wind is produced, it will be bought and placed on the grid. That policy then turned around and saddled Ontario consumers with the bill.

In principle, the goal of greening Ontario's energy sector through conservation and renewable energy generation is an admirable one, but in practice, the government's expensive inefficiencies hit households and businesses alike and contribute to sagging job markets and soaring unemployment.

Back in September 1991, a young MPP from Ottawa South said, "I submit I am not going out on much of a limb when I say there is a direct correlation between Hydro's rates and our rate of unemployment in Ontario. As the rates go up, so will the rate of unemployment."

Speaker, 12 years later, the perceptive young man became our current Premier, but by then he had forgotten his insight. It's like the classic Kids in the Hall skit where the guy tries to recall his mother's words of wisdom about eye care, "Never put salt in your eyes," and he goes around repeating this wisdom to himself until he gets it twisted: "Always put salt in your eyes"—cue laughs—except this is Ontario's energy policy here; it's no laughing matter. The Premier had it right back in 1991, and yet his Liberal government has relied on massive spending and costly subsidies for wind and solar that drive up hydro rates, undercutting job creation and competitiveness.

I think most people can appreciate that this approach has been a failure. You may recall that the AG found that under this government's FIT program, ratepayers may actually wind up paying renewable energy generators up to \$225 million a year not to generate electricity—the

reason being that the energy they would be adding to the system is growing faster than consumer demand.

The global adjustment rate offsets the difference between the market price and the contracted rates being paid out to producers—the difference, in other words, Speaker, between what the province is paying people to produce the energy and what they're selling the power for. In theory, this adjustment can move both ways. In reality, this government's lucrative green energy subsidies are intentionally pegged well above market price, so conserving energy—lowering market demand and, with it, pricing—can potentially hook you with a higher hydro bill. You're covering the spread, and the house always wins. And does it ever.

The year it was introduced, employers paid \$700 million in global adjustment payments. In November, the Auditor General revealed that those costs will soon increase tenfold, to \$8.1 billion in 2014. Mark Winfield, the chair of the Sustainable Energy Initiative at York University, has suggested that this sort of off-kilter arrangement calls this province's entire energy policy into doubt. "Some pretty fundamental assumptions about the future of electricity demand in the province are under a serious question mark," Winfield said in February of this year. "If the load forecast is now under a question mark, then effectively the whole plan is under a question mark."

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

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I'm pleased to rise and again contribute to this debate. I'm going to start by addressing some of the things that I agree with that the member from Burlington has added to this discussion, because things have been quite heated over this last week. It's been quite contentious.

I agree with her when she says that the \$25 million in savings that would be achieved if this bill were to be implemented is really nothing more than a drop in the bucket and that it's a cosmetic fix.

You know, I often think about what things are like in Kenora—Rainy River, and in many cases it's like we live in a different world. It's really a different reality for us. There's no surprise that it's colder. I remember the first winter I spent here, this past winter, I had to sleep with all the doors and the windows open in my apartment because it was so hot. In Kenora—Rainy River, when it's minus 20 to minus 50, we don't have that option. If there's a crack, we want to stuff the crack, because we're freezing. And everything is more expensive, so when it comes to upgrading our homes to make them more energy-efficient, putting in those good windows, putting in the doors, all those things cost more money. Heating our homes costs more money, whether it's with oil or—some people actually rely on electric heat.

So the price of our hydro bills is very important. It's important that we keep that in line and affordable, because in Kenora—Rainy River and across the north, hydro is a necessity. It isn't a frivolous thing. You know, we can decide if we want to go out and get our hair or

our nails done or if we want to wear fancy clothes; it's not a case of that. It's a matter of life and death, and so I think we need to do more with this bill. We need to do something that is going to be reflected on the hydro bills of people living across this province, and I think we can do better.

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

Mr. Reza Moridi: Madam Speaker, in response to remarks given by the honourable member from Burlington, I would just like to add that this Bill 75 is about basically bringing two organizations together, merging the Ontario Power Authority and the Independent Electricity System Operator.

Last year, we asked Ontario agencies to look into efficiencies and savings in their operations. They listened and they came back and actually came up with a figure of about a billion dollars in savings in efficiencies. By merging these two organizations, the Ontario Power Authority and the Independent Electricity System Operator, the government, the taxpayers, the ratepayers, are going to save \$25 million on a yearly basis, which is quite a significant amount of saving.

Also, the newly established agency, if this bill passes, is going to be responsible for market operations, which is distinct from the procurement and contract management. It's also going to be responsible for the provision of opportunities to increase contract efficiencies. The new agency is going to streamline the operation of the Ontario Power Authority and the Independent Electricity System Operator. It's also going to create an agency which will assist our electricity system and the electricity sector to be more systematic and more efficient.

1650

These are some of the visions we have in the bill, and once this new agency is created, our electricity system will be much more efficient, and of course this is going to lead to a \$25-million savings for taxpayers and ratepayers.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: I must say I enjoyed the address by my colleague from Burlington, and I have to say, she's only been here a little less than a year, but I'm very, very impressed with the way she has learned the nuances and the idiosyncrasies of our electricity system and was able to speak in a very, very informed and learned way about it today.

On the other hand, I have to say to my good friend from Richmond Hill here, who seems to be the designated hitter today for the Liberals—

Mr. Steve Clark: The Reza Moridi Show.

Mr. John Yakabuski: The Reza Moridi Show.

He says that they asked the agencies. Madam Speaker, they don't ask the agencies anything. All we have to do is look at what this Parliament—and now the finance committee is going to be seized upon, and that is the sanctions and the censure of the Minister of Energy. We find out, and we have found out over the last few weeks

with the release of some of the documents—not those ones that, as my colleague from Nipissing says, have been redacted.

But we find out that the OPA, really the Ontario Power Authority, which was created by the Liberals to be an arm's-length agency to take the politics out of the electricity system, is a toothless tiger. It has been neutered completely. All of the decisions are in the office of the Minister of Energy, and actually, more correctly, in the Premier's office. It is time to put the OPA to bed. It's over. Shut it down. If that's what it is—just another political tool for Dalton McGuinty to play games with at the expense of the people of this province—it is time to shut it down. The OPA performs no useful service if it is nothing but a political pawn in the hands of Dalton McGuinty. It's time to shut it down, and it's time to get that motion to the committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Timiskaming–Cochrane.

Mr. John Vanthof: It's once again a pleasure to join in this debate and comment on the statements by the members from Burlington, Kenora–Rainy River, Richmond Hill—and I'll never be able to compete with the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

The one thing that I'd like to comment on the member from Burlington—also the member from Richmond Hill mentioned this: \$25 million. In the big picture, for your average person, that's a lot of money, but in the big government picture, what they wasted on the energy system, it is a drop in the bucket.

Also to the member for Burlington—just to prove I do listen to these things—I'm also a Kids in the Hall fan.

But I'd like to spend more time commenting on the member from Richmond Hill and on the Liberals' statements on this bill, their rebuttals on this bill. Again, like the member for Toronto–Danforth said, at no time do they explain why they are removing the last little piece of public scrutiny. Why are they removing that? For what purpose, especially since this House has been seized by this whole problem with lack of public scrutiny, lack of appearance of documents? And yet in this bill they're making what seems to be a—not seems to be—what is a big problem. They're making it worse. Instead of recognizing a problem and trying to fix it, for some reason, whatever reason, they are trying to bury it. Merging two organizations? You know what? If it's done correctly, I think we want to merge four. If it's done correctly, it should work. But why, why, why are you removing the scrutiny by the OPA that has to go through—with the Ontario Energy Board? Why replace it with ministerial plans? Because ministerial plans have gone wrong in the past.

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

Mrs. Jane McKenna: Carefree or optimistic planning has no place in something so central to our province's economic prosperity and quality of life as energy policy. When developing Ontario's energy policy of tomorrow, we should look more seriously at supply and demand,

value-for-money issues and the true lifespan costs of various energy sectors.

Rather than grossly overbuilding the province's energy capacity or handing out subsidies that aren't financially viable, we should evaluate all options to pull together the strongest and most sustainable energy portfolio possible. If we want to woo new economy investors with our reputation of being a forward-thinking province, we first need to be more strategic as we plan for the future. We need to go back to the basic truth that the Premier twigged to more than 20 years ago: There is a direct correlation between hydro rates and our rate of unemployment in Ontario. As Ontario's hydro rates go up, so will its unemployment rate.

Capital is mobile; Bay Street knows it, and affordable energy is the strong foundation of economic success.

We need policies that will keep prices under control for households, for small businesses, for industry. We need a system that's sustainable, we need substantial change, and we need fresh, inspired thinking. The hedging and fudging that we get from this government on this file is shameful.

As terrifying as our monthly hydro bills have often become, the consequences of sticking to the status quo will be far, far scarier, and there is obviously excellent reason to pay attention to this issue. The well-being of our future generations of Ontario is riding on the outcome.

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

Mr. Rod Jackson: It's a pleasure to join my colleagues today in this debate on Bill 75, An Act to amend the Electricity Act, 1998 to amalgamate the Independent Electricity System Operator and the Ontario Power Authority, to amend the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 and to make complementary amendments to other Acts—that's quite a mouthful.

Bill 75 amends the Electricity Act, 1998, by amalgamating the Independent Electricity System Operator, the IESO, and what should have been the temporary Ontario Power Authority—and I stress, it should have been temporary. Effectively, this bill will assume both agencies under one name: the Ontario Electricity System Operator, the OESO—another acronym for the alphabet soup of agencies, boards and commissions that are already plaguing and slowing down this government.

What's in a name, you ask? Well, supposedly \$25 million of savings through this amalgamation that permanently retains a temporary bureaucracy. However, not a single taxpayer will see any of those savings transferred to lower rates on their hydro bill. So what good is it, really? That is the most pertinent issue, which this bill does absolutely nothing about. The reality faced by the hard-working families of Ontario as they struggle to pay their bills day to day—this is what we need to address, not taking care of temporary bureaucracies and creating more bureaucrats to do more of the same, especially when they started out temporarily.

I went door to door in the last election and I actually met a lady, a really nice older woman. She said she'd

never voted before in her life, but she was going to vote this time. You know why she was going to vote? She was going to vote because on her bill, when she looked at it—and this is a woman on a fixed income, whom every single dollar matters to—she saw a debt retirement charge; she saw HST. You know what? Those two things alone determined what she was going to eat that week. That's not fair, that someone who's a senior citizen, who's doing everything they can in our community to keep their house, to feed themselves, to get from place to place in the city, can't do it because of that extra few bucks a month. It may not mean much to you; it may not mean much to any of us, that extra \$10 a month or whatever it is, but I'll tell you, for her, it changes her life.

The majority will of this Legislature has actually already decided to alleviate the economic burdens faced by families by voting to remove the HST from home heating and hydro. That's the majority of the House. Yet instead of submitting to the majority of the House and the people we're here to serve, the McGuinty Liberals, who are still in full denial of minority government status, thought they would just ignore it, and to this day are still ignoring that majority will. It's not the first time, and it certainly hasn't been the last time that this has happened in this House. We see examples of that almost on a daily basis, brazenly ignoring the majority will—and you still maintain the HST on home heating and hydro.

1700

Here today we are debating an energy bill that will maintain what was intended to be a temporary bureaucracy, the Ontario Power Authority, in the name of saving up to \$25 million per year, none of which will be seen by a single ratepayer on their energy bills. Frankly, the Ontario Power Authority should not be merged but simply scrapped altogether, as my colleagues have said. When it serves no purpose and it does nothing but cost money and create more red tape and bureaucracy, get rid of it. It was formed seven years ago as a 15-person transitional body created by the government to manage the energy supply of Ontario. Today, it has ballooned to 235 people—in seven years, from 15 to 235 permanent people—with 87 of those people earning \$100,000 or more. The CEO himself actually earns \$570,000—not bad for a temporary job, I might add. In just seven years it has burned through over \$375 million in expenditures, and its expenses have risen from \$14 million in 2005 to \$76.4 million today.

Let me tell you, this is not an isolated example. Other so-called temporary government bureaucracies have also ballooned and consumed more resources than they're worth. For example, I am the Pan Am accountability critic, and I've seen the Pan Am organizing committee, as an example, swell from 11 people—still listed on the website—to over 17 making the sunshine list. Sources tell me that this structure is now over 60 strong.

By the way, they continue to hire—people for the Pan Am Games, which happen in 2015, are being hired for permanent jobs. So where are they going after that? Either you're going to pay to get rid of them with a high

severance, or you're going to pay to keep them to do a job that won't exist after 2015. I'd like to know the answer to that question. That's a question for another day, though, Speaker.

When the CEO of the Pan Am Games makes \$550,000, almost five times more than any of us, and we're elected to actually be the executors of this province—it's ridiculous.

Furthermore, if this bureaucracy hadn't swelled to a level that even the government knows is obnoxious, it wouldn't be hiding it behind a shamefully expensive FOI request either. Gouging the taxpayer, overspending, feeding the infinitely expanding bureaucracy under this government and hiding it, is the legacy of this very government. You will live with it, and you'll have to explain why to the taxpayers.

Private jobs are going down and public jobs are going up. We don't build an economy with public service jobs; we build it with private jobs to create that environment. This government has done nothing to create an environment to create new jobs for the people who actually employ the majority of Ontarians: small business.

Another perfect example—and we've talked about it a lot lately—is the seat-saver program for Mississauga and Oakville. The taxpayer is on the hook for hundreds of millions of dollars of wasted taxpayer money for scrapping projects to retain their own seats. It has made no practical difference whatsoever either. We're still in minority government. Even if those seats were lost, we'd still be in a minority government today.

What's worse is, we'll never really know the extent of the damage until it's all done. Without these documents, without the blanked-out documents, we'll never really know. You know what? When these sole-sourced plants come online in Lambton and Lennox, who knows what we'll find next? This is just the tip of the iceberg. Why are they so reluctant to provide all these documents, beyond the fact that it was a politically motivated decision? It's also creating a sham of our electricity and power sector.

It just keeps going on and on and on. When will it stop? None of this can be considered surprising, given this government's abysmal record in regard to the energy sector in general. It has done nothing but cost the taxpayers money and provided absolutely nothing in return. That is a bad deal.

It's not just about the swelling and wasteful bureaucracy that has ballooned up under this Liberal government, nor is it just about Bill 75, which itself is a textbook example of this government run amok—all in the name of supposedly helping the taxpayer, but it also is about the cancellation of these power plants.

Our Speaker said himself that the government has the obligation to provide all these documents, and still we haven't gotten all of them. By refusing to do this, this could be one of the first times in history that the government has been found in contempt—a minister of the government. It's ridiculous that they're going to these lengths to conceal these documents.

I don't know about all of you here, but I was elected to represent the people of Barrie and the people of Ontario in this House, and to do it in the best way I can, providing good service for good value. So far, I haven't seen that over there. To me, most of us here hear things like "accountability," "honesty," "transparency" and "integrity"—and they matter, and I believe they should. Bill 75 certainly doesn't go to transparency; it goes to hiding more bureaucracy.

It's high time this government remembers that it serves the people and starts allowing us to do our jobs. We need to get to the bottom of this mayhem in the Ministry of Energy and all the mess that seems to be coming quick, before this energy sector hurts more people. Bill 75 is just going down the same road. Political motivations aside, scandals like this are continuing to prove that McGuinty's Liberal government lacks the organizational and managerial know-how to run Ontario's \$15-billion energy system. It's outrageous that you're willing to break the law, really, to conceal a few documents. The energy sector is one Liberal mess after another, and it's costing us millions of dollars.

I cannot support Bill 75, Speaker. It assumes an unnecessary bureaucracy and doesn't actually pose any real benefit at all to the taxpayer.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: The member for Barrie has spoken to a number of the fatal flaws in this bill. I personally still think it makes sense to reduce the bureaucracy, eliminate a CEO and eliminate a superfluous board of directors, but more important is a necessity to cut out of this bill the obscuring of public input into power planning.

I sat through estimates with the Minister of Energy earlier this year, and I have to tell you that, even under repeated questioning, I couldn't get commitments from that minister to give information on how the energy system worked, how planning was done, how decisions were carried forward. Madam Speaker, if under the current act, if under the current structure of this Legislature, it is extraordinarily difficult for us, in estimates, to get straight answers, how on earth is the public or the rest of the legislators in this province going to be able to find out what really is going on with power planning?

It's one thing to try and eliminate waste and duplication; most people in this chamber would think that's a good idea. It's another thing to make it even harder for the public to have input into power planning. It's bad public policy if we aren't able to find out what is being decided and why it is being decided. If this government, in the committees where questions are posed as part of our job, was straightforward with its answers, you'd have a very different approach. This bill underlines the fact that this government likes to hide the truth.

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

Mr. Reza Moridi: It's a pleasure, Madam Speaker, to rise again in this House to speak on Bill 75 and respond

to the remarks given by the honourable member from Barrie. I would like to add that in 2003, when we formed the government, our electricity system was in major disarray. Since then, we have done a lot of work in the electricity system as a whole. For example, we have brought 10,000 megawatts more of generating capacity to the system, and we have done so many things. I'd need hours and hours to talk about our achievements in the electricity sector in this province, but in the short time I have, just in line of merging the two organizations—OPA and the Independent Electricity System Operator—as the subject matter of this bill, we are also looking into consolidation and the restructuring of the local distribution companies.

1710

Actually, the minister has asked three former members of this House, honourable members of this House—Mr. Murray Elston, Mr. Floyd Laughren and Mr. David McFadden—to form a committee to look into how to reorganize, restructure and consolidate these local electricity distribution companies. The panel is looking into potential long- and short-term financial savings through this consolidation. They are looking for benefits for ratepayers. They're also going to look into long- and short-term operational efficiencies and potential risk.

This is the thing our government has been doing in terms of streamlining the electricity sector and the agencies that run our electricity sector as a whole, from generation up to transmission and also distribution.

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

Mr. Jim McDonell: It's always a pleasure to hear the member from Barrie, with his insight into this red-herring bill, really citing some—well, many—of the faults of this government and the transgressions that we've seen over just the short time I've been here.

We look at the member from Toronto–Danforth when he talks about getting rid of the CEO. We're talking about getting rid of the whole organization. It went from 15 people up to 235 members of this group. Really, if you look back, just what is its purpose? Do we need to make one super-government agency, or can we do with much less?

The answer to the unemployment problem for this government is to hire more public servants. We've driven up the cost of the public service in this province to double what it was eight years ago. Gee, I remember that for every government job we have, we have to have a private sector forced to pay more in taxes to cover these jobs.

The member from Richmond Hill, who talks about their achievements—really, these achievements should be their transgressions. Let's look at some of the issues that we've seen over the last couple of weeks, details from these plants in the energy sector that they're refusing to give out, even under order from the Speaker. This is not how government runs in Ontario under a minority government. This government maybe should be going back and getting some training to see that there are

changes. When you're in a minority government, you have to work together.

We need information to be able to help out with some of the decisions. Hopefully, we can change their minds on some of these decisions, because it's driving businesses out of Ontario. Businesses are going down to our neighbours in the States, our neighbours in Quebec, because it has become too expensive to run a business in Ontario.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: The merger to form the Ontario Electricity System Operator may well be a well-intentioned step forward. However, the same cannot be said for the approach the Liberals are taking.

My colleague from Toronto—Danforth noted previously that this bill effectively removes public scrutiny of power planning in Ontario. There are other matters that are addressed by the bill, but the largest, most significant piece, the one that is the greatest concern to the people of Ontario, is that one piece, the transparency and accountability piece.

Unfortunately, the lack of transparency and accountability is only one of the troubling aspects of this bill. Under Bill 75, the government is proposing to remove the Ontario Power Authority's power and duty to develop an integrated power system plan for approval by the Ontario Energy Board. It further removes the Ontario Energy Board's power and duty to review the plan for economic prudence, cost effectiveness and regulatory compliance. In effect, the integrated power system plan will be replaced by ministerial energy plans. In fact, by involving the OEB explicitly in the energy planning process, Bill 75 blurs the distinction between the functions of the OESO and the OEB.

In retrospect, the approach the government is taking can be seen as an extension of their ongoing efforts to exert control over the activities of the OPA and the OEB. We have seen policy imperatives, directives, and now legislation.

The proposed changes to energy planning and procurement are significant and will have far-reaching effects on Ontarians. It's our obligation to make sure there's a balanced approach and there's affordable hydro for—

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

Mr. Rod Jackson: Thank you very much to the members of the other parties for their comments. I'm happy to respond.

The member from Richmond Hill mentioned that in 2003 they increased the generating capacity of Ontario to several thousand more megawatts. I think it's interesting that that actually happened. It's quite an accomplishment, considering we didn't need any of it because of the loss of manufacturing we've suffered in our province. Now we're actually generating surplus power that we're not selling; we're paying people to take it away from us. That worked out really well for you. I mean, you've had nine

years to fix these problems. Not only have you not fixed them but you made them much, much worse, to a point where we have some of the most expensive electricity in the province. Let's not even get into why that happens. Subsidies—we know these things don't work. The other thing is, let's look at a committee—really?—to try to figure out how you can amalgamate these things and study this and study that. You can study and committee your way all the way through this government. It's not going to help if you don't actually step up and do something at some point.

I'll tell you how you can fix this: Scrap it. You've created this temporary bureaucracy at a massive cost. It's gone from 15 to 235 employees. Just get rid of it. You don't need a committee to tell you that, do you? Can't you figure that out for yourselves? It is ridiculous that you've just continued to kick the can down the road and make sure that the taxpayers are going to foot the bill. Right?

It's enough. This bill should never pass. It should never have been brought up in the first place. The answer is simple: Scrap it.

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

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: It's always an honour to stand in this chamber and debate in a formal fashion that is conducive to our democratic process here and for all democracies throughout.

I want to just talk briefly, a little bit, about some history. A wise visionary of this great province, Sir Adam Beck, at the turn of the last century, early on, had a great vision for this province. Mr. Beck, in his infinite wisdom, decided to develop hydroelectricity and provide electricity for the Toronto and York regions and throughout this province of course. I had the privilege of going down and visiting a few of the early hydro plants that brought electricity to this great province—and in fact are why this province was the industrial heart of Canada. Because of Sir Adam Beck's vision of providing cheap, cheaply produced electricity, this province was founded and enriched by that vision.

We're lacking, in some cases I would argue, individuals with vision once again. Here's an individual who made this province great and actually has a statue just south of here on University Avenue. If you go down—and I would encourage the members to go down and see the fine statue that was erected in his honour.

I was talking to an individual back in my riding, Mr. Daniel Christie. It was interesting. He pointed out—because we were talking about my vision of having a hydro development brought into Northumberland—Quinte West and what that would mean economically for the region—that, in fact, if you look at many of the statues that are situated, they usually face south. Mr. Beck, his monument, is looking up University Avenue to Queen's Park, and Mr. Christie pointed out to me, "Rob, the reason that statue is pointed facing Queen's Park is a subtle reminder"—to each of us, as parliamentarians and as elected members for our various ridings—"that his

vision of cheap electricity to the masses of this province is what made this province great.”

1720

So Sir Adam Beck had this vision, and he was the one, I would argue, who had a great impact on why Ontario became the haven for individuals from far and abroad to come and bring their families here, searching for a better life in this province of Ontario, as many families have since come to Ontario looking for a better life for their families, a better education for their families—opportunities that they don't have in other jurisdictions from where they came.

Unfortunately, this has changed over the last nine years. What we've seen here with Bill 75 and the so-called amalgamation of more bureaucrats—it's disheartening to see that Sir Adam Beck's vision of low-cost electricity is being destroyed, not only for the industrial base but also for the residents and small businesses who now find themselves struggling month to month to pay their bills, to keep their shops open, to keep the lights on in their homes.

The OPA, as mentioned by many of my esteemed colleagues here today, started out as a transitional body of 14 individuals, but over the course of the years from when it was established to the present—not many years in fact; seven years—we have a body that was supposed to be temporary and has gone from 14 to over 230 members, over 80 of whom are making well over \$100,000. Let me just say that I don't begrudge individuals getting paid a decent wage, not at all, but when you see the waste that has been brought forth in the bureaucracy that this government has ballooned, you have to question yourself: “Why can the CEO of the OPA make close to \$600,000?” To me, that's ludicrous. He's not a brain surgeon. This is an individual who oversees—I don't know what.

Interjection: Ask him.

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: I should ask him. I should maybe follow him around for a day to see what he does. It would be interesting—

Interjection: Take your MPP to work.

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: Yes; take your MPP to work.

Here we have an example of bloated bureaucracy, the public sector has ballooned, and what we find—and this is based on fact—is that the public sector does not generate wealth; the private sector generates wealth. But with the overregulation and red tape of this government and the ballooning bureaucracies of the public sector, it's unbalanced. So what we have is a restriction of growth economically in the province of Ontario. It doesn't make sense to fundamentally artificially make another bureaucracy, with another obscure acronym that the masses can't relate to. It does not make sense.

My esteemed colleague from Barrie made the point about an elderly lady on a fixed income in his riding when he was campaigning and how she found it very difficult, because of the skyrocketing price of electricity, to even pay for food or choose what she was going to eat based on that.

I came across a couple very similar to that: an elderly couple in the town of Brighton who were struggling to make ends meet because this government has failed to do the right thing when it comes to ensuring that electricity prices for individuals in this province are affordable. It's shameful to see the great vision of Sir Adam Beck thrown away for political attributes that, quite frankly, shouldn't be brought forward in this.

Here we have the shifting of the gas plants that, once again, is going to have a huge financial impact—a negative impact, I might say—on Ontarians as a whole, whether you own your own company, factory, you're a small business or you're just the plain working poor out there trying to make ends meet. But this government has shown, throughout my early stages here at the Legislature, that they don't listen. They say they want to listen and be co-operative. We have some ideas. Tim Hudak and the PC Party have put forward great ideas that are going to help individuals in Ontario, not hinder them from expanding their businesses and paying their bills.

The gas plants in Oakville and Mississauga are just a small tip of the iceberg. I could go on about the other scandals—Ornge, eHealth and the many others that have taken place under the guise of this government's so-called “Moving Ontario Forward Together,” but I don't have time for that, Madam Speaker. Unfortunately, I'm out of time. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: Once again, a pleasure to add some words to this debate on Bill 75 and to comment on some of the comments made by the member from Northumberland–Quinte West. We share a deep respect for the power of hydroelectricity. We disagree on some things, but we also agree that this government lacks vision on this issue because the industrial heartland was built on affordable public power, in most cases, generated through public electricity.

The problem we're facing here—and in my region as well—is that our biggest industries were built—there's a reason why the paper mill in Iroquois Falls was built in a place called Iroquois Falls: because they had the ability to dam up the river and make affordable power. There's a reason why Xstrata in Timmins was where it was. It was closed because the power prices got too high. But the flipside to that is, now I have power generators in my region that are afraid they are also going to close, and do you know why? Because they no longer have their major customer, because Xstrata closed.

On the face of it, it would make sense for the OPA who buys the power and the IESO who regulates the power to actually integrate so that you could make the power go to places where it should, because closing Xstrata didn't help the province. It might look good on paper, but actually we're just wasting power now that could have been used to employ those people. But again, the final word for this bill—it has to have public scrutiny. Why is this government tearing public scrutiny out of power?

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

Mr. Reza Moridi: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to thank the honourable member from Northumberland–Quinte West for his remarks, particularly in relation to Sir Adam Beck. We all owe a lot to Sir Adam Beck. He was a visionary man, as the honourable member indicated. He's the man who created the first publicly owned utility in the world, and he is the man who built Niagara Falls. He was a great man; there is no question about that. Like the honourable member, I invite every member of this Legislature, while they are walking on the beautiful University Avenue, to just step for a moment in front of his sculpture and pay respect to this great Ontarian and great Canadian.

1730

Our government, actually, has been following the path of Sir Adam Beck in the area of hydroelectricity. We are building a dam, a hydroelectric power station, at Lower Mattagami. A 400-megawatt power plant is under construction. As well, we are building the biggest tunnel in the world in Niagara Falls, which is going to produce electricity for 160,000 homes in Ontario for the next century, for 100 years. This is the path of Sir Adam Beck, which our government has been following.

When you look at, again, the achievements of this government, in the context of Sir Adam Beck's achievements, bringing the Green Energy Act to Ontario by the Honourable Dalton McGuinty, the Premier of Ontario, was another visionary step when we come to the electricity sector in this province. This was a major initiative which we brought into Ontario. Now we include renewable energy along with other sources of energy for electricity production: hydroelectricity, nuclear and renewable.

My time is over. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to provide a couple of minutes of comments on the member for Northumberland–Quinte West and his remarks this afternoon on this bill.

I have to tell you, Speaker, that although I grew up and spent basically all my life, save and except a few of those early years, in Leeds–Grenville, I was actually born in the member for Northumberland–Quinte West's riding. My mother, my late father and my brother were all born in his riding. Although I don't have very many relatives there, I know that I can speak for many of his constituents in thanking him for being such a vocal advocate for a variety of issues in his riding. Although he's a new member, I think he's performed admirably, and today was one of those days that he seemed to really hit the nail on the head when it comes to the difficulties with this particular piece of legislation, so I want to compliment him on his address today.

I think it's fair for all of us to be concerned, as the member is, about the creation of this mega-agency with the OPA and the IESO. The reason that I think we need

to be concerned is because of the way this government deals with creating agencies. They're not good at it. They have difficulties with it, difficulties managing it. I think we've seen it with eHealth, with Ornge and with OPA. They're just a few examples that come to mind—and especially OPA. When you see a government that creates a temporary, 15-person agency, and it becomes a who's who list on the sunshine list, you really have to question.

Although I do have my problems with OPA, the last thing that they would need would be to have the minister with more powers. I think the legislation goes in the wrong direction. I think the member has very adequately expressed some concerns he has with the way the government operates, and I want to congratulate him for putting those comments on the record this afternoon.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I want to thank the member for Northumberland–Quinte West for his comments—his reference to Sir Adam Beck. There's an interesting book in the legislative library here, Adam Beck and the Ontario Hydro, for anyone who wants to read the history—Sir Adam Beck, who fought the Liberals because the Liberals then were privatizers and they're privatizers now; Sir Adam Beck, who fought conventional coal interests, who said, "You know what? This newfangled long-distance distribution of power isn't going to work." Sir Adam Beck fought for the leading edge of renewable energy technology in his time, just as many now fight for renewable energy technology.

It makes sense to develop Ontario in the 20th century. We need new renewable energy technologies in the 21st. But to proceed with a shutting off of public interest, public research into, public commentary on investment in power simply allows privatization to grow in the dark.

Madam Speaker, right now, this government has a panel looking at privatizing the local distribution utilities in each of the regions of this province. There will be only one outcome, and that will be higher hydro rates. Right now, this government is looking at privatizing transmission lines in Ontario, the east-west tie across the top of Lake Superior. There can only be one outcome: higher hydro rates.

Sir Adam Beck fought for renewable power. He fought for public power. He took on the Liberals. He took on financial interests in London, England, that fought against public power. Madam Speaker, he set a good example for us. We should follow it: public power, open public participation.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Northumberland–Quinte West has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: I would just like to thank the members from Timiskaming–Cochrane, Richmond Hill, Toronto–Danforth and, of course, my esteemed colleague from Leeds–Grenville, who I use as a mentor. He gives me solid advice at times, and I do rely on that.

We do want to again just mention the mismanagement that we've seen from this government. When they bring

forward a bill like Bill 75, one has to ask, what's the reason behind this? What's truly the reason behind bringing forward such a bill?

I sometimes think that there are secret motives. I'm not sure for political gains or what, but I have seen, Madam Speaker, the two closures of the Mississauga and Oakville gas plants and the relocation of that and how that's going to cost the taxpayers of Ontario at least \$650 million. That means an increase in your electricity bill of about 1.4% or 1.6%. The industries of this province are even going to get harder hit with that, Madam Speaker.

Here we are debating something which I think really—and I'm glad we've had this opportunity to speak to Bill 75, because it makes sure that we are doing our jobs here, as pointed out earlier, Madam Speaker. That is to keep this government accountable and transparent. Unfortunately, we haven't seen that from this government.

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

Mr. Jim McDonell: Speaker, at first look, this bill sounds like a good-news bill. But we didn't need to hear many words from this minister before we clearly saw that it was a bad-news bill for Ontario consumers, the seniors who see their pensions swallowed up by the ballooning monthly hydro bills, or our businesses that managed to survive the economic downturn and this government's skyrocketing taxes, fees and regulations, only now to be dealing with the highest energy prices in North America, higher than even the countries in Europe. To a sane person, it looks like the McGuinty government is trying to bankrupt this province.

This is clearly just another red-herring bill to get people's attention away from the real problems that this government is facing, those of scandals at Ornge and eHealth, Green Energy Act fallout, and now the incredible waste of the cancellation of not one but two gas-powered plants that was nothing more than a seat-saver to cling to power.

In our short time here, I see a government that's scrambling to keep information from the opposition and the public. I see their clear signs of desperation. In fact, in just the short time since I returned to the Legislature a few weeks ago, we see a Premier and his high-ranking senior staff refusing to go before the committee looking into Ornge, the CAO of Ornge refusing to appear before the committee, and the government delaying the reinstatement of committees, essentially silencing our ability to provide the drastically needed oversight that this government is unwilling and unable to provide. And now we see a minister of the crown who has been warned of being in contempt for refusing to disclose essential documents to this House throwing out rhetoric about trumped-up issues that may raise the already-obscure cancellation penalties to the people of Ontario.

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It's been two years since this expensive and selfish seat-saver decision was made, and they are still afraid to let Ontarians know the true costs. The more desperate

their efforts, the more it makes one wonder just what these costs are and who benefitted from the decisions. Six hundred and forty million dollars and counting—what are the McGuinty Liberals so desperate to hide? What is the true bill that the people of Ontario will have to pay? Because it is us that will have to pay the bill.

Back to this bill: This government claims that the merger will save \$25 million a year, certainly a novel idea if, in fact, it was true. We're not against the principle, but does this government find savings, efficiencies and redundancies only amongst its critics? The McGuinty government has turned the Ontario Power Authority, once a 15-person transitional body created seven years ago by this government to manage Ontario's power supply—let's look at its record: It's grown to a 235-person permanent board that burns through \$76 million per year. The board has become a simple reward for loyal Liberal supporters. It's time for the McGuinty government to stop using patronage appointments to government boards as their major policy to combat high unemployment, one that has been higher than the national average for more than six years.

Our PC plan for the OPA was not to shuffle bureaucrats around, making an even larger super-agency, but to eliminate it all together and save the entire \$76 million. If this new legislation is not going to save money, what's it all about? I would suggest it's just another ploy to shift attention away from failed government energy policies that are bankrupting this province. The energy sector needs deep reform, and the McGuinty government is simply not up to it—to putting jobs and the people of Ontario first.

The OPA—the Ontario Power Authority—the Ontario Energy Board—the OEB—and the Independent Electricity System Operator have all stated very openly that “no independent, objective, expert investigation had been done to examine the potential effects of renewable energy policies on prices, job creation, and greenhouse gas emissions,” and that “no thorough and professional cost/benefit analysis had been conducted to identify potentially cleaner, more economically productive, and cost-effective alternatives to renewable energy, such as energy imports and increased conservation.”

Now we see two of them being amalgamated. It makes one wonder if they're not just being penalized for doing what they're supposed to do: provide independent advice to the minister. Very similar to a method used by another provincial agency, Ornge, that the people of Ontario have now unfortunately become very familiar with, for all the wrong reasons—this government agency's way of getting to the bottom of perceived corruption was to send employees letters threatening them with lawsuits and firings if they went on record.

I sit on the Standing Committee on Government Agencies, where we tried to bring the OPA before the committee to look at some of the very issues this government seems to be having with this group, but our answer was “no.” The McGuinty government had structured it, as they had with Ornge, the IESO and this proposed new

Ontario Electricity System Operator, so that it cannot be reviewed by the Standing Committee on Government Agencies.

So there will be no oversight over the new agency, one of over 300 that this government has created. Can you believe that? From 250 to over 600 since they took power. It just goes to show that if you want to be serious, you have to do the right thing and be prepared to listen and put Ontario first.

If we were to believe their intentions, after all the years of mismanagement, broken promises, rising taxes, deficits, debt and unfunded liabilities—and did I say “broken promises”?—the people of my great riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry would be very quick to remind me of an old saying: Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me. I say shame on this Liberal government, which has put their political gain ahead of the people of Ontario.

We have seen the fire-from-the-hip decisions of the Green Energy Act double and on the way to triple the cost of energy in this province, to the point where we are the highest in North America—a once huge economic advantage destroyed; truly hard to believe. But still, as pointed out by the 2011 Auditor General’s report, this government has a duty to let the people of Ontario know what the power is costing and to stop denying the problem and hiding the true costs, blindly promoting an energy plan that pays up to 80 cents a kilowatt hour, in spite of having surplus power that we can’t handle by spilling over \$300 million over our dams in 2011 or by shutting down our nuclear and gas-powered plants. No, we had to pay our neighbours to take the power off our hands as well, at a cost of hundreds of millions of dollars a year. At a time when our rates are skyrocketing, we are subsidizing the cost of power to our neighbours, our competitors.

The Auditor General put the bill at over \$4 billion a year, enough to build 12 large hospitals a year, and over two million MRIs per year—unbelievable. The global adjustment charge will reach \$8 billion by 2014. Maybe now it’s clear to this government when the Auditor General says that you lose two to four jobs for every green job you create. Whether you took the old math that I took in school or the new math that my children took, the message is clear: Four, three or even two jobs lost for every one you create is a losing formula. Some 300,000 lost manufacturing jobs because companies can do it cheaper elsewhere—not a record to be proud of.

But the sad thing to say is, it gets worse. This Liberal McGuinty government’s energy policies have split rural Ontario, pitting families and neighbours against each other, and taken the land use planning away from municipal governments—and the economics are even worse. We are looking at an additional 45% increase in power rates over the next five years; a deficit they can’t control and which is 10 times worse than our neighbour, Quebec, the next worst; and a debt that has doubled and is tracking to be \$411 billion.

Our financial situation is quite frankly critical. This government has received three credit downgrades and

still refuses to acknowledge the problem. The people of my riding tell me the obvious: Ontario can’t tolerate them anymore. Instead of creating bills that sound good, we need a government that will make the tough decisions necessary to allow the ingenuity and entrepreneurial spirit of the hard-working people of Ontario to create new jobs and new companies, making Ontario the economic engine of Canada once again.

Madam Speaker, I can’t support this bill. It is only an attempt to change the channel away from the—

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

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Ontario went down a mistaken path, and that path was—there was this belief that if we privatized electricity—it was advertised as a way to make electricity more affordable. I, for a moment, had a moment of weakness, and I thought maybe this might make sense. The theory is that competition would bring prices down; that if we privatize it, it would bring prices down. I’m happy to say that my moment of weakness passed, and I thought this was a ridiculous idea.

Now what do we have? We see that it has absolutely flopped as an idea, that privatizing and having public and private electricity providers has resulted in increased electricity prices. It is not the way to go. When there is a necessity, when there is something that the public requires, like health care, like education, like electricity, these should be publicly held, publicly delivered, publicly controlled. That’s the direction we should be heading in as a province. We went down the wrong way and we need to correct that.

I know where the blame lies. There are a number of individuals and parties available in this assembly today that hold the blame for that. But let’s all work together to move in the right direction now. We all understand that that was a mistake, that private electricity is not the way. Like my honourable colleague from Timiskaming–Cochrane said, let’s remember Sir Adam Beck and not Samsung Adam Beck. We need a champion for public energy. We need a champion for public inquiries and public scrutiny, not private deals for electricity. That’s not the direction we need to be heading in this province.

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

Mr. Reza Moridi: Madam Speaker, it’s a pleasure again to stand up in this House and speak on this bill.

In response to the comments made by the honourable member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, I would like to make this statement: In contrast to October 2, 2003, which is, as of today, nine years in the past, when our electricity system was in disarray, today I am proud to stand in this House and make the statement that our electricity system is in an excellent state. We are producing enough electricity to meet the demands of the people of Ontario, even in the hot days of summer and in the cold days of winter when northern Ontario needs more electricity.

During last year, 2011, we produced 142 million megawatts of power, and 80% of our power came from renewable and emission-free sources. We have 5.2 million electricity consumers in this province: 145 of them are industrial customers, and 60 major industries use one fifth, 20%, of our electricity.

When it comes to the price of electricity in Ontario, it is comparable to the price of electricity in our neighbouring provinces and neighbouring states, and it is much cheaper than in many European jurisdictions, such as Germany, France and the UK.

Today, 57% of our electricity comes from nuclear—our reactors are among the best performers in the world—and 22% of our electricity comes from hydro-electricity. Only 3% comes from coal, and we are going to get rid of coal within about two years from now. We have introduced renewable energy instead of coal—

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's a pleasure to comment on my colleague from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

I want to touch a little bit on the comments from the parliamentary assistant here, who's been assigned to the rock pile today. He can't leave his seat for hours because he's got to be the apologist for the government.

The Liberal energy policy probably ranks among the greatest frauds ever perpetrated on the people of the province of Ontario. That's exactly what it is. It's a fraud. It's a shell game. It's smoke and mirrors.

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

Mr. John Yakabuski: Withdraw.

My friend Mr. McDonnell touched on it. You've got power that costs two cents a kilowatt hour, such as hydraulic, hydro power, being allowed to pass over the dams generating nothing. Why? Because the McGuinty government has decided it would rather have expensive wind and solar power coming into the grid at 13.5 cents or up to 80.2 cents per kilowatt hour, would rather have them coming into the system and allow that natural, emission-free, clean, green power that is our water, that was the basis of our hydro system in the first place when it was envisioned by our forefathers—"We'll just let that pass over the dam."

That is one of the shameful things that has happened under the watch of the McGuinty government here in the province of Ontario. Billions and billions of dollars have passed over that dam over the years, and billions more will pass as this government decides that politics trumps good energy policy.

And who pays? It is the people out there who have seen their hydro bills—we're only 1.2 cents away from having tripled the price of hydro in this province. It's gone from 4.3 cents a kilowatt hour to now 11.7 cents; another 1.2 cents—and they'll do it shortly—it will be triple the price of power under their watch.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Madam Speaker, before us today is a debate about the direction of this province. It's as simple as that, and it always has been. Electricity has been a central factor in the development of Ontario, in the development of our industrial base and, frankly, of our technological base. The development of hydro at the beginning of the 20th century gave us the ability to send out engineers and, frankly, financiers around the world to show people how to develop renewable power.

What we've seen, though, in the last decade, Madam Speaker, with the introduction of large-scale privatization of our electricity system, has been gross overbuilding of gas facilities, investment in nuclear plants that we don't need and a neglect of 21st-century technologies and efficiency in conservation, with renewable power—solar and wind—essentially set up as sideshows because they are not going to be more than 10% of the power mix here in Ontario if the Liberals have their way. A combination of privatization, further investment in nuclear, and investment in gas-fired power that we can't afford and don't need: Those things together have driven up the price of electricity in Ontario, undermined our environmental goals and undermined our ability to develop an industrial society for the future.

Madam Speaker, what's proposed today, the part of this bill that takes away public scrutiny, that deals the public out when it comes to actually assessing what the plans are, has to come out of this bill. That part is the road to disaster. We're going to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on the Liberal seat-saver plans because of a lack of public scrutiny. We can't have more of that.

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

Mr. Jim McDonnell: Thank you to the speakers.

The member from Malton clearly talked about the price increases. They're so high that the people of Ontario are now forced to pay prices that are driving our businesses out of town, out of the province. Revenues that we desperately need to offset our services are now gone.

The member for Richmond Hill talked about the 2003 problems. But I wish he'd also go into the study that was done at that time which showed that the problem wasn't in Ontario. It was a result of a problem in the States, a problem with the grid that started in Ohio. It's just another red herring thrown out there. What was their solution? Their solution is to close down the manufacturing. Our peak hydro usage is still back in 2003, even though our population has increased significantly. Our business is gone. That's the problem. And that is their energy policy.

I heard the honourable member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke when he talked about the Liberals' failed policies. I won't use the word "fraud." They were really all about a message to the people that's not the right message. It's not the message that the Auditor General said they'd need to give out. They need to tell the people what this is costing. We're paying 80 cents for power because it sounds good, but we're dumping two-

cent power, and the people of Ontario have to pay the bill—almost three times the cost. We look at the Lennox plant—another red herring bill. We're actually taking a plant that is not being used today and we're adding half the capacity again to it, at at least \$1.2 billion. But we clearly don't need it.

I want to thank Toronto–Danforth for his talk about the neglect of 21st-century technology. Surely we have

the best minds in this country and in the world. Let's use them.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

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

The House adjourned at 1759.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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

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

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Attorney General / Procureur général
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton–Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Milligan, Rob E. (PC)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Piruzza, Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Bob Delaney

Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Teresa Piruzza

Bob Delaney, Victor Fedeli

Cindy Forster, Monte McNaughton

Yasir Naqvi, Teresa Piruzza

Michael Prue, Peter Shurman

Soo Wong

Clerks / Greffiers: Valerie Quioc Lim, Katch Koch (pro. tem)

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