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Tuesday 26 March 2013

Mardi 26 mars 2013

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 26 March 2013

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 26 mars 2013

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

AMBULANCE AMENDMENT ACT
(AIR AMBULANCES), 2013
LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LES AMBULANCES
(SERVICES D'AMBULANCE AÉRIENS)

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 25, 2013, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

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

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Questions and comments?

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I'm certainly pleased to rise in response to a number of the comments that have been made in relation to Bill 11, the air ambulance act.

First of all, I'd like to address something that seems to have been coming up in comments from the third party in relation to some testimony that we heard at public accounts last week; namely that of Dr. Andrew McCallum, the former chief coroner who is now president and CEO of Ornge. The third party is saying that Dr. McCallum stated that Bill 11 is unnecessary. I was there; this has been taken completely out of context. Dr. McCallum stated that the provisions of Bill 11, all the types of protections, the patient advocate, the whistle-blower protection—all these types of measures have been, in fact, instituted at Ornge under his leadership. The quality improvement plan, the performance agreement, all these provisions that we are enshrining in legislation have been introduced by Dr. McCallum—and prior to him, Mr. McKerlie, the former interim CEO. At this moment in time, the various protections for the Ontario taxpayer and for the public safety aspects of the service are all being looked after through the new leadership at Ornge. So I really take exception to the fact that the third party is saying that Dr. McCallum said that Bill 11 was unnecessary.

We all know that memories fade of issues that have gone before. There are new challenges in this House, and

we need to have this legislation enacted so that never, ever again can something like this occur.

I would continue to urge all members of this House to support Bill 11. We need this act, and we need it for protection of the public here in Ontario.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: It's a pleasure today to respond to the member from Timmins–James Bay. In a lot of ways, we agree with the position of the NDP.

I just want to make it very clear that with this particular issue of the Ornge ambulance fiasco, if you will, before the public accounts committee now, I'm surprised and indeed disappointed that the minister hasn't, at least as a courtesy and out of respect, waited for the findings of that committee—to bring forward another bill which really doesn't get the entire job done. In my understanding, a lot of the nuances within Bill 11 are actually permitted under the powers of the Minister of Health today.

But what is most troubling is it seems that the trouble continues. When our critic Christine Elliott spoke on this, she said that as far back as 2005, the ministry was advised by the Auditor General of Ontario of trouble at the organization. Every day for months, we received trickling independent information from the media. The most troubling, of course, was back some time ago, just earlier this month—insurance for Ornge had cost \$450,000. They bought Chris Mazza, who was making about \$1.5 million for Lord knows what he was doing, an insurance policy at the cost of \$450,000. It was a \$10-million life insurance policy.

This is the kind of waste—and what I always think of: Always put the constituent first; always put the people of Ontario first. It seems that in many cases, specifically in this organization, that they're putting themselves first. Can you imagine people making over \$1 million in an organization dealing in health care, that is already struggling for—

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

The member for Kitchener–Waterloo.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I think that it's really interesting that some of the criticism of what we put forward yesterday—one of the main points of contention for our party is that this Bill 11 does not have Ombudsman oversight. We have said very publicly that it's a missed opportunity to put another measure of accountability into the legislation. Ombudsman oversight, as well as including all health care organizations, is desperately needed.

The Ombudsman's office has repeatedly called for oversight over the MUSH sector, and Ornge should be no different. Perhaps if the Ombudsman had been provided with oversight, we would not be in the mess that we're in today and the Liberal government would not be trying to change the channel.

New Democrats are still very concerned that what we see here is a government that's still trying to dodge responsibility and change the channel. Does the public have any assurance that what happened at Ornge will never happen again? No—unequivocally, no. Does the public see a government that is willing to take any reasonable steps to ensure transparency and accountability at Ornge? Again, no. If you were very serious about this issue, you would include the Ombudsman having oversight over Ornge.

To make matters worse, there are questions that are puzzling and actions that don't make sense. Why is this government introducing far-reaching regulations that allow them to change the bylaws of a corporation without any notice or agreement? This is a dangerous precedent indeed. Why is the issue of federal incorporation still being used? What does this mean to all of our federally incorporated health care organizations? That they are beyond the control of government.

We need to see some action from this government on where it matters most. We want to see acknowledgment that more should have been done and that concrete steps are being put in place to make sure that this never happens again, both at Ornge and at other transfer payment agencies. We do not have that assurance with this legislation.

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

0910

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I'm pleased to speak for an additional two minutes on this piece of legislation, further to my comments last night.

In terms of the Ombudsman, which keeps coming up in some of this debate, the Ombudsman has an important role in Ontario. We understand that, and we respect that. But I just want to reiterate what I was talking about last night, and that is that we have a new accountability agreement in the Ministry of Health with respect to Ornge. As I said last night, I believe this is a strong piece of governance for Ornge. The steps that the Minister of Health has taken are extensive, they're concrete. There are requirements for reporting. There are new people involved in the oversight of the agency. I'm very proud and pleased that the Minister of Health has taken these steps. I think it's a model, quite frankly, for other ministries and other jurisdictions. Going forward, I think this will only help to serve the agency. I know the staff of the agency work hard every day on behalf of Ontarians and will continue to do so. With this new framework, the new leadership in Ornge, I think we can all be confident.

Is it a perfect organization? No. Were there issues in the past? Yes. But with the new framework in place now, I think we, the Ontario Legislature, and all Ontarians, can

take pride and confidence that Ornge is a well-run organization now and that the folks involved in the agency will continue to serve Ontarians and be there for all of us when we need air ambulance the most.

Thank you, Speaker, for this opportunity to speak again this morning on the legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member from Timmins–James Bay has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The government is telling us that this legislation is going to fix the problems at Ornge and we're not going to see yet again another billion dollars of money wasted by this Liberal government. I've heard this song three times before. Do you remember eHealth? The government had eHealth and they spent a billion dollars that they shouldn't have spent, and the government said, "Never again will that happen." Then what happened? Then we had Ornge. The government said, "Oh, we spent a billion dollars of taxpayer money that we didn't have and we'll never have that happen again." And now we've got gas plants, and the number—God knows what it is. It's \$600 million or \$1.3 billion, somewhere in between. The government is yet again wasting taxpayers' money on things that we shouldn't have spent the money on. And the government is trying to make me believe that the legislation before us is going to plug the hole? The hole is so big in the Liberal caucus that that ship will never float. There's no way that you can guarantee that this legislation is going to stop that stuff from happening again. The issue is, you have refused to give Ombudsman oversight to this particular committee. This bill is so full of holes you can drive a Mack truck through it and sink five Liberal ships without any difficulty.

I want to be clear: We'll vote for the bill at second reading, only because I want this bill to go to committee so that we can actually do some of the things that should be done to stop these types of things from happening again. The test will be, will the government accept those particular amendments? That will be the test, and that will be the determination if we support this, as New Democrats, at third reading or not.

I want to say to the government across the way, \$3 billion of money we didn't have to spend would have gone a long way to eliminating our deficit and paying for the things that people want in this province, including some of the transit issues that face the province of Ontario.

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

Mr. Todd Smith: It's great to speak on Bill 11 today, another billion-dollar Liberal scandal. Unfortunately, we've risen to speak on billion-dollar scandals plaguing this government far too often here in this Legislature.

Interjections.

Mr. Todd Smith: Thou dost protest too much, over on the other side, when we bring up these numbers. Forty million dollars is what they claimed for a gas plant scandal in Oakville, that we've heard in committee is costing hundreds of millions of dollars.

Interjections.

Mr. Todd Smith: Thou dost protest too much.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I would ask the members—

Interjections.

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

Mr. Todd Smith: I would like to speak to another Liberal scandal. How about if we put it that way? Will that appease them? We'll just call it a Liberal scandal, another one. We won't attach a dollar figure on this one yet, because we don't know exactly what it is, but it's going to be a hefty Liberal scandal.

This Liberal government has spent nine years crowing about the health care system as they allowed their air ambulance service to deteriorate. I have a story that hits home, especially in Prince Edward county, and I will share that with you very shortly. It talks about the troubles not just when it comes to the financial disasters that we've seen at Ornge, but it also talks about the human disaster that we've experienced with the lack of oversight at Ornge as well over the last many years.

As one of our members just spoke about moments ago, this has been going on since 2005. Last time I checked, this government has been in power far too long, since 2003. The red flags have been raised time and time again, but this government has refused to act. Now they act and they bring forward a flimsy piece of legislation that isn't going to fix the problems. It's not going to plug the hole in the health care system that the member from the NDP just spoke of.

Millions of dollars were put into a system with no oversight, not because the mechanisms didn't exist but because the ministers who were in charge refused to do their job. They were asleep at the wheel. They were asleep at the switch. Can we imagine, really, anywhere else where hundreds of millions of dollars, possibly, could be wasted like they have been in Ornge—

Interjection.

Mr. Todd Smith: You caught that—and the person at the very top, the minister, would still be able to keep her job? We've had ministers who have lost their jobs and shown some humility and walked away after spending too much on orange juice, but not when you're wasting millions of dollars on the Ornge file here in Ontario. No, they continue to stick around and bring out this flimsy piece of legislation, saying that they're doing their job.

The waste of money has been painfully catalogued on the front pages of our newspapers now for months and months and months: \$50,000 wasted on a motorcycle that never moves. It sits in a lobby at the Ornge headquarters. It's an Orange County Chopper, a very cool bike, but why is an organization spending \$50,000 on a motorcycle to sit in their lobby as a decoration piece? Ski trips expensed to the tune of \$15,000; \$1.2 million in loans to former CEO Chris Mazza. That is just the loans; that isn't the salary. Over the last two years at Ornge, Dr. Mazza received \$4.6 million in salary. That includes loans and benefits and bonuses, of all things.

There was \$6.7 million in questionable deals with the company that was providing these helicopters for the air

ambulance service; the company was AgustaWestland. Hundreds of millions of dollars was spent on these helicopters that were too small for the first responders and those working in these choppers to perform CPR because they weren't designed properly. Those providing medical service couldn't provide CPR to those in need.

The cost of the air ambulance actually increased 20% under Ornge while they were handling 6% fewer patients at Ornge. An unexplained \$14,000 payoff to a Brazilian law firm by one of Ornge's for-profit subsidiaries; \$40,000 spent on a speedboat expensed to Ornge.

I know all of this happened under the minister's watch. And if we're to believe her, not a single bureaucrat or member of her political staff informed her about these over-expenditures. If that's the case, then the minister is either falling in her job to oversee agencies in her ministry—

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I think it was “failing,” not “falling.”

Mr. Todd Smith: You could call it failing. If you want to say you're failing, that's fine. It'd be nice for you to admit that you're failing, but “falling” works as well. You've been falling down on the job, and I'm happy to see that the minister admits that perhaps she's been failing in her job, because the rest of us who are watching have realized that for a long time. So maybe some humility is starting to peek through here. Her ministry is failing to appropriately manage her staff. Neither is really encouraging; whether we're saying “falling” or “failing,” they're both negative implications.

0920

If only the Liberal dealings at Ornge stopped there. The firm of former federal Liberal Party president Alfred Apps was paid millions of dollars. People with connections to Liberal bigwigs like Warren Kinsella were major players at Ornge. Mr. Mazza even told the public accounts committee that Mr. Apps had arranged for a meeting between himself and Premier McGuinty. Ornge was failing Ontarians in many, many ways.

With the few minutes that I have left, I'd like to tell you a little story about a young boy in Prince Edward county. We've talked a lot already about the shortcomings when it comes to oversight and finances at Ornge, but I can recall when I was the news director at Quinte Broadcasting radio stations in the Quinte region in eastern Ontario—it was a May weekend, and two little boys were playing in the southern part of Prince Edward county. They were playing with matches, and one of them unfortunately was burned very, very seriously. The burns of this eight-year-old boy—his name is Joseph Stoness—covered 70% of the young lad's body. They were third-degree burns, a very, very serious situation.

Paramedics responded to the scene. I believe it was May 24, 2009. They knew that this boy needed the services of an Ornge air ambulance. He was in a very, very serious situation. While they were waiting at the scene, the Ornge air ambulance was on its way and decided that instead of stopping in Prince Edward county to pick up this young boy, it would make its way to Renfrew, which

is in the Ottawa Valley, of course, and it would bypass this serious, serious call in Prince Edward county, where this eight-year-old boy had received third-degree burns to 70% of his body.

Those emergency responders who were on the scene in Prince Edward county were beside themselves. They were very, very angry when they received the call from those at the hospital informing them that in fact the air ambulance would not be coming to Prince Edward county; they had been diverted away to a call in the Renfrew area.

The reason, it's speculated, that that took place is because Ornge had been directed from someone at headquarters that in fact they could get that call in, in the north, and make money on that call and then eventually get back to Prince Edward county to pick up the young boy there and take him to the hospital.

Unfortunately, those on the ground who were driving the ambulances and providing the service on the ground said, "We can't wait." They drove the boy to the Picton hospital, Prince Edward County Memorial Hospital, and he waited there. Eventually, that air ambulance did make its way to Prince Edward county. The Prince Edward county OPP detachment issued a report a few days after, saying that the child was airlifted from the location to Sick Kids Hospital in Toronto, but that in fact didn't take place; it never happened. EMS and land ambulance transported him to Picton. The Ornge dispatched to pick up the child was diverted by Ornge dispatch five minutes from landing at Picton. The diversion to Renfrew was met with a lot of resistance, as I say, from the attending physicians as well in Prince Edward county. Several hours later, that air ambulance made its way to pick up the boy and take him to Sick Kids in Toronto.

There are problems with the field trauma triage guidelines, that burn victims don't fall within the environmental standards. So there are some changes that need to be made not just in the way that the finances are looked after at Ornge, but there are some serious problems and shortcomings when it comes to the medical guidelines as well.

Thank you for your time this morning, and I look to comment further on this.

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

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I touched on this point yesterday and I want to touch on it again just to clarify my position. I think that while we recognize that after the scandal broke and after the Toronto Star and other news agencies released the story related to the exorbitant salary of Dr. Mazza, among other things, the Minister of Health did take some actions that worked towards putting Ornge on the right track, on a new track, and I recognize that. But what I don't acknowledge is that the bill is necessary. I don't agree that it's necessary. In fact, if you look at all the steps that the minister took, the minister took all these steps without having any bill before this House, without having any bill passed. The fact that there was a new board, the fact that there's a new CEO, the fact that

there's now continual contact between the ministry and Ornge—all of these things are happening without this bill being passed, without this bill being enacted. So I ask, and I question, why do we have this bill in the first place? If the ministry is able to make the changes without the bill, if the ministry is able to have oversight without this bill, why even waste the time of this House in discussing and debating this bill?

In fact, my colleague mentioned that this has the optics of simply a political manoeuvre to show that more is being done, but what it does is highlight the fact that this should have been addressed years and years ago. It highlights the fact that this could have been addressed years and years ago, without any bill being before this House.

The Ministry of Health is the primary funder—the sole funder—for Ornge. For any transfer payment agency where you are the sole funder, you have great powers of moral suasion. You can convince and encourage and persuade that organization to do the right thing. That's what we've seen, and we'd like to see that happen moving forward, and we'd like to see that happen with proper oversight in all transfer payment agencies.

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

Hon. Liz Sandals: I want to comment on one of the things that greatly distresses me about this whole conversation. What we hear over and over again from the opposition is a catalogue of past wrongs. If you listen to the opposition, you would think that that's what is going on today. The feedback I get from front-line workers at Ornge is that they are truly distressed and truly insulted by the impression that the people in this Legislature often give the public about what is wrong, because people think it's still wrong, and it's not.

I would like to read you some of the data about what Ornge is like today, which is because that minister took control and fixed things. From October to December 2012, these are the stats. If you look at the Auditor General's reports, one of the concerns was that often crews weren't available to respond to calls. The current data is that Ornge air crews and aircraft are available to respond to calls 97% and 97.3% of the time, respectively; that's crews and aircraft. That's a dramatic improvement over what it was when Mazza was there.

Some 93% of the calls that Ornge receives are actually for transport between facilities, which, in plain English, means from one hospital to another hospital, typically from a hospital in a small town to a teaching facility where there are specialized services.

Some 96% of these calls were confirmed within 20 minutes, just to do a patient transfer from town 1 to town 2; that's new. Seven that are actually emergencies—90% of these calls are confirmed within 10 minutes and the aircraft is on the way. That is a dramatic improvement in performance, and I think we need to recognize that in the front-line workers from Ornge and say—

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

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: My esteemed and fine colleague who represents Prince Edward–Hastings with great fortitude and knowledge has made some very good points here this morning.

One of the things that I find disturbing is the simple fact that this government—it's the same government that was led under Mr. McGuinty, and now it's under the new Premier, supposedly bringing in changes and the whole new facade. But no matter how many coats of white paint you put on the old fence, the old fence is broken and the old fence needs to be replaced.

The Minister of Education can rhyme off all the statistical data she wants, and she can make a good front for the Minister of Health. But the bottom line, and I know—I have many, many friends here on the front lines at Ornge, Minister—many friends, Minister—personal friends that I grew up with, who will sit down and will be more than happy to talk to the Minister of Health, if they can actually get through to the Ministry of Health, and would be more than happy to share their frustrations with what's going on at Ornge.

0930

You know, we as politicians sit here and we can talk about situations, and that's what we do, but a lot of times we don't listen to what is actually going on. This is the problem and this is one of the reasons why I got involved, because when I'm listening to people back in my riding and to front-line paramedics and Ornge operators, whom I have the greatest admiration and respect for, I'm getting a different depiction from the front lines than I am from this government sitting across from us.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further comments? The member for Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, boy, that's an interesting defence on the part of the government, saying that this is all in defence of the workers at Ornge. The workers at Ornge were almost swinging off the chandeliers as this whole thing was unfolding, and the government wasn't listening. I was one of the members, along with Howard Hampton, some years ago, who raised this issue at committee—the concerns that were being brought forward by workers. I know that Frank Klees, the member from Newmarket–Aurora, did the same in order to raise alarm bells about what was going on at Ornge, and the government wasn't listening. The government, because there was a majority, was saying, “Oh, there's no problem. Everything is okay. Don't worry about it. You're the opposition. You're just being partisan.” Well, \$1 billion later, who was being partisan?

The Liberals, quite frankly, wasted \$1 billion of taxpayers' money on something they shouldn't have spent the money on. This is not once; they did the same thing under eHealth. They spent \$1 billion on eHealth that they didn't have to spend. They told us, on both of those occasions, “Don't worry; it'll never happen again.” Now we have got gas plants that you're spending between \$600 million and \$1.3 billion on—we'll see what the final number is. All I know is that the Liberals, when it comes to using taxpayers' money for their own political self-

interest, are pretty darn good, but they're not very good at the political interest and the interest of the public.

I say that that \$3 billion of wasted money would have gone a long way to reducing the operating deficit of this province. It would have assisted us in making sure that we have the dollars to pay for some of those services and things that we need to do in this province, such as making sure that we have a good transit strategy that is properly funded.

Now the government is about to spend another \$1.3 billion to give corporations the ability to write off their entertainment expenses—nothing that anybody else can do in this society—so the count is up to \$4.3 billion of money we should have not spent.

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

Mr. Todd Smith: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I'd like to thank those who spoke as well this morning, from Bramalea–Gore–Malton and Timmins–James Bay, as well as the Minister of Education and my good friend from the Trenton–Warkworth–Campbellford area, Mr. Milligan from Northumberland–Quinte West riding.

You'll recall that for much of last year—I was thinking about this as I was walking down here this morning to the Legislature as the bells were ringing for five minutes to warn us all that we were coming in to start our debates for the day. I was thinking back to last year, when the bells wouldn't just ring for five minutes; they would ring for 30 minutes. The reason that they would ring for 30 minutes is because we were opposed to this government and their misrepresentation or denial of the will of this Legislature.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Order. Continue.

Mr. Todd Smith: You might remember that the health minister spoke several times about the fact that if it was the will of this Legislature, there would be a select committee to look into everything that was going wrong at Ornge, and it never happened. It never happened. And do you know what? The Minister of Education can say, “Hey, we're on the road to recovery,” but I can tell you, just back to my story about little Joseph Stoness in Prince Edward county, that we're not on the road to recovery. What needs to be done hasn't yet been done. This bill is a stopgap measure to stop those bells from ringing, and it certainly didn't work.

I can tell you that burn patients, like the little boy in Prince Edward county, still don't qualify under field trauma triage guidelines set out at Ornge. So, this could happen again. They're under consideration at the Ministry of Health, but what isn't under consideration at the Ministry of Health? It's time to get to the bottom of these problems and get Ontario back on the right track before we lose more money and more human collateral occurs in this province.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: I think that this debate is really important. The government has said that we are focusing on past wrongs, but the important thing about focusing on past wrongs is that you learn from those experiences. And this bill, G11, the Ambulance Amendment Act, as it's presented has not been revised to prevent—for instance, the example from the member from Prince Edward–Hastings—it has not been adjusted to make those changes so that that little boy is not in that same circumstance again.

Let's look at what this bill does have, though, for instance. There is, thankfully, whistle-blower protection. I think that we've seen from across the province that front-line health care workers have been speaking up; they've been standing up for their patients and taking great risks in doing so. This proposed legislation would protect an air ambulance attendant from coming forward and bringing forward his concerns. However, we can actually adjust that and adapt that to include also, in the mainstream health care field, personal support workers as well as long-term-care workers.

It also does—it's an accompanying regulation unrelated to the bill: The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, FIPPA, will add Ornge to the list of agencies accessible to freedom-of-information requests. As many of you know, we put in many of those requests. We wanted to find out about costs; we wanted to find out about mismanagement. Had we had the opportunity to access that information and had the government provided that information, perhaps we could have brought forward some ideas and pressured the government to take some action.

What's not in the bill is actually more important for us on this side of the House. The oversight of Ornge by Ontario's Ombudsman is still not granted. I know the government has expressed some frustration that we keep bringing this up, but when you listen to the Ontario Ombudsman, André Marin, he's expressed strong concern that his office will continue to not have oversight of Ornge. He has said that without his oversight, there will be "no credible accountability." The patient advocate role reports to Ornge's vice-president, not the public or even the board of directors. So we have a credibility issue and we actually have a trust issue with the people of the province.

Ornge will continue to be an organization that cannot be called to government agencies. Government agencies is an important place where we can actually hold a level of accountability for the people of this province.

Finally, the bill cannot obscure the fact that the Ministry of Health has refused to look at their own role in this. And the reality is that this bill will do nothing to prevent future scandals from occurring at other government-funded agencies or organizations. The bill brings far-reaching measures to an organization that is already subject to—and I think the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton has raised some very good points. Why are we actually having this conversation about this bill? A huge missed opportunity, when this

House was prorogued on October 15; the government could have gone back and reworked the bill, added Ombudsman oversight, for instance. Having the ability to bring Ornge to a government agency—these are revenue-neutral options, definitely another layer of accountability that we could have adapted to.

Today, we're debating Bill 11, and we've been here before. It's no different than it was pre-prorogation. I know that people know how strongly I feel about prorogation. It was a missed opportunity, it was an interruption in democracy, and it was obviously an opportunity for the government to avoid scrutiny. Instead of using that time for a positive goal—to rework G11—nothing happened. It's a little bit like Groundhog Day; it's a little bit like déjà vu. Quite honestly, the government shouldn't be surprised that in the four months that the Legislature was shut down, by not bringing Ombudsman oversight into the bill, we are unhappy with that because the public at large would like to see more accountability in this government agency.

But we are happy. I think it's important to say what is good and that we're happy that this legislation would bring Ornge under FIPPA, so, subject to freedom-of-information requests.

I think yesterday, though, I raised a number of concerns fundamentally about transparency. It's so important that transparency is at the core of this legislation moving forward. Air ambulances often deal with life-and-death situations—high-stress, crisis situations, much like the member from Prince Edward–Hastings has told us—and sometimes things do go wrong. For those families to know that they can rely on the excellent services of the Ombudsman for impartial third-party answers often brings help and closure. People want answers when things go wrong, and they won't get them under this current circumstance.

0940

You would think that this new-found desire for transparency—because there's a lot of talk and there's a lot of conversation about transparency and accountability—would bring us Ombudsman oversight, but no; Ornge remains outside of the mandate of our Ombudsman. As I already pointed out, Ornge will also not be called to public accounts or any other government agencies. This is a real trust issue and a real accountability issue, and the government has given us no reasons whatsoever why they are reluctant to take these easy and cost-free steps. They say, "No. We've got it under control."

But, you know, we've heard this before. In fact, in the Auditor General's report on Ornge, from February 2006, the Ministry of Health "committed to set standards and monitor performance against those standards to ensure that the 'end result will be improved care, improved access to service, increasing effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery of service, and the assurance of greater fiscal and medical accountability.'" So we heard this in this House. We heard the defence of that report. We heard a promise. But the ministry never fulfilled their end of the deal. As the auditor said in his report, "However, the

ministry” had “not been obtaining the information it needs to meet these oversight commitments.” In other words, the ministry wasn’t even trying to improve the operational standards, the accountability. You weren’t asking the hard questions about salary, about fiscal management, and the fact is that the performance agreement included many tools of oversight, but the ministry failed to do their job.

The Minister of Health’s main line of defence is that this original performance agreement tied the government’s hands. But you have to remember who you’re working for. We’re working for the people of this province, and you need that level of accountability. Also, it mentioned that although the ministry wanted to keep Ornge in line, they were first prevented by this inadequate agreement and that they were lied to by the Ornge executives.

Really what happened, if we’re clear and if we’re honest, is the public raised concerns; the front-line workers raised concerns; this House, the opposition, raised concerns. We forced this issue to come to the floor. That’s part of our role as the third party and as the opposition, to actually hold the government to account for your practices and for your policies and, quite honestly, for your legislation.

In summary, I think I’d say that New Democrats are still very concerned that what we see here is a government that is still trying to dodge responsibility and to change the channel. We have what appears to be a public relations exercise instead of fundamentally changing—making positive changes, constructive changes that actually serve the needs of the people of this province. Does the public have any assurance that what happened at Ornge will never happen again? We do not. This is an ongoing concern.

You had the opportunity to make this bill stronger, to make it more effective. That did not happen. Does the public see a government that is willing to take any reasonable steps to ensure transparency and accountability at Ornge? Again, no. And to make matters worse, there are questions that are puzzling and there are actions that don’t make sense. Why is this government introducing far-reaching regulations that allow them to change the bylaws of a corporation without any notice or agreement? This is a dangerous, dangerous precedent. Why is the issue of federal incorporation still being used? These are outstanding questions. We have more questions than answers going forward. It makes it very difficult to be supportive of a piece of legislation that actually is ineffective.

There were many editorials over the last two years, three years that have been written about Ornge, and I think that one of the strongest ones is actually from the Waterloo Region Record. It mentions that there is a “bitter taste of Ornge.” G11, this proposed bill, does not remove that bitter taste. More importantly, it doesn’t hold the accountability. It doesn’t improve operational management, and it leaves more questions than answers.

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

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I’m pleased to hear from the member from Kitchener–Waterloo that she did see some positive aspects of this bill. Certainly, I would expect that people would see the benefits of instituting this piece of legislation.

I just want to focus on some of the protections, in terms of public safety, that have been instituted. First of all, Ornge has already created a declaration of patient values. This is going to guide the organization, going forward, in terms of what type of expectations the public can have. To assist with this declaration of patient values, Ornge has developed an online patient relations portal, and there is a guarantee for feedback on patient complaints.

They have hired a patient advocate to work with patients and their families to address concerns and advocate for operational improvements. I think we all know that quite often patient complaints just arise from misunderstandings. They’re not necessarily in any way catastrophic, and there can be a process whereby explanations, clarifications can be provided through a patient advocate.

In terms of whistle-blower protection, which over the last several months we’ve heard quite a bit about, I think the way that this is being instituted is a very cautious approach, a very sensible approach. The whistle-blower hotline is answered by an independent ethics officer. Grant Thornton LLP is going to be in charge of that process. This is a completely independent organization, and I think this will be extremely helpful, should any further problems appear at Ornge.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: I’m pleased to join in the debate and provide a few minutes of comments to the member for Kitchener–Waterloo. I have to tell her that during the March break, I went to Gananoque—Speaker, indulge me for a moment—to get my car serviced at Chiasson Ford. Arnold Chiasson, Uncle Arnold—he is the uncle of the member for Kitchener–Waterloo. The dealership just reopened after a four-month renovation. I know that Arnold and Marilyn and their family are very, very proud of the member from Kitchener–Waterloo. I wanted to pass along to you your family’s congratulations from Leeds–Grenville.

Interjections.

Interjection: I’m sure they’re proud of the member from Leeds–Grenville too.

Mr. Steve Clark: They’re very proud, yes.

I want to just provide a few comments from what the member for Kitchener–Waterloo said about Bill 11. I want to take members back to a March 4 story by Rob Ferguson in the Toronto Star, “Ombudsman Takes Aim at Ornge Bill.” You’d think that if the government wanted to get something right after what happened in the very tumultuous sitting we had just before the government ran and hid for 128 days, they would have gotten this Ornge piece right.

I want to take a quote from Mr. Marin in that Toronto Star story, that this patient advocate’s “job description

posted last year calls on the advocates' office to "investigate, resolve, document and report organization-specific patient and visitor compliments and concerns."

This Legislature doesn't want compliments to be dealt with. There are some real and severe concerns with Ornge and its operation.

This bill does nothing to have transparency and accountability.

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

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I want to congratulate my colleague from Kitchener–Waterloo on her presentation that was both sensible and intelligent.

I hear the response from government members, and you expect this. I recall my friend Howard Hampton saying four years ago, "This is going to be a disaster down the line," and he was right. I haven't said it often enough in this Legislature—because he was hearing from the front-line workers that there was a disaster in the making. He raised questions in the Legislature and, of course, the government didn't want to hear about it at the time, hoping to be able to contain the damage.

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Bill 11 attempts to contain the damage as best as it can, and I understand it. You hear the member from Oak Ridges–Markham defending an officer who is—an independent officer advocate, I think, is the language that is being used. But they refuse to do what New Democrats have been calling for for seven long, painful years, and that is that what we need to have is Ombudsman oversight over these matters.

Interestingly, Ontario is one of the few provinces in Canada where they refuse to have the Ombudsman's oversight over these matters, which include the hospital care, which include child care services. If we had such oversight, we would truly have an independent person doing a review with the powers to go in, investigate—the powers to bring forth people to account. If we had that, we would have the oversight we desperately need, and the government refuses to do that. Why? Why not show some leadership and have the Ombudsman have the power to have the oversight that is desperately needed? That's what the member is calling for.

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

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thank you, Speaker. It's a pleasure to join the debate to follow up on the comments from the member from Kitchener–Waterloo. I think the member from Oak Ridges–Markham had it right when she said that she heard something positive, at least, in the comments.

I think all of us in this House aren't pleased with what happened at Ornge. I don't think anybody should be proud of the way that it was managed. I think any government that I've ever seen in the province of Ontario—I think in any modern democracy—runs into issues from time to time and they need to act. How that government is judged is on how it responds to the issues that it finds within its own government. We've all had them: The

Conservatives have had them, the New Democrats surely had them—Rosario, you'll remember them—and we've had them as well. It's how you respond to that; it's what you do next; it's how you resolve those issues. There will be others to come with other governments of different stripes, I'm sure. That's the way it works.

So it's what do you do next. What does this bill say you should do next? It says we need a new performance agreement. It says we need new policies and procedures on conflict of interest. It says we need some whistleblower protection. It also says that we respect and we understand that the 600 front-line employees who provide this service on a daily basis are doing a good job for the province, are doing a good job for the people in the province of Ontario.

When we try to understand what they do on a daily basis—93% of the calls Ornge receives are for transports between hospitals or between facilities; 7% of those calls are scene calls—and those are the emergencies. That's where we see them land on the highways.

To say that this isn't a step forward, I think, would be an error. I think this is a positive step forward; it deserves the support of all three parties in the House. Its first quality improvement plan has been submitted, and it's going to build on the achievements of the past year. I think we've got better days ahead for Ornge and I think we should all be proud of that, Speaker.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you to the members from Oak Ridges–Markham, Leeds–Grenville, Trinity–Spadina and Oakville for commenting on Bill 11. I feel like we're going in circles a little bit on this one, but I go back to the fundamental purpose of bringing forward Bill 11. It was to rectify the damage, to make changes to the practices, to alter the procedures to ensure that Ornge was actually an effective agency, delivering a very important and fundamental service to the people of this province.

I just want to say to the member for Leeds–Grenville, I'm sure that my uncle would be very happy that you figured a car-dealership part of the conversation into the debate. But I can connect it. If something happened in Gananoque that required an Ornge ambulance, you want to make sure that that loved one—that parent, that grandparent—actually has a chance of receiving the services that the government has promised. I think that when we look at this bill and we look at the—first of all, really, God love the member from Trinity–Spadina. He will not give up on the Ombudsman. It is a theme that he continually brings, because he is right. We are right to ask for Ombudsman oversight over this government's agencies. He doesn't hear it a lot, so I just want to make sure I get it into the Hansard. When the Ombudsman says there will be a lack of credible accountability—his voice, his opinion has greater weight than all of us in here; a missed opportunity to actually strengthen Bill 11. We still have ongoing concerns, and we're really hopeful that, if it gets to committee, it can be changed in a very effective and positive way.

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

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's my pleasure to rise and speak today to Bill 11, An Act to amend the Ambulance Act with respect to air ambulance services.

On September 10, 2012, I stood in this very spot and debated Bill 50. For those watching from home, Bill 50 was a version of this bill last session that was swept away by the Liberals' shameful prorogation. I'm saddened to see that little has changed since I spoke against that piece of legislation. The bill remains toothless, a mere lip service, an illusion of action. It provides just enough that some may think the Liberals are tackling underlying, systemic problems at Ornge.

The tragedy at Ornge has an impact that extends far beyond the walls of the Legislature. It ripples into the homes of those who have lost loved ones. When Ornge helicopters were unable to reach a young girl in Windsor, not far from my hometown in Chatham, there was a tragic loss of life, and the family called for action to be taken to get to the bottom of what had happened.

Sadly, there is absolutely nothing substantive in this legislation. It is only an attempt to shift the blame away from the Minister of Health for her lack of oversight on the gross waste of public funds at Ornge. It's an attempt to divert attention away from the fact that the minister has had the power to hold Ornge and its board accountable from the very beginning of the Ornge saga. The minister had the power to intervene under the original Ornge performance agreement; article 15 of this agreement gave her intervention powers. After the scandal was brought to light—thanks to the hard work of the public accounts committee, the tireless efforts of our member from Newmarket–Aurora, investigative reporters and the Auditor General—the minister wishes to be seen doing something.

Perhaps the greatest disappointment of Bill 11 is that it fails to address the underlying cause of problems at Ornge: the existing structure of the air ambulance service. Even today, we still don't know exactly what happened at Ornge. This is because the government ignored calls for a select committee and refused to release many pertinent documents at Ornge. Even the Auditor General stated that Ornge would not willingly provide his investigation with documents. It's an organization that is plagued by mismanagement, corruption and scandal.

It's quite clear that the problems at Ornge are not merely skin deep. Urgent and meaningful reform is in fact required, but rather than recognize that it is flawed and requires direct oversight by the Ministry of Health, the Liberal government prefers to pretend a few minor tweaks will get the job done.

Some of these insignificant tweaks are abysmal attempts at providing whistle-blower protection. Since the government failed to form a select committee to look into the Ornge scandal, we rely on whistle-blowers as a primary resource for accountability. For every person who has the strength to come forward, surely others are staying quiet for fear of losing their jobs. The govern-

ment has stood up and stated that the bill will expand the scope of whistle-blower protection, when in reality it will set restrictions. Firstly, the bill does not provide across-the-board protection to whistle-blowers. This is such a basic measure, so incredibly obvious, that its omission from the legislation is an indictment of this government's ability to act. Further it imposes limits on which individuals are protected and whom they can approach with information. The point of whistle-blower protection is to ensure that people who come forward will be protected regardless of who they approach, not to only cover them if they happen to have read the legislation and gone through the ministry-approved contact.

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Lastly, this bill fails to provide a formal process for the Ombudsman that would have ensured proper protection and follow-up. Instead, the bill calls for the provision of special investigators who will be appointed by and answer to the Minister of Health, a consolidation of control that opens the door to translucency instead of transparency.

Ombudsman André Marin commented on this legislation in a letter to Minister Matthews, stating that the special investigators would not be independent of government and that "far from being watchdogs, they would operate on a ministerial dog leash."

Mr. Marin makes reference to the government's claim that this bill was brought about because of recommendations made by the Auditor General. To this point the Ombudsman states, "Nowhere in his report did he recommend (a) a new bureaucracy of 'special investigators'; (b) the creation of a patient advocate residing deep within Ornge whose partial responsibilities include being a clearing house for 'compliments'; or (c) the maintenance of the status quo with respect to the exclusion of any role for the Ombudsman."

The simple and obvious answer to this accountability and independence dilemma would be to expand the scope of the Ombudsman of Ontario to include oversight of Ornge. The public wants this. The Ombudsman has called for this. Both parties on this side of the House have called for this. Everyone seems to be in agreement with this noble idea except the Minister of Health. Why is she so afraid of proper Ombudsman oversight? What does she have to hide? We may never know.

The health minister has stated that Bill 11 "provides a lot more oversight" than a previous agreement Ornge had with the government, under which the air ambulance service set up a complex web of for-profit companies leveraged off tax dollars. The Minister of Health had absolutely no oversight of Ornge as it spent millions of taxpayer dollars while also failing to provide proper service. In that regard, I suppose the minister is, in fact, correct in saying that the bill would provide more oversight than before—a slight improvement over doing nothing at all. Mere lip service may be enough for the Liberal government, but it's not enough for me, nor is it enough for the PC Party of Ontario.

With the introduction of this bill, the minister is making it appear as though all is well and forgotten at

Ornge. In my opinion, Speaker, this couldn't be further from the truth. You don't use a band-aid to plug a gaping hole in a dam. I've recently spoken with an Ornge staffer in my riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex who has told me of several botched air ambulance missions. I can't mention him by name because there's not proper whistle-blower protection.

Let's face the facts: Ornge was a fraudulent scandal, a total mismanagement of taxpayers' dollars that wasted millions of dollars, putting lives of patients and crew members at risk almost daily.

In no way could I support this bill. The chief concern of such legislation should be to ensure that a similar tragedy can never happen again. Ornge was a tragedy in many ways. First and foremost, for those who died and the ones left behind, Ornge has done irreparable harm. No apologies, no investigation, no structural reform can ever take back a life or undo the damage to survivors. For these victims and those who remain, we must take real steps to guarantee that this is the last time a scandal like this occurs. For those who have lost faith in the institution of government—if there are any left—we must show them that there is a better way. We must put politics aside for certain issues. This is one of them.

I call on the government to scrap this bill. It is an insult to everyone that the Ornge scandal has impacted. Let's do the right thing: protect whistle-blowers, provide actual oversight and let the Ombudsman do his job independently so that we can start to move on from this mess.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I want to thank the member from Chatham Kent for his comments on this bill. The member has talked about meaningful reform that is needed in this bill. He pointed out one positive thing that has been put in this bill, which is whistle-blower protection, but it doesn't go far enough. There are loopholes in that whistle-blower protection that may cause people who have concerns who work at Ornge not to come forward.

The members opposite agreed with us as well that we need to have proper oversight, a democratic process in the government to show proper oversight to the citizens of Ontario. We need Ombudsman oversight. We have said this over and over again. What concerns me, Speaker, is when someone, just like the whistle-blowers—they kept coming to this Legislature. They came to the members here, the New Democrats and the Conservatives. Letters were sent out in July 2011—14 copies, apparently, to the ministry, and nobody saw them. I think, on that example, if a whistle-blower went to the Ombudsman, the Ombudsman's ears would perk right up and he would investigate this matter. This didn't have to be dragged on for four years.

The people of Ontario have lost faith in this government and their ability to oversee Ornge. That's why we're here today. We're here today to discuss this bill and how important it is that this wrong has to be corrected. We have to remember why we are here. We're

here to serve the public. This fiasco hasn't served the public interest. We have to remember that we are servants of the public.

I ask this government to please listen to the House on this side and consider Ombudsman oversight. We're going to pass this bill, as the member mentioned earlier, to committee, but we're going to work darned hard to get you to listen—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. The Minister of Consumer Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Thank you, Speaker. I'm happy to rise again to speak about the Ambulance Amendment Act. I'm very disappointed to hear that the PCs will not be supporting this, will not be helping us to move this bill to committee, to work on it, potentially improve it and bring ideas forward. To say that they won't support it really is a slap in the face to the Ornge organization and the good work that all of the people do there.

I think it also flies in the face of good movement forward. Some of the things my colleague from Oak Ridges moraine and my colleague from Oakville have talked about that the Minister of Health has implemented are indeed strong measures to increase government accountability, governance and transparency at Ornge.

We talked about the new patient advocate. We talked about improvements in the helicopters. We talked about expanded services in Thunder Bay. We talked about a dedicated patient flight service. We talked about the whistle-blower policy. We talked about a quality improvement plan. We talked about new performance agreements, and requirements to post executive expenses and salaries to improve accountability and transparency. We talked about other new policies and procedures on conflict of interest, performance management and executive compensation, and the appointment of an ethics officer.

Speaker, these are all very strong measures. I have spoken repeatedly over the last two days of how the actions of the Minister of Health, the measures she has put in place for more transparency and accountability, are indeed a model for other organizations. I think it shows progress; it shows we are responding to issues. I'm very happy to hear that the NDP will be supporting this and helping us move this to committee in a constructive and positive fashion, in the interests of Ornge and in the interests of Ontarians.

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

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to rise today to provide comment about my colleague from Chatham–Kent–Essex today debating Bill 11, An Act to amend the Ambulance Act with respect to air ambulance services, 2013—basically a response to the Ornge scandal that we have been hearing about, actually, for years.

A lot of members have made comment about that, that people that worked within Ornge had sent red flags to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care for a long time.

The Auditor General did confirm that it was hard to get information out of them. So, there's up to \$3.2 million, I think, that has been wasted so far. We're still having committee hearings and still hearing witnesses. We did take a break on that because the government prorogued. That shut down our investigation into Ornge.

The people want to know about how their taxpayer dollars are being used and, certainly, the waste that happened. So we're talking about health here, but in general it's the government revenues. There's a waste of millions and billions of dollars that could be used to improve, in this case, home care services.

The minister always talks about the great things she's doing in the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. One of the things she has not done is done proper oversight of Ornge and its misuses of money. You just can't put it off to the side and say it's all running well when there are lots of employers from Ornge that are saying red flags—issues aren't being dealt with. People are dying. Helicopters are being bought in which you can't even perform CPR. I mean, that's just basic if you're running an air ambulance company.

So, it does need oversight from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Our taxpayer dollars have to be watched, but first and foremost, the safety of the citizens of Ontario has to be monitored. We have that responsibility here, so I appreciate the comments from my colleague from Chatham-Kent-Essex, and look forward to speaking on this later.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member from Timmins-James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Again, the government is trying to position this as if it's going to fix all of the problems at Ornge in one fell swoop by the way of this legislation. I just want to say—listen, if that's what the government thinks, I think they're sadly mistaken.

We're going to vote for this bill even though we think this is a bill that probably doesn't do as much as it needs to, only because we believe it has to go to committee. That's going to be the real test: Will the government actually do things like give the Ombudsman the ability to have oversight over Ornge, something that this government refused to do?

I remind members that in this House, years before this became a scandal, Howard Hampton, myself and Mr. Klees got up on numerous occasions in committee and in this House and pointed out what the employees of Ornge were telling us at the time. When we went to the Ombudsman in order to get him to do an investigation, the Ombudsman told us he didn't have authority to do so. When we went to public accounts, the government used its majority to stop us from being able to do oversight at the time through the public accounts committee.

This government is trying to talk a good line that they fixed the problem, but the problem has not been fixed. We've now spent a billion dollars on Ornge, needlessly—money we didn't have to spend. We spent a billion dollars on eHealth—money we didn't have to spend. We've spent between \$600 million and \$1.3

billion on cancelling gas plants that nobody wanted and we didn't need, and the government is about to give \$1.3 billion in HST rebates to employers to be able to offset their entertainment costs. That's a lot of money.

We're talking close to \$5 billion that this government has wasted through the debacles at eHealth, Ornge, gas plants and now the HST issue, that we could have applied to the deficit, that we could have spent on transit funding, that we could have dealt with in order to have a better health care system, but this government's choice is always about their political self-interest and never about the interests of the people of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Chatham-Kent-Essex has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Thank you very much, Speaker. Again, I would like to thank the members from London-Fanshawe, Pickering-Scarborough East, Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock—my colleague—and, of course, the member from Timmins-James Bay.

First of all, what I'd like to do is to extend my thanks: On behalf of our leader, Tim Hudak, and the rest of our colleagues, our thanks to all of the hard-working air ambulance staff who have in fact come forward and shared with us the harrowing experiences that they have encountered as a result of this scandal at air Ornge.

Speaker, we talk about wasted money—absolutely right. Now all of a sudden the public are faced with no knee surgeries, no hip surgeries—people suffering in pain. Why? Because there is not enough money. I wonder how much better our health care system would have been, could have been, if this scandal, along with the other scandals in health care, had not occurred. It's the number one expenditure of this government. Lives have been lost. Family members have suffered.

We need to have protection of whistle-blowers. It's critical, as far as I'm concerned.

Do we need to move forward? The answer is yes, we do. We need to move forward from this. But do you know what? What has happened in the past cannot be forgotten, nor should it be forgotten. Do we learn from lessons? Yes, we should be learning from lessons.

I have a saying, Speaker, and it's this: If ifs and buts were candies and nuts, we'd all have a merry Christmas. If this hadn't occurred, I wonder just how much more would have been provided for our taxpayers, especially in the area of health care.

Thank you very much.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

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

The House recessed from 1016 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: First of all, I'd like to introduce Jacob Van Boekel, the page captain here today, from the great riding of Oxford. The reason I introduced him first is that he has a number of guests here visiting

with him today, and I'd like to introduce them. They're in the members' gallery: Mike and Jennifer Van Boekel, his parents; Gregory and Hannah Van Boekel, his brother and sister; Gerry and Thea Van Boekel, his grandparents; Betty and Bill Hampson, his grandparents; Tim and Carolyn Kaufman, friends of the family; and Heather Vondervoort and Zach Stevenson, who are Jacob's friends. Thank you very much. I'd like to extend a warm welcome to all the guests.

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I rise today in the House to welcome my friend and my constituent Lorraine Gandolfo. She is currently the manager of communications and public affairs at the Ontario Trillium Foundation. She is active in the francophone community, and she sits on my Central West Local Health Integration Network board. Welcome, Lorraine, and happy birthday.

Mr. John O'Toole: I would have the privilege of introducing one of the top pages here, Andrew Hodgins. Both Andrew and his sister Keira go to College Park Elementary School in Oshawa. The family lives in New-castle. Allan and Charisma Hodgins are pleased to be here with their daughter and their friends from Oshawa, James and Cathy Anderson. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: I'd like to welcome, up in the public gallery, students from St. Augustine Catholic High School, from my great riding of Oak Ridges–Markham. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Steve Clark: I'd like to introduce, in the west members' gallery, a great citizen of Kingston and the Islands, and our PC candidate there, Mark Bain.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I want to introduce the proud father of page Andrew Sheehan, John Sheehan, who has joined us from Grimsby today. Andrew Sheehan, who I had a great lunch with last week, is a student in Grimsby, a Prime Minister of his student council, by the way, and a competitive gymnast winning awards across Ontario.

I just want to say to John and to Andrew that, for the time being, the Niagara West–Glanbrook seat is taken, but I appreciate the direction that this young fellow is heading.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm often concerned about the same thing myself.

Introduction of guests? The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I'd like to introduce our candidate from Kingston and the Islands, Mark Bain, who is joining us in the Legislature today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And we won't go for a three-peat on that one.

I have a few introductions of my own. On behalf of the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville, for page Emily Kostiuk: Her father, Mike Kostiuk, will be here shortly.

On behalf of the member from Huron–Bruce and Ellen Jansen, page: her mom, Val Millson, is here in the gallery for her visitation.

Finally, in the Speaker's gallery, a high school chum who does not have any stories about the Speaker whatsoever: my good friend Cal Waddell.

Thank you for joining us today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Minister, as you may be aware, Ontario has lost 300,000 well-paying manufacturing jobs under the McGuinty-Wynne government. At the same time, you've added 300,000 jobs to the government payroll. So you've lost 300,000 jobs in manufacturing and you've added 300,000 jobs to the government payroll. Surely, as finance minister, you agree that this is not sustainable. I just want to ask you: Is that record an indictment of your predecessor, Minister Duncan, or an indictment of the Liberal government in general?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Depending upon the supplementary, I may refer to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

But I do want to set something straight here. The fact is, over the last four years, since the recession, the Ontario government, together with the people of Ontario, has done a tremendous job of trying to recover. We have over 400,000 net new jobs, a lot of them in the manufacturing sector, which has had some difficulty, and we are trying to work with them to try to provide for a new manufacturing sector to thrive.

But it's essential that we all do our best so we ensure our sense of recovery continues. That's why we maintain a very competitive tax regime. That's why we have lower taxes for corporate and for personal. That's why we're continuing to work closely with our corporate sector and our small business partners to promote those jobs.

Interjection.

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

Supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the finance minister, who has the capacity to bring in a new plan to help open Ontario up for manufacturing and investment: There is going to be an incredible renaissance for manufacturing jobs in North America. The Americans believe they can capture five million new manufacturing jobs. But I do lament the fact that in the recent Wynne Liberal throne speech, they had no ideas for bringing manufacturing jobs back to our province. The entire topic of manufacturing's decline was absent from their paper.

The minister says all these jobs are coming. Minister, we've seen GM putting investment now in Michigan, Caterpillar heading to Indiana, and John Deere putting investment in Wisconsin. Why in the world, given this crisis in manufacturing, would you have no mention whatsoever of a potential manufacturing renaissance in your throne speech?

Hon. Charles Sousa: This is a very interesting question, coming from the same man and the same party who voted against supporting our manufacturing sector. We were the only party that stood for the manufacturing sector, that supported the auto industry, which you called

corporate welfare and which we call helping our businesses and the people of Ontario.

We now have one of the strongest auto manufacturing sectors still, because of our partnership and because of our involvement. We will continue to do that with all other sectors of Ontario so that we promote not only manufacturing but also financial services and other sectors that are essential to the strength of Ontario.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: I would ask that the minister make a bit more effort on his homework, respectfully. When we hear that the Big Three—GM, Ford and Chrysler—are all looking to invest in the United States and looking to invest in Mexico and they have not promised one new job here in the province of Ontario, that should tell you, as finance minister, that something has gone dangerously off the rails.

Let me give you an example. We brought forward a bold plan to kick-start job creation across the economy, including in manufacturing. Unlike the Liberals and their partners in the NDP, who think manufacturing is a thing of the past, we believe in a bright future for the manufacturing sector, to rebuild our middle class and make our province strong.

Minister, one of the things you could do: We put out a plan to reduce the number of regulations, the red tape, this thicket of runaround they have to go through, by a minimum of a one-third reduction in regulations. If we failed to do so, I would dock my cabinet's pay; I would dock my pay as Premier as well. Will you commit to following this outstanding policy to motivate job creation and investment in manufacturing in the great province of Ontario?

Hon. Charles Sousa: To the Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I'm pleased that the leader of the official opposition had an opportunity this morning to have a media availability. Perhaps it gave him the opportunity also to explain why the PC Party opposed our tax cuts, making investments in manufacturing and other industries in Ontario very competitive. Perhaps he had a chance to talk to the media and explain why the PCs opposed the auto restructuring investment that supported and saved over 485,000 jobs in our manufacturing sector. Perhaps he had the opportunity to explain to the media why the PC Party opposed our Advanced Manufacturing Investment Strategy, which has created or retained 5,800 jobs in 29 communities across—

Interjections.

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

While I accept that as the answer, at that moment I was also hearing too much from both sides. Again, I remind you that when you're putting the question I would like the same side to be quiet, when you're putting the answer I would like the same side to be quiet; and when you're putting the answer I'd like this side to be quiet,

and when you're putting the question I'd like this side to be quiet. Amazing. It can be done.

New question.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Monte McNaughton: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Minister, in January alone Ontario's private sector lost 48,000 jobs—the largest number of job losses to this province since the Great Depression. On top of this, just this week, Minister, we're seeing more anti-Alberta sentiment from your government and more anti-resource jobs for Ontario. You are continually slamming the province of Alberta for Ontario's woes.

Minister, our white paper, An Agenda for Growth, outlines specific steps the Ontario government can take in order to stop this downward trend and make Ontario a leader in manufacturing again. Can you outline any reasons why you haven't incorporated any of our growth ideas?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Let's be clear: Ontario has recovered 415,700 net new jobs since the recession. Ontario has recovered 156% of those jobs lost since the recession, whereas in the US it's only been about 65%. A majority of those new jobs are in high-paying, value-added employment, and we recognize that Ontario is still one of the most attractive destinations for investment. We are outpacing every other jurisdiction, pretty well, in North America. I should say this: For 13 consecutive quarters in a row consumer spending has gone up, and manufacturing sales have been over 36% higher than the recessionary lows.

We are doing our part; we're working closely with all stakeholders to improve Ontario's fortunes and prosperity.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Minister, your government's deliberate decisions have cost us 300,000 manufacturing jobs in 10 years, while you've added 300,000 jobs to the government payroll. This month will mark the 75th month that Ontario's unemployment rate is higher than the national average. Many other jurisdictions, including the United States, have lower labour costs than Ontario, which is why we have seen production leaving the province only to cross the border.

We have proposed labour reforms that put power and choice back into the hands of individual employees, not union bosses. In June 2012, GM announced that their consolidated line will close and production of the Chevy Impala will be moved to Detroit, Michigan, while production of the Chevy Equinox will be moved to Springville, Tennessee.

Minister, why haven't you incorporated any of our policies to make our labour costs competitive, so companies like General Motors won't leave this province?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, again, this party is talking about supporting our manufacturing sector without really supporting them. When we put forward initiatives to help the automotive industry, you voted

against them. When we sought your support in order to provide for those jobs and cut those taxes, you voted against them. We will continue to do what's necessary to support our industries with or without you.

I do hope that you will participate in trying to put forward a budget that's going to be there for the benefit of the public, not the benefit of any political party.

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

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Listen, your record of job losses in this province is nothing to be proud of; I can assure you of that. Some 300,000 manufacturing jobs lost in this province in 10 years, while you've added 300,000 to the public sector—absolutely shameful.

Ontario's loss of manufacturing jobs has not been unique globally. Manufacturing employment also fell over the past decade in powerhouses like Germany and South Korea.

Unlike in Ontario, experts are predicting a prolonged period of low energy costs for the United States, especially as a result of newly accessible deposits of oil and gas such as Marcellus shale. Many US states are also moving toward pro-job creation labour policies, giving workers a choice as to whether or not to join a union.

Minister, my final question is simple: If you do not plan to incorporate any of our pro-job creation policies while other jurisdictions are moving forward, what specific policy—

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

Hon. Charles Sousa: Here we are again. I appreciate the premise of your question, because what you said this time is, in fact, that the world is suffering. We've had recessions right across the globe. Many of them are even more impacted than we are in Ontario. We felt it quick, we felt it fast, and we took immediate action to protect our industries—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean–Carleton, you can whisper it, but it's still not quiet.

Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

When we moved forward to try to make some support mechanisms to help our businesses, to provide more opportunity—not more government—to create those jobs by the private sector, you voted against it. You voted against the very economic development plans that we've brought forward in eastern and southwestern Ontario to promote those very businesses that you speak of. We'll continue to do what we have to do to support our manufacturing, to support our businesses, with or without you.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Deputy Premier. The government currently plans to start phasing in a new tax loophole for Ontario's largest corporations,

which will allow them to stop paying the HST on a variety of items. Is this still part of the province's future fiscal plan?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: When it comes to revenue tools, I think the NDP leader has to have a conversation with her caucus members. I would urge that she have a conversation with the MPP for Parkdale–High Park, the MPP for Trinity–Spadina, the MPP for Davenport, the MPP for Toronto–Danforth. I think these members of her caucus are owed a frank and open conversation with the leader of the NDP about whether or not they want more transit built in Toronto.

The NDP have been supporters of public transit for as long as I can remember, but now when it comes to actually figuring out a way to pay for it, they seem to have lost their courage. So I'm just asking the member, have that chat with your caucus members.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, that's a lovely piece of advice. I talk regularly to my caucus members, and we also listen to the people of Ontario—something this government doesn't do.

The Minister of Finance knows that New Democrats don't want this tax loophole to be opened, and we don't think it's fair. Now, he has indicated to the House very clearly that he's looking into the issue. Does he have a progress report for us on what he's seen since he started looking?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I appreciate the question and, again, I appreciate the involvement and the engagement of the third party in providing some assistance and some advice.

A good idea is a good idea. I don't care where it comes from, as long as we're working for the benefit of the people of Ontario. The issues around tax avoidance and tax compliance and tax loopholes are something that we are taking very seriously, and we have addressed it with the federal government. You may well know that Minister Flaherty also introduced some of that in his federal budget in response to the very issues that we as Ontario, together with the NDP, have asked for. We'll continue to do our bit to close those loopholes.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This new tax loophole will give Ontario's largest corporations and financial institutions an opportunity to get the HST taken off their heat and their hydro, their company vehicles, their telecommunication costs, their meals and their entertainment. In tough economic times, does the minister really think it's fair to set aside over a billion dollars for tax loopholes like this one?

Hon. Charles Sousa: I appreciate the question. As I've said repeatedly, we are addressing those concerns around tax avoidance and also around tax credits and the way we're going to address them. Dr. Drummond, in our commission, also reported on some of these issues, and

we're taking them seriously. We're going to address it, and I again thank you for your involvement.

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TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: To the Deputy Premier: We've been pretty clear that there are better ways to create jobs and promote investment in this province. The minister says that he wants a budget that's fair and balanced. The government is scrambling for money: They're building casinos, they're laying off nurses. Does he think that while households are struggling in this province, in tough economic times, that we should actually make it a priority to give an HST bonanza to Ontario's largest corporations by opening a new corporate tax loophole? That's their plan. Are they going to go forward with it?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: We have gone out of our way to make our taxes more competitive than most jurisdictions in North America and the OECD countries. We've reduced personal and consumer taxes. We're reducing taxes, and have reduced them, for corporate and, especially, small businesses that are hiring more people and investing more in Ontario. That's the key: trying to make all those decisions to promote more jobs so that the people of Ontario are working. We will continue to do what's best in the interests of the people of Ontario. As I said, we're addressing any issues of tax loopholes that would prejudice that issue.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, gee, Speaker, we don't have very many good jobs left in this province, and we don't have any money for infrastructure, so I guess their plan has worked out pretty darn well, hasn't it?

The average household budget in this province has taken some hits in recent years. They are paying some of the highest electricity bills in the entire country, the highest auto insurance in the nation and an HST that leaves them paying a new tax on gasoline, home heating and more, and now the Premier is indicating that she may be asking them to dig even deeper.

Does the minister think it's fair to ask everyday households to continue to pay more and more and more while telling Ontario's largest corporations that it's "HST off everything" for them?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I can't believe that the leader of the third party is disparaging Ontario, saying that we don't have good jobs for the citizens of this great province. In fact, since the bottom of the recession, Mr. Speaker, we have created 415,700 net new jobs. That's better than the United States and better than the United Kingdom. In fact, in this global downturn, it's one of the best records across the globe.

I want to just mention as well, because I think the leader of the third party will be interested in this, that Hamilton in particular has benefited from our invest-

ments and has attracted more industrial and commercial development than any other city in Canada over the past year—and this is not according to the government; this is according to Site Selection magazine.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, maybe the government hasn't travelled to Windsor lately—or London, where unemployment is 9.1%. Maybe they don't realize that it's the government of Ontario that's making it worse, because they're laying off people at casinos, they're laying off people throughout the horse racing industry, they're laying off nurses and front-line health care workers. They're making the problem worse.

People are feeling like they're the ones being left behind. They're feeling like they're being ignored. They see casinos being forced on their communities. They see their bills that continue to climb higher and higher. They see their government asking them to get ready to dig deeper again. They're paying more, and they see Ontario's largest corporations—which is the point—getting more than a billion dollars in new tax breaks, new tax loopholes opening up for them.

When is the minister and this government going to admit that this is not fair and is completely unbalanced?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I referenced Site Selection magazine a moment ago, and I want to say as well that not just, in particular, with regard to Hamilton—but Site Selection magazine has actually ranked Ontario as the most competitive province in Canada for the last three years, and that's because we have all the fundamentals of a sound and strong economy. We have a competitive workforce. We have a competitive infrastructure. We have a competitive tax structure. We have the presence of innovation in research and development. We encourage local job creation. And we have a reliable, clean and modern energy system to support business. Of course, we're focusing more and more on our export and trade opportunities.

In sum total, Mr. Speaker, we have a province to be proud of. We're working hard as a government to create jobs, and we're showing the results.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is to the Attorney General. In the last Parliament, you quietly passed an omnibus bill naively named Open for Business that included repealing section 12.3 of the Professional Engineers Act, known in the manufacturing sector as the industrial exception. This change is of serious concern to 25 associations representing over 700 employees across Ontario because you've not consulted with the industry on what will qualify as professional engineering under the new rules. The manufacturing sector is worried that by removing the industrial exception, you are once again imposing additional red tape and overhead costs on manufacturers when they can least afford it.

Under your government in the last decade, Ontario has lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs. How can you justify

repealing the industrial exception and adding more red tape on our manufacturing sector without a full analysis of the cost implications?

Hon. John Gerretsen: I appreciate the question from the member. As the member well knows, we are the only province that has an industrial exception for engineers. You may also be interested in knowing that, yes, there was a regulation passed, but we put it on hold for at least another six months so that we can continue to consult with the manufacturing industry and so that we can continue to consult with the individuals that are affected by this. We are still looking at it. It's not a *fait accompli*, and we will get back to you in due course on this issue.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Minister, you may—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'll just take a pause for a second. Thank you.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Minister, you may also know that Ontario is the only province that has lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs under your government. It is an implication that if you remove section 12.3 you are, in fact, handcuffing innovation and creativity with our manufacturers that they use every day to create jobs and successfully compete around the world.

Will you commit today to leave the industrial exception in place, which, by the way, has been in place for 29 years, and let our manufacturers get on with the business of creating jobs and building our communities?

Hon. John Gerretsen: As I mentioned before, Speaker, one of the reasons why we are still continuing to consult is that, quite frankly, we weren't happy with the result that was reached in changing the regulation. We will be consulting with industry, we will be consulting with those individuals that are going to be involved, and we will be consulting with the professional engineers as well.

Just for the record, as she well knows, we are the only jurisdiction in Canada that has the industrial exception. We are looking at it right now, and a decision will be made within the next six months on the issue.

POWER PLANTS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Deputy Premier. Last October, New Democrats requested documents from the Premier's office related to the gas plant scandal that came under the code name Project Vapour. We were told that no such documents existed, in spite of the fact that we held some of them in our hands.

This morning an executive assistant in Cabinet Office confirmed that Project Vapour meetings were held with the Premier's chief of staff and that she saw correspondence in Cabinet Office with the title Project Vapour. It's clear that you had Project Vapour documentation flying around the Premier's office, yet we're told they don't exist.

Can the Premier square the circle?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: I know that the honourable member would never want to leave the impression that he's talking about a request from the committee. He's talking about a freedom-of-information request. As the honourable member is aware, there's a process by which members of this House or members of the public can ask for documents under freedom of information. If they are dissatisfied with the response they get, there are appeal mechanisms that are available.

When you go back as a committee context, what I find very strange is that the government went forward to the committee and offered to provide all documents government-wide, far beyond any of the scope of anything that had been requested in the past. To my astonishment, to my surprise, that member, along with the opposition colleagues, raised their hands to vote against that very motion which would have given him all the documents that he had requested.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Speaker, there's a big difference between saying you'll be open and actually being open. Ontarians want a little more transparency from their government.

1100

Deputy Premier, will you commit to releasing today the documents we requested under freedom of information and that in fact we had testimony today saying exist?

Hon. John Milloy: As I said, I'm sure the honourable member is aware, as are all honourable members, that if they have made a request under freedom of information and are dissatisfied with the response, there are appeal mechanisms and avenues they can follow.

But again, I listened very intently to the honourable member's question, and I heard no explanation why he and members of the opposition—when government members put forward a motion to produce all gas plant documents across the government, including the offices of the Premier and the Cabinet Office, those individuals put their hands up and voted against it.

As I've said in the past, I actually called the legislative television service to say there was something wrong with my television coverage because I could not believe that they would vote against something that would have benefited them.

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

I may or may not be right about this, but there is a possibility that someone is using props in this House. It is my duty to remind all members that props are not allowed in this place; nor is it my responsibility, if I don't see it, to guess that it happened, but if it does happen again, the props will be removed and the member will be admonished.

New question?

PAN AM GAMES

Mr. Joe Dickson: My question is for the minister responsible for the 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games. The upcoming games are a once-in-a-lifetime opportu-

ity to showcase Ontario to many tens of thousands of athletes and visitors. In my riding of Ajax–Pickering and across the province, it is important to have world-class sports facilities for our athletes to compete in and for us to showcase to the world. As one of the world's largest multi-sports events, I understand the games will attract 10,000 athletes and officials from 41 countries and will host competitions in 51 high-performance sports.

Speaker, through you to the minister: What types of facilities can we expect in my riding and in other ridings in Ontario?

Hon. Michael Chan: I want to thank the member from Ajax–Pickering for his question. The member is right that there will be 41 countries and 10,000 contestants coming to Ontario in 2015. On top of that, there will be 250,000 visitors, plus Ontario will train 20,000 volunteers. Again, we will stimulate economic growth as well. It will create and support about 15,000 jobs and invest more than \$700 million in new and improved sports facilities and legacy support.

Other facilities like the new Markham Pan Am and Parapan Am centre, where badminton, table tennis and water polo competitions will be held, will ensure that our next generation of champions and contenders can compete.

I'm pleased to advise that the town of Ajax has been selected to host softball and baseball competitions—

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

Mr. Joe Dickson: It is good to know we are investing to ensure that Ontario will have world-class sports facilities for generations to come. I can tell you how enlightening it is to see how sports can inspire our creativity and our sense of identity. That is why it is also important to prepare for the games with special events leading up to them, much like our government has done with the War of 1812 bicentennial, so that Ontarians everywhere can get a chance to celebrate the upcoming Pan Am milestone.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Can the government indicate what special events are being hosted to promote the upcoming Pan Am and Parapan American Games?

Hon. Michael Chan: Thank you for the question again. I'm pleased to say that this past weekend, I had the opportunity to welcome the renowned sport artist David Arrigo to the Ontario junior A badminton championships for a special celebration of the Pan Am Mural Experience. The unveiling of this artistic mural was a great example of capturing and celebrating the cultural sporting history of communities hosting the 2015 games. Inspired by images and themes sent from venue locations, the mural and others will visit their municipalities for planned celebratory events, allowing community members to add their personal paint stroke.

Much like the Olympic torch, these travelling works of art will capture the diversity that the games represent.

POWER PLANTS

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Deputy Premier. Deputy, on September 25 last year, you stood in

this very House and talked about the gas plant documents. You stated, "The request has been complied with. The documents have been tabled. The work is done."

But at that very time, you knew that no Project Vapour documents had been released to the committee. Yet this morning at the justice committee, Tiffany Turnbull from the Cabinet Office told us she was aware of Project Vapour as early as 2011.

Deputy, how can you tell us we had all the documents when even the staff of the Cabinet Office were aware of Project Vapour documents nearly two years ago?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I think we've been through this before, but let me just quote what Peter Wallace, as secretary of cabinet, told the committee on March 19: "It is my belief that the Ministry of Energy acted in good faith in searching for and producing documents in their possession that they understood were responsive to the committee's request."

But the more interesting question, Mr. Speaker, is why did the honourable member and members of his party and members of the opposition vote against a government motion that was put forward to go beyond the scope of anything that had been asked for before and have the entire government look for gas plant documents and make them available to the committee?

As I said, Mr. Speaker, I sat in my office watching it on television and was beyond astonished to see members of the opposition voting against the production of the very documents that they're asking for.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: We are also very grateful to Mr. Wallace, as he told us there are indeed more documents coming.

Deputy, the so-called new government looks and sounds a whole lot like the old government. At the justice committee hearings this morning, Tiffany Turnbull testified there was weekly email traffic on Project Vapour-lock, which now refers to Mississauga. Speaker, that shocked the committee, considering there were no Project Vapour-lock documents turned over in the 56,000 documents that we have—not one Project Vapour-lock document.

This is even more proof today there are documents that exist that you don't want us to see. What there is no proof of, Speaker, is that this government is any different from the last. Deputy, when are you going to end this charade and finally turn over all the details of this gas plant scandal?

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, listen. This is what the honourable member voted against: "The Standing Committee on Justice Policy directs the government of Ontario, including ministries, ministers' offices, the Cabinet Office and the Office of the Premier; the Ontario Infrastructure and Lands Corp.; and the Ontario Power Authority to produce ... any and all identified paper and electronic files and records, including but not limited to correspondence, briefing notes, emails, memoranda, issue

or House book notes, opinions and submissions, and including any drafts of or attachments to those records....”

Mr. Speaker, he and his colleagues sat in their chairs and raised their hands in the air and voted against that very motion. If anyone has some explaining to do, it's that member of the opposition.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question is to the Minister of Finance. In 2010, this government made changes to the auto insurance industry, which slashed benefits for consumers by 50%. As a result, this saved the industry \$2 billion annually, yet in the past two years the premiums that auto insurance drivers pay have gone up 5%. On Wednesday, tomorrow, this House will have a chance to pass on part of these savings to the drivers of Ontario by voting for a motion which would direct FSCO to pass on, in a gradual increment, 15% reductions to auto insurance premiums for the drivers of Ontario. Does this government finally plan to give drivers in Ontario a break by voting in favour of this motion to reduce auto insurance by 15% in this province?

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Hon. Charles Sousa: We share the same concerns that our members from the third party have—and I'm sure members of all parties in this House and the people of Ontario—to ensure that we have very competitive and affordable insurance premiums. We also recognize on this side of the House, as I'm sure you do, that the cost of insurance has gone up even more dramatically than it should have. We need to get at those root causes and address the fraud.

I appreciate you taking the opportunity to do it on a gradual approach so that we can resolve those matters and work in conjunction with the industry to ensure that we reduce the cost and reduce the premiums over time. It's in the best interests of all concerned.

One more thing, however: We actually decreased auto insurance last year by a small percentage and it has actually gone up below the rate of inflation. But we need to do better, and I appreciate what you're doing.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: The issue is that the industry has actually saved; the costs have gone down. Over two years, the industry has saved \$4 billion. The savings have already occurred.

What I'm asking the government today is, is the government finally prepared to be on the side of drivers in Ontario by reducing auto insurance premiums by 15%? Tomorrow, they have a chance to vote in favour of a motion which would direct FSCO to encourage 15% reductions in a gradual manner to reduce rates for insurance for drivers of Ontario.

Is the government prepared to be in favour of auto insurance, to be in favour of drivers for once instead of insurance companies, and to pass on some fairness to drivers here in Ontario?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, we share those concerns. In fact, we share the concerns of all Ontarians, especially those who aren't affected by the same degree of auto insurance hikes as they are, say, in the 905 region, in which the member opposite and I reside. But we recognize the implications that may have on the north and other parts of the province, so we've got to be fair to all people of Ontario.

I should also say that it was this side of the House that implemented the Anti-Fraud Task Force so that we could get at those root causes to ensure that we do the right thing.

I appreciate what the member is saying. I appreciate what you're putting forward, which I believe is tomorrow. We will look at your proposals and we will work with you, together, to ensure that we reduce auto insurance premiums for the benefit of the people of Ontario.

HYDRO OPERATIONS

Mr. Kim Craitor: My question is for the Minister of Energy.

Niagara Falls is one of the greatest natural wonders of the world and we're lucky enough to have it right here in Ontario. One of the biggest benefits is its ability to generate a constant source of clean hydroelectric power, and it has been doing so for over 100 years.

Over the past few years, this government has been working on the construction of the Niagara tunnel to increase the capacity of the falls for hydroelectric power and to provide clean, renewable energy for thousands of homes. Last Thursday at the Sir Adam Beck generating plant, the Niagara tunnel in-service announcement took place.

Could the Minister of Energy update the House and the people of Ontario on the status of this project?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I thank the member for the question. The member has been a very strong advocate for this project.

Our government's commitment to renewable energy is unparalleled. That is why I was pleased to announce the completion of the Niagara tunnel project last week in Niagara Falls. This 10-kilometre Niagara tunnel will harness the power of Niagara Falls, channelling water from the Niagara River to the Sir Adam Beck generating station. Water will travel through this four-storey tunnel at a rate fast enough to fill an Olympic swimming pool in seconds.

This is the largest hydroelectric project to come to Ontario in the last 50 years and it will provide clean, renewable, affordable energy for the next 100 years. We're looking to the future and building on our government's strong record of investing in renewable power across the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Kim Craitor: Thank you, Minister, for the update. The Niagara tunnel is truly a landmark project for the province, and it reaffirms our commitment to renewable energy. As my good friend the mayor of Niagara

Falls, Jim Diodati, said, “The renewable capital of Canada is right here in Niagara Falls.”

I know that this government has made numerous investments in wind, solar and hydroelectric power across the province. In fact, we are the renewable-energy leader in North America.

I know that the Niagara tunnel is just one of the many hydroelectric projects across this province. Minister, could you please inform the House and the people of Ontario on other projects and what is going on to expand hydroelectric power in Ontario?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The member is right. Our government’s record investments in renewable energy have made us a leader in North America. I’m proud to say that we are proceeding with projects to redevelop and expand some of our aging hydroelectric fleet. This will increase the amount of clean, renewable energy we provide across the province.

By 2018, we expect to have 9,000 megawatts of hydroelectric capacity in place across the province. The Lower Mattagami River project will have 800 jobs at its peak and will be the largest hydro project in northern Ontario in 40 years. It’s also a partnership with the Moose Cree First Nation.

In fact, most of Ontario’s water power potential comes from the north. Hydroelectricity is affordable and emission-free, and we look forward to working with our First Nations partners in developing viable and appropriate hydro projects.

POWER PLANTS

Mr. Rob Leone: My question is to the energy minister. During testimony this morning, yet another employee privy to the inner workings of cabinet and the Premier’s office delivered the latest blow to a government badly damaged by the gas plant scandal that continues to spiral out of control.

Tiffany Turnbull testified that she received at least one email per week on Project Vapour-lock, yet we haven’t seen any of those documents. In fact, in the document dump of the 56,000 pages, the words “Project Vapour-lock” don’t appear at all. So, in seeing that the Premier has thrown down the gauntlet on transparency and claims that she has opened up her government for all to see, how is it possible that witnesses are still testifying that we don’t have all the requested documents on your gas plant scandal?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: To the government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I have here in my hands, since the honourable member wants to continue, some of the 56,000 pages that were tabled with the committee. Here is an email from Joseph Silva at energy to Jesse Kulendran. Let me quote: “The crowd from this morning’s Vapour-lock briefing know about this briefing to be set up. Rebecca—could you find time with Maria,” etc., etc.

Here’s one from David Lindsay to Joseph Silva: “Subject: Vapour-lock.”

Here we have one from David Lindsay to Joseph Silva: “A meeting has been scheduled today that will take place in Shelley’s office, main Legislative Building. Would you kindly ensure your DMs are in attendance?” Wait for this: The subject is “Vapour-lock.”

I think the honourable member had better reread the 56,000 pages that were given to the committee before he stands in this House and makes these false allegations.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Rob Leone: Back to the energy minister. Just as disturbing as the fact that there are still more documents out there, are the steps that this government has taken to take the Premier out of this scandal.

Further to Ms. Turnbull’s testimony, she told the committee that she had “received direction” from members of the Cabinet Office on how to answer questions. She initially claimed that she did not know what the acronym “PO” stood for in the document that she in fact authored herself. Then, reluctantly and through intense questioning, she changed her story and told us what every government employee making over \$100,000 on the sunshine list should know: that PO actually stands for the Premier’s office.

Why would a former employee be told not to be forthright about the involvement of the Premier and her office in this scandal?

Hon. John Milloy: It’s one thing to have the cut and thrust—I must say, in this job my skin is as thick as an elephant’s. But I’ve got to tell you, when a citizen of this province comes before a committee and we witness the drive-by smear that we just heard—do you know what the woman said to the committee? Mr. Leone said, “What kind of direction did you receive from legal counsel?” Ms. Turnbull said, “Really, that I just had the five minutes for my opening statement and what to sort of expect for the set-up of the room. There was no discussion about content.” Mr. Leone: “Did they advise you of things not to say in committee?” Ms. Turnbull: “No. They advised me of process-type things.”

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Mr. Speaker, what that member has just done is reprehensible, and he should stand on his feet and apologize to a private citizen who came forward before a committee this morning to give of her time and give testimony. The fact that it didn’t comply with what he thought is not her fault; it’s his problem.

CASINOS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question’s for the Deputy Premier. This government’s all in on modernization plans for the OLG, even as 38 people got dealt right out of their jobs yesterday at Windsor’s Caesars casino. That’s 38 families who’ve just lost a regular paycheque; 38 families who face agonizing choices in the coming days. How many more Windsor families will go bust because of this government’s big gamble?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: To the Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: The question begs this response: You've just highlighted the concerns that are happening in those border towns and casinos that are being affected. We need to do something to transform and modernize the system.

OLG has tried to provide another \$1.3 billion more in revenue and access. It's also going to employ an additional 6,000 employees, I believe it is. These are the kinds of things that we need to do in order to strengthen our system. That is what we're aiming for.

We also take note that it is unfortunate that this is occurring in those border facilities, and that's why we have to take stands to protect those jobs.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, the government's plan is actually going to kill the border casinos. This is no game of chance. Livelihoods are at stake here. Some 38 people have already lost their jobs at Windsor's Caesars casino. Odds are this number goes up if the government goes ahead with its OLG modernization gamble.

Will the Deputy Premier stop rolling the dice with jobs in Windsor until people can have a real say about new casino development?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, it's terribly unfortunate that's what's happening. I know that the increased competition coming from Ohio is having a huge impact on Windsor. That's why we have to take the steps necessary. These are very difficult decisions, but they're being made to support Windsor, to support the employees and the staff that are there. We need to take these steps.

Your response is, "Do nothing." Doing nothing is creating the situation that we have before us. We're taking the steps necessary to modernize, to transform, to build those jobs and protect the industry.

CHILD CARE

Mr. Phil McNeely: My question is to the Minister of Education. Many of my constituents have been coming to me with questions about our government's work on child care. For my constituents, child care is essential for their child's development. It offers our children an opportunity to be social and learn important interactive skills. For many of our young ones, child care is the first step in their pursuit of lifelong learning. For many families, child care provides parents with the security of knowing that their child is safe and cared for while they are at work. It's important that my constituents know what this government is doing to provide quality and accessible child care in Ontario.

To the Minister of Education: Please inform this House on the work that is being done to provide sustainable child care in Ontario.

Hon. Liz Sandals: Thank you to the member from Ottawa-Orléans for this important question, and thank you to the member for his advocacy on behalf of his constituents and for access to child care.

Our government is working hard to enhance the quality and accessibility of child care so that our children can have access to the best-quality care. As we work towards that goal, it is so important that we hear from child care operators themselves and gather important data that can help us for the future.

That's why, in July 2012, our government launched a questionnaire which gathered important information from licensed care facilities. The survey asked important questions about child care operations, fees, wages and finances. My ministry has posted a summary of the results from this survey on the ministry website, and the information will inform policy—

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

Mr. Phil McNeely: I agree that gathering information from our licensed child care operators is an important way to get a better understanding of child care in Ontario. I'm quite happy to hear as well that our government has important data that will help us continue to improve child care in Ontario.

According to a recent TD Economics report, investments in early childhood education help improve a child's development. I know that many of our child care operators are adapting to the implementation of full-day kindergarten. Full-day kindergarten is such an important tool that will give our young students an essential start to their education, including my two grandchildren, who have just completed it.

But child care also plays a significant role in early learning. Mr. Speaker, through you, can the minister please elaborate on the government's programs that will make sure that child care continues to play an essential role in early learning?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Speaker, since 2003 our government has increased funding for child care by almost 90%. In that process, we've helped create nearly 90,000 licensed child care spaces.

Our government is committed to working with our partners to stabilize and modernize child care to ensure that families and children have access to high-quality programs and care. One of the steps we've taken was the release of our discussion paper *Modernizing Child Care in Ontario: Sharing Conversations, Strengthening Partnerships, Working Together*. This was released in June 2012. We're seeking input on strengthening.

We have also changed the funding model to a funding model that now reflects the demographics of a community.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: My question is for the Minister of Energy. The Liberals' throne speech talks about suddenly wanting to work with municipalities. It talks about respecting local decision-making when it comes to energy infrastructure development like wind turbines. It stresses the need to have willing host communities. Well, Minister, the Premier is visiting a non-willing host com-

munity as we speak. My community is definitely not a willing host community.

Minister, will the government do anything to make good on its throne speech promise and place an immediate moratorium on any further wind farm development?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, the question was asked a week or so ago as well. I indicated at that time that the Minister of Energy, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Minister of Rural Affairs are working on some changes that would allow municipalities to have much more control over the siting of energy projects in the community.

Wind power is a part of our long-term energy plan. It will continue to be part of our long-term energy plan, but it will be with a lot more control by municipalities.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Again to the Minister of Energy: It sounds like the Liberals forgot to include the fine print in the throne speech, which states, "Applies only to gas plants in the GTA where Liberal seats are at risk."

Minister, across Ontario, including Perth–Wellington, there are proposals for industrial wind turbine projects that are strongly opposed by the host local communities. Your government has dragged its feet on calling the throne speech to a vote; however, you do have a choice to respect local decision-making. Minister, will you respect communities in rural Ontario and support the PCs' call for a moratorium on all wind turbine projects immediately?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. How about some quiet?

Minister.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, I respect the fact that the member is speaking on behalf of his community. He's hearing from his community.

The reason why that statement was in the speech from the throne is because the Premier is listening to communities across the province of Ontario, and we are responding. We are working diligently with the three ministries. We are creating some options that will be brought forward in the very near future. We are committed to having more control in the hands of local communities. I appreciate the question from the member.

1130

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Minister, you know that people in northern Ontario have been upset at your government for the move to privatize the ONTC. People across the north—be it municipalities, be it workers, be it shippers, be it passengers—don't agree that privatization is the option.

There was a Liberal leadership race in which a number of your leadership candidates said that they were prepared to put a pause on privatization and consult with

northerners when it comes to what we do with the ONTC. We see that you formed the committee, but according to your particular comments on Monday, the northern transportation commission is still on the auction block.

You're trying to position yourself as a new Ontario government. Can you tell me what's new about that position?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I appreciate the opportunity to respond. I was very much pleased to be in North Bay yesterday for the first gathering of the ministerial advisory committee for the discussions related to a number of stakeholders to help us make the right decisions related to the divestment of the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission: municipal leaders, First Nations, Métis, industry—various stakeholders that obviously are going to help us make decisions related to how we do this the right way. Certainly, the discussion was an open one, a very transparent one and, I think, one that we can lead forward. We think there's a great opportunity for the people that are on that committee to help advise us as to how we can move forward.

It's a very tough decision related to the divestment of the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission. The priority for the Premier—made very, very clear—was that we need to make sure that we put in place a northern transportation strategy that makes sense for northerners and meets the economic development needs that are there in the northeast, and that's indeed what we intend to do.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: This government is trying to say they're a new Ontario government. I fail to see what is new in this. The only thing that's new: You've taken the mayors of northern Ontario and you've said, "Please help us privatize this entity." That's not what northerners want and that's not what New Democrats have called for. What we've asked you to do is to put a pause on this entire thing and to give northerners an ability to look at the ONTC and how we can run it as a publicly funded corporation, as we do with GO Transit and many other such entities across this province.

I ask you again: Will you not pause the privatization of the ONTC, once and for all?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: What we're committed to—and I believe the members on that side of the House are committed as well, as we all are—is having a sustainable transportation system in northeastern Ontario. We all know that there were significant dollars spent in terms of the ONTC, a heavily subsidized operation. We believe that this can be done in a better way, and quite frankly, I believe the members of the ministerial advisory committee can provide us with that advice as well. How can we, for example, set up criteria for potential future divestment that make sense so that we can meet those goals of making sure that a transportation system or a telecommunication system in the north is one that's sustainable over the long term and can provide the kind of employment opportunities that we know are so important to everybody in the northeast? We are very committed to

this; Premier Wynne is very committed to this. We set this up as a—

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

WATER QUALITY

Ms. Soo Wong: My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Minister, last Friday marked World Water Day. World Water Day draws attention to one of our most valuable resources: clean water. Clean drinking water is essential to the well-being of every Ontarian. Conserving our water supplies and protecting our water quality are crucial to the health of our families, our communities and our economy. As a former public health nurse, I know the importance of ongoing research, testing and evaluation of current drinking water systems throughout the province.

Speaker, through you to the Minister of the Environment: Can he please inform the House of the improvements our government has made on the current water system?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I'd be happy to do that.

In 2007, we announced that we had implemented all 121 of Justice O'Connor's recommendations. We achieved there an important milestone in the turnaround of our drinking water. Since 2003, we've accomplished a great deal regarding the state of drinking water in Ontario. We've hired an additional 39 drinking water inspection staff. We established the Walkerton Clean Water Centre, which has trained over 37,000 water professionals and 500 municipal decision-makers. Under the Drinking Water Stewardship Program, over 3,000 local, on-the-ground projects have been completed to protect water supplies. We've invested over \$200 million in source protection planning since 2006.

These are just a few examples of the hard work we have undertaken to restore the public's confidence in drinking water, and I look forward to elaborating on the results in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to hear the update on all the hard work this government has done on the water system. It is impressive to hear how far we have come in the last 10 years. As stewards of the largest supply of fresh water in the world, it is important that we strive to achieve the best results for people living in Ontario, as well as for generations to come.

Speaker, through you to the minister: Can he please elaborate on the results of all of this hard work and what we are doing to continue to build upon the gains we have made?

Hon. James J. Bradley: These strategic investments and initiatives have produced some very impressive results. In 2010-11, 99.87% of drinking water test reports by municipal residential systems met our health-based standard. We were the only province to score an A on Ecojustice's most recent report card on drinking water. In 2011, the Canadian Water Attitudes Study showed that

91% of people in Ontario are confident about the safety and quality of their drinking water.

While we could be content with that, we won't rest on those laurels. Our Showcasing Water Innovation program, announced in 2007, is supporting leading-edge, innovative and cost-effective solutions for managing drinking water, waste water and stormwater systems. We partnered with the federal government to launch the Canada-Ontario First Nations Drinking Water Quality Improvement Initiative and created the Water Technology Acceleration Project to bring together industry, academics and government.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member from Timmins-James Bay has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to his question given by the Minister of Northern Development and Mines concerning privatization of the ONTC. This matter will be debated today at 6 p.m.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A point of order from the government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, as members are aware, there is an opportunity to correct your record in this Legislature. This morning, the member from Nipissing clearly said that no Project Vapour documents had been released to the committee. That obviously was not the case—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You're half right: Members are allowed to correct their own record. I'm not amused. Everybody has been here long enough to know that.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm waiting for a little bit of quiet.

I would encourage everyone to use that standing tradition to correct your own record and stop trying to correct somebody else's.

The member from Nipissing.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: On a point of order, Speaker: We heard from Tiffany Turnbull this morning that there indeed were emails between the energy ministry and CAB, the cabinet board, but even the emails that we read this morning show that—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): What you are presently saying is not a point of order. Are you correcting a record?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Oh, no. I was referring to the—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): As a reminder to all members, your microphones get turned off as soon as I—

Interjection.

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

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Withdraw.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Look, I don't know how many times I have to say this, but when we do get quiet, having people interject when it's quiet is very insulting to me. Thank you.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands adjourned until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1139 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Leeds–Grenville.

Mr. Steve Clark: Thank you very much, Speaker. They're not here yet, but I know that they will be sitting in the west members' gallery very, very soon.

Mr. Todd Smith: Here they are.

Mr. Steve Clark: There they are. They're coming in here now. I'm very pleased to introduce to members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario a number of my guests that include Dr. Ron Yim, who is on the board of directors of the Ontario Dental Association; Dr. Raffy Chouljian, who is also on the board of directors of the Ontario Dental Association; Dr. Lynn Tomkins, Ms. Maureen Black and Mr. Frank Bevilacqua from the Ontario Dental Association. I also want to introduce Maggie Head from the ODA, although she told me she didn't want to be introduced, and finally Ms. Julie Toole from the Association of Ontario Midwives and Ms. Heather Harding from the Association of Ontario Midwives.

I know my colleague from Burlington also has some introductions of her constituents, but I want to welcome you all to Queen's Park today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm assuming you're assuming that I'm going to identify you as introducing some guests, so: The member from Burlington will introduce some guests.

Mrs. Jane McKenna: Thank you, Speaker. I would like to welcome two of my constituents to the Legislature. Joining us in the members' gallery this afternoon are Burlington dentist Dr. Larry Pedlar and his wife Margo Pedlar, co-chairs of the Coalition to Restore Spousal Rights and Freedoms. The Pedlars are here to show their support for legislation being introduced by my colleague the member from Leeds–Grenville today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Timmins–James Bay, introducing guests.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to introduce you to guests from Peawanuck, but because they have to pay \$1,000 to fly from Peawanuck to Timmins and another \$500 to fly down, they couldn't make it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'd like to send a shout-out to them over in Timmins; they didn't quite make it all the way.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm patient. Further introduction of guests?

There being no further introduction of guests, including those that never made it in the first place, it is now time for members' statements.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

WIND TURBINES

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I am pleased today to speak about a private member's bill I will be introducing in just a few minutes. The bill, called the Ensuring Affordable Energy Act, will do exactly that—give Ontario rate-payers some relief on their energy bills—and it will respect municipal decision-making.

Wind power is one of the most expensive forms of energy generation, mainly because of the costly, highly subsidized Feed-in Tariff, or FIT, program. In this bill, the FIT program will be eliminated, and to ensure that the cost of wind is kept low, the cost per kilowatt hour must line up with other sources of generation.

The PC Party know that local municipalities know what is best for their communities. In the Ensuring Affordable Energy Act, municipalities will receive their planning powers for renewable energy back. Wind turbines will only be considered within willing host communities, and municipalities will be given full veto over wind turbine projects. Municipalities will also have the ability to decide whether or not they want to promote wind energy; it will no longer be legislated.

But we also need to protect the environment. This bill does that. For instance, wind turbines will be prohibited on the Niagara Escarpment and Oak Ridges moraine.

The Premier said, just this morning, in Clinton—which is in my riding of Huron–Bruce—that she is looking for a better process for wind turbine development. Well, Premier, here it is. I expect the Premier and her government will vote in support of this better process on April 18. Anything less is totally unacceptable.

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Today I rise to highlight a growing concern in the province of Ontario and particularly in the GTA. It's a concern regarding precarious employment: temporary help agencies.

There was a report recently released, It's More Than Poverty, which was put together by PEPSO, McMaster University Social Sciences, and the United Way. This report made a number of findings about the negative impact of precarious employment. In fact, precarious employment is increasing in the GTA. Only 60% of GTA workers have a full-time job. That means 40% of workers in the GTA have precarious employment, employment that is not secure.

They have also found that precarious employment impacts disproportionately new Canadians and immigrant Canadians. Naturally, precarious employment means that these workers earn less and face more uncertainty. This

type of employment negatively impacts the individual, their family and their communities. It has a significant impact. We define ourselves by our jobs, and having precarious employment significantly impacts the way we view ourselves and the way we conduct ourselves in our societies.

This is a serious concern in my riding. In Bramalea–Gore–Malton, many constituents have raised this issue, that precarious employment and temporary help agencies are increasing. There is more and more temporary work, but there is no permanent work. People are struggling to make ends meet because of this, and it's a serious concern.

We need to implement some policy changes so that people can get a permanent job, as opposed to this temporary, precarious type of employment. This is something we need to address soon—now rather than later.

PANDAS

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I am pleased to welcome two new residents to my riding of Scarborough–Rouge River. Yesterday, a five-year-old female and a four-year-old male arrived from China. The two giant breeding pandas, Er Shun and Da Mao, are part of a conservation, research and education project. They will be on loan to the Toronto Zoo for a minimum of five years. The pandas will go through a period of quarantine and should be ready to meet the public by May 2013.

Through the Celebrate Ontario 2013 Blockbuster application, the giant panda exhibit received \$500,000 in provincial funding. The giant pandas are expected to attract 1.1 million new visitors over the five years, including 440,000 tourists, and to bring in approximately \$10 million annually to the Toronto Zoo.

The Toronto Zoo, located on the beautiful Rouge River, is one of the largest zoos in the world, occupying 710 acres of land. It is home to 5,000 animals representing over 500 species and offers 10 kilometres of walking trails, plus much more.

Mr. Speaker, I welcome my new residents Er Shun and Da Mao to Ontario and wish the Toronto Zoo success with the giant panda exhibit. It has been over 20 years since we had the giant pandas in Toronto. I encourage everyone to take a family trip to the Toronto Zoo and visit the pandas.

SPRINGWATER PROVINCIAL PARK

Mr. Rod Jackson: It's a pleasure to rise in the House today to speak about a very important issue that's affecting my riding and the surrounding ridings in Simcoe county: the closure of Springwater Park.

Springwater Park is a park that has been around since the 1930s. I have to say, Speaker, I wasn't even informed as a member, nor were the other members in Simcoe county, of the impending closure of this park. We weren't consulted about it; we weren't informed about it.

In fact, I found out through my own media that this park was closing. I was very disappointed.

There are no parks like Springwater anywhere near Barrie that fill its unique niche. It's a wildlife sanctuary. It's got 12 kilometres of trails. It's essentially just a beautiful park, and there's nothing like it in the area. Certainly it deserves at least, I think, a reprieve of a year where the local residents and the local governments in the city of Barrie and Springwater and, indeed, the county of Simcoe can have an opportunity to come up with some alternate funding methods within the community to try to keep this park open.

As it stands now, this park is destined to close by the end of the week. This is a travesty. This is one of the parks where the actual visitorship has gone up in the past couple of years, not down. There have been voluntary payments at the gate. When this park is so nice, people would gladly pay to help keep it open.

It's my hope, Speaker, that the minister will reconsider his decision to close this park and give the community an opportunity to do what it can to keep this park open.

OPTIMIST CLUB OF EAST LONDON

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: It is my pleasure to share with the members of this Legislature an important celebration I attended this past Saturday. The East London Optimist Club celebrated their 50th anniversary, and I was pleased to share in that celebration. The first-ever organizational meeting of the East London Optimist Club was held back on February 13, 1963. Within a year, they created the first Junior Optimist club.

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While most people know the East London Optimist Club for their annual Canada Day fireworks celebration, which began back in 1982 at East Lions Park in London, it is the less-known work they do every day to improve the lives of children and families in our community that I want to acknowledge today.

The volunteers of the East London Optimist Club have dedicated themselves to the London community. In 1977, they launched the Helping Hand Program. This vital community program seeks to improve the lives of underprivileged children in London. Over the years, the East London Optimist Club have generously donated their time and financially contributed to a variety of important organizations in London, including the London Centre of the Deaf and the Children's Hospital of London.

These are just a few examples of their incredible work. We know that the success of this organization is due to the people who have dedicated their time to their community. I am so thankful for their efforts, and wish them success for another 50 years.

CLARKSON CUP

Ms. Helena Jaczek: This past weekend, the 2013 Clarkson Cup Tournament was hosted in Markham. Each year, the top four teams in the Canadian Women's

Hockey League compete in a tournament for the Clarkson Cup, which is awarded to the eventual champion.

This year, I had the privilege of taking part in the ceremonial puck drop of a final round robin game between the Boston Blades and the Montreal Stars. These two teams competed on Saturday for the championship game, where Premier Kathleen Wynne dropped the ceremonial puck with former Governor General Adrienne Clarkson, by whom the trophy was created and for whom it was named. Miss Clarkson has been a champion of promoting women in sport, and her advocacy has helped create opportunities for young women who have a passion for hockey, like those who play for the Markham-Stouffville girls' hockey association.

I'm proud to say that my great riding of Oak Ridges–Markham was represented in the tournament by Stouffville resident Liz Knox, who plays goalie for the Brampton Thunder.

I would also like to acknowledge the hard work of Markham resident Brad Morris, who is the chair of the Canadian Women's Hockey League, which, with a team of local volunteers and local businesses, made this past weekend a huge success.

Congratulations to all the women who play simply for the love of the game. We look forward to seeing many of you as part of Team Canada at the 2014 Winter Olympic Games.

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT

Mr. Ted Arnott: The Guelph Mercury hit the nail on the head in its March 21 editorial on the Highway 6 Morriston bypass. The Mercury concluded, "After so much time, so much effort and ever-increasing traffic, doesn't this project deserve a spot on the province's five-year plan for highway capital projects?"

This is a question that many of my constituents in Puslinch township are also asking. Our community has been waiting for more than 30 years for this project to move forward. In fact, the need for a bypass around Morriston was first identified in the late 1970s. A number of environmental studies were done, but the project itself moved at a snail's pace. Meanwhile, the traffic problems continued to get worse and worse.

Highway 6 is an important economic corridor, linking the 401 to the US border. In 2006, the Minister of Transportation said that this stretch of the highway accounts for 12% of the province's truck traffic.

On February 19, the very first day that the Legislature resumed sitting after being prorogued, I tabled a resolution calling on the Minister of Transportation to put the Highway 6 Morriston bypass onto his ministry's five-year plan for highway construction. The motion is identical to one which I tabled last fall before the prorogation, and I want to thank all the residents of Puslinch township who have been working so hard to advocate for this project, led by their township council and staff.

I want to continue to do whatever I can to support their efforts. I once again urge the Minister of Transpor-

tation to listen to my constituents and put this needed project on his ministry's five-year plan.

LAHORE RESOLUTION

Ms. Dipika Damerla: I want to speak to a historic event that took place over the weekend. Specifically, March 23 marked the 73rd anniversary of the Lahore Resolution, which led to the creation of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. It's really important at many, many levels to recognize this. Of course, it's very important for anybody who's of Pakistani origin.

What the Lahore Resolution did back in 1940 was, it was the very first time that somebody formally put forth the idea of having a Muslim state. Many of us don't know this, but the first Islamic republic wasn't created in the Middle East; it wasn't created in Persia. It was actually created in the Indian subcontinent when Pakistan was formed on August 14, 1947.

This all began with the Lahore Resolution, which in part reads, "No constitutional plan would be workable or acceptable to the Muslims unless geographical contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary."

With this resolution, the dream for an independent Islamic republic, namely Pakistan, started. It would take another seven years for it to come true. For Pakistanis all over the world, this was a red-letter day. They have every right to be very, very proud, and I am here just talking about that.

THOUSAND ISLANDS SECONDARY SCHOOL

Mr. Steve Clark: Two dozen high school students from Thousand Islands Secondary School in Brockville are back from a once-in-a-lifetime experience in Nicaragua from February 19 to March 6. This was no ordinary field trip for these grade 11 and 12 students. Living with Nicaraguan families and paying \$9 a day to board with them, they were immersed into the culture and the poverty that's a daily reality for people there. The incredible experience was organized by Thousand Island teachers Brent Robillard and Caroline Bergeron.

Inside tiny cinder-block homes, students quickly realized the comforts of life in Canada were gone. They slept on wood cots, and lizards regularly crawled through cracks in the walls to join them for the night. They also witnessed heartbreaking scenes of child labour in a large garbage dump where young children scoured for scrap plastic and metal.

Amidst this poverty, in a country where the average income is \$2 a day, they saw something else: how these families still enjoyed their love of life. They may not have the material things that we have, but they have love of family, something we perhaps too often take for granted. The impact on them was profound. Many of them skipped an Internet café to catch up with friends at

home. Suddenly, things like Facebook and Twitter were less important to them.

I want to commend Brent and Caroline, two outstanding teachers, who taught their students an invaluable lesson in humanity. These students have been inspired to make a difference here at home and maybe to one day help change the world.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

PLANNING AMENDMENT ACT (ENABLING MUNICIPALITIES TO REQUIRE INCLUSIONARY HOUSING), 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT DU TERRITOIRE (INCLUSION DE LOGEMENTS ABORDABLES PAR LES MUNICIPALITÉS)

Ms. DiNovo moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 37, An Act to amend the Planning Act with respect to inclusionary housing / *Projet de loi 37, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire à l'égard de l'inclusion de logements abordables.*

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, please.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Section 34 of the act is amended to allow the councils of local municipalities to pass zoning bylaws to require inclusionary housing in the municipality by mandating that a specified percentage of housing units in new housing developments containing 20 or more housing units must be affordable to low- and moderate-income households.

New section 37.1 of the act deals with inclusionary housing bylaws in greater detail.

Section 51 of the act is amended to allow the approval authority to impose, as a condition of approval of a plan of subdivision, a requirement that a specified percentage of housing units in new housing developments in a subdivision containing 20 or more housing units must be affordable to low- and moderate-income households.

This bill, supported by dozens of municipalities, including Hazel McCallion herself, would provide some 12,000 units of new affordable housing without one tax dollar.

HELPING VOLUNTEERS GIVE BACK ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 VISANT À AIDER LES BÉNÉVOLES À CONTRIBUER

Ms. Jones moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 38, An Act respecting criminal record checks for volunteers / *Projet de loi 38, Loi concernant les vérifications du casier judiciaire des bénévoles.*

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

First reading agreed to.

1520

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

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Speaker, the explanatory note is actually quite long, so instead, what I will share with the House is this: My bill would allow a police record check to be used in multiple volunteer organizations. Currently, you need a separate police check for every organization that you choose to volunteer for. This would allow you, on an annual basis, to basically volunteer in multiple agencies.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. I appreciate the efforts to read the explanatory notes and I would hold you up as a good example. Thank you, member.

ENSURING AFFORDABLE ENERGY ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 FAVORISANT L'ÉNERGIE ABORDABLE

Ms. Thompson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 39, An Act to provide for control by local municipalities over renewable and affordable energy undertakings / *Projet de loi 39, Loi prévoyant le contrôle des entreprises d'énergie renouvelable et abordable par les municipalités locales.*

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.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. The explanatory note is a little long, so I'll shorten it up for you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A star, too.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: Thank you.

The short title of this bill is the Ensuring Affordable Energy Act, and that's exactly what this bill will do. This bill states that wind turbines will only be placed in willing host communities and municipalities will be given a full veto. Wind power must be affordable, meaning the cost per kilowatt hour must line up with other sources of generation. The costly Feed-in Tariff, or FIT, program will be eliminated. Municipalities will have the ability to decide whether or not they want to promote wind energy. The Niagara Escarpment and Oak Ridges moraine will be protected from wind turbines, and municipalities will receive their planning powers for renewable energy back.

REGULATED HEALTH PROFESSIONS
AMENDMENT ACT
(TREATING SPOUSES), 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT
LA LOI SUR LES PROFESSIONS
DE LA SANTÉ RÉGLEMENTÉES
(TRAITEMENT DES CONJOINTS)

Mr. Clark moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 40, An Act to amend the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 / Projet de loi 40, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1991 sur les professions de la santé réglementées.

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, please.

Mr. Steve Clark: The Regulated Health Professions Amendment Act, affectionately known by me as “treating spouses”: Currently, subsection 1(3) of the Health Professions Procedural Code, which is a schedule to the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, sets out a definition of sexual abuse which includes sexual relations between a patient and a member of the regulated health profession.

The new subsection 1(5) of the code enables each regulated profession to provide by regulation an exemption for such conduct when the patient is also the member’s spouse, and a definition of spouse is also added to the act and applies to all regulated professions.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES

VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARDS

Hon. Michael Coteau: I rise today to proudly salute the Volunteer Service Award program. The VSAs are ceremonies held in every corner of Ontario to recognize one of our province’s greatest assets: our volunteers.

Each year, more than five million volunteers give their time, their talent and their compassion to make Ontario a better place to live. It’s often hard work, but they do it because they care. Young, old, newcomer or long-time resident, each one takes action to make life better for others. They support the most vulnerable. They coach our children, cheer our seniors, mentor our newcomers. They care for our environment. These are some of the most energetic, trustworthy and dependable people anywhere, and we’re so lucky they choose to give their best to our communities here in Ontario.

Most of them will say volunteering is just what they do, yet through their service to organizations and their neighbours, they not only improve the quality of life in their communities but also the entire province. They are the heart of our communities.

That’s why we are taking time, through the VSAs, to give these volunteers the thanks they deserve. This year, 52 Volunteer Service Award ceremonies will take place in 38 communities across the province, starting in Stratford on March 20 and finishing in Toronto on June 27. Over 10,000 volunteers will be recognized.

Mr. Speaker, I know that many of my parliamentary colleagues will want to recognize their constituents by attending these events. For those of you who have not had a chance to attend the VSA ceremony or haven’t done so in a while, I strongly encourage you to do so this year.

I also urge my colleagues to have their deserving volunteers nominated in their communities for our other recognition programs such as the Ontario Medal for Young Volunteers and the June Callwood Outstanding Achievement Awards for Voluntarism. Ceremonies for these programs will be held during National Volunteer Week from April 21 to 27. We will also begin our sixth annual ChangeTheWorld: Ontario Youth Volunteer Challenge at the same time.

I’m confident that all members of this Legislature share our vision in keeping Ontario’s volunteer spirit strong and will join me in thanking our volunteers for their outstanding services in our communities.

FINDING YOUR WAY PROGRAM
PROGRAMME FINDING YOUR WAY

Hon. Mario Sergio: As part of our government’s Action Plan for Seniors, we have set up a wandering prevention program to help people with Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias, and their families and caregivers from our diverse communities, to reduce the risk of going missing.

The government of Ontario is proud to join the Alzheimer Society of Ontario, police forces, community representatives and government ministries in an integrated response to a growing challenge: improving safety awareness and preventing missing incidents among individuals with dementia, many of whom are seniors.

Finding Your Way is a new program to help people with dementia who may wander and become lost, while supporting caregivers and communities—the first of its kind in Canada. It’s aimed at helping to save them from harm and potentially life-threatening dangers. With the increase in the number of people with dementia, and their preference to live in their community as long as possible, we have recognized the importance of having a program in place. Seniors, caregivers, the general public—every one of us has an obligation to do our part to ensure the safety and security of people with dementia who wander.

The time for Finding Your Way is now. The number of people with dementia is growing as never before and will increase 40% in less than a decade, from 180,000 to more than a quarter of a million people. Indeed, this is closely linked to the fact that in just five years, there will be more seniors in Ontario than children 14 and younger.

While the likelihood of developing dementia increases with age, we also know that more people are being diagnosed with early-onset dementia at younger ages.

Finding Your Way will improve safety as we educate, involve and empower seniors, their families, caregivers and people throughout the province. We will equip people with information and support, so that they can plan for the future in a way that maximizes choice, independence and safety. The program will help us all work together—the entire community—to become aware of the signs when encountering persons with dementia and other related illnesses who are lost or missing.

With the Alzheimer Society of Ontario and the police, we are developing resources for individuals and families to prevent loved ones from going missing; public education to raise awareness; outreach to communities, with an emphasis on diversity; and training for front-line police officers to recognize and respond to cases involving seniors who have wandered.

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The Alzheimer Society will provide tips on what to do when a person goes missing, as well as identification kits that encourage people to document vital statistics and include photographs of their loved ones before they go missing. The society, with its history of dealing with this issue, is leading the public awareness campaign. It will include a broad range of media organizations, engagement with communities and partnering with ethnocultural organizations to extend our information outreach. In particular, the campaign will begin with resources in English, French, Chinese and Punjabi, and expand by introducing resources in Italian, Spanish and Portuguese in 2014.

Speaker, we want everybody, young and old, to know and be aware of wandering risks so that the community responds to help missing seniors. Public safety is our collective concern and shared responsibility. We must recognize and reduce the risk of them going missing.

Monsieur le Président, traitant nos personnes âgées bien et avec les meilleurs soins aujourd'hui sera l'empreinte de pas pour nos personnes âgées de demain. Maintenant, c'est notre temps. C'est notre occasion de faire de l'Ontario la meilleure province et le meilleur endroit où nos personnes âgées peuvent, avec confiance, vieillir en bonne santé, heureuses et dans la dignité et le confort. Après tout, elles le méritent.

Speaker, this program is a good start, and I have to compliment everyone involved. I hope this will be used well.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Merci beaucoup, monsieur le Ministre. It is now time for responses.

VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARDS

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It's an honour to rise on behalf of the PC caucus to respond to the minister's statement on the Volunteer Service Awards. When we think of volunteers, we often think of Rotary, Lions, Optimists, Kinsmen, Shriners, our churches and our schools. But

there's also a very unusual and special group that keeps our community safe, the St. John Ambulance volunteers, who are at every public event with first aid; and Victim Services, a huge organization province-wide that, quite frankly, would not be able to exist without the use of volunteers. Volunteers truly form the bedrock of our communities. People often do not realize the huge amount of work volunteers do in our towns and cities.

The Volunteer Service Awards are an important way for us to recognize this hard work and acknowledge our volunteers for all they do. I'm reminded of people like Mary Phelan from Caledon. Mary has been a volunteer with the Canadian Cancer Society for over 40 years. I think of Lorna Bethell. Lorna has been a volunteer with churches and hospitals for most of her life. Her leadership in creating a palliative care home in Caledon is a big part of why Bethell House exists today.

It's people like Mary and Lorna who were the inspiration for my private member's bill, the Helping Volunteers Give Back Act, that I introduced earlier today. This bill will help people volunteer more across Ontario by making it easier for them to volunteer with multiple organizations by allowing the same criminal record check to be used when applying to multiple organizations.

The Volunteer Service Awards recognize our volunteers for their hard work, but we also as legislators can do more by making it easier to allow them to do what they love. Often, if someone volunteers for one organization, they are more than willing to do so for others. We should be helping them realize that goal. It's an important cause and one that I hope will be supported by all parties in this House.

On behalf of the residents of Caledon and the PC caucus, I would like to say congratulations to all the Volunteer Service Award recipients. We cannot thank you enough.

FINDING YOUR WAY PROGRAM

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to join with my colleagues in offering the support of the PC caucus for the Finding Your Way wandering prevention program. The Alzheimer Society of Ontario is to be congratulated for launching this vital program, and I am glad the government has agreed to provide the necessary funding. Finding Your Way will be a great help in teaching families, caregivers and first responders how to keep those with dementia safe and what to do if someone goes missing.

Safety starts in the home, and I know it can be a challenge for many families, particularly where the caregivers have to work during the day. The safety kit that the Alzheimer Society has designed is one that every family member of someone with dementia should ask for and follow. Alzheimer's and other dementias are terrible diseases which rob people of their memories and ability to think and make daily tasks difficult and sometimes impossible.

Nearly 200,000 Ontarians over 65 are affected, and the number, sadly, is increasing. Despite this, much of the new research is providing hope for those with dementia and their families. The Alzheimer Society tells us that key drugs are now available that delay the onset and slow the progress of the disease. Research is telling us new ways that people can reduce risk factors, and the search for a vaccine is promising.

We should all give our thanks to the Alzheimer Society for its hard work in research and advocacy, creating programs such as Finding Your Way that will make a real difference in people's lives. I would also like to take the chance to thank my local Alzheimer societies in greater Simcoe county and York region for the important work they do.

Finding Your Way is a great program, and I urge every family member and caregiver of someone with dementia to find out more.

FINDING YOUR WAY PROGRAM

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I am happy to speak to this important issue. We are pleased to hear about this program and welcome the announcement on behalf of seniors and Ontarians. Moreover, I am glad to see that the government of Ontario has partnered with the Alzheimer Society of Ontario as key stakeholders representing those suffering from dementia and those who care for them.

We know that nearly 200,000 Ontarians have dementia, and that this number will increase to more than 250,000 by the year 2020. We need action to be taken today. We can't afford to wait for another senior to be lost or go missing. With one in three people with dementia going missing at some point, the numbers of individuals and their families potentially affected are staggering.

I am also pleased to see that the kits include specific information about what to do in case someone does go missing. The kit also highlights the need to include working with local law enforcement and other available community resources. There are so many Ontarians caring for loved ones, and having access to the right information at the right time is essential.

We must keep in mind that, while this is a great first step, there is more work to be done. I congratulate the Alzheimer Society for their efforts, but remind this government that it is their job to protect the most vulnerable, whether they are living in care or living at home.

As the NDP seniors' critic, I hear from many families who are struggling to make sure their loved ones have the care and attention they deserve. We are currently debating the caregiver bill, and the New Democrats are very concerned about how little this bill does—how it does not address many of the most fundamental issues, including finances, kinds of illnesses covered and the creation of an integrated system of supports for caregivers.

New Democrats are very concerned about the ongoing delays in our home care system, that some seniors are

waiting up to 262 days for care, and this leaves families and individuals without help that they need. We are urging this government to address the problems in home care by putting our five-day home care guarantee into the budget.

Finally, we continue to be very concerned about the safety of our loved ones when they go into a long-term-care home. The government tells us that our long-term-care homes are safe for vulnerable seniors, yet terrible news stories of abuse and violence keep emerging. We need to end this once and for all.

We welcome this announcement today, but let's not forget how much more needs to be done.

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VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARDS

Mr. Michael Prue: I rise today to salute all those volunteers out in our communities. They are the lifeblood of literally every town, city, village and rural area of this province. They give of themselves and they give of their talents, and they do so in a way without expecting ever to be rewarded, and certainly many of them without ever expecting to be recognized.

Last night, as an example, I had an opportunity to attend a small community group called Applegrove, which is in the southwest quadrant of my riding. It was a really nice little ceremony, with eight or 10 people, who were given just a little piece of paper thanking them for everything they had done—people who had cooked meals, people who had done some fundraising, people who had been part and parcel of community events.

On Sunday afternoon I was at the Agnes Macphail Award ceremony in East York, where the Honourable Alan Redway was honoured. People might know him as an MP; they might know him as the former mayor. But he was honoured not for those things but what he has done since he left political office: the Daily Bread Food Bank; in the Leaside community; housing for people who are in desperate need of it; and at Flemingdon legal services, helping new immigrants and others to get legal services that they need.

On Saturday, I went to the Little Stanley Cup at Stan Wadlow arena. It's a very unique thing because there's only one true replica of the Stanley Cup in all of Canada. It's handed out in East York every year to the winning team. Toronto occasionally wins as well at the Little Stanley Cup. There were some wonderful people there: Art Kennedy, Ed Svelnes and a whole group of parents and others who struggle and work all year long in order to produce the hockey teams and give opportunities for kids to play one of our national sports.

These are just some of the five million people who are out there, and I'm very thankful that some of them are going to be recognized by the province. But it's equally important that they all understand that they have a feeling of accomplishment. Whether they're sports teams, community groups, or civic groups, whether they help the aged, those with disabilities, or the environment, or do a

thousand other things, we could not produce the kind of communities we want to live in without them.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

Hon. John Milloy: Point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): A point of order from the government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I believe you'll find unanimous consent to move the late show requested by the member from Timmins–James Bay directed to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines which was scheduled for tonight to 6 p.m. on Wednesday, March 27, 2013.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Do we have unanimous consent to move the late show? Agreed.

Not to set a trend, but it's now time for petitions, so I'll acknowledge the member from Durham.

PETITIONS

AIR QUALITY

Mr. John O'Toole: It's a pleasure to stand behind my House leader here, representing the people of Durham riding. It says:

"Whereas Ontario's Drive Clean program was implemented only as a temporary measure to reduce high levels of vehicle emissions and smog; and

"Whereas vehicle emissions have declined so significantly from 1998 to 2010 that they are no longer among the major domestic contributors of smog in Ontario; and

"Whereas the overwhelming majority of reductions in vehicle emissions were, in fact, the result of factors other than the Drive Clean program, such as tighter manufacturing standards for emission-control technologies; and

"Whereas from 1999 to 2010 the percentage of vehicles that failed emissions testing under the Drive Clean program steadily declined from 16% to 5%; and

"Whereas the" Minister of the Environment, Mr. Bradley, "has ignored advances in technology and introduced a new, computerized emissions test that is less reliable and" more "prone to error; and

"Whereas the new Drive Clean test no longer assess tailpipe emissions, but instead scans the on-board diagnostics systems of vehicles, which already perform a series of continuous and periodic emissions checks; and

"Whereas the new Drive Clean test has caused the failure rate to double in less than two months as a result of technical problems" which the new emissions testing method has caused; and

"Whereas this new emissions test has caused numerous false" fails, "which have resulted in the overcharging of testing fees for Ontario drivers and car dealerships, thereby causing unwarranted economic hardship and stress;

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

That the Ministry of the Environment take the advice of our critic, Michael Harris, and "take immediate steps to begin phasing out the Drive Clean program."

I'm pleased to sign and support this and present it to Andrew, a page from my riding of Durham.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

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

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

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

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

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

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

I support this petition. I will affix my signature to it and hand it to Jacob.

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

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It's great to see you in the chair once again.

I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas residents of Ontario want a moratorium on all further industrial wind turbine development until an independent third party health and environmental study has been completed; and

"Whereas people in Ontario living within close proximity to industrial wind turbines have reported negative health effects, we need to study the physical, social, economic and environmental impacts of industrial wind turbines; and the Auditor General confirmed wind farms were created in haste and with no planning;

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

"That the Ontario government place a moratorium on the approval of any wind energy projects and a moratorium on the construction of industrial wind projects until further studies on the potential adverse health

effects of industrial wind turbines, their effect on the environment, the potential devaluation of residential property are completed; and that any industrial wind projects not currently connected to the grid be cancelled.”

I agree with this petition and I'll affix my name to it.

SPRINGWATER PROVINCIAL PARK

Mr. Jim Wilson: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas we oppose the termination of the operating budget for Springwater Provincial Park in Springwater township on March 31, 2013;

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

“We ask that the park remain operating and facilities such as the animal sanctuary, cabins/shelters, playground equipment and ground maintenance remain intact and operating.”

I agree with this petition and will sign it.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I agree with my friend from Northumberland; you look great in the chair.

Today I present a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the province of Ontario has closed historic jails in Walkerton and other rural Ontario municipalities resulting in loss of employment and heritage buildings to be vacated; and

“Whereas the province of Ontario is committed to job creation and economic development in rural Ontario communities and the preservation of heritage resources; and

“Whereas the provincial Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services has indicated a desire to establish a provincial correctional museum and memorial to showcase the history, heritage and legacy of our correctional institutions;

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

“That the Liberal government support the establishment of the Province of Ontario Correctional Museum in the historic 1866 Bruce County jail in Walkerton and instruct the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, Honourable Madeleine Meilleur, to begin discussions with the municipality of Brockton.”

I totally agree with this petition and I will give it to John to take to the table.

WATER QUALITY

Mr. Steve Clark: On behalf of the member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry and I, I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the member churches of the Seaway Valley Presbytery are subject to the provisions of the Health

Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario regulation 319/08; and

“Whereas these churches and other non-profit organizations in eastern Ontario's rural communities cannot afford to pay for the expensive testing required by this regulation or the volunteers to transport water samples to provincially accredited laboratories in urban centres hours away; and

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“Whereas public health laboratories have the equipment necessary to conduct the testing required under Ontario regulation 319/08;

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

“That the Minister of Health amends Ontario regulation 319/08 to allow non-profit organizations to have water testing done at existing public health laboratories at no cost.”

I'll affix my signature to the petition and send it to the table.

AIR QUALITY

Mr. John O'Toole: I have another petition to the Minister of the Environment, which reads as follows:

“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, during four to five months of the year”—especially when it's not raining;

“Therefore, be it resolved that the Ontario Legislature support Ontarians who collect and restore old 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” rigorously “by the Ministry of the Environment and governing the installation of newer engines into old cars and trucks.”

I would put to the minister that he should cancel the Drive Clean program totally, right now.

LANDFILL

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas many of the resources of this planet are finite and are necessary to sustain both life and the quality of life for all future generations;

“Whereas the disposal of resources in landfills creates environmental hazards which will have significant human and financial costs for;

“Whereas all levels of government are elected to guarantee their constituents’ physical, financial, emotional and mental well-being;

“Whereas the health risks to the community and watershed increase in direct relationship to the proximity of any landfill site;

“Whereas the placement of a landfill in a limestone quarry has been shown to be detrimental;

“Whereas the placement of a landfill in the headwaters of multiple highly vulnerable aquifers is detrimental;

“Whereas the county of Oxford has passed a resolution requesting a moratorium on landfill construction or approval;

“Therefore be it resolved that we, the undersigned, humbly petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“To implement a moratorium in Oxford county on any future landfill construction or approval until such time as a full review of alternatives has been completed which would examine best practices in other jurisdictions around the world;

“That this review of alternatives would give special emphasis on (a) practices which involve the total recycling or composting of all products currently destined for landfill sites in Ontario and (b) the production of goods which can efficiently and practically be recycled or reused so as not to require disposal in landfills.”

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to read this petition, and I affix my signature.

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Jim Wilson: I want to thank Betty Schneider of Clearview township for sending me these petitions.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas we, the residents of Clearview township and neighbouring townships, oppose the wpd Canada Fairview wind project on Fairgrounds Road and all wind energy projects in Clearview township; and

“Whereas we support the petition of mayors and councillors from 80 municipalities, farm organizations, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario, which petition requested that the province place an immediate moratorium on all wind projects until an independent and comprehensive health study has determined that turbine noise is safe to human health, amongst other things; and

“Whereas wpd Canada’s Fairview wind project violates the OLS airspace and usability of registered aerodromes in Clearview, including Collingwood Regional Airport and Stayner field, and wpd Canada’s draft renewable energy approvals reports do not recognize these impacts or the jurisdiction of the government of Canada; and

“Whereas wpd Canada is seeking final approval from the province for the Fairview wind project prior to

completion of the federal Health Canada study and prior to federal actions to protect aviation safety;

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

“That the government of Ontario agree and accept that until the federal health study is completed and federal aeronautical zoning is in place, that it will immediately take whatever action is necessary to give full effect to a moratorium on all wind turbine development in Ontario, including all projects for which final approvals have not been given.”

I agree with this and I will sign it. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUPPLY ACT, 2013

LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 2013

Mr. Milloy, on behalf of Mr. Sousa, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 33, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2013 / Projet de loi 33, Loi autorisant l’utilisation de certaines sommes pour l’exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2013.

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

Hon. John Milloy: I’m pleased to be here today to talk very briefly about the Supply Act for the 2012-13 fiscal year. Rather than dwell on the many issues that I know members will want to talk about today in a very broad debate that usually takes place in terms of the Supply Act, I thought I’d just give a little bit of background, particularly for viewers, as to what the Supply Act is. It’s one of the cornerstones in this Legislature. Passing the Supply Act will constitute the final authorization by this Legislature of the government’s program spending for the fiscal year that is coming to a close.

If passed, this bill would give the government the authority to finance its programs and honour its commitments. Up to this point, the government’s interim spending authority for the fiscal year which will end March 31, 2013, has been provided through the Interim Appropriation for 2012-2013 Act. Pending the vote, the enactment of the Supply Act would repeal and replace this temporary legislation.

It’s important to note that the Supply Act would not authorize any new expenditures. All expenditures incurred under the Supply Act would be in accordance with the 2012-13 estimates that have been tabled in the Legislative Assembly. Because the Supply Act is intended to be the statutory authority for all incurred expenditures during the relevant fiscal year, it would be deemed to have come into force on the first day of the present fiscal year, which is April 1, 2012.

The Supply Act would provide necessary legal spending authority for important payments made to institutions and individuals. These include nursing homes, hospitals,

doctors, schools, municipalities, financial and income support recipients, people with disabilities and special needs, children's aid societies and those who rely on various benefits or programs, such as the Ontario Child Benefit.

I think that with that brief description members realize the importance of this piece of legislation. Of course, I look forward to what I imagine will be a very vigorous debate this afternoon, but ultimately I urge all members to support this very important act that is coming forward today. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate? The member for Dufferin-Caledon.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Thank you, Speaker. It's an honour to rise on behalf of the residents of Dufferin-Caledon to comment on the government bill before the House this afternoon.

The bill before us today, the Supply Act, 2013, is basically a bill which allows the Minister of Finance to spend taxpayers' money to pay the salaries of public sector employees as well as make other necessary payments. This is related to the interim supply motion that was debated last week, which I also spoke to.

As I said then, and will say now, Ontario is in the midst of the biggest jobs and spending crisis of our lifetime. Compounding this dire situation is the fact that the party across the aisle that created the mess just doesn't understand that their tired, old, recycled policies are not the solution; they are in fact the problem.

In my remarks last week I decided to use my time to focus on the reckless overspending demonstrated by this government. I outlined how, contrary to their soaring platitudes and feel-good bill names, the Liberal government has run Ontario totally off course and the result has been crippling debt and deficits.

I recalled how over a year ago we were all presented with a stark, foreboding picture of our province's finances by the economist Don Drummond. He warned us that unless we took immediate action and stopped moving down this reckless path, we would soon be confronted with the untenable spectre of a deficit of over \$30 billion and a debt exceeding \$400 billion, yet even those astonishing figures were not enough to dissuade the Liberal government from entrenching their big-spending ways.

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So here we stand today, awaiting another budget, confronted with another \$100-billion-plus deficit—more borrowed money, courtesy of Ontario's future generations; more reckless spending on the part of the Liberal government. That is why I was unsurprised—dismayed, yes; worried, yes. But surprised? Sadly, no. When Premier Wynne and her finance minister began referencing the need for new transit revenue tools while at the same time refusing to rule out new taxes as a component of their upcoming budget, I got worried. Frankly, the reason I wasn't surprised is because Premier Wynne and her Liberal colleagues are turning to what they know best,

just like they did under her predecessor, Dalton McGuinty: new taxes.

I want to get something out of the way and on the record here and now so that there's no confusion or room for error: A tax is a tax. Any time the government takes money out of a person's pocket or a business profit, it is taxing the private sector of our economy. All that taxing takes its toll on the economy, and as a result, private sector job creation stagnates and suffers.

You see, Speaker, what the Liberal government just does not seem to realize is that it already takes a huge amount of money out of the private sector economy each and every year. Just because this government can't effectively manage the money they already have—just because they waste huge amounts of that money—does not mean that this government should now take more of the people's money to waste and mismanage.

If we were in the real world—you know, where everyone else lives—it would be akin to using your credit card and spending every last cent you made every month to cover your living costs; then, once you've maxed out your credit card, you just get another credit card and continue doing the same thing over and over and over. I don't think there's a single one amongst us who would teach our children to manage their finances that way, never mind condone their government doing so. That's the problem we face here today, because that's exactly what this government has been doing and continues to do.

The worst part is that they've done it for so long now that it has become structural. To demonstrate my point, consider the fact that while our annual deficit is approximately \$11.9 billion, we pay approximately \$10 billion annually in interest, servicing the massive debt that the Liberal government has run up. That makes debt interest payments the third-biggest expenditure of this government, behind only the health care and education ministries. There is no way to stop paying those interest payments—except, of course, to pay down your debt, which, of course, we cannot do because we are consistently running deficits.

Every year, we increase our debt more and more, and every year, this in turn further restricts our ability to balance the budget more and more. So the cycle continues, until we reach a point—and I daresay we may just have arrived at that juncture already in Ontario—where the deficits are just too toxic and the deficit too massive—that the Liberal government finally throws its hands up and explains to Ontario, "There's no other way. We're really sorry, but we have no choice but to raise your taxes again."

We are almost there; slowly but surely, the Premier and her finance minister have been talking about more revenue and more taxes. Surely anyone can see the writing on the wall. The party opposite will resort to the only thing they know how to do: tax more and spend more. This is a fiscal policy I wholeheartedly reject, and that is why I will not be supporting this bill before us here today: because I believe that it is within our capacity

to actually reduce reckless overspending. Moreover, I believe that we owe it to Ontarians to do so.

With our caucus not supporting this bill, I'm sure the other parties will cry foul. I'm sure they'll revert to their usual canned lines and claim, "The PCs are never for anything; they're always against everything." Well, I, for one, refute that claim. I think we're for ensuring Ontario's services are well funded and operating effectively, but I think we're against running large deficits year over year, consistently avoiding making the tough decisions that are necessary to balance the budget. I think we are for having cost-effective, sustainable green energy, like hydroelectric power, the essential part of our province's power supply, but I think we're against imposing a draconian Green Energy Act on Ontarians with little regard for municipal planning rights, public health concerns or consumer affordability. I think we're for paying our public sector employees a fair, honest wage. What we're against is doling out anything union bosses demand with little or no consideration paid to Ontario's fiscal realities. And I can tell you that we in the PC caucus are absolutely for a change in direction and a change of leadership in Ontario. What we are against is standing by idly while the Liberal government continues to run up the tab and make our province more and more financially unsustainable.

This government's reckless financial record, out-of-control spending and a complete lack of action in creating private sector job growth makes it undeniable that the party opposite cannot be supported, and that is why I will be voting against this supply motion.

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

Mr. Michael Prue: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I think, though, we are dealing with the Supply Act today, not the supply motion.

For anybody who might be watching this on television, this is not a rerun. This is sort of what happens here. We talk about the supply motion one day, we pass it, and then the next day we turn around and talk about the Supply Act. Although they're very similar, they are somewhat different.

Every year, we go through this process. Every year that I've been here for the last 12 years, and I think every year probably since Confederation, we go through the same kind of discussion leading up to a budget.

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Prue: No, I haven't been here that long, although some days it feels like that. But no, I've been here for 12 years, and for 12 years I've watched the same thing. I've watched when the Conservatives were on that side, standing up and asking for a supply motion and for a Supply Act to follow that. And it's essential for that to happen as we lead up to the budget, because the government does not have the authority to spend money without such a motion and act being put forward until the time that the budget is passed.

Traditionally and historically, this has been an act that will last for four to six months and, at the end of that,

hopefully by that time the budget is passed and all is well with the world. And if the budget's not passed, then we'll be in an election.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: All will not be well with the world if that budget is passed, Michael.

Mr. Michael Prue: Then we'll be in an election, and my friends in the Conservative Party can be very happy, I'm sure, at last.

This allows for payments, because governments have to continue to make payments. Whether or not the budget itself has been passed, they have to make payments to the municipalities who expect and need that money in order that the cities, towns and villages of this province can operate. They need to make money available to the universities and the schools so that our children and adults can continue to learn, and they need to make money available to our hospitals so that our sick can be looked after. They need to have the money to pay the thousands of public employees who work diligently and well on behalf of the people of this province and for the thousand other things that government does.

If this act did not pass, then the payments would literally stop. I don't know why my friends in the official opposition are bound and determined to make this happen. It seems to me that if they are dissatisfied with the direction of government policy, the true test will come in the budget, when we actually know what this government is going to do.

Now, all of us have a pretty good guess. We all have a pretty good guess what's going to happen, and I think there's going to be a lot of disappointment in this province because right off the bat—as a member of the finance committee, I study this a great deal, what the government is up to and what they're planning to do. But this government is even keeping the date of the budget itself in secret. The finance committee has been asking the finance minister for weeks to announce the budget day because the finance committee has to do a number of things. We have to travel across and around the province in order to gauge public opinion on the upcoming budget.

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We have already talked to about 100 people. We wish we could have talked to more, but we can't schedule dates that may be in conflict with the eventual date of the budget. And as I've said, we've heard from about 100 people, and we're going to be in Thunder Bay next week to hear from up to 28 more. We've got to prepare reports. We have to have motions made, reports made, translations made, and the whole package sent off to the finance minister well before the budget date. But we don't know when that date is, so we're having to truncate everything we do down to a few weeks in order to meet an imaginary time frame. It has been very frustrating, I must tell you.

What we've heard from people across this province is a whole bunch of things. Many groups have come forward in support of the report made by Frances Lankin and Munir Sheikh about people on welfare and the reform of our welfare system here in Ontario. Many

people have come forward talking about tax fairness and how we need to put some kind of fairness back into our taxation policies here in Ontario. Some have come and asked us to balance the budget.

Some have come and asked us to change legislation that will make their work an easier work and also recognize the kinds of difficulties they have in performing their duty on behalf of the people of Ontario. I speak specifically here about the firefighters, who have asked us to change the presumptive legislation in order to add some additional cancers to the list of things to which they might be susceptible due to the nature of their work.

We've talked to doctors and nurses and hospitals about how to make the health system more efficient, and some very surprising recommendations have come from some of them. The Ontario Nurses' Association asked us to get rid of CCACs. That was quite a surprise to me when I heard that. We've had others talk about how the hospitals, in fact, are spending too much money in some of the fields rather than listening to the experts, i.e., the doctors, around a whole range of programs.

We've listened to business organizations trying to balance the budget again. We've listened to unions and some of the right-wing think tanks who are diametrically opposed in their views, but both had views to offer.

We've listened, of course, to ordinary citizens who come with their complaints.

I am eternally optimistic—unlike some of my friends in this House—that this government will listen. I am eternally optimistic that they will do a U-turn and change what they've been doing for the last eight years: that they'll finally understand that deficits need to be controlled; that they'll finally understand that they need to find better and more acceptable ways of dealing with the many problems that Ontarians face; and that they will finally understand that some of these programs are essential to the well-being of the people of this province.

They hired an expert by the name of Mr. Drummond, who told them a whole bunch of things that they needed to do, and I am eternally hopeful that maybe they'll listen to some of those. Mr. Drummond said that we had to start exploring certain fields where we weren't really getting the kind of support or the kinds of money that Ontarians would come to expect. He thought we had to explore the increase in the employer health tax exemptions. We had to look at whether we were getting good value for our money or whether those exemptions were necessary for all of the very large corporations. Granted, we in the NDP think they're absolutely essential to small business, but are they essential to very large business and should they see that exemption on their payroll when they have hundreds or thousands of employees?

We have to start looking, I believe, at the tax write-offs, and there are many of them. I'm very disappointed with the answers we're getting in this House about the entertainment tax writeoff that this government talked about in 2009 when they brought in their very unpopular HST legislation. One of the things they said was that there wasn't going to be an exemption at that time—they

said there's not going to be an exemption on the entertainment and meals tax writeoff until 2015.

Here we are, coming into a budget that's going to lead us up to that, and we in the New Democratic Party are saying, "Hold on here a minute. This is a \$1.3-billion expense to the government unless you continue it." We've asked day in, day out to this government, "What are you going to do about that? What are you going to do about that \$1.3-billion potential cost to the government by allowing people to no longer pay the HST on entertainment and meals?" We haven't gotten any real answers.

I want to tell you that ordinary people who've come before the finance committee don't like this one bit. If they've ever had enough money to attend even a hockey game and look up into all those big, fancy seats and all those people having a great time in the box, they have to wonder—they have to wonder—who's paying for this? In fact, the people of Ontario are paying for this through tax exemptions. You have to wonder, when you can't even afford a ticket to get in there in the first place, how is it and why is it that this is a tax writeoff? Couldn't we use the \$1.3 billion in a much better way? I would suggest we can.

We've been hearing the last few days, in this Legislature, and the banter back and forth across—the Liberals are all gung-ho to try to raise some money for transit. New Democrats love transit. We think it's an important thing. But the question is, where is the money going to come from? Where is it going to come from? Well, there's a real easy place for \$1.3 billion. There's a real easy place for some of it, and Liberals across there are going to have to think about some of that.

We have to start talking about tax compliance. In here—in the province of Ontario—and across Canada, we have many corporations that have offices in Toronto, but they also have offices in Montreal and in Halifax and Vancouver and Calgary. In Canada, it is perfectly legal for companies to shift their profits and losses across their various branch plants in each of the provinces and thereby evade the taxes in this province, and sometimes the taxes in other provinces as well. We need to sit down with the other provinces. We need to sit down with the federal government and work on that tax compliance, because if we do, there can be an additional \$200 million to the revenues of this province.

We also need to ask the federal government to deal internationally, because the same phenomenon occurs, not only with inside the borders of Canada, but also outside the borders of Canada, when multinational corporations take their profits and their losses from other jurisdictions and use that against the profits that are being made here in the province of Ontario.

New Democrats need to know that this budget is going to do so much more for the people of Ontario. We are waiting for budget day. My friends are asking, "Are you going to prop this government up?" I don't know, because I don't know what they're going to say and I don't know what they're going to do. If their only

solution is to tax the people more who can ill afford it, I don't think there's much hope that the budget will make it off this floor. If they are actually going to listen to the people of Ontario and provide the kind of leadership that I hope they can, then there may be hope yet.

As I said, I'm an eternal optimist. I believe all the time that when you start to listen to the people of Ontario instead of to yourself, you can make good decisions. So I'm asking them to please, please consider things that are important.

We have 600,000 people unemployed in this province who desperately want to get a job. Most problematic, in my mind, is that we have a 15% or 16% rate of unemployment of those who are under the age of 26. They are desperately seeking to try to find that first and that important job, and they have not had the kind of success that we know they need to have. New Democrats are asking for a job plan for young people. We're asking for support to create jobs for them. We have earmarked how that can be done for some 25,000 young people: by giving guarantees to industry to create jobs.

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Right now, we give out lots of money. The Conservatives like to call it corporate welfare. I would like to call it corporate largesse, because we give out the money with no strings attached whatsoever. What we are saying as New Democrats is that strings have to be attached. One of the ways to attach those strings is to create jobs for young people, to allow the corporations an amount of money—\$8,000 or \$9,000, I think the figure is—in order to create a job that lasts for a minimum of six months, that pays a decent salary and that has a future in it at the end. It's not just six months and kick them out on to the street; it's intended for six months in order to assist the company to evaluate the capability of the incumbent and then to continue that employment into the long term, once they're satisfied the person can do the job.

This is the kind of thing we need in this province. We cannot have a whole generation of young people who have no future and no prospects. We can't have a whole generation of young people who leave university and community colleges and find no work. We can't have a whole generation of young people who are forced to stay in their family home because they have no other options and no other way of making ends meet. We need to give them the same kind of opportunities that all of us in this room probably had when we were in Ontario, when we were in our twenties, when we were looking for our first job and were able to find it and prosper. That's what we need to do, and that's what New Democrats expect in this upcoming budget.

We also expect, Madam Speaker, that this government will finally look at the whole problem of home care and people who are exiting the hospitals and people who require assistance to go back to their homes. At the present time, it just takes too long. We know in some parts of Ontario, it takes 262 days from the time you apply for home care until the time that somebody actually comes to help you in your house. That is not acceptable

to the New Democratic Party, and it's certainly not acceptable to the people of this province.

We have suggested that, for a relatively small amount of money, we can make that, and we must make that, available to people after five days. It's doable. In a city like Toronto, it's already around 10 days, so it's not like reinventing the wheel. But in rural and northern Ontario, where it is particularly acute—small-town places—people wait huge amounts of time. This is not fair to them nor their families nor to all of us. It in turn, in many cases, costs us more money because they return to hospital or they go into facilities that cost a lot more than the small amount that would be necessary to keep them in their own homes.

We as New Democrats believe that consumers need a break, too. I'm going to turn my attention next to insurance rates. The highest insurance rates of any drivers in Canada are paid here in Ontario. Two years ago—I listened again to the government, who are saying they are going to help the insurance companies by slashing all the programs. I said then, and I'll say it again now, anybody can sell an inferior product for less money. That's the reality of what has happened. The insurance companies are selling a product which is inferior to what they sold two years ago. But they're not selling it for less money; they're selling it for the same or more money. This is where I think this government has been duped.

Consumers expect that if they're not getting the same quality product—and if they're willing to settle for something that doesn't give them the same guarantees if they're hurt or injured or in an accident—they shouldn't be paying as if they were.

The insurance companies have seen a windfall of some \$2 billion a year or some \$4 billion in the two years since the law was changed. Yet, what have consumers seen? They saw last year a 5% increase, and they see this year, as the minister said, a fraction, a fraction, a fraction of 1% decrease. But I beg to differ, because certainly that's not universal, and it's certainly not what consumers were expecting.

New Democrats are demanding a 15% reduction in automobile insurance rates because the consumers deserve it, because the consumers are sick and tired of being ripped off. It is a commodity they must purchase if they're going to drive a car. They have no option. You can shop around all you want from the various insurance companies, but in the end you're still going to be paying more than you would anywhere else in this country. So we're expecting some movement on this as well.

We also have the recommendations of Frances Lankin and Munir Sheikh about ODSP and Ontario Works and making it more humane. One of the things they are suggesting is that people on ODSP and Ontario Works get to keep the first \$200 of income they make each and every month in order to make life easier for them and to help them transition back into work life, if they are capable of doing so. We think it's a very reasonable recommendation that won't cost too much money and is certainly long overdue. A person on ODSP who earns

\$200 a month is not going to be rich. In fact, that \$200 goes only part way between their life and the poverty line.

I will tell you—and I've said this story many times in here, and I'd like to say it again, with permission, if I can have a few more minutes from my colleague—

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Prue: Okay—because he has the other 20 minutes.

In this province many years ago, when I was a boy, people who were born with Down syndrome went inevitably to an institution when they were five or six years old. They just disappeared from your community and you never saw them again. We have, as a society, taken a great deal of pain around this, but ultimately to good, good effect. People with Down syndrome now live in their homes and their communities. They finish high school, and they go out and work. I go into the supermarket and I see them stocking shelves. I go into McDonald's and I see them working behind the counter. I see them sweeping floors. I see them doing lots of stuff. But this government claws back the money they make. They are eligible and entitled to ODSP, but the government claws back half of everything they earn, and I think it's a shame. As a matter of fact, I think it's more than a shame. I think it almost borders on criminality, because I do not want their money clawed away from them because in their whole life they will never know anything but poverty unless we let them keep some of it.

That's why I appreciate, although I think it's too small, the recommendations that have been made to allow them to keep the first \$200 of money they earn each and every month, because with that combination and what they get on ODSP, they climb the ladder ever so slowly towards that figure where they're no longer in poverty, and they're in poverty through absolutely no fault of their own.

Last but not least, New Democrats are looking for something to reward job creators. We're looking for something to make sure that those people, those industries that are out there who are trying to create jobs, are rewarded for creating the jobs, not for taking the money and hoarding it. Even the finance minister of Canada says that we're sitting on about \$1 trillion of hoarding of monies from some of the large corporations. We want them to open those purse strings and to spend the money and to create jobs and to be rewarded for it, because in the end, when we're all working, when we're all able to contribute to this wonderful province, it will be a better place.

To close, Madam Speaker, New Democrats are expecting a great deal, whether it's in two weeks or three weeks or four weeks when this budget comes down. We are expecting a U-turn from this government. We are expecting a budget that is more balanced. We are expecting a budget where people pay their fair share. We're expecting a budget where those in need are going to find that their needs are met and where the institutions we hold dear are supported in every possible way. If it

happens, you may find some votes on this side of the House; if it doesn't, we'll see you on the campaign trail.

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

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: I'm pleased to be here today to talk about the Supply Act for the 2012-13 fiscal year. The Supply Act is one of those cornerstone acts in this Legislature, as we all know. Passage of the Supply Act would constitute the final authorization by the Legislature of the government's program spending for the fiscal year that is coming to a close very shortly.

If passed, this bill would give the government the authority to finance its programs and honour its commitments for the current year. Up to this point, the government's interim spending authority for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2013, has been provided through the Interim Appropriation for 2012-2013 Act. Pending the vote, the enactment of this Supply Act would repeal and replace that temporary legislation that we've been operating under.

Madam Speaker, it is important to note that the Supply Act would not authorize any new expenditures. All expenditures incurred under the Supply Act would be in accordance with the 2012-13 estimates that have been tabled in this Legislative Assembly.

Because the Supply Act is intended to be the statutory authority for all incurred expenditures during the relevant fiscal year, it would be deemed to have come into force on the first day of the fiscal year; that is, April 1, 2012. The Supply Act would provide the necessary legal spending authority for important payments made to all our institutions and individuals, including nursing homes, hospitals, doctors, schools, municipalities, financial and income support recipients, people with disabilities and special needs, children's aid societies and those who rely on the various benefits programs such as the Ontario Child Benefit.

I urge all members of the Legislature to support this act, because without this necessary spending authority, the government will be unable to meet its obligations to the people of this province.

I just want to speak a little bit about some of the accomplishments of this government during the past year. The government has done a great job of managing many of its expenditures. As reported on January 22, 2012, in Ontario's third-quarter finances, the province's 2012-13 deficit is projected to be \$11.9 billion. That's an improvement from the \$14.8 billion that was projected in the 2012 Ontario budget. This is the fourth year in a row that Ontario is ahead of the government's fiscal targets.

We've come a long way since the depths of the global recession in 2009. At that time, our deficit was projected to be \$24.7 billion; now we're projecting a deficit that is 52% lower. Our government is vigilant in staying on track to eliminate the deficit, as was planned, by 2017-18, and we have agreement on that particular year by all the parties in this House.

Madam Speaker, the past fiscal year involved some very difficult choices. As members know, a one-time

savings of \$1.1 billion was achieved with the elimination of banked sick days for teachers. The 2012 budget included nearly \$18 billion in savings and cost avoidance over three years. We knew we had to look at managing compensation costs in order to meet our fiscal targets. We knew we had to protect the gains we made in health care and education. That's why this government has focused on taking a responsible approach to balancing our books.

Over the past number of years, this government has worked hard to help Ontario's businesses become more competitive. We have lowered taxes, we have cut red tape, we have invested in infrastructure in Ontario, and we as a government are very proud of these accomplishments.

I'd also like to take a moment to highlight the successes we have achieved since our new Ontario government has hit the road running. The government is moving ahead with a plan that will create jobs, strengthen the economy, and build stronger communities and a fair society for the people of this province. Just last month, employment in Ontario rose by 35,300 jobs. That increase accounted for 70% of all new jobs in the entire country. This province has gained 455,000 net jobs since the recessionary low in June 2009.

This government is committed to helping create jobs for the people of this province. That's why we have held jobs round tables across Ontario, led by our new Premier, Kathleen Wynne, with individuals from the private sector as well as our partners in labour, education and training. Discussion at these sessions has focused on generating ideas to grow employment opportunities for all of Ontario's communities.

This government is also committed to finding common ground among all parts of this province. We're committed to serving both the urban and rural communities, as well as people living in the north. I am proud to say that at the beginning of this month we had the pleasure of hosting the first northern cabinet meeting since 1995, because we understand that we are all connected and that every person in this province should have a chance to contribute and flourish.

This government will also continue to support advances in health care. That's why we recently announced \$100 million over five years to support world-leading brain research. This investment in innovation will not only strengthen our health care system, it will also help to strengthen our economy, because we understand that innovation and productivity are important parts of a thriving economy.

This government has been working hard on many different fronts for the people of this province. Here are just a few examples: We have provided grants for community groups to restore wetlands and clean up beaches and shorelines. We've introduced legislation that would, if passed, create three new categories of job protection leave so people can take care of their loved ones without fear of losing their job. We have also worked collaboratively with this Legislature to help prevent skin cancer

among young people by banning their use of tanning beds.

Our work is never finished. This year, we reached out to even more people across Ontario through our expanded pre-budget consultations. We believe it is important to open the channels for dialogue as we work to meet our fiscal targets in the upcoming year and beyond. We want to hear ideas from people, organizations, associations and other stakeholders across the province. We want ideas to help find common ground and continue our path of fiscal responsibility to balance the books by 2017-18. We're moving ahead with our plan to strengthen our economy, build a fair society and establish stronger communities for the people of this great province.

The Supply Act is one of the cornerstone acts in this Legislature. Passage of the Supply Act would constitute the final authorization by the Legislature of the government's program spending for the fiscal year that is coming to a close. Again, I urge all members of the Legislature to support the Supply Act, because without this necessary spending authority, the people of this province would be denied the opportunities they deserve. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: I just want to say, before I start, that I'm wearing a purple tie today for epilepsy awareness. I wanted that into the record.

It's very interesting when we're having debate this afternoon. It likens me to want to put on the record my opinion about the future of Ontario's fiscal health. I have to tell you, in my opinion, I don't think the patient is doing very well. I think the prognosis isn't good in the province of Ontario right now. Nearly a decade under the McGuinty-Wynne government, the patient is struggling.

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I think the strong, robust economy that this government inherited back in 2003 is looking rather weak and anemic in 2013. We're no longer the envy of all the other provinces in Canada. Ontario is now a have-not province, and we have to look for the kindness of others to help make ends meet. Even with that charity from other provinces—those provinces, I might add, that do have their economic fundamentals right—the Liberal government in this province still can't manage to make ends meet. We're saddled with a staggering \$12-billion deficit and a provincial debt that's spiraling out of control, which now stands at \$235 billion, an unbelievable 78% increase over the past nine years.

I could stand here for a lot longer than the minutes that I am going to be here to recite statistic after statistic on how bad things have become. I'm just going to give you one statistic, one number that I want everyone watching to remember, and that number is 600,000. That's the number of Ontarians that woke up this morning without a job. We also know there are countless others in communities across Ontario struggling desperately to hold on to things as the rising cost of doing business in Ontario,

the rising cost of living in Ontario, is increasing rapidly. The example we use on this side of the House is the cost of energy. Many of those 600,000 people saw their good jobs in Ontario, through our manufacturing sector, disappear. Now they're trying to support their families with part-time or minimum wage jobs.

It wasn't always like that. I remember a couple of speakers ago, my friend Mr. Prue talked about when he was in his twenties. I remember that when I was in my twenties, this province was the envy of Canada. I remember graduating from university, and I got involved in municipal politics. I was the mayor of a city in my riding—Brockville. I can remember how proud I was as a municipal leader in this province, how I worked with the members of my council and the communities within both that city and with other communities in eastern Ontario to help bring new jobs to our community and new prosperity.

The reality in communities today has certainly changed. When you talk to municipal leaders, you don't necessarily have that level of optimism that you had so many decades ago.

I know in my speech—and I know my friend the member for Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington is here. He and I both spoke last week about our families, some of our kids that have left the province of Ontario, have left this province for jobs in other provinces, and how sad, how angry that makes us feel that those young people who have left this province, who will build their families, buy their houses, create that prosperity, have chosen another province. I think we need to change that. We need to make a change, get our economic fundamentals right and provide some hope and optimism for those young people for the future of this province.

I listen to the motion and I hear some members talk about this motion as being routine. When you talk about this Liberal government and mention the word “spending,” nothing is routine when it comes to the Liberal government and spending taxpayers' money. The single most important thing we can do as a government is to manage the economy.

A government must ensure the decisions it makes don't impoverish future generations with unmanageable debt levels that threaten our most valued services, things like health and education. That's what's happened in Ontario. Bad decision after bad decision, mismanagement after mismanagement and scandal after scandal have dug us in a hole that has put the quality of life for our children and grandchildren in jeopardy.

I want to say, I think we need to reverse the course that we're on, or the terrible news that we see in the media from countries like Greece and Cyprus. I am so worried that those are going to be the headlines in the province of Ontario some day in the future.

Hard-working Ontarians, their children and their grandchildren deserve better than what they're getting from the McGuinty-Wynne government. We need to stand up, and I think we need to, as an opposition, treat that role that we play with a lot of respect, and I take

offence at some members' assertions that this is a routine motion. We have to demand accountability from our government and demand those answers to the very serious questions that members on this side of the House are asking. That's why the people in our ridings elected us: to stand up and not to give the government a free pass like has been done.

The old saying goes, “That was then; this is now.” I think that's very important, because we're at a crossroads. Again, we need to take some bold action to get our economic fundamentals right, and I think we in the Ontario PC Party are doing that. It's all about showing leadership in the province of Ontario.

I have to tell you, Speaker, that when I looked at the throne speech—and I made some comments last week about the throne speech that was given here back on February 19. None of the bills that the government has put forward right now look at—

Interjection.

Mr. Steve Clark: I know that one of the members opposite just started talking and naming some of those bills. The bills that he mentioned don't do anything to reduce our debt and our deficit. They don't do anything to encourage private sector investment, and they don't do anything to help those 600,000 men and women who woke up this morning without a job. In fact, in that speech, I quoted last week that the government referred to fiscal responsibility, economic growth and increased employment being the bedrocks on which the McGuinty–Wynne government is going to build their plan. Well, I'll tell you, I didn't hear any bedrock in that speech at all; in fact, I think it's quicksand that they were talking about, more importantly. Quite frankly, I think we're up to our necks in quicksand from this government, and we need to change.

The other thing I want to talk about is the shocking position that I see with members of the third party on this motion, and I know they must be hearing the same when they're in their ridings. Their constituents must be telling them that we need to change our approach in this province, yet it appears that the NDP are once again going to give the government a free pass, and that's sad to hear. They're going to give them more time to continue implementing the kinds of policies that have put Ontario in the mess that it's in. We saw it last year with the budget. NDP members went out and they talked about how terrible it was with the government planning to kill 60,000 rural Ontario jobs with its attack on the horse racing industry, but when it came time for them to stand in their places and stand up for those 60,000 jobs, the NDP sat on their hands and allowed this budget to pass. That's why we're seeing the job losses and the loss of investment in rural ridings.

So I ask them, what are you prepared to do this year? Are you prepared to sit on your hands or are you prepared to stand up for those issues in the government? We've got the billion-dollar gas plant scandal, the debacle at Ornge and the continuing embarrassment at eHealth. The member for Kitchener–Conestoga talked

about the PhD that Ornge funded for the CEO. It's terrible, the amount of mounting debt and deficit, the lack of a plan that this government has, its green energy policies. The member for Huron–Bruce tabled a great piece of legislation that I hope other parties will support. These things and many more were given a pass by the NDP, the third party, while it has been our party that has stood up repeatedly and brought bold ideas to the table. Our party is the party that has the plan. There's no plan over there. There are a lot of words. There's a lot of meaningful conversation, I think the talking point was. "We like to have conversations." Well, do you know what? Ontarians are asking for action. They're asking to turn around the terrible economic policies that this government put forward.

I am going to join with members of my party and vote against this bill, and I'm very glad to have the opportunity to speak this afternoon.

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

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Mr. John Vanthof: Once again, it's an honour to stand in this House and speak on behalf of the residents of my great riding of Timiskaming–Cochrane. Before I start talking about the interim Supply Act—I had the opportunity this morning to travel to a part of the province I hadn't been to before. It was in Lucan. I had the opportunity to be on a nice farm in Lucan.

I've been a farmer all my life, and there's always one day when spring awakens and you can smell it and you can feel it. In my part of the province, it's not going to be for a while, because we've still got two and a half feet of snow. But today in Lucan, or outside of Lucan on that farm—

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: Home of the Black Donnellys.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: In my riding.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes, and it's a great riding.

That smell and that feeling is what makes the difference between people in the country and people in big cities, because a lot of people living in big cities have never had that, where you feel the earth awakening. Sometimes in the country, us farmers are so busy that we miss that too. But today, in the Conservative member's riding, in Lucan—it deserves a mention—today was the first real day of spring there. You could smell it.

Mr. Randy Hillier: You don't want to be talking about the \$120 billion—

Mr. John Vanthof: I'm going to get to that.

What we're talking about today is the interim Supply Act, and yes, if we vote against this act, the government will fall. That is what the Conservatives want without even looking at the budget, without reading the budget. But if the government falls on an interim supply act, you will also get chaos, because the only people who will be able to regulate the money supply in this province will be the cabinet. So really, the Progressive Conservatives are saying, "You know what? We don't want the Legislature to control the money supply; we want the cabinet to control it."

Interjection: We don't want the coalition to control it. That's why.

Mr. John Vanthof: No, you want the cabinet to control it.

Hon. Liz Sandals: And we could do that.

Mr. John Vanthof: Oh, yes. The government has shown how well they can manage money. I think we can agree on this side of the House that we have some big problems with how the government manages money.

But this act is about—and it's not a routine act; we're talking about a lot of money. But there's a difference between making the government fall on the budget or making it fall on an interim supply act, where the day after the government falls you will have chaos, because it will be up to the cabinet to come up with some kind of plan—although the cabinet has more members than it had a while ago, so they can have more people to talk about it. But for the folks here and for the folks at home, there is a time to hold the government to account—

Mr. Randy Hillier: Support ONTC.

Mr. John Vanthof: I'm going to get to the ONTC.

There is a time to hold the government to account—and it's coming quickly, and that is the budget—and there is a time to make sure that people get paid the next day, hospitals work the next day, and if there is a snowstorm, which could very well happen where I come from, that the plows go out the next day, and that's this—

Mr. Randy Hillier: The world will stop spinning if we don't pass this act.

Mr. John Vanthof: No, the world won't stop spinning, but we give cabinet control, and they've got enough problems. They can't handle the problems now.

One thing that the government—and I heard it again today, several times—the "new" Liberal government—

Mr. Randy Hillier: It's the new coalition government.

Mr. John Vanthof: No, no. They keep talking about the "new" Liberal government. At the very best, it's new to you, because nothing has really changed; they've just brought it into the shop and done a bit of detailing, hoping that we'll buy it. That's exactly what has happened. A lot of the things they talk about as "new"—especially in my part of the province, one of the things they talk about as new is about the ONTC, our public transportation, our freight transportation.

When they announced they were going to divest it, that was a year ago, and not much has changed except they killed our passenger service, our passenger train. There's still time to actually put a pause and let northerners really make the tough decisions.

What they've done is they've created a committee but not really given it a mandate. They've said, "Well, we're going to create a committee. We're going to listen to northerners."

I support those people who join that committee, because you know what? Right now it's the only game in town. If I was a mayor in northern Ontario, I would be at that table.

Then they force them to sign non-disclosure agreements, so there's very few people now who can stand up and say, "Okay, wait a second. Let's give that committee a mandate to really see if divesting or if dumping the ONTC is really the answer for northern Ontario." If you really want to be—

Interjection: You supported it last year.

Mr. John Vanthof: Actually the truth is, in the committee we had amendments that were ruled in order. It was Tories who didn't support those amendments. Those amendments would have put a huge spoke in the wheels. Let's get it straight, who really—

Interjection: We voted against the budget, not you guys.

Mr. John Vanthof: You voted against the budget. But we were the ones who put the amendments in, and you didn't support them.

Interjections.

Mr. John Vanthof: I don't want to lose this debate into cheap political shots. Sometimes I wonder if the Progressive Conservative Party is really progressive conservative or more into progressive chaos by not supporting or by wanting to vote and confuse people. Vote against the budget if you will. You know what, the government—

Mr. Randy Hillier: I think you guys are the progressives—

Mr. John Vanthof: We're the progressives; you're the chaos.

Interjection.

Mr. John Vanthof: Okay. The government is coming up to a huge test, and that's the budget. Our caucus will be supporting—

Interjection: The budget.

Mr. John Vanthof: Nope, the interim supply act, because we want people to get paid the next day.

But there are five bellwether signals that we're going to have to see in the new-to-you Liberal government. We've made really, really definite—not requests. We want these things so that you can show us that you're actually trying to do things differently. We've made the five requests or five signals that we want to see. Are they going to turn the province around by themselves? No.

Mr. Randy Hillier: What are the five? Tell me the five.

Mr. John Vanthof: I am going to get to some of the most important ones, okay?

In my riding, I have a lot of people—I think, as we all do—people on OW, people on ODSP. The vast majority of these people don't want a handout; they want a hand up. That's what the vast majority of them want. One thing that we've asked is that when these people go out and get a job, the first \$200 isn't clawed back by the government. There's no greater disincentive to working, even when you make just a little bit of money, than that it's taken away. That one would make a huge difference to people in Timiskaming—Cochrane and people all over.

1700

Everybody wants to improve their lot in life, and not everyone is dealt the same cards. With this, these people

could start getting a hand up, because they want to work, but there's no incentive to work or to declare your earnings if they're going to get stripped back anyway.

Another thing we think is very, very important is a first-jobs program. I'm one of the ridings where not everyone is employed, but there are a lot of jobs available in my riding. Northern Ontario, because of mining and forestry are coming back, but a lot of those—

Interjection: Solar farming.

Mr. John Vanthof: Well, mines and forestry and farming. We're not so much into solar farming.

The one thing that is very difficult is—and I've got kids going through it—to get your first job. Before I had the honour to stand in this place, I was an employer. When I had my own business, I was the same thing. If I had to pick between someone who had experience or qualifications—just qualifications or qualifications and experience, you know what? You'd pick someone with qualifications and experience. It's not rocket science.

What we're proposing is that when someone came for a first job and they have the qualifications, the government would help the employer and help the applicant with this program and, once again, give those people a hand up, not a handout. Both the employer and the employee need a hand up and not a handout.

There's something else that's very important in my riding. Since we don't have any public transportation except what was supposed to be the new and enhanced ONTC bus service, or private bus service, which also never materialized—when they cancelled the passenger train, in this House we were told that we were going to have an improved, enhanced bus service, but once again that never materialized. So in our riding and in many rural ridings—and a lot of urban ridings. I hear a lot of people talk about transit. A lot of people can't take transit. They have no option. To go to work, to go visit their families, they have no option but to drive.

In the past, this government has made changes to insurance. It was supposed to be that it would reduce the cost to the people who actually pay the premiums. Our coverages have changed; they've gone down. But the actual cost to the people has gone up. As we were looking for ways for government to save money, for government to provide better programs, we also identify, hey, there's a way that we can make a difference in the average working person's life who has to drive to work by forcing the government to provide a fair insurance rate, because, right now, we've got the highest insurance rates in the country—the highest insurance rates in the country. Is there any reason?

We have made a request. What we want is a bellwether signal that you on the government side are actually serious about lowering insurance rates to a reasonable level for the average working family who depend on a car.

Something else that we've talked quite a bit about is that the government should look at actually being serious about closing corporate tax loopholes, and should be serious about it, not just have conversations about it and

talk at length about it but be serious about it. We've made several suggestions or directives on how that can be done. And once again, we need to see them. We need to see them in the budget as a bellwether so that we could even consider supporting it. We in this corner of the House are not here to play games about, you know, we vote against everything and that's how we prove we stand up for the people. We're not here to play games. We don't say in the press, as do the Conservatives, how we are going to vote against something before we even read it. But I'd like to make a point that in this corner of the House, when we read the budget, if those bellwether signals aren't in there, then their time will come. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Todd Smith: It's a pleasure to be up and contributing to this debate. Why are we debating a supply bill in the first place? That's a good question, but the answer is really quite simple. We have a government that couldn't get its act together and actually put a budget before the end of the fiscal year, so that's why we're here debating this bill today.

The first chance that the new finance minister has had to try and change the trend of reckless overspending that's plagued this province and this government for the last nine years is before us, and he's late to the party. Once again, this government has overpromised and underperformed, and I can tell you that no one in this chamber or anywhere else in this province is very surprised at that fact. This bill is just simply a legislative symbol of this government. It's a status quo bill, a sign from the government that they really don't see a problem with the path that the province of Ontario is on right now. It operates under this false belief that spending can continue at the current rate and that that is affordable for not only the provincial but municipal governments in Ontario, too.

Last night, Belleville city council, which is in my riding of Prince Edward–Hastings, heard about the latest entrants on to the sunshine list. Get this: 53 of Belleville's 62 firefighters are on the sunshine list. So 85% of the Belleville fire department is making over \$100,000 now. For those of you who don't know, Belleville is a rather small municipality; less than 50,000 is the population. How can any reasonable finance minister sit in his place and say that it's acceptable that a city of less than 50,000, like Belleville, should pay 85% of its fire department more than \$100,000 a year? Perhaps the most outrageous part of this story is that the city of Belleville—get this—has been in arbitration with its firefighters' union since—wait for it—not last year, not 2010, but they've been in arbitration since 2008. To quote that old jazz song, something's gotta give. Last night, it was the outrage at Belleville city council, and I can assure you that it's probably the outrage on the Belleville *Intelligencer* comments section today as well.

How long is it going to be until we have a government that accepts the reality and the responsibilities beyond

this Queen's Park bubble? It's not the first example of how this government has failed to realize that the realities on the ground have changed, and we need a fundamentally different direction than we had under the nine years of Dalton McGuinty's failed premiership here in Ontario. I can tell you that before Dalton McGuinty tucked his tail between his legs and scooted out of the Legislature on October 15, 2012, closed the doors here at Queen's Park so that nothing could be debated, that very week, our very fine member from—where is Jim Wilson from?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Simcoe–Grey.

Mr. Todd Smith: Simcoe–Grey. He had a private member's bill before the House called the Ability to Pay Act, and it was going to address the problems with the arbitration system in Ontario. I'm very pleased to say that after the prorogation has ended now and we are back here in the Legislature, Mr. Wilson will again be introducing a bill called the Capacity to Pay Act. The aim is the same: It's to make sure that our municipalities have the ability to pay the payroll of our firefighters and our police officers and our public servants in the municipalities, because right now the arbitration system is broken.

1710

As Belleville struggles with the escalating costs of its fire department, and Bancroft struggles with the increasing costs of its police service, right along with Prince Edward county—they have same situation down there—we've got a government here with its fingers plugged firmly in its ears on this issue.

So I can't support a bill that says the status quo is acceptable, as this bill does, or at least this act does, here in this House today.

I can't support an act that stands in the place of a budget because the finance minister has failed to bring forward a budget before the end of the fiscal year. As finance minister, the member from Mississauga South now has the major task every year of bringing forward a budget commensurate with the end of the fiscal year. Not only are we standing here in the last week of the Legislature in March without a budget plan; we don't even have a date yet as to when the budget is going to be brought forward. We assume it's going to be some time in April, but who really knows? It says a lot about the ability of the new finance minister and our new Premier.

Never in the history of this province have we had a government that was so satisfied with its ability to put off the big problems for someone else to deal with as this one. This province needs some direction. It needs real management, and it needs a real plan to start to get its costs under control. Continuing to supply the current level simply isn't sustainable for this province in the short term or the long term.

Last year, after he delivered his report to the Legislature, Don Drummond penned a column for the *Globe and Mail* saying that tough choices were needed and growth alone wouldn't save Ontario this time. Mr. Speaker, some tough choices need to be made here in the province of Ontario.

I can tell you that I was here when the new cabinet was sworn in. One of the first series of tough decisions

that the new Premier was going to have to make was to choose who was going to be in her cabinet. She acknowledged at the time that it was a very difficult thing for her to pick those who were going to sit in her cabinet. What did she do? Mr. Speaker, she increased the size of the cabinet by 25%. Her very first decisions as the new Premier of Ontario proved that she didn't have what it takes to make the tough decisions of running the province. She added five new cabinet ministers, taking it from 22 to 27, increasing the size of cabinet by 25%. So in her very early days, she has shown us that she doesn't have what it takes to make tough decisions.

You know what else she has done? She hasn't brought in anything new. Everything old is supposedly new again. The bills that we're debating in this Legislature are the same bills that we were debating when Dalton McGuinty was the Premier. We haven't seen any kind of a vision from this new Premier. I guess it's difficult when you're continuing to live under the cloud of scandal that has been pervasive in this government for the last nine and a half or 10 years.

That it has come to a supply bill to put off the budget is a disappointment that lies squarely at the feet of the finance minister and this government. I ask, how long can we put off these tough decisions? We can't put them off that much longer, because the longer we put off the decisions, the more we're going to have to pay to service the debt in the province of Ontario, a figure that's already in the \$11-billion or \$12-billion neighbourhood each and every year. Over the 127 days that the House was prorogued, we tacked another \$4 billion onto the debt in Ontario. How many billions more will have to be added before we start to see a plan from this government? How many billions more will be added before the finance minister pulls his head out of the sand and decides to finally deal with the debt and deficit problems that are facing Ontario? That's what I want to know, and it's what people in my riding of Prince Edward–Hastings want to know.

Belleville city council wants to know exactly how much it's going to cost for them to pay for their fire department and how many of them are going to be on the sunshine list. I can tell you that there are only eight members of the fire department that aren't on the sunshine list. I suspect it will probably be next year because this government doesn't appear to be poised to do anything when it comes to the broken arbitration system in the province.

In Bancroft, in Prince Edward county in my riding, they want to know exactly how far into the red they're going to have to go in order to afford police services before the province realizes that small municipalities simply don't have the capacity to pay that larger municipalities have. The debt and deficit problems that this province is experiencing are too serious to be punted to a future government; we have to start making the decisions now. The debt has doubled under the McGuinty-Wynne government, the deficit has soared to record levels, but this finance minister is okay with

twiddling his thumbs instead of bringing in a real economic plan to this House.

We can't continue to twiddle our thumbs any longer in Ontario. It's time for some action, and I can tell you that our leader, Tim Hudak, has put forward many different plans out there for the government to consider. The question I have for the finance minister is: How much longer will we continue to stall? How much longer will we continue to govern, because that's obviously what's most important for the party on the other side: to stay in power. It's very clearly become a do-nothing government. How much longer do you intend to maintain the status quo on the other side of the House? How much longer do you intend to procrastinate on bringing forward a real plan for Ontario? How much longer are we going to have to wait for you to get down to business and actually start making the tough decisions and start doing your job?

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

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I'm pleased to rise today to add to the debate currently ongoing regarding Bill 33, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2013, also known as the Supply Act.

I've said this before, but it bears repeating, because I have to say that I was truly optimistic to return to Queen's Park. I was hopeful for the upcoming session, hopeful that after 126 days, Premier Wynne would finally break the McGuinty padlock and open democracy's door, returning the House and getting MPPs back to work on behalf of the ridings and people who elected us to represent them here at Queen's Park. I had hoped that this House would see real change, and Ontario would finally be able to move forward, but sadly, after being back for nearly five weeks, it is very evident that nothing has changed. The government party is sitting in different chairs; they have different titles and new business cards, but just as a zebra can't change its stripes, neither can the failed McGuinty-Wynne government.

Today we are debating the Supply Act, the bill which will allow this government to continue spending and, in my view, to continue to be reckless with Ontario's fiscal purse. Let's be clear: This bill is going to pass. The NDP, who talk a tough game back at home, have already signalled that they will be voting for this bill and are in agreement with government spending continuing to grow and grow and grow, with no priorities and absolutely no focus, but that's what we've come to expect from the third party, the NDP: tough talk, but very little action and very little resolve to hold the McGuinty-Wynne Liberals to account. We've seen it in the horse racing file, and now we're seeing it with this Supply Act.

You see, Speaker, the past five weeks of the McGuinty-Wynne Liberals' legislative agenda have been telling. They still do not recognize the crisis facing this province, and have failed to produce a plan to help kick-start the economy, simply continuing to do what they have always done, as is the case with today's supply bill, Bill 33, but it just won't get it done.

February was the 74th consecutive month that Ontario's unemployment rate has been higher than the national average. Of course, Premier Wynne may feel she deserves a pat on the back for creating more jobs in her cabinet—now 25% larger—but there are still over half a million Ontario residents who woke up this morning without any job to go to. It's a real problem when the only sector that seems to be growing in Ontario is the government sector.

1720

As I said during question period this morning, 300,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost in the province of Ontario. Well, there are now more than 300,000 additional people working in the broader public sector than when the Liberals came to power back in 2003. While the size and cost of government continue to skyrocket, as I said before, this is the 74th consecutive month where our unemployment rate has been higher than the national average. It's a real concern to me that the economic and jobs policy for the Liberals appears to be doing exactly what they've always done.

In contrast to the Liberals, our party, our leader, Tim Hudak, and the Ontario PCs have to date released a dozen different Paths to Prosperity discussion papers aimed at reining in reckless overspending and encouraging economic growth.

It seems like it is almost daily that we hear about another Liberal government scandal, another billion dollars being wasted, and Bill 33 is the very bill that allows those dollars to be spent, those dollars to be wasted and those deals to be signed. While it's business as usual for the McGuinty-Wynne Liberals and while the scandals continue to pile up, the taxpayers are being left with the bill. It seems that the culture of this government is scandal, waste and mismanagement. We could also add the words "secret deals" and "hidden documents" to that list.

Ontario families know they cannot trust the Liberal government to get to the bottom of these scandals. Further to my point, Premier Wynne's first five weeks and again this bill underline her unwillingness to make the necessary and urgent decisions needed to fix the Liberals' made-in-Ontario jobs and debt crisis.

When the new Premier says that she wants to build on Mr. McGuinty's legacy, I question how she could fail to recognize the amount of scandal that the McGuinty legacy is built on. Indeed, the McGuinty-Wynne legacy is a tale of injustice and mismanagement that has cost Ontario taxpayers billions and billions of dollars. Premier Wynne's first act was to increase cabinet by 25%, adding \$3 million more to Ontario's debt. That follows deliberate choices to hand the chequebook over to union bosses at the expense of students and parents, continue the expensive Feed-in Tariff program and park the Drummond commission's 362 recommendations permanently on the shelf.

We have seen no initiatives to reduce the size and cost to government, Speaker. Instead of restraint, we continue to have a government spending even more money, doub-

ling our debt over the past nine years while we're getting less. The estimates included with this bill show nothing but red ink continuing for Ontario's future. Fewer people are working outside the government, paying for more working inside the government with higher wages, benefits and pensions than those who are paying the taxes. We see reports from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business indicating public sector workers earn 27% more in wages, pensions and benefits than their counterparts in the private sector.

Ignoring the issues Ontario is facing is not a solution. We are facing the biggest jobs and debt crisis in our lifetimes. Anyone who has ever been faced with a crisis or an emergency will tell you that being cautious, being incremental, will not save you. The only way forward is to move confidently and boldly in the direction that you know is right. Ontario needs a new approach, one that will create jobs and stop reckless overspending. It's clear that the current government is not up to the challenge of doing this.

Speaker, we are five weeks into this government and we have seen nothing but the same old results. You would swear that Premier Dalton McGuinty and his political handlers had never left the building. To change the direction of our province, we need to change the team that leads it. The Ontario PC Party and opposition leader Tim Hudak are the only party with a comprehensive plan to end overspending and grow our economy.

Five months after the Liberal government shut down the Legislature and walked off the job, this Premier had an opportunity to change course and move Ontario onto the right path. But, regrettably for Ontario, Premier Wynne and her government chose to further entrench the Dalton McGuinty agenda. If the McGuinty-Wynne Liberals won't make the necessary decisions to get Ontario back on its feet, there's another party and leader who will, and it starts with opposing and standing up against the wasteful spending contained in Bill 33.

I am proud to say that, unlike the McGuinty-Wynne Liberals, the Ontario PC team has put forward a plan to rein in overspending, get our economic fundamentals right and grow the economy through our Paths to Prosperity white papers. They're bold ideas to create a leaner public service that delivers more value for less money; to lower taxes on businesses so they can invest and create jobs in our province; to reduce the heavy hand of the 300,000 regulations that stand between businesses and success; to fix the outdated labour laws that have made us uncompetitive and are costing us thousands and thousands of jobs; and to create more affordable energy for Ontario families by treating energy as an economic fundamental rather than a social experiment.

We can no longer be content by being first in debt and last in job creation. Ontario will rise again and reach its true potential, but only if we change the team that leads it. Our party is committed to working hard for Ontario families, and that is why we are offering real solutions for the disaster that this Liberal government has got us into.

The Liberals took power when Ontario was booming, and they're leaving it a complete disaster. They've chosen bankruptcy over prosperity, and we fundamentally oppose that approach. There has been no change and no renewal here at Queen's Park under this government.

While the politically easy thing to do may have been to let the supply bill pass as those in the third party have chosen to do—and Speaker, they continue to prop up this scandal-plagued government every time we turn around. They criticize about the gas plant scandal, they criticize about eHealth, but at the end of the day, they prop up. They propped up Dalton McGuinty for a year, they propped up Kathleen Wynne, and they're continuing to do that. It's an absolute shame.

There's one party standing up for Ontario families, small businesses and farmers in this Legislature, and it's the Ontario PC Party. As I said, there has been no change here, and the easy thing to do would be to let the supply bill pass, but we have a responsibility to demand a plan that brings about a major change in direction.

We clearly need a new approach—it's something I hear in my riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex—to deal with the debt that's heading toward \$550 billion by 2019-20. When this government took over, the debt in the province of Ontario was around \$125 billion. They've been completely reckless, and they are leaving Ontario a complete disaster. Of course, with 600,000 people

unemployed, they have no plan for the future of this province, and they continue to make decisions that kill jobs in the province of Ontario.

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

Mr. Milloy has moved second reading of Bill 33, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2013. Is it the pleasure of the House that that motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

I have just received the following notice: Pursuant to standing order 28(h), the vote on Bill 33, the Supply Act, is deferred until deferred votes on Wednesday, March 27, 2013.

Second reading vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Orders of the day?

Hon. John Milloy: Madam Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): All those in favour, say "aye." This motion carries.

The House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1729.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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

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

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

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

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

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough–Sud-Ouest	
Best, Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	
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 Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales 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 du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
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, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
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 Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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 Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
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 Economic Development, Trade and Employment / Ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et de l'Emploi
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	Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Rural Affairs / Ministre des Affaires rurales
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
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	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre 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, Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
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	
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	
Millroy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
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 Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Piruzza, Hon. / L'hon. Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
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 Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement 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 Agriculture and Food / Ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation Premier / Première ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Vacant	London West / London-Ouest	
Vacant	Windsor–Tecumseh	

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Vic Dhillon, Michael Harris
Rob Leone, Bill Mauro
Taras Natyshak, Taras Natyshak
Rick Nicholls, Michael Prue
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Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day (pro tem.)

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Joe Dickson, Jim McDonell
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Steve Clark, Mike Colle
Garfield Dunlop, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Cindy Forster, Lisa MacLeod
Bill Mauro
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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des comptes publics**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Toby Barrett
Toby Barrett, Dipika Damerla
France Gélinas, Helena Jaczek
Phil McNeely, Norm Miller
Jerry J. Ouellette, Shafiq Qaadri
Jagmeet Singh
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: John Vanthof
Margaret R. Best, Vic Dhillon
Joe Dickson, Randy Hillier
Rod Jackson, Monte Kwinter
Peter Tabuns, John Vanthof
Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

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la politique sociale**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Ted Chudleigh
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Margaret R. Best
Ted Chudleigh, Cheri DiNovo
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