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(Hansard)**

Thursday 2 May 2013

Jeudi 2 mai 2013

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 2 May 2013

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 2 mai 2013

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

LOCAL FOOD ACT, 2013
LOI DE 2013 SUR
LES ALIMENTS LOCAUX

Resuming the debate adjourned on April 29, 2013, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 36, An Act to enact the Local Food Act, 2013 /
Projet de loi 36, Loi édictant la Loi de 2013 sur les
aliments locaux.

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm very pleased to pick up where I left off on Monday, because while the Local Food Act, at the surface level, seems to have a lot of fruit to bear, unfortunately, as I said on Monday, it's a very, very shallow bill.

I can't help but reflect on some of the comments that the Minister of Agriculture and Food shared in her opening comments. There was one particular phrase. She asked a question: "How do we best increase demand for and access to local food across the province?" Well, ladies and gentlemen of the House, I suggest to you that the minister has reflected upon how she wants to have respectful conversations. Well, she needs to start engaging with our agri-food stakeholders because what she's proposed in this particular act just isn't going to cut it. If she actually had respectful conversation with agri-food stakeholders, she would learn that less regulation, more research, better support and a focus on how to minimize cost to production is what our stakeholders are really looking for.

When I talk about less regulation, I think of Gerhard Metzger; he's got a wonderful abattoir business. I was just speaking to him Monday morning and he was reflecting on the fact that with the burden of regulation, it's getting harder and harder to make a viable business. Further to that, he actually recognized the lack of skilled trades as an issue as well. He doesn't want someone just to come into his operation and cut meat; he wants someone to come in and be educated and have an appreciation for food science. We've talked about that in our white paper, the PC white paper called Respect for Rural On-

tario. We need jobs in our agri-food industry and we need a system that promotes that so that we can develop local foods and embrace what there is to offer in that regard.

In terms of more research—you know, some of you might crack a smile when I talk about this, but in her comments, again, the Minister of Agriculture spoke to the fact that they want to be responsive to foods—"from ethnically diverse foods to foods that address special dietary needs like nut-free and gluten-free." If she was listening to the Grain Farmers of Ontario, she'd come to realize that research is needed. The Grain Farmers of Ontario have been consistently asking for dollars with regard to a seed breeder. Some of you might smile when I say that, but we need research to determine how we can develop the gluten-free grains so that we can address the local foods that our new populations require.

In terms of better support and cost of production, on Monday morning as well—I thought it was rather ironic—I received two emails from folks from home. One was Heather Ritzema. She sent an email because she's worrying about running her dairy operation—her dairy farm—while enduring skyrocketing electricity costs that ultimately come back to each and every consumer of milk in this province. If we can't get our cost of production under control, then our products are going to go up in price and people won't be able to afford to buy local food.

I also got an email from Jason Emke, from District 2, OSMA—Ontario Sheep Marketing Agency. He was sharing his stress over the fact that Ontario sheep producers have fewer vaccines, while Australia, New Zealand, the US and now the UK are all exporting lamb into Ontario and they have many drugs available for use that are not available for Ontario flocks. These countries have many different dewormers—combination drenches—that put us, in Ontario, at a great disadvantage.

So we have to take a look at how we can best position our farmers in Ontario to produce, in a cost-effective manner, the most effective, good-quality local foods we can.

I'd also like to focus on comments that the Minister of Agriculture and Food shared with regard to the need to increase education and awareness. You know, it kind of made me scratch my head a little bit, because I really wonder how well the Minister of Agriculture and Food knows her file. It's a flag for me, and I'm concerned about it.

I used to work for OMAFRA. Yesterday, we heard the minister recognize the 125th anniversary of OMAF. There was a body within OMAF: Ontario Agri-food Edu-

cation. It was agriculture in the classroom, traditionally. That program was managed by a couple of wonderful ladies; Marjorie McDonald comes to mind, Joyce Canning.

Then, in the spirit of recognizing a need and getting government out of the way so an organization could grow and excel, OAFE spun into a not-for-profit organization that provides great support for agriculture in-classroom initiatives. OAFE is all about developing curriculum-based resources that articulate a clear agri-food message.

Ernie Hardeman and I will be travelling there later today. We've embraced this in our white paper, and I hope the government does as well. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you, Speaker. Once again, a great opportunity to talk about agriculture and the introduction of this rather—I'd agree with the member from Huron-Bruce on a few issues on this very shallow bill. It is a very, very shallow bill.

One comment I'd like to bring forward in this House is that last night, at the Dairy Farmers of Ontario reception, the Minister of Agriculture, the Premier, acknowledged—she said there are a lot of things we can do to make this bill better. I think we should take this opportunity to actually make this bill into something that agriculture and people all over the province can be proud of and can benefit from.

A few of the things: We need a real, honest discussion about where Local Food Week should be placed in the year. It shouldn't just be, "Oh, we decided to put it here, and we're going to bump somebody else. So we're going to go over another—we're going to go over Agriculture Week." That's one thing we've got to change.

We need, in this act, especially for small processors who are the backbone, along with farmers—but small processors are actually the backbone of local food—some kind of framework within this act that's actually going to show how we can make regulation make sense for small processors. That has to be included in this act.

We need food literacy included in this act. We need a framework on how we're actually going to improve access to local food; how we're actually going to do it. We need to set those goals and objectives, not three years after we pass the law, Mr. Speaker; we need to set the goals and objectives, and especially the framework on how those goals and objectives are going to be set—before or while the act is passed into law, not three years after. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Thank you, Speaker. I'll be brief; I understand we have spent about 18 hours on this debate. I just want to say it was great to talk about the Local Food Act last week at Allan's Your Independent Grocer in my wonderful riding of Pickering-Scarborough East, where they're very receptive to this week and they look forward to speedy passage to committee.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

0910

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm very pleased to stand and pay respect to the member from Huron-Bruce, because she does bring a lot to the argument—or the discussion, I should say—about agriculture, as her working history and her life are basically entwined with agriculture. In fact, an interesting remark is that she defeated, as someone would know, the Minister of Agriculture in the last election. So I give her credit for having great traction and great respect in her riding.

But more importantly, this bill—I think in her remarks she said it's a lot to do about nothing. It actually doesn't do anything, unfortunately, where in fact the suggestions that she brought to the table do suggest things that we could do to improve the plight of agriculture in Ontario.

There's another sad point to this bill. It actually attempts to expunge from the public record the great work done by the member from Perth-Middlesex, I think, Bert Johnson. Now, Bert Johnson brought in Agriculture Week; I believe it was in 1998.

This bill seems to try to superimpose on that this whole ideal of feeling good about the Local Food Act. Really, what I think is important is to pay respect for agriculture. They grow the food that we eat. Get to know a farmer. Visit a local garden. Visit a local market. You'll see the great work that's being done, not just in the GTA, but across Ontario. Our member brings that. Huron-Bruce is another area widely respected for agriculture, not unlike my riding of Durham, which I'll be speaking about. I hope to have an hour this morning to speak about my riding of Durham and the great leadership in agriculture there.

The member from Huron-Bruce, as I said, knows what she's talking about, has a lot a lot to offer, and I commend her remarks to everyone's attention.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jonah Schein: I'm pleased to stand again and speak to the Local Food Act, which we're speaking about this morning. Speaker, as members around this chamber have said, this is a good idea. It's a good to talk about food. It's a good idea to talk about local food. Unfortunately, we're not very specific about what we mean by "local food." That's something that should be in this bill. It should talk about how far your food is travelling. Is your food local if it travels from Toronto to Kenora? Is that local? Are there different definitions here? How is your food grown? As my colleagues have said, there is so little in this bill. It's unfortunate that we have a debate literally about nothing. So it is inspiring to some of us that we should be talking about this, but the debate's not happening here.

My colleague from Timiskaming-Cochrane was speaking about the importance of doing food literacy in schools. This is so common sense. This is something that we should be debating here. How are we going to do this? There is so much opportunity for this to happen. Unfortunately, this debate is not happening in these chambers about how we could do that.

There are people who are inspired around the province. Sustain Ontario is asking schools in Ontario to report out—have students report out about how they're using food in innovative ways. They want to know about student nutrition programs. They want to hear about cafeterias and culinary arts programs. But, Speaker, there's not enough support from this government to help those programs happen. So I'm afraid that those reports are not as exciting as they could be if we actually had a government that would work with communities, work with our school system, work with students who want to bring food into their schools and do this work.

Clearly, we're going to pass this on to committee. I hope at that point civil society will come in and make some of their recommendations to this government. But I hope, too, that the government is listening. It's unfortunate that we don't have more to talk about in these chambers about what could be done when it comes to local food in Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Huron–Bruce, you have two minutes for a reply.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I certainly appreciate everyone's remarks. To the member for Davenport, the member for Durham, the Minister of Consumer Services and the member for Timiskaming–Cochrane, I'm glad we're all on the same page. We have to do more with regard to this particular bill. I really look forward to seeing it go into committee. I'm hopeful that all three parties certainly recognize the value of the amendment that has been put forward by our agriculture critic, Ernie Hardeman, and our education critic, Lisa MacLeod. Food literacy is really, really important, but I have to stress to you that this is not new.

Agriculture in the classroom has been around for some time. Prior to coming to this wonderful House on October 6, 2011, I'm very proud to say I was vice-chair of Ontario Agri-Food Education. I just want to give a shout-out to them, because in case the Minister of Agriculture and Food or the rest of the people in the House aren't familiar with what they do, I want to share that OAFE has reached over and provided over 43,000 agri-food educational resources to classrooms. OAFE is sponsored by all the commodity organizations throughout Ontario, as well as a number of financial institutions and individuals. OAFE also reached more than 16,000 teachers who in turn reached out to more than 326,000 students in 2010 alone. They're great partners in huge traditional rural activities that we embrace, much like the granddaddy of all fairs, the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, and the International Plowing Match, with which the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane became very familiar as he managed the education tent there. I really appreciated the efforts he put forward there.

But in the end, ladies and gentlemen, the Local Food Act needs so much more work. Our agri-food industry deserves respect and we need to really get this into committee to give that. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Jim Wilson: I'm pleased to participate in this morning's debate about Bill 36, the Local Food Act, 2013. It's yet another bill that has been revived by the Liberals after their similar legislation, Bill 130, died with prorogation. Remember that period where they took off for four months and for an unprecedented occasion closed this House down? Now they go out and tell all the interest groups that we're holding up legislation when they actually closed the place, but anyway, that's being Liberal. I think it's important to note that this bill, as I said, could have been enacted into law.

In regard to Bill 36, I'm very supportive of the concept of a Local Food Act. Farming and agriculture is a rich part of our history and the history of my riding. That not only fuels growth and job creation but contributes significantly to our local, provincial and federal economies. In Ontario, the farm sector contributes close to \$3.5 billion in tax revenues, it generates over \$7 billion in salaries and wages, and it has created over 165,000 jobs and makes up roughly 13% of Ontario's gross domestic product. So I think we can all agree it's a very, very important industry.

While I agree with the premise of supporting local food—who wouldn't?—in terms of the health benefits, the economic benefits and the common sense of it all, there are some weaknesses to this particular Liberal bill that have not only been brought forward by the opposition parties but by various stakeholders that I want to briefly discuss here today.

One concern for us is the loss of Ontario Agriculture Week, to be replaced with a Local Food Week. As was said earlier by my colleague from Durham, Ontario Agriculture Week was brought forward by a former colleague, Bert Johnson from Perth, and it's been a huge success since he brought that forward in the 1990s. Now the Liberals somehow want to discard that and replace it with Local Food Week.

Agriculture Week has always served to underscore how much we continue to rely on agriculture and the products made by the agricultural industry in our daily lives. It has always been a week we could reserve to pay tribute to the entire Ontario agricultural industry and all those who work within it. This includes everyone from sod and potato farmers in New Tecumseth in my riding, corn and cabbage producers in Clearview, and apple growers in Clarksburg, to name just a few. They all deserve this special recognition and grateful acknowledgement and are why we do not want this important week replaced.

If anything, we believe Ontario Agriculture Week and Local Food Week should be separate weeks to allow us to recognize both the contributions of our farmers and the importance of local food, including the many people and organizations involved in Ontario's food system.

The second weakness of this legislation is how little it actually does much of anything, as my colleague Lisa Thompson indicated in her remarks. It has a great name, it sounds great, but if you look to the meat and bones of the bill, there's very little substance. In a CBC radio interview last October, the former Minister of Agriculture,

Food and Rural Affairs, Ted McMeekin, even had a hard time explaining the purpose of this bill. The announcer repeatedly asked him about the targets and goals of the act, to which Mr. McMeekin had no reply except to say basically that the act would allow for further discussions to eventually establish goals and targets to “aspire” to in respect of local food. I mean, come on, do we really need an act in the Ontario Legislature to do that? This is common sense stuff here.

0920

For a Premier who prides herself on her devotion to rural and agricultural issues, her reintroduction of this bill is an insult. For this to be the first bill—and so far the only bill—for her to introduce to address the issues that plague the agricultural community, it’s certainly clear that our part-time Minister of Agriculture is falling short of her responsibilities.

Stakeholders and the PC caucus have put forward a number of proposals that would have strengthened our food system, increased access to local food and helped our agriculture sector. But instead of listening, the government has chosen to ignore these initiatives and reintroduce the same weak legislation as they did last fall that doesn’t do much of anything.

In a letter to the Premier dated March 28, 2013, stakeholder groups outlined their concern with the shortcomings of this legislation. The letter was signed by the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, FoodShare, Sustainable Food Production, Sustain Ontario, Food Forward, Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers’ Association, Ontario farm fresh, the Organic Council of Ontario, Holland Marsh Growers’ Association, Toronto Food Policy Council and Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation.

Let me read a couple of highlights from this letter, as the Premier has seemed to neglect to read it herself:

“Premier, we also feel the Local Food Act can and should do more than promote awareness and strive to improve procurement. We believe the key to really accomplishing the goals of stronger food systems in Ontario lies in improving the basic food literacy for all Ontarians. In the short term this means food awareness programs including nutrition and food preparation programming. A longer term investment includes a strong food literacy component in our school curriculum. We go as far as to suggest hands-on food skills training in our school system.”

It continues: “Likewise, a Local Food Act should also address the very fundamental issue of food access—the ability of all Ontarians to procure nutritious and culturally acceptable food at all times....”

“Premier, we hope that you will also extend the focus of Bill 36 to encompass regional economic development opportunities. A well-crafted Local Food Act will help strengthen Ontario’s food and agricultural sector, resulting in social and economic benefits for communities all across Ontario....”

“Finally, we feel that it is important to emphasize that Bill 36 can realize several environmental goals. We aspire to have a Local Food Act that would include meas-

ures to further incent producers and processors towards environmentally sustainable practices.”

Mr. Speaker, I would like to note that many of these suggested reforms are also the reforms we suggest in our PC white paper entitled *Paths to Prosperity: Respect for Rural Ontario*, which is on the Ontario PC website. I would encourage the Premier to have a look at that discussion paper.

Also I would note that just a few days ago our critic for agriculture and food, Mr. Ernie Hardeman, from Oxford, and our education critic, Lisa MacLeod, from Nepean–Carleton, announced that when this bill gets to committee—which it will soon—we’ll be putting forward an amendment to do exactly what the people asked for in the letter I just read, in bringing in food literacy in the curriculum in our schools.

A third concern with this bill is its failure to address the various challenges Ontario’s food system and agriculture sector is facing. The impact of red tape, hydro rates and the latest tire tax are some of the issues that need to be addressed, and in most cases are due to policies that need to be reversed.

The number one problem PCs found during a thorough consultation process with farmers, food processors and agribusinesses was red tape and the unnecessary regulatory burden forced on the sector. Of those surveyed, 77% of farmers, 76% of food processors and 86% of agribusinesses reported that needless paperwork is hindering their operations.

In my riding, Miller’s Dairy in Creemore provides an example. Their on-farm milk processing plant was delayed by various government regulations, including the requirement to build a receiving bay for milk trucks to transport unpasteurized milk. On-farm milk processing means milk is pasteurized on-farm and that both a milk truck and receiving bay aren’t needed. Mr. Speaker, I had to intervene personally in this thing; it was the stupidest thing in the world.

They wanted them to build a very, very expensive truck cleaning station, a truck receiving station and other facilities to deal with trucks. Well, there are no trucks moving milk on Miller’s farm, but it took us months to explain to the bureaucrats—because they had these regulations they had to stick to—that we’re going to put a pipe from one barn where the cows are milked; the milk will go into a holding tank and then that pipe will take it over to the next barn, where it will be pasteurized and bottled. There are no trucks. But that was a very strange concept for them. They couldn’t understand that a four-inch pipe would replace trucks.

Yet the government at that time—the Minister of Agriculture was running around saying, “We need more on-farm processing and value-added on the farm,” and “Sell it at the farm gate.” Here we were doing exactly that in Creemore at Miller’s Dairy. I am happy to report that they are up and running, and they are selling wonderful milk products in our local stores in the riding and just outside of the riding. Of course, their milk is featured on many restaurant menus.

There's also an example I have of local food. I've got a bistro in Alliston called Bistro Burger Joint. The owner-chef is Jay Klausen. He has recently been told that he has to take the word "local"—he has two restaurants in town, and he tries to source local. Well, because he has been buying his carrots from Holland Marsh, over 30 kilometres away, he can no longer call his food "local" because of federal red tape. So, I think the minister, rather than this food act, should be dealing with the federal government and getting rid of that piece of red tape. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Vanthof: Thank you, Speaker, once again. It's an honour to be able to stand and talk about the Local Food Act.

I think the member from Simcoe–Grey brought up some very good points. Specifically, I'd like to spend a minute on the on-farm processor of milk he has in his riding, Miller's farms. It's a prime example of where there has to be something in the Local Food Act, some kind of framework, where the regulation makes sense for the size of the processor and for the individual conditions of the processor. A truck-washing station for a dairy that gets bulk milk trucks is a necessity. It has to be a regulation. How much hot water? How much pressure? Those things all have to be in the regulation, because that keeps people safe. But that regulation, quite frankly, does not fit for an on-farm processor. An on-farm processor needs different rules to make sure that it's safe. They're not the same. If you want to promote more local food processors, if you actually want to protect the local food processors that are here now, we have to have some kind of framework, a definite legislative framework that's talked about in this House, to make sense for those processors. He brings up a very, very good point.

I also listened to the interview from the previous minister. In fact, the bill has changed somewhat. It's being brought forward now by the new minister—but actually it's being made worse. Moving Agriculture Week—trying to supplant or moving Local Food Week on top of Agriculture Week isn't an improvement. Having goals and objectives to be set three years from now is not an improvement.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: We have, by my count, now debated this bill for 18 hours and 30 minutes. I think it's time that we get this bill to the committee so that we can hear from farmers, so we can hear from communities like mine in Ottawa Centre, and get this bill passed into law. Thank you very much.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Julia Munro: I want to use my time to reflect on the matter that has been raised by a number of speakers, and that's the idea of imposing Local Food Week on top of Ontario agricultural week. In my view, it's a demonstration of the lack of understanding—it may be an urban focus—but the notion that these are the same two things.

Ontario Agriculture Week was and is an opportunity not only to have a harvest celebration, but also to recognize the complexity—that's why it's called Agriculture Week—the secondary products that are created, the value-added through keeping processing in our communities and the issue around abattoirs. All of these things go up or make up the economy of agriculture and its contribution to Ontario. When you look at Local Food Week, not only as a set-aside time but also as part of this bill, this is an urban focus.

0930

There's more to eating that goes on in agriculture. Obviously, that's the most important part of agriculture, but there's an entire area that is ignored by suggesting it can be replaced by Local Food Week. I would argue that the best time to do it is actually at planting time. If we were to have the week set aside at the time when people are working, in some cases 24 hours a day, to get planting done, maybe there'd be a greater appreciation of the risks between planting and harvesting. Now, that is a local food issue.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Again, I rise to speak to this bill, and it's with great pleasure. With your indulgence, Mr. Speaker—if I stray away, I'm sure you're going to bring me back around—my focus this morning won't be on urban or rural; it's going to be specifically on Manitoulin Island.

Manitoulin Island has farmers like Linda, Ted, Max and Glenn, who are thriving on Manitoulin Island, bringing their businesses to fruition. They're counting on the season to start, and they're looking forward to it. Businesses owned by Alain, France, Richard, Sue and Garry are just waiting for those people to come into their businesses and their restaurants, as are the farmers—bed and breakfasts, gift shops, hotels, jobs, the farmers' market. The farmers' markets measure their success based on the amount of tourism that comes to the island.

But you know what the problem is? The Chi-Cheemaun ain't going to run this year because it's late. These people's lives are being put in danger because this government is not going into action to help them. What they're doing is they're throwing the hot potato back to the federal government, telling them, "It's your fault; it's your responsibility." They're throwing it back: "Well, we got a legal opinion. It's your responsibility. You deal with it." And they're throwing it back: "Well, we're doing everything we can. Let's have a chat about it."

Let's stop having a chat. These lives are really being put in danger. I'm always going to continue to come into this House and talk about the people of Algoma–Manitoulin. Their lives are really being put in danger by the inaction that is happening by this government.

We really need to promote a food act. Let me tone it down here. It is a good thing. But I will always speak on behalf of the people of Algoma–Manitoulin and about the inaction of this government to help them. Stop passing the hot potato; get to the pot. Get the deal done for these people so that they can promote their Local Food Act.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Simcoe–Grey, you have two minutes.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I want to just start by congratulating the member for Algoma–Manitoulin for his passion. It's absolutely ridiculous. I used to be a northern minister, so I've travelled the Chi-Cheemaun many, many times over many, many years. Of course, my riding's not too far away. The Great Lakes level is a horrific problem that nobody seems to be doing much about. I see the International Joint Commission is actually starting to order governments to do something now, in a report last Friday, but that will take many, many years.

The Chi-Cheemaun needs an adjustment to its fenders—how difficult can that be?—so that people can get access to the island and indeed enjoy it. There are some wonderful restaurants, and there's a wonderful inn over there and lots of great spots. Maybe they could enjoy local food if they could only get it over to the island. Maybe they'll have to canoe it over, Mr. Speaker; it's back to the Dark Ages. It's something that their government should stop fighting about. It's about \$100,000 in repairs. The Owen Sound Transportation Commission can't afford to do that themselves, so it will take government intervention. Certainly people do deserve that.

So congratulations to the member from Algoma–Manitoulin. I hope, no matter what the topic is today and for the rest of the time that's needed to get the government to respond, that he does take that time.

I just want to give another plug for an amendment that we're bringing forward to the Local Food Act. Mr. Hardeman, our agriculture critic, the member for Oxford, and Lisa MacLeod, our education critic, the member from Nepean–Carleton—food literacy. We believe it's an essential part of any food act because it's vital that our children have knowledge of healthy food and understand where it comes from. There's an astounding statistic that we received from the Farmers Feed Cities organization. It found that only 41% of 18- to 34-year-olds said they knew where their food comes from. That's astounding and it's embarrassing, and it needs to change. Hopefully, this act, when properly amended, will do something to change that rather low statistic, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate?

Mr. Frank Klees: I'm pleased to participate in this debate on Bill 36. I will start off by saying that I would propose an amendment to the title of the bill, given its content. The real title of this bill, if there's to be truth in politics here, should be as follows: an act that perpetuates public cynicism about government and its disrespect for agriculture in Ontario.

The reason that I say that is because anyone who would review this bill would realize that it does nothing. Our critic Mr. Hardeman, who spoke to this bill, was very articulate in pointing out that anything—anything—that this bill is proposing to do by legislation can be done today without legislation, without regulation. The only thing that is required in this bill that needs legislation is the very cynical motion to do away with Agriculture Week. That, I think, is most disrespectful.

I would hope that it is perhaps because the Premier, who is now the Minister of Agriculture, simply wasn't aware of the fact that our former colleague in this House brought forward legislation that has been celebrated, that has been honoured, throughout Ontario for the last number of years as Agriculture Week. That celebrates agriculture from the farm to the table, and it honours the work that farmers do every day. It honours their contribution to our economy. It respects an industry that is making a major contribution to this province but, sadly, is certainly not being recognized by this government. As the Premier goes through her apprenticeship in agriculture, hopefully, she will take the time to recognize that this bill, in many respects, is actually an insult to the industry.

We've heard many recommendations coming forward that will no doubt be made more substantively at committee. There is an opportunity to make some substantial changes—amendments—to this bill that will actually be meaningful. Certainly, we will, as the PC caucus, be bringing forward a number of amendments. I know the third party will as well, and, hopefully, members of the government.

Hopefully, the minister herself, the Premier, will at least take the time to read the Hansard of the remarks that are being made and will participate in those committee hearings. Speaker, as she appeared at the committee investigating the power plants scandal, we would hope that she would make herself equally as available to participate in the committee hearings that deal with this bill.

I'm proud to represent the riding of Newmarket–Aurora. Over the course of the last 18 years, I've now represented three separate ridings in York region due to redistribution, ranging from Oak Ridges, which included the very rich farmland of Stouffville as well as the northern part of Markham. People don't perhaps realize that there is still some very rich farmland encompassed by the urban boundaries of Markham.

I represented the riding of York–Mackenzie. I was the first and last member to represent York–Mackenzie. That included the township of King.

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Today I represent Newmarket–Aurora. While there is little farmland left there, I can tell you that we're very proud of York region, which today has 972 farms comprising some 67,000 hectares of land. In York region alone we contribute some \$147.2 million in farm cash receipts; 24,730 jobs throughout York region are supported by agriculture.

Speaker, I know that my colleague Ms. Munro has mentioned in the past the Holland Marsh as Ontario's food basket. The Holland Marsh produces 95% of Ontario's celery, 66% of its onions, 80% of its carrots, 90% of its Asian vegetables—still very rich farmland. While that land is under attack, I also want to go on record, and I'm very proud of the fact, that it was the PC government and myself and my colleagues in the PC caucus who advocated for the Oak Ridges moraine legislation, which, as we know, when it was implemented, protected perma-

nently literally thousands of acres of land across the Oak Ridges moraine from development for generations to come, a proud accomplishment. It's for that reason that we continue to stand with those in agriculture who are making such an incredible contribution to our province.

I want to take this opportunity to make reference to the fact that in Aurora as well as in Newmarket we have a farmers' market that I have the opportunity to attend from time to time. The farmers' market in Aurora actually opens up this Saturday. From 8 o'clock until 1 o'clock every Saturday through to October, people can purchase locally grown produce. There are bakery items and meats, meat products and preserves and crafts, and I invite people to attend that. It's located on Wells Street at Metcalfe in downtown Aurora.

Newmarket, as well, opens their farmers' market this weekend. It also runs from 8 o'clock until 1 o'clock in the afternoon. It's located at Riverwalk Commons, which is at Doug Duncan Drive and Timothy Street—again, locally grown produce and meat products. And when we talk about encouraging locally grown food products, there's no better place to enjoy that than in our local farm markets.

Speaker, I've made my comments about this bill. I'm not going to speak any more about it because, quite frankly, there is little to say. The only action words in this legislation are “review,” “set targets,” “consult.” It does nothing. But I can tell you what we will be making our amendments based on. The PC caucus has published our discussion document on agricultural policy. It is entitled *Paths to Prosperity: Respect for Rural Ontario* and it makes this commitment, Speaker. I will quote from the document: “We would introduce a comprehensive Ontario food act that would support local procurement and help our farmers, food processors and agribusinesses by reducing red tape and supporting Ontario's food system. To have an impact, the legislation needs to address our entire food system from field to fork and contain real, meaningful changes. This act would also include our proposals for a dedicated fund for the Risk Management Program and the one-window access to government for farmers and agribusinesses.”

Speaker, what we need in this province is real action. What we need is a substantive approach to ensuring that our agricultural industry cannot only survive but that it can prosper. Unfortunately the bill that we have before us does none of that. In fact, as I indicated, I really do believe that it shows a great deal of disrespect for this industry. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mr. Jonah Schein: I think the member from Newmarket–Aurora began his comments by talking about the cynicism that these kinds of bills breed. I want to welcome members in the gallery. If you haven't caught on to what's going on here, we're debating the Local Food Act. I've been here for about a year and a half, so I've been learning on the job, and what I see the government continue to do is put out bills with nice names—people in

my community absolutely support local food; this is something that we want—but the name of the bill actually doesn't change the way things happen in Ontario. Just naming a bill something—we all know that's not how things work.

So we've had a government here that had a bill about supporting seniors, and it did nothing to actually support seniors. But they can now go into an election at some point and say, “We passed a bill to support seniors, and we passed a bill to support local food.”

We spent months here talking about bullying in the province, which is a huge concern for people—clearly everyone's against bullying—but the net result was anti-bullying week. In my experience this has not actually stopped bullying in my community or in Ontario, and neither will just naming a week in October “Local Food Week.” Will that actually create sustainable food systems in Ontario? It's good politics; it's poor policy.

I was happy to hear the member from Simcoe–Grey, however, talk about the support from the Conservatives for food literacy in schools. That is something that's really important. It's something we could do. I hope that they'll actually provide resources for this stuff, too, because just saying “food literacy” isn't actually going to create food literacy.

We know the cost of poor health and of poor nutrition in Ontario. We all pay for it with our tax dollars. Nobody wants to waste taxpayer money, but we're wasting it when we don't do the upfront investment to make sure that people have access to good food. We could do this through this bill. We could actually support schools to have good food in their schools.

I hope that all parties will work on this and actually make the necessary investments to make this a healthier province.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Bob Delaney: This debate on second reading of this bill is deep into the law of diminishing returns. I think it would be far more productive to hear this debate in committee where we can hear from additional witnesses.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I actually agree with the member across and what he just said. The problem is there's nothing in this bill to debate in committee. That's the whole thing. There's nothing there.

I do agree with all the comments from the member from Newmarket–Aurora—

Mr. Jonah Schein: What about me?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: And you, sir; I do agree with that. Thank you.

Anyways, I guess the issue that I have with this whole act—I've heard this from my farmer friends in Perth–Wellington—and why it's brought out words like “aspire” and things like that, is that their job is very difficult. They have a lot to look after; they have a lot to

read, but unfortunately a part-time minister can't do the job that we think they should be doing.

Agriculture in Ontario is the second-largest industry in Ontario. All the jobs, all the economics it puts back into this province, and we have a part-time agriculture minister. Well, she can't keep up with it. It just doesn't work. We need a full-time agriculture minister in this province. We've always had one, and we should have one right now.

I'm also very disappointed that they would choose a date to replace Agriculture Week, which is the week leading up to Thanksgiving, which was passed under the leadership of a former MPP from my riding, Bert Johnson. That's disappointing. It shouldn't be there, and in committee we need to change that.

I just want to point out, I remember when I was growing up on a dairy farm, if my father had said at 6 o'clock in the morning, "Would you aspire to go out there and milk those cows? Would you go do that?" I probably wouldn't have gotten out of bed—

Hon. Jeff Leal: Inspirational, Randy. Inspirational.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: "Aspire" is not inspirational. But anyways, I'll end my comments there.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Vanthof: Once again, to speak on the Local Food Act, I agree with a lot of the comments made from all sides. One thing I take exception to is the comments from the member from Mississauga–Streetsville, because, regardless, it is never a waste of the Legislature's time to talk about the number one industry in this province. The waste of the Legislature's time was bringing forward this act last fall, having it be universally criticized for being completely vague—nice title, little else. Change minister, change leader; come back: leader, minister same person, and come back with not a better act but a worse one. That is a waste of time.

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I'm very proud to be able to stand here on behalf of my NDP colleagues, on behalf of the farmers, farm families, small processors, big processors, and talk about the number one industry in Ontario. It was number one 125 years ago we found out yesterday, and it's number one today. That's why someone in the ministry should have spent a lot more time looking at this Local Food Act when they brought it forward the second time, and said, "Gee, you know, we could maybe make this better. We could actually be discussing a real—a meat-and-potatoes act here before—"

Mr. Jonah Schein: Or healthy vegetables.

Mr. John Vanthof: —and vegetables, for Davenport—before it goes to committee. That would have made the committee's job easier. That would have made this Legislature actually work, instead of proposing a press release and trying to get it to committee and make the government look good. Let's actually make laws in this province that help the people of this province.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Newmarket–Aurora, you have two minutes.

Mr. Frank Klees: In my two minutes, I want to do two things. First of all, I want people who are watching this debate to know why members of the government want debate to stop. It's because they're embarrassed by it. That's why. They know full well that the bill we're debating is an insult to the agricultural community, and they don't want to hear any more about it. So we will debate until we are cut off. I know, Speaker, you won't do that to me. You'll at least give me the balance of my two minutes.

In our policy document, *Paths to Prosperity: Respect for Rural Ontario*, there are some numbers. I want to put those on the record. The first one is 51,950; that is the number of farms in Ontario. The next one is 164,400; that is the number of Ontario jobs that are generated by the farming sector in this province—13% is the value of the rural economy to Ontario's gross domestic product; \$7 billion is the value of the wages and salaries tied to Ontario's agricultural industry; \$3.4 billion is the Ontario farm sector's contribution to federal and provincial taxes.

Over 30—that is the number of pieces of provincial legislation that are governing Ontario agriculture; 386,251 is the number of provincial regulations on the books in Ontario that are affecting the agricultural industry; 154 is the hours spent by the average farmer filling out government forms; \$11 billion is the cost to business to comply with Ontario's regulatory burden.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you.

Mr. Frank Klees: Speaker, I believe that says it all.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you very much. Further debate?

Mr. John O'Toole: It's very difficult to follow the member from Newmarket–Aurora. He makes eminently good sense in all things he speaks about, specifically the statistics he cited. I have checked them out; they may not be accurate.

But anyway, the fact is this—

Interjections.

Mr. Frank Klees: On a point of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Point of order, the member for Newmarket–Aurora.

Mr. Frank Klees: Speaker, I would ask you to call the member to order—

Interjections.

Mr. Frank Klees: —disparaging remark to an honourable member. He should know better. I'm expecting an apology.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Durham, it's your colleague.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Minister of Rural Affairs.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Mr. Speaker, I'm so stressed out this morning with that remark by the member from Durham that he should apologize immediately. Mr. Klees is a very honourable member, a member of integrity and is always known to have a lot of good statistics at his fingertips. I would never want his reputation sullied on this particular

matter. So I'd ask the member from Durham to apologize immediately and get on with what I anticipate will be a fine—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you for your comment. That's not a point of order, but I leave it up to the member from Durham to do the right thing.

Mr. John O'Toole: I think it draws to the point of discussion here: that some of the statistics are simply unbelievable. In that respect, it's the amount of disrespect that is burdened on farmers today and agriculture generally. I can't believe that—what he said—there was a total of \$3.4 billion in tax, and yet this bill pays little deference to the important contribution agriculture makes to Ontario.

In fact, for those viewing or listening today, I think it's important to read what the bill is intended to do. I'm actually reading from the bill. It's a couple of pages. There's really very little in it. Here's the explanatory note:

"1. The week beginning on the Monday before Thanksgiving Day in each year is proclaimed as Local Food Week.

"2. The Minister of Agriculture and Food may establish goals or targets to aspire to in respect of local food." Think of the soft, mushy words there: "may," "aspire to." "The minister must engage in consultation...." That means travel around Ontario. "The minister may direct a public sector organization to provide information...."

There are no objectives, no measurable goals nor measurable outcomes. This is a shame and an embarrassment, and that's in that context, Mr. Speaker, that I meant to the member from Newmarket–Aurora. He has put on the record the contribution that agriculture makes in Ontario, and I think that's the point he was making, and it's the point I'm commenting on.

My riding is made up of three large communities: Uxbridge, Scugog and Clarington. Within each one of those communities, there are many agricultural communities—tier 1 communities—that I think make Ontario the strong base that it is today.

I've had the privilege of serving in that area for about 30 years—about 18 here, and prior to that as a municipal councillor. I have great respect for the leadership in agriculture in my riding of Durham. In my remarks, I will certainly put on the record the names of those farms that I am familiar with.

In fact, it was just last week that I was on a farm tour, which started with a poultry farm. The next one was a blueberry farm, and the next one was a dairy operation.

As I said, my riding is a world leader in agriculture, and probably the largest sector would be the horticultural sector. I'll list a few for those here today.

Willowtree Farm in Port Perry is another regional award-winning farm of excellence in agri-food innovation. This is a family-owned market garden run by the McKay family, including Rod, Marlene, Jordan and Alex.

Then there's Steve and Lisa Cooper, who are the 2010 national winners in Canada's Outstanding Young Farm-

ers Program. They are the owners of the Cooper's CSA Farm and Maze near Zephyr.

Just yesterday, there was an opening I was unable to attend, but I know them generally as the Ing family—they have an organic farm, and they had their grand opening yesterday.

Wilmot Orchards is famous for their blueberries and apples—that's Charles and Judi Stevens—and they are featured in a recent farm tour.

Algoma Orchards is Kirk Kemp, president; Mike Gibson, CEO—innovators in agri-business, not only as growers, but also as packagers of apples, producers of apple juice and operators of a farm market near Newcastle. They now provide to Sobeys as well as McDonald's for most of Ontario, if not part of Canada.

Watson Farm is Ted and Paul Watson—a family farm for many years. In fact, my children, in the summer, before they were in university, worked on the farm. Watson Farm offers extensive pick-your-own products, as well as a roadside market in Bowmanville.

Archibald Orchards and Estate Winery—Fred and Sandy Archibald—are award-winning fruit wines, orchards and markets. In fact, they are so talented in agriculture and leadership in agriculture, that I believe Fred's brother Bruce was the Deputy Minister of Agriculture here, and federally as well. Fred and Sandy are both thoroughly involved in agriculture and, in fact, in agri-tourism as well.

Ocala Orchards, which is Irwin and Alissa Smith, is a historic family farm that is home to a vineyard, orchard, winery and retail shop. Formerly, it was a dairy farm, and they have transformed it to high-level, high-value agriculture.

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The Found Family Farm, operated by Stan and Mary Ann Found and family, are proud to carry on an agricultural heritage that began with their family four generations ago on a Courtice farm—all meat, eggs and poultry. I would say that this farm here is the leader in agriculture education in my riding, and indeed in Ontario. They are involved with the royal winter fair. The head of the royal winter fair, the president, was Don Rickard, from Rickard's farm.

The list goes on, and I would say that there are farm markets in Port Perry and Uxbridge, as well as Clarington.

The Yellowlees Family Farm—Karen Yellowlees is the representative for the Durham agricultural advisory committee; I believe it's the Federation of Agriculture that I think she's the adviser for—have raised sheep, grown wild bird feed and produced home-baked goods on their farm for over 20 years.

Durham Farm Fresh promotes local food by bringing together farmers, farmers' markets, community-supported agriculture, chefs and restaurants in Durham region. There is a list of 50 farms marketing local food—almost all farms in Clarington, Scugog and Uxbridge within my riding.

In fact, the story of agriculture could be told every day by families that I try to represent effectively here in Ontario, but what I want to also put on the record is what this current government is not doing. I'm looking here at one of the petitions that was presented to me, and this is on the tire tax—the stewardship fee—being raised by 2,000% on farm or off-road agricultural—for their tires. That's just one example, as the member from Newmarket–Aurora stated, of the 154 different regulations and red tape, the 154 hours that farmers put into—I think that's the comment he made—working on red tape in agriculture.

This bill really is kind of a shameful experience of exploitation of agriculture. When I look at it—I think, if you look at Ontario, for instance, Ontario spends \$745 million per year on food for its institutions like universities, colleges and hospitals. That's 80% of the population, almost. The largest public sector institutions' cafeterias in Ontario should be required to use Ontario food. That's the problem; there's no strength.

Yesterday the Dairy Farmers of Ontario were here, and I'm sure they gave her an earful just about her position on chocolate milk—this sound-good, feel-good—she thought that it wasn't a healthy food. I can't believe the disservice that we hear in agriculture. I think the farmers in my riding of Durham should be respected, because my final remark would be to refer to one of the people that I consider a mentor to my activity in public life.

He was a fellow by the name of Garnet Rickard, who is in the Order of Canada, and he was in an agricultural farm family for years. He told me that you could see all of the class 1 farmland in Ontario from the CN Tower, and that's part of my riding. What they've done to it is shameful. In fact, the 407 goes right through some of the prime property, and those farmers are now being evicted. They're not being properly compensated for the farmland that has been taken from them to build a highway, and I believe that that kind of attitude towards agriculture is why I get so frustrated. A feeling of lack of respect for agriculture emanates from this current government.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Michael Mantha: Again I rise, and I will speak on behalf of the people of Algoma–Manitoulin and the concern that I've tried to raise in my earlier comments in regard to Manitoulin Island as a whole.

For those of you who don't know, it's a diamond. It's a diamond in the rough, Manitoulin Island, and I challenge you all and I welcome you all to come and visit the island. There is so much diversity on the island, with First Nations culture, with various artists, with communities, with museums and with a whole agricultural sector that is there, that is thriving and that is looking to diversify itself.

Last year, I had a nice chuckle at one of the farmers' markets. Over the last couple of years, as I've been going out to these farmers' markets—and these farmers' markets, you have to remember that it's a family-oriented business; it's really “my neighbour, my community,” and they move around. You have to understand that there's a

cycle around Manitoulin Island. Every weekend is identified for a particular activity, so you gear yourself to get to that activity in order to promote your farm, in order for you to sell your vegetables, in order for you to make a living.

Not only that, the hotels, the accommodations, the bed and breakfasts really count on that tourism coming to Manitoulin Island. Their umbilical cord is the Chi-Cheemaun, and unfortunately, every single day that the Chi-Cheemaun is not running, we are putting these people in a critical financial hardship and situation throughout the island. It is unfortunate to see that, because it is such a fantastic place.

Again, I challenge everybody to come there. But at the same time, pick up the phone, and why don't you get some of our ministries at the provincial and federal level to stop passing that hot potato, in order to get a decision to get the Chi-Cheemaun running so these families don't have to worry about feeding their kids? That's part of the Local Food Act, and if you can't promote it, it's going to be very hard to get to that island.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Hon. Jeff Leal: I'm delighted to say that on my left this morning, I have the wonderful member from Sarnia, who is having a chat with me.

I just want to comment on the inspirational speech that the member from Durham delivered today.

I just want to say—Dairy Farmers of Ontario. Will Vanderhorst, a director from my riding, has a wonderful dairy farm just south of Norwood. He's very supportive of the Premier also being the Minister of Agriculture, and he had nothing but laudatory praise yesterday when I met with him. And I'm glad that Kawartha Dairy was present yesterday—a great regional, local food producer.

In Peterborough, along with our folks from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, we have a phenomenal branding called Kawartha Choice, all local food. Get it in the Peterborough market every Saturday morning, 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the afternoon. It's a great spot. Everybody's welcome there. The member from Timiskaming–Cochrane paid a visit to that market, and he thought it was one of the best in Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rod Jackson: It's a privilege to comment on the member's comments from earlier. It is interesting, this food act. I had the pleasure of talking to this last week at some length.

I'm blessed in Barrie. We're an urban community. A lot of people don't realize this about Barrie: We don't have one farm in our community. However, we're surrounded by farms that feed us in our city. It's a unique situation, where we have a lot of restaurants in Barrie that specialize in serving and preparing local food, and local food means exactly that: It's actually very localized food. We have pig farms, dairy farms, all sorts of different farms in the area, and it's great to have that.

You know what? It's a big piece of our economy. My children go to a school where most of the kids who go to

this school in the city of Barrie actually come from farms on the outskirts of town, so they get an opportunity to go out and see and actually learn food literacy, understand what it takes to put food on the table, whether it's milk, beef, crops or whatever it is.

Mr. Michael Mantha: Boats.

Mr. Rod Jackson: And we need boats. We need the Chi-Cheemaun to run, to make it happen.

The point of this is that there are so many issues that need to be addressed by this bill, and it runs woefully short of addressing the serious issues that need to be addressed by the agricultural sector in Ontario. It just seems to me that it's okay to put another bill forward—the Liberals say it's okay to put another bill forward that has a nice name and has good intentions but does nothing.

It can't be that difficult, with all the people we saw here yesterday and other sectors in the agricultural industry coming here and telling us what they need, to give it to them. We're not even talking about money, in a lot of cases. We're talking about resources and we're talking about organization of the things that are already in place.

Let's start getting down to business, getting the backbone of our economy—which is agriculture—back on its feet and making sure that it stays on its feet for all the years to come.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's another opportunity to talk about agriculture in this House, and local food.

I'd like to branch out a little bit to the rural community as a whole, because for many people, and especially in northern Ontario, it takes more than—to create a local food economy, you need a lot of services, and in a lot of places, rural people are much more spread out.

We're facing an issue now where the TSSA—that's the semi-autonomous group that regulates gas stations and oil tanks. You know what? They do a valuable job. I'm not complaining. They serve a purpose. But in a riding like mine, they don't inspect gas stations for 10 years, and then they inspect them all in a row and everybody has to be fixed within a month and a half. These people want to keep up the code, but when you do that, what you end up doing is closing mom-and-pop gas stations in towns where you have one gas station. So you close that gas station; the next gas station is 50 clicks, 60 clicks, 70 clicks—in northern Ontario, 100 clicks. There are local food producers around that gas station. That's where they get their diesel fuel, and all of a sudden it's not there anymore. And we wonder why—

Mr. Jonah Schein: —people hate government.

Mr. John Vanthof: —we're losing local food; we wonder why people hate government.

And while the Tories go on about red tape, they created the TSSA, which is not responsible to government; and that's part of the problem. We can't rein these people in and say, "Okay, we want everybody to be safe, but the rules have to make sense for the size of the operation." Does the mom-and-pop gas station have to be safe? Yes, but I've got a station that sells 40,000 litres a year, and they're going to be shut down because they

need the same system as somebody who sells three million litres a year. It's crazy, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Durham, you have two minutes for a response.

Mr. John O'Toole: Speaker, I want to thank the member from Algoma–Manitoulin, the minister of rural Ontario, and the members for Barrie and Timiskaming–Cochrane with respect to their comments. These comments show how important agriculture is, whether they're critical of our position on different things or not. But they do make the point, they are standing up for agriculture, where in fact on the government side, they're not.

I think I've got a good reference here. We can all criticize, but I think it's important, in my concluding remarks, to look at what recommendations we've put forward. Our critic Ernie Hardeman, the member from Oxford, as part of a consultation with rural Ontario, has put together a document referred to as Respect for Rural Ontario. In that, there are several recommendations that deal with some of the comments with respect to red tape and tire stewardship fees, as well as regulations like the TSSA that was just mentioned. This is having respect for rural Ontario, and that's—really, if you look at it, rural Ontario is under a lot of stress because farms today aren't 100 or 200 acres. Farms today, to be economically viable, are—in my riding, some of them are 3,000 to 5,000 acres. I think of Youngfield Farms as an example of two young, intelligent brothers who farm. They have all the latest technology. They have, I think, 3,000 or 4,000 acres themselves. So that's affecting rural Ontario. They can no longer have the small stores, and that's because instead of being 100-acre farms down a concession road, you have one farmer who owns the whole concession road. So rural Ontario is shrinking.

I want to put one more farm on the list here that I didn't take the time—Hank and Lisa Mulder have Link Gardens. It's a hydroponic operation. Now, this is a young family where he came from Holland about 20 years ago. He has built a thriving, successful business on his own, on his own knowledge, using the resources and innovation that agriculture in Ontario is famous for.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Thank you. Seeing the time on the clock, the House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1013 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Steve Clark: It's not often that I have guests two days in a row from the great riding of Leeds–Grenville. I want to make sure I introduce Len and Barbara Waddingham from Brockville. They're here and they're the grandparents of Brigid Howard-Waddingham, who is one of the page captains today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Today, the Ontario Parliamentary Friends of Tibet are excited to welcome the Tibetan Women's Association, Students for a Free Tibet, and the

Tibetan Association of Ontario, who will be in room 230 with a wonderful Tibetan meal for everyone to celebrate together, and that's right after question period.

Hon. Teresa Piruzza: It's my pleasure to introduce a guest to the Legislature today. We have Betty Kuchta with us here today. She is the CEO of the Erie St. Clair CCAC. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I'm not sure if they're here yet, Mr. Speaker, but I'm pleased to introduce Nima Basharat and Sharon Swenson. Nima's from my riding of Scarborough Centre, and Sharon is her colleague. They're both educators in the province of Ontario.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's my privilege this morning to introduce two people from the great rural riding of Chatham-Kent-Essex: Jacques and Barb Tetreault. They've come up all the way from Chatham to experience question period and to be part of the budget this afternoon. Jacques is also president of the Chatham-Kent Christian farmers' association.

Mr. Michael Prue: I'm proud to introduce today page Madison Hogg. Her mother is here, Dianne Ryan; her father, Robert Hogg; her sister Ainsley Hogg; her grandmother Maria Hogg; and her grandfather David Hogg. They will be here this morning in the members' gallery.

Mr. Kim Craiton: Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to introduce, in the members' gallery, Dean Demizio. Dean is the president of the Fort Erie chamber of commerce, but more importantly, he's the father of Gabriel Demizio, who's sitting to your right. He's a page from the great town of Fort Erie. Welcome to the page; welcome to Dean.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I'd like to welcome James and Aileen Gallagher to the gallery this morning. They're two proud grandparents of Daniel Starrett, our great page from Whitby. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'd like to introduce a constituent of mine, a celebrated accountant. His name is Mike Mokhtar. Michael, welcome to Queen's Park.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: This really isn't an introduction. It's just that I want to pass on my regrets to the member from Newmarket-Aurora on the 4-1 loss of his Maple Leafs last night.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further pseudo and actual introductions?

On behalf of the member for Eglinton-Lawrence, and on behalf of page Brigid Howard-Waddingham: mother Kelly Waddingham and mother Martha Howard, brother William Howard-Waddingham, grandmother Barbara Waddingham and grandfather Lenard Waddingham. Welcome today to Queen's Park.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is for the Premier. It's budget day, and over the course of the next week or so, the NDP is going to have to decide whether to support your government or allow Ontarians to judge your ability to govern.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. I was almost ready to admonish the other side, and I'm going to let everyone know that I will keep control today.

The member from Glengarry-Prescott-Russell, come to order. The Attorney General, come to order. The member from Oxford, come to order, and the member from Leeds-Grenville, come to order.

Please put your question.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Premier, we know that nothing has changed. Time and time again, your government has shown that you're more concerned about your own interests than the interests of the province of Ontario. You've continued a pattern of spending that's intended to help no one but the Liberal Party. Consider it: eHealth, \$1 billion; Ornge, \$300 million; cancelled gas plants, \$600 million.

Premier, do you think a government that's blown some \$2 billion has earned the ability to govern the province?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Today is budget day, and I really believe that the people of Ontario would expect that every member of this Legislature would read the budget before they decide whether they're going to support it or not. The budget today will be about creating jobs. It will be about making changes to help people in their everyday lives. So I would ask the member opposite if she is going to read the budget, if she is going to look at the details that we're going to talk about: youth employment, about reducing auto insurance, about investing in roads and bridges. Those are the issues that affect people's everyday lives, and I hope that the member opposite will read it and then make her determination.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary question?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I certainly do intend to read the budget, but most of it's already been leaked anyway. And the pattern is clear: Again and again, when faced with a decision to spend money for Liberals or spend money for Ontarians, the Liberals give priority to—guess what?—the Liberal Party.

Just yesterday, while Amanda Telford, an Ottawa mother, made the painful decision to leave her autistic son in a government building, the Liberal government was busy announcing—guess what?—a \$45-million subsidy for music producers. At every turn, this government chooses what it thinks is best for them.

Premier, do you think a government that prioritizes a \$45-million subsidy over basic critical services to families desperately needing their help has earned the right to govern?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I am very aware of the media reports on this case and I—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from—Dufferin-Caledon; oh, I had to locate you.

Please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I'm very aware of the media reports on this case. I can't comment on a specific case, but I recognize that caring for an adult family with a developmental disability can be challenging, and we will actually speak to that in our budget. If the member opposite reads the budget, she will see that.

From my perspective, these are not mutually exclusive issues. We absolutely have to work to make the lives of the parents who are working, who are living with children with developmental disabilities—we have to work to make their lives better. But that doesn't mean that we can turn our back on investing in an economy that will create jobs, and the music industry is part of that economy.

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

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Ultimately, this is a question about priorities.

Interjections.

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

1040

Mrs. Christine Elliott: This is a government that made the decision to spend some \$600 million to save a few Liberal seats. Yet there are thousands of Ontarians out there, like Amanda Telford, like Wilma Arthurs, who are unable to have even the basic supports they need in order to care for their disabled children.

Interjection.

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

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Premier, I will ask you again: Do you think a government that prioritizes saving their own seats over serving the needs of Ontarians at the very basic level deserves the right to govern?

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Interjection.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Second time, member from Halton.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I have said repeatedly, in answer to questions at committee and in this Legislature, that I regret that we have been in this situation around the relocation of the gas plants. We implemented a decision that had been made by every member in this House. All parties had decided that this is what they wanted to do, Mr. Speaker, because we all had listened to the members of the community and we determined that the gas plants needed to be relocated.

But to suggest that somehow, because that happened, because it was an implementation of a decision that we

all had made, that we can't then talk about the need to create jobs and make sure that we help people in their everyday lives is ludicrous. That is what the budget is about. That is what moving forward is about.

I regret that that happened. It shouldn't have happened. We have to make sure it doesn't happen again, but we also have to work together to improve people's lives and make sure that we create jobs in this province.

Applause.

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

While the clock is stopped, I believe there's a budget this afternoon, and I'm absolutely convinced each and every one of you wants to be there. If there's going to be a test of my will to bring decorum, I'll pass the test.

New question.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is also to the Premier. But may I say this first and foremost: This side of the House is appalled that you did what you just did in applauding that Premier after what happened in Ottawa to that family and the disabled son.

Interjections.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: No; shameful.

Now, to the heart of my matter, Speaker. Premier, during your testimony in justice committee on Tuesday, did you refuse to admit you knew the true cost of the Oakville power plant cancellation exceeded \$40 million from the outset because you were under oath?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I answered my questions on the gas plant relocations in committee, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to be clear. I am not going to and our government is not going to concede the ground on compassion to the people across the floor. That is the party that cut welfare rates. We created the Passport program. We have invested in autism, to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars—

Interjections.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: You want to slash taxes and slash—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex, come to order. The member from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington, come to order. The Minister of Social Services, come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Well, I want you to come to order anyway. Thank you.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The leader of that party has said that what they want to do is cut revenue, cut taxes—that means cutting services. He's also said that he believes that everything he did when he was a cabinet minister in Mike Harris's cabinet was exactly what

should have happened, Mr. Speaker. We've seen that movie, and we're not going there.

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Perhaps the Premier is so angry because she did cede compassion to this party when her party decided to prioritize Liberal seats over the people of Ottawa.

Premier, Shelly Jamieson, JoAnne Butler, David Lindsay, David Livingston and Colin Andersen all testified that your Liberal government was aware that the true cost of the Oakville power plant was over \$40 million from the outset. Colin Andersen said that everybody knew. Shelly Jamieson said it was "buckets of costs."

In committee, you refused to admit what you knew and when you knew it, even though you were a co-campaign chair who made the decision and you were a cabinet minister who met about it.

I want to know: Why did she intentionally use the \$40-million figure when she knew it was false?

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I've answered my questions on the gas plant relocation in committee.

Let me talk about some things that I think the party opposite, given their position on fiscal responsibility, should be interested in and some reasons they should read the budget. Our deficit projection is now down to \$9.8 billion—a reduction of \$5 billion from last year. This is the fourth year in a row that Ontario has achieved a lower deficit forecast.

We're going to continue to build on our successes. This budget is going to be about creating jobs—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm going to pass phase 1 of the test. The member from Lambton-Kent-Middlesex is warned.

Interjection: Wow.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And anyone else who wants to "wow" will be warned, too. I'm going to show you my resolve. You want the test? I'll pass it.

Carry on.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The budget is going to be about creating jobs and working to improve people's everyday lives, Mr. Speaker. We're moving ahead on 60% of the Drummond report recommendations, which is something that has been coming across the floor to us. We are making changes. We are transforming government. We are going to be creating jobs and making people's lives better.

I think the party opposite should read the budget and then decide how they're going to vote on it.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: That was cute. Speaker, we did read the budget. It has been 10 long years of Liberal rule that has cost us jobs, that has cost us our health care system, that is costing us our prosperity, that cost us our "have" status in this province.

Let's get back to the politically motivated decision to save Liberal seats in the last election, the one where she knew it was going to cost well over \$40 million from the outset. That strikes at the very heart of our democratic principles in this province, but do you know what else strikes at the heart of our democratic principles? Refusing to call a confidence motion that this party has tabled.

It is clear, having spoken to the public in the last week—and Tim Hudak will allude to this later today—that your government has lost confidence in the people and they have lost confidence in you. My question for the Premier, if she can listen for two seconds, is this: Will you call our confidence motion for debate? Will you call it for a vote, or will you simply table your budget and call—

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

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Speaker, I have extreme faith in the people of Ontario. I believe that they deserve a government that is focusing on their needs and understands that their everyday lives have been tough in the last few years and that they're worried about whether they're going to get home care for their loved ones. They're worried about whether their adult children are going to get a job. They're worried about whether their small town is going to be able to flourish because the roads and bridges need to be maintained. They talk to their town councillors, and their town councillors say, "We've talked to the government, and we need a roads and bridges fund because we need this small town to have that support." We're providing that, Mr. Speaker. That's what we are putting in our budget.

Those are the issues we're going to be focusing on, and I really hope that the member opposite takes the time to look at the budget, takes the time to see what's there and think about what her constituents are talking to her about in terms of their everyday lives, and that she'll then consider whether she's going to support the budget or not.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Premier. In today's tough economic times, people are worried about falling further and further behind. They're worried about their kids finding a good job, about their loved ones accessing home care and about household bills like auto insurance rising higher and higher. They're frustrated to

see a government more concerned with their political fortunes than the challenges facing the province.

Will the Premier listen to Ontarians' concerns, and will the budget today finally put people's priorities ahead of Liberal priorities?

1050

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I have said consistently that what this budget is about—and really, Mr. Speaker, what our philosophy in this government is about—is about listening to people in the province, listening to people in communities and responding to them in a way that demonstrates that we do understand their concerns.

The issues that the member opposite has identified are ones that have been identified by his party, and they are ones that we were already working on, Mr. Speaker, whether it's home care or whether it is finding jobs and finding opportunities for young people to get an experience that would lead to a job—you know, making sure that they have a co-op placement or an internship so that they can get a foot in the door. Those are the kinds of issues that we need to focus on, and that's what you will see in our budget.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Prue: At the same time that the Premier has been making all these grandiose things, she also claims that the government needs to be careful with the public's dollars. We know that's true, but you haven't been. Yet she seems fine with suggesting people should pay more, even though household budgets in many cases are strained.

Does the Premier think it's fair that a government spending billions on higher CEO salaries, corporate tax loopholes and cancelled gas plant deals is in reality asking people to pay more?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let me just take these issues one at a time, because the member opposite is talking about making changes that would require that we make an investment. I think what he's not saying is that that issue is investment in transit and making sure that we have the revenue streams that allow people to pick up their child from child care in a timely way and get home, get to work in the morning on time, get to school with their child in the morning. That's what building transit is about. Making sure that we have a revenue stream to build transit is extremely important to us, and I believe it's important to the constituents in the member's riding, in fact, and across the GTHA.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the relocation of the gas plants, I have said that we cannot let that situation happen again. We all agreed that the relocations needed to happen—

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

Mr. Michael Prue: If the Premier thinks transit is so important, then release the Metrolinx report you're sitting on. Let us all see it.

Ontarians want to see a balanced approach to balancing the books in today's budget. New Democrats have been clear: In these tough economic times, we shouldn't

be making it even tougher for families, to ask them to pay more. Ontarians want to see a government who understands their challenges, but that's not what we've been seeing in Ontario today.

Is the Premier ready to admit that her government needs to get her priorities in check, actually listen to Ontarians and put forward a budget with real results to the challenge facing the province and the people who live here?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Actually, I have not seen the Metrolinx report, so I'm not sure what the member opposite is talking about.

Mr. Speaker, our budget is going to be about creating jobs and making sure that we make improvements that will help people in their everyday lives. That is what the Minister of Finance has been doing for the last number of weeks. He has been travelling the province; he has been listening to people's concerns. That's what our jobs round tables were about, Mr. Speaker. Whether it's providing home care and making sure that people have home care in a timely way, or whether it's about helping young people to find their way into the workforce—because there is a mismatch between the jobs that are available and the skills that young people have. That actually was an idea that has come out of conversations with people across the province.

So that's what you will see in our budget, and I look forward to the debate, and I look forward to support from across the floor.

POWER PLANTS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Premier. When the government cancelled the Mississauga and Oakville gas plants, they wrote blank cheques to private power producers. Over and over, the Liberals chose to keep the public in the dark, keeping them in the dark rather than coming clean about the costs, which turned out to be eight times higher than the Liberals were willing to admit.

You'd think the government would have learned its lesson that the public doesn't like secret power deals. Will the government commit to ending secret power deals that leave Ontarians paying more?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, I've answered many of these questions in committee, and I have said clearly that the way this process unfolded was unacceptable. We cannot let this happen again.

The reality is that everyone in this House agreed that these power plants should be relocated. We implemented that decision and we have to make sure that the process is changed for the next time around. But that discussion does not preclude the importance of bringing a budget forward that speaks to creating jobs and making sure that we make changes that help people in their everyday lives. It is imperative that we do that. That's what our budget is going to focus on, and I look forward to the debate in the House.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: To the Premier: The government doesn't have an estimate for the cost of refurbishing Darlington, yet nearly \$1 billion worth of contracts have already been signed. It's entirely possible that the cost of refurbishing Darlington will prove to be impractical or too expensive for Ontario.

Will Ontarians be left on the hook again like they were with the Mississauga and Oakville secret power deals?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The member will know that we have a long-term energy plan, and that long-term energy plan requires 47% of our generation to come from nuclear generation. We have announced that we're going to be—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I know that the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek would want to sit in his seat so I could tell him to stop. Thank you.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli:—doing a review of the long-term energy plan. That will include looking at refurbishment and new nuclear. We will be listening to the opposition and meeting with the opposition critics. We will be consulting across the province. We have been extremely successful in our long-term energy plan to date. We've created over 11,000 megawatts of new generation at a time when we had blackouts and brownouts from the previous government.

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

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Premier, you don't seem to want to answer the question. When it comes to the government's plans for the refurbishment at Darlington, it's like you're driving by looking in the rear-view mirror. Ontarians need to know the costs before you spend the money, not when they get the bill. Why doesn't the government care about spending public money wisely?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The issue of the Darlington refurbishment and the possibility of new nuclear has been under discussion publicly. Ontario Power Generation has been doing all kinds of research on that issue. We are dealing with it extremely responsibly.

The important issue here is that we have to make a determination whether nuclear, as our baseload, is going to continue, as many people recommend, or not. We're going to have a review process, and I would expect that the member will not get so worked up that he won't have any energy left to help us in our consultations.

POWER PLANTS

Mrs. Julia Munro: My question is for the Premier. Yesterday in the Legislature, you said, "We must have a better process going forward ... I hope the justice committee, having heard all of the witnesses, is going to be able to help and give some advice on how, going forward, we can avoid this situation ever happening again."

Premier, we have 17 gas plants in Ontario, and there have been no problems with those existing ones. Why would you suggest that this fiasco might happen again? Is

it because you foresee your government needing to make a quick seat-saver decision again in the next election?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Actually, thank you for noting that 17 of the 19 gas plants that have been located were located in a very good way.

No, I was actually making the point that when there is a reversal of a decision; for example, when there was a hole dug on Eglinton Avenue for the Eglinton subway, and then the decision was made not to do that and \$100 million was spent—what I'm saying is that when decisions like that are made—and I know that the member opposite was part of the party that made that decision—I want to make sure that we have a process that is transparent, that's open, so that when we all determine, as we did in the relocation of the gas plants, that it needs to happen, the process is as open as possible.

1100

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary? The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen–Sound.

Mr. Bill Walker: Again to the Premier: Despite your denials, you've been intimately involved in the gas plant scandal from day one. Here is what we know: You were a Liberal campaign vice-chair; you were a senior cabinet minister; you were a Chair of cabinet; and now, of course, Liberal Party leader and Premier.

Premier, you have said publicly that the Oakville gas plant would be \$40 million, a lowball by 775%. What we don't know is why you keep claiming ignorance after Colin Andersen exposed you by telling us under oath that everyone in the government knew the costs exceeded \$40 million. Please take responsibility. Please tell the truth. Premier, when were you told the costs were higher, and why did you continue to use the number that you knew was wrong?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I have answered this question many times. I regret the situation. I take responsibility for making sure we have as open a process as possible. We need to make sure this doesn't happen again, Mr. Speaker.

However, this is not going to stop us from bringing in a budget that is going to create jobs and that is going to work to improve people's everyday lives.

Let me talk just about the announcements that we've made so far. We have said that we want to invest in home care to reduce the time that it takes for people to get home care. We're going to invest \$260 million for home and community care. What that means is, that's an extension of the health care that people receive at home. We are going to invest in a \$100-million fund so that small and rural municipalities will have access to infrastructure funding. That's what's going to be—

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

MUNICIPAL PLANNING

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of the Environment, that's about it.

Ms. Catherine Fife: The OMB recently overruled the region of Waterloo's official plan and supported a sprawl development on 1,000 hectares of rural land. This ruling hurts local agricultural businesses and jobs, increases municipal infrastructure costs and undermines transit-oriented development.

This is far from the first time an OMB decision has gone against progressive planning principles and good local economies. When will the minister finally admit that the unelected, outdated OMB is not serving the needs of Ontarians and take action to reform this unelected body?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I guess I'll speak to the first part of the question. There were kind of two parts to that question. Certainly when the Ontario Municipal Board issued its decision with regard to the region of Waterloo's official plan and regarding the development of the area regarding their growth plan, they had contacted my ministry and asked for our assistance, and the city of Waterloo obviously sought appeal of this decision through the Divisional Court. We were contacted. We went back and discussed the decision, and certainly we shared our intent, we've made it public, that we will act as a party to Waterloo's decision, because certainly we think that that's important to do. Because the issue is before the courts, obviously it would be inappropriate for me to comment any further.

But I can comment to the importance of a growth plan. Certainly I think everybody in this Legislature understands that it's important to have a vision that guides all of the province and the Golden Horseshoe over the next 25 years, and we're working with municipalities to make that happen.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Minister, I have heard repeatedly from constituents who feel the OMB does not speak for them and that community members and municipal leaders should have more input into planning decisions. The OMB decision in Waterloo reveals systemic problems with the planning process, ambiguities about density targets and the Places to Grow Act, lack of consideration of local and environmental impacts, and a lack of municipal authority over official plans. When will the government fix the planning process so that it serves families and communities rather than the interests of those who hold power at the OMB?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I understand that many of my colleagues have an interest in improving the OMB, and certainly my colleagues from across the aisle have made suggestions on how we can improve it. Both parties have made suggestions, and we welcome their input on how to improve the process.

We listened to our municipal partners back in 2006 when we added the requirement that the OMB take into consideration the information that is provided by municipal councils in making their decisions. In addition, we also made sure that municipalities have the ability to

create their own local appeals body with regard to certain planning matters, showing our government's respect for elected officials and their decision-making.

Our government is always open and receptive to hearing new and constructive ideas on how to improve this system. Certainly, it's a conversation that I've been having with the AMO board at our MOU table, because we respect and want to consult with municipalities across Ontario on how to make the system more constructive.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Dipika Damerla: My question is to the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation. Speaker, as you've probably noticed by now, public transit is a passion of mine. It's a very important file for me, not just because of the reflection of my value systems—but the reality of living in a fast-growing suburb.

The reality is that Mississauga, as Ontario's third-largest city, not just deserves but needs more public transit, and I'm really proud to be part of an administration that has invested so much in Mississauga, whether it's more GO parking spots, whether it's more GO double-decker trains or whether it's two more trains on the Milton line.

But we still need more, and I know that the Big Move has big plans for Mississauga. Minister, I was interested to read today in the Globe and Mail that there was some talk about reconsidering some of the projects on the Big Move. Could you, Minister, please set the record straight on this article?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I want to thank the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville, who has raised these issues consistently in the House.

The Big Move contains 15 projects that are described. The first-wave projects are under construction right now. We're very excited to see boring machines on Eglinton and across the GTHA. We are now moving with the balance of the second-wave projects, which we are also very clearly committed to and to seeing fulfilled. We look forward to working with Metrolinx and our municipal and regional partners, to fully realize and optimize those projects.

Our investment strategy, that is now being developed by Metrolinx, will make sure that this is not just a dream, but that they are fully realized, because we have to make sure we have the financial capacity to solve the congestion problem, get people home to their families on time and move these projects forward.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Thank you, Minister, for that answer. It's really reassuring to know that we are still committed to the Big Move. I really want to thank you once again for some of the big investments that have been made in Mississauga, especially on the GO file, whether it's two more trains on the GO line, more parking or double-decker buses.

However, Minister, the article specifically mentioned the BRT, the bus rapid transit, as one of those projects

that might be reconsidered. The BRT is already under construction in Mississauga, and I know that my constituents are looking forward to its completion. Could you specifically speak to this project, Minister?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Not only is the BRT project a critical priority, but we've already put \$65 million, as a province, into the project. The city of Mississauga, as you know, is contributing another \$48 million for an 18-kilometre, two-way BRT system.

We are also moving forward in the second phase with projects like the Hurontario LRT and the Eglinton cross-town line. These are municipal priorities, and Metrolinx, in connecting to our Places to Grow plan and the Big Move, looks at the regional perspective on this and how we connect these projects going forward.

Our plan for the Big Move is more than simply a handful of projects or a number of projects. It is a plan meant to increase mobility and reduce congestion, and we will optimize each project to that outcome.

HYDRO CHARGES

Mr. Monte McNaughton: My question is for the Premier. Mitchell's Bay, a small town in my riding, experienced flooding in January which resulted in the loss of power to 45 homes and cottages. Sadly, they are still without power and may not have power restored until later this month, nearly five months later. Ironically, these 45 homes still continue to receive hydro bills, which include charges for delivery, debt retirement and global adjustment.

Premier, is your government so desperate to pay for your political decision to cancel the Mississauga and Oakville power plants that you have to continue to bill my constituents when they are not even receiving the service that you, Premier, are billing them for?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Energy.

1110

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, what we're talking about here is the reliability of the electricity system across the province. When we took over government, we had blackouts, we had brownouts, we had dirty coal-burning generation, and it was totally unreliable.

We have since built and invested in over 11,000 megawatts of new generation of power. We've almost totally eliminated dirty coal-burning generation. We have—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): While I'm prepared to talk to some people on this side, I'm now going to have to talk to people on this side. I wish I could figure this one out.

Interjection: Time, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): And you can point to the clock all you want. Thank you.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: We've invested over \$9 billion in new or expanded transmission services across the province.

On the particular issue that he's raised, I'll be more than happy to get the information and look into it, and get back to you before the end of today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Back to the Premier: This is simply not right. If your government cannot deliver an essential service, such as heating a home in the middle of the wintertime, then the least you can do is stop sending the bill. It is unacceptable that you are taking the people of Ontario to the cleaners to pay for the cost of your gas plant scandal.

Premier, no doubt I don't need to tell you that the people of Mitchell's Bay have lost all confidence in your Liberal government. Can you explain to this House why the people of Mitchell's Bay have to pay for the handful of Liberal seats that you saved by moving the Mississauga and Oakville gas plants and how this House can have any confidence in your Liberal government whatsoever?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, our system of LDCs—local distribution companies—including Hydro One, is among the best in North America. We have invested, as I mentioned, in transmission services in order to provide better service—\$9 billion over that period of time. We invested in a system that has—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Chatham-Kent-Essex is now warned—phase 2.

Carry on.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: We invested in a system that had deteriorated beyond acceptable levels. The system was not reliable in any way, shape or form.

As I mentioned to the member, I'd be more than happy to receive the details and look into that issue for you, and get back to you before the end of today.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Jonah Schein: My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Speaker, there's a proposal to build an ethanol plant in Oshawa Harbour. Many people in Oshawa and across Ontario oppose this proposed plant because it's next to a provincially significant Second Marsh wetland and it will cause significant air pollution and truck traffic, and it's not consistent with the city's vision of a clean, people-friendly waterfront.

Why has the minister been so silent on this issue of concern to so many Oshawa residents?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I can't recall being accused of being silent at any time in this House or elsewhere.

Interjection.

Hon. James J. Bradley: The member says—should I repeat that?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You go ahead, because I was going to myself.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Okay.

I want to say that I have actually met with the mayor of Oshawa on this very issue and have had communications with him. As you know, this is under federal jurisdiction, and I know that there are a number of people who have made representations to the federal government on this and no doubt to the local federal members who represent that location.

But I do want to say that I have been in communication with and had a very good meeting with the mayor of Oshawa and have conveyed to the federal government the concerns that Oshawa has had in this regard, and I will continue to do so, even though it's under federal jurisdiction.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jonah Schein: The proposed ethanol plant may be on federal land but it has a clear provincial component. Communications from the Ministry of the Environment indicate that provincial laws apply to this project and that provincial permits are needed for water-taking during construction and to control noise, air emissions, and sewage and waste water emissions during plant operation.

When will the minister finally stand up for Oshawa Harbour and make it clear that provincial approvals will not be granted and construction of the plant will not be allowed to proceed unless environmental concerns are addressed?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I want to say that that's precisely what I've done in my discussions with the mayor of Oshawa. I know that you have probably asked your federal leader, Mr. Mulcair, to raise this issue in the House of Commons, because it comes under federal jurisdiction. They may have been preoccupied with other issues there. I understand that fully, but I would certainly suggest that a matter under federal jurisdiction should be raised, in fact, in the House of Commons of Canada.

Having said that, I have made known to the federal government the views of the mayor of Oshawa and those who have concerns about the proposal that is there, and I think the people in that area who have met with me are fully aware of the stand that I have taken in this regard. We want to ensure that all necessary protections are available to the people of that area, and I will ensure from a provincial point of view that that is well-known.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mr. Grant Crack: My question is to the ever-energetic Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. This government is strongly committed to providing access to our world-renowned colleges and universities, and our recent announcement of the reduced tuition framework has been well-received by students and families right across the province of Ontario, and in my riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell.

Post-secondary education is crucial to our economic future, and many students in high school are faced with tough decisions upon graduation. Students at the end of their high school careers must decide whether to attend

college and/or university. Some students worry that if they attend a college but later decide to attend a university, transferring credits can be difficult. I've also heard that students face transfer-credit challenges even when they move within the university system.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the hard-working minister, what are we doing to assist those students?

Hon. Brad Duguid: To the visionary member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell—he does raise a very important issue, all kidding aside. Many students choose to move from one program to another during their academic career, and we have to make sure that they can do just that. I've recently met with the university and college presidents, and this important topic of credit transfer came up.

I think it's really important to point out that a great deal of progress has already been made on credit transfer. The ministry announced a provincial credit-transfer initiative worth \$73.7 million in funding over five years. We launched a bilingual credit-transfer website in 2011 to improve transparency and access to information, and we established the Ontario council on articulation, which is fostering these credit transfers.

There's more work to be done. I'm looking forward to working with all stakeholders to deliver even more progress when it comes to credit transfers.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Not to be a killjoy, but I want to be consistent when I'm in this chair. I am going to ask all members—because I have admonished someone in the past on the opposition side for using any kind of adjective in front of the minister's portfolio or the riding, I'm going to ask that that stop as well. It is not balanced and it's not helpful, so I'm going to ask everyone to please simply make mention of their riding or the minister's title. That's it. Just—it's not helpful.

Supplementary.

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you very much, Speaker, and thank you to the minister for that very comprehensive answer. It is good to know of the steps taken to make movement within the post-secondary system easier. I urge the minister to push for more progress on credit transfer opportunities on behalf of students right across this province. The economy is changing fast, and students sometimes need to change their paths to adjust to those opportunities at the same time.

While university may be the best post-secondary route for some, the college route is becoming a first choice for many students as well, so I would ask the minister if he can confirm that Ontario's students are wise to consider colleges as an alternative first choice for post-secondary education.

Hon. Brad Duguid: This is a very important question, and it's a very difficult decision for students to make as they graduate from high school: Do they go the college route or the university route? I think the good news is, here in Ontario, that is a choice that students have to make, but on either route they're going to be getting a world-class education here in the province of Ontario. That's good for all of our students.

In fact, in a recent survey of college graduates in 2011-12, over 83% were employed within six months of graduation. That shows good progress; I think there's more work to be done. Our world-class college system is demonstrating that the significant investments that we've been making in our colleges are paying off. Evidence of that fact is that 93% of employers who hired a recent college grad were satisfied—very satisfied—with their hire. That tells us the investments we're making in our college system are paying off. It's an excellent first choice for students across—

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

1120

WASTE DIVERSION

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Minister of Consumer Services. Minister, as of May 1, Ontarians who go to purchase a big-screen TV will be forced to pay a 40% higher eco tax, thanks to your government. The environment minister signed off on this massive eco tax increase without giving any forewarning to consumers. He knew full well that this decision would be extremely unpopular, so he hid it from the public, and still, to this day, refuses to admit he rubber-stamped this massive increase, even though I have his approval letter right here.

We know from the Premier's testimony at the gas plant committee that she clearly doesn't read documents she signs that link her to scandals and mismanagement. So can you tell this House if the environment minister at least ran it by you?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: To the Minister of the Environment.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I've been discussing with a number of people the very inadequate Conservative bill, which was the Ontario Waste Diversion Act, and all of the problems that it has created for this province. Each one of the groups I talked to is very concerned about hearing what the Conservatives are saying on this particular matter, because they mischaracterize, on many occasions, what these are all about—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's a withdrawal.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I will withdraw. I've listened to many of the statements that have been made by members of the opposition. I'm going to tell you, they've come a lot closer to unparliamentary than what I just went through.

I want to say that the information that the member is trying to convey to this House, of course, is incorrect. He knows the Ontario government receives no money from this at all. He knows that this is a result of the legislation that his government put into effect, legislation we're going to change completely, revise completely and make sure that this kind of situation does not arise in the years to come.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Harris: For the record, my question was actually to the Minister of Consumer Services. Asking the

environment minister about consumer protection would be like asking a bandit for a lesson in fair pricing.

Minister, as the person charged with protecting consumers, I'm sure you can understand why Ontarians are shocked that you failed to address this issue. Instead of standing up for consumers, you sat on the sidelines while the Minister of the Environment and Ontario Electronic Stewardship quietly plotted a massive new eco tax hike they both hoped would just fly under the radar. This behaviour couldn't be more unaccountable, lack more transparency and be more anti-consumer.

Minister, how can Ontario consumers have confidence in your government when you can't even protect them from your own environment minister?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Minister of the Environment?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I'm worried, first of all, that the very good veterans who are members of the Conservative caucus never seem to get a chance to ask any questions anymore.

We have introduced, as a government, two bills that are designed to help consumers in this province. The Progressive Conservative Party and caucus are stalling both of those bills without letting them go to committee.

But speaking of consumer ministers, the person who had a chance, back when you passed that ill-advised legislation in 2002—the leader of your party was the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. He, in effect, is the godfather of eco fees in this province.

Interjection: What did Bill Murdoch say about him?

Hon. James J. Bradley: And I remember the quotation of one Bill Murdoch, a former member of this Legislature, on the job that the leader was doing at that time.

I hope that this member will support the legislation we'll be bringing forward to replace the ill-conceived, inappropriate legislation that was brought forward by your government.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Minister, by your own admission, our jail system is currently operating at 95% capacity, and those numbers are only forecast to increase. Yet, your ministry is closing down a perfectly functional jail in Sarnia without any consideration for the safety of inmates and corrections officers. As we've seen at the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre, crowded and unsafe conditions lead to fights and lockdowns, which endanger the lives of inmates and staff.

Will the Liberal government create an actual plan to ensure the safety of inmates and correctional officers instead of closing down jails without the numbers to back up those closures?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: This is a very good question. Yes, we are having an issue with overcrowding in our jails, and we are addressing it. We will be opening two new jails pretty soon. We need to modernize our

system, and that's why I asked my staff to prepare a plan for renewal of our infrastructure. We are presently occupying jails that were built prior to Confederation, so we are closing them. We are modernizing our system.

As you know, because of a bill that was passed by the federal government, now we have more inmates coming into our system. So we are getting ready for that, and we will continue to modernize our jail system.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: The minister makes a compelling case for continuing to keep the Sarnia jail open, obviously. You said that we have more inmates coming into the system due to the changes at the federal level.

Minister, a tool within the direct supervision model is space to properly house those who cannot cope appropriately within the jail. The Sarnia jail closure will mean less space for such inmates—no space, especially on weekends, which will lead to transfers to Toronto of inmates serving their jail sentences. The closure will lead to increased costs, hardship for correctional officers and inmates, and is just an overall bad plan.

Will the minister commit today to putting the safety of workers and inmates first?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Yes, I am committed to that, and that's why I asked my staff to give me a plan to modernize the system. But I'll say to the member on the other side that you should ask your brothers and sisters at the federal level to address this situation and ask for the help of the federal government to give us more money so that we can help to put in place a new and very modernized jail system.

I noticed that coming from the federal Auditor General—he's talking about \$11 billion of uncollected taxes. So if they do, then the federal government will be able to continue to transfer money to the province to allow—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: —to put forward their Bill C-10—

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

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: —you know, the negative effect of having more inmates in our—

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

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

Mr. Bob Delaney: This question is for the Minister of Labour. Minister, with summer on the way, young people in Lisgar, Meadowvale and Streetsville are busy filling out applications to places like local golf courses, summer camps, retailers and other employers. While new and young workers bring a new energy to the workplace, they may not always recognize workplace health and safety hazards on their first summer job or their current summer job. In fact, new and young workers are four times more likely to be injured within the first month of their job than at any other time.

Minister, what role can youth, parents and employers in Mississauga play to make sure our Ontario workplaces are as safe as possible?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I thank the member for a very important question. Ensuring healthy and safe workplaces is the most important part of my job. We all have a role to play to ensure that our workplaces are healthy and are safe, especially as the youth of our province are starting to find summer jobs. We need to make sure that they get those jobs and they are able to perform them at safe workplaces.

As I've said, Speaker, it is a partnership. We all have to work together so that we're keeping our workplaces safe for our youth. For example, for parents, I ask them to please check that your daughter or son receives health and safety training for their loved ones at the job. My message to youth is to be sure to inform your parents and the employer if you get injured.

1130

The year 2012 was the fifth consecutive year in a row that we conducted health and safety blitzes for new and young workers. We'll continue with these blitzes to ensure that our workplaces are safe for youth employees.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Bob Delaney: Minister, safety doesn't just happen, and new and young workers are often reluctant to seek help in staying safe on the job. Your ministry needs to focus on educating both workers and employers about their rights and responsibilities under the Employment Standards Act. Young workers are vulnerable. They may be taken advantage of if they're unaware of their rights in regard to such things as hours of work, required break times, minimum wage, overtime, termination and severance pay.

Recently the Ontario Court of Justice ruled on a case where the Ontario Ministry of Labour had charged an employer for failing to pay wages to its employees. Minister, what was the outcome of this decision?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Protecting vulnerable workers in seasonal businesses—or young workers—is a very important responsibility and priority for the Ministry of Labour. In 2007 and 2008, the ministry received employment standards claims from a substantial number of former employees who worked for a business known as All Pool Solutions and Aquatic Pool Solutions in Mississauga. Most of those claimants were actually students. The ministry issued three orders to the company to pay totalling \$63,000, and other charges were laid as well.

Most recently, the Ontario Court of Justice in Brampton sentenced the director of that company to 90 days in jail, imposed a fine of \$15,000, and ordered the outstanding wages of about \$55,000 to be paid. I think it clearly shows that the government and of course our court system is very serious in protecting vulnerable workers like our youth. I encourage them to report any incidents to the Ministry of Labour.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Ted Arnott: My question is for the Minister of Health. Just before Christmas I emailed the minister's office to inquire about the approval process for funding

for Kalydeco, a new medication that shows great promise in the treatment of cystic fibrosis patients who have the G551D mutation. When the House resumed sitting on February 20, I spoke to the minister personally, informing her of the issue and asking for her help. I spoke to her again on March 20 and I raised it in the Legislature during debate on March 26. We learned in late March that the Canadian Drug Expert Committee has recommended that Kalydeco be placed on the formulary and be publicly funded for the treatment of cystic fibrosis patients aged six and older who have this genetic mutation. What is the minister doing to ensure that cystic fibrosis patients in Ontario who could potentially recover their health have access to Kalydeco?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the member opposite for this question. I know many of us in this Legislature advocate for patients who are looking for access to drugs that are not currently covered. I think it's important to acknowledge that our drug budget is now \$4.4 billion. That's a significant increase, an increase of \$1.4 billion since we took office. We're covering more drugs, and we're covering drugs for more conditions.

I think the member opposite does understand that this is a process. I've explained it to him before. We have actually taken these decisions out of the hands of politicians and put these decisions into the hands of experts. That is the right thing to do, and I look forward to updating the member on this particular drug.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Ted Arnott: I want to make it clear it was never my intention to politicize this issue. I first raised this with the minister last December and it's now May. The need for funding for Kalydeco for CF patients was brought to my attention by a constituent, Shelley Phipps, from Georgetown. Her 17-year-old daughter, Madison, has cystic fibrosis. In her young life, she has spent more than 250 days in the hospital. I have met with a representative of Kalydeco's manufacturer, Vertex, and I've communicated with CF Foundation. I've even met a CF patient named Chris MacLeod, who is a lawyer in Toronto who has gotten his life back because of Kalydeco. I want to do everything I can to help.

Will the minister commit to this House that she will undertake to do all that she can to expedite the process, giving hope to CF patients across this province?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I can assure you that I will do everything I can to ensure that the process is being followed in this case.

You know, we have a budget coming down this afternoon. One of the things we talk about in a budget is, can we afford to spend more to care for more people? Our government is very clear: We are prepared to spend more to support more people with their health care needs.

It's disappointing when I hear from the member opposite, who's going to vote against the budget even though they haven't even read it. Their plan is to cut spending. Our plan is to continue on a steady path to balance.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Miss Monique Taylor: My question is to the Premier. This week, Ontarians learned—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Halton is warned.

Ask your question, please.

Miss Monique Taylor: Thank you. Speaker, this week, Ontarians learned about the Telford family. This family has been living with unimaginable stress and an endless battle to get appropriate care for their 19-year-old son, who is developmentally disabled and has autism. They finally reached the breaking point this week and had to relinquish care of their son.

My question is simple: Does the Premier think it is appropriate that this is the only way these families are able to secure the care and support for their children that they need?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I'm certainly aware of the media reports on this case, and as you know, I'm prohibited both legally and in professional practice from commenting on the specifics of any case. But that said, I recognize, as I think all members of this assembly do, that an adult family member with a developmental disability can be challenging for parents, particularly aging parents.

We understand the concerns that are being raised. We've made some real strides. Over the last few years, we've increased funding some 58%. We don't stop looking for solutions at any point. While each situation is different, our staff in the ministry and throughout Ontario are committed to responding as best we can to the needs of parents and children in this situation.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Miss Monique Taylor: Last fall, the Arthurs family in Sarnia was in a very similar situation. For years, they worked tirelessly to provide the care their daughter needed, but when this family reached their breaking point, there were no services there for them. Only after they left their daughter at the local Community Living and launched a very public campaign did this government find a workable solution.

It's shocking that in Ontario, families only receive appropriate care after giving up their children and going to the media. Does the Premier agree that no family should have to relinquish care in order to get appropriate services?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I want to point out to the member opposite that it was our government that created the Passport program and is investing \$1.7 billion. I just want you to—

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm trying to give you a hand.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Yes, thanks, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order, please. Thank you.
Minister?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate every break I can get in life.

We invest, on the residential side, some \$1.08 billion and some \$610 million in supports. I would just point out that the third party, when they issued their list of demands for the upcoming budget, regrettably didn't say a single thing about support for those requiring developmental services.

The Premier has said in an earlier response that we have every reason to look forward to—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. Just to show you I wasn't kidding, the member from Prince Edward–Hastings is warned. The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is warned. I hope our performance this afternoon doesn't challenge me to the next phase of my words to you.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Elgin–Middlesex–London has pointed something out to me that many of you have: I would like to introduce in the Speaker's gallery today Mr. Steve Peters, member in the 37th, 38th and 39th, and Speaker in the 39th Parliament.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I have a feeling that they want us to switch spaces; I'm not sure.

Oh, no, thank you? Okay.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1140 to 1300.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

GREY BRUCE SINGERS

Mr. Bill Walker: I rise in the House today to recognize a community choir in my riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. The Grey Bruce Singers are a community choir located in Hanover, Ontario, and have recently been invited by Distinguished Concerts International New York City to participate in a performance of Handel's Messiah at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall in New York City on Sunday, December 1, 2013.

The Grey Bruce Singers received this invitation of honour because of the quality and high level of musicianship demonstrated by the singers. The choir is a group of 70 to 90 gifted singers, men and women, ranging in age from teens to seniors. They sing under the direction of Dianne Leith, with the talented accompaniment of Chris Patterson. Under the artistic direction of Leith, who lives in Holstein, and the accompaniment of Durham's Patter-

son, since 1980, the Grey Bruce Singers have produced 66 seasons of musical productions, each including five performances per season.

Their repertoire includes a wide selection of secular and sacred music both old and new. The talents of the group go beyond singing to include dancing, staging, props, costumes, ticket design, sales, advertising and all the other things that go to make up enjoyable practices and successful concerts.

Although the Grey Bruce Singers is a Hanover-based community choir, its talented voices come from many surrounding communities such as Mount Forest, Ayton, Holstein, Durham, Harriston, Palmerston, Dundalk, Flesherton, Markdale, Eugenia, Walkerton, Formosa, Mildmay, Elmwood, Listowel, Wiarton, Guelph and more.

I welcome everyone to visit my riding. Come out to one of their practices or concerts and see what they have to offer.

TIBET DAY

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's an absolute delight to stand here today and to acknowledge that it's the second annual Tibet Day at Queen's Park. I hope members here will enjoy the wonderful food. Today it was hosted by the Ontario Parliamentary Friends of Tibet, and with them the Tibetan Women's Association, Tibetan Association of Ontario, and Students for a Free Tibet; all were in the House. By the way, we have our very first Tibetan page, Tenzin from Durham, the very first Tibetan page ever at Queen's Park, so we're delighted with that as well.

Of course, on a more sombre note, one of the reasons that Tibetans would like to come here and to be able to speak to our MPPs and through them, and in Ottawa through the Parliamentary Friends of Tibet to our federal MPs, is that one day they would love to be able to celebrate back home in Lhasa. Most of the Tibetans here are here because they came from refugees or are refugees, and all they really want is freedom in Tibet. We've had over 100 Tibetans self-immolate to date. The conditions there are worsening. And so I ask, on behalf of the Tibetans, for all of our combined prayers and hopes for them so that one day Tibet will be free.

Until then, there's still some food available if you want to leave the chamber for a few moments, and definitely say hello, tashidelek, to our Tibetan friends.

YOUTH ACHIEVEMENT

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I am honoured to congratulate a group of outstanding youth from my community of York South–Weston. Last week, WAVE Youth Action Team was honoured at a Queen's Park ceremony to celebrate its commitment and outstanding achievements in serving victims of crime.

WAVE stands for Working Against Violence Everyday, and was founded by Louise Russo around the principles of respect, responsibility, and the role of leadership in reducing violence in schools and communities.

Working with a group of 18 high school students from Chaminade College in York South–Weston, WAVE received an Attorney General’s Victim Services Award of Distinction for creating an anti-bullying, anti-violence presentation for children in grades 2 to 6. The team developed a hands-on interactive workshop and has presented it to more than 450 students so far. The workshop supports victims by enforcing the message of speaking up, time away, opening up and peace to identify bullying behaviour.

I had the privilege to meet with a number of Chaminade College students last week at the ceremony, and I was very impressed by the dedication shown by these youth to make their community a safer and more supportive place.

Thank you for all your work to bring attention to the important issues of bullying and youth violence, and congratulations on your recognition.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. John O’Toole: It’s my pleasure to recognize, and I ask members to recognize, the names of Clint Cole, Doug Taylor and a few other people who are members of the Enniskillen Environmental Association.

Members should be aware of the alarm bells that have been raised by citizens in my riding over the health and environmental implications regarding the Clarington transformer station project. This \$270-million project by Hydro One will be built on 100 acres in an environmentally protected area in the Oak Ridges moraine and the greenbelt.

The Enniskillen Environmental Association warns that any leakage from the transformer station would pollute the aquifers of the Oak Ridges moraine, which is a key source of drinking water for southern Ontario.

This week, we learned that the gas plant fiasco in Mississauga and Oakville has officially wasted almost \$600 million—I suspect it’s a billion dollars. This is one more example of projects not being managed. We want to ensure that history does not repeat itself here.

Clarington council, as well as Durham regional council, are calling on this government and the Minister of the Environment and, indeed, the Minister of Energy, to reconsider the approval process itself and demand a complete environmental assessment.

Mr. Speaker, I urge this government to put health and the environment first. I urge this government and the House to listen to the citizens and find alternatives to the Clarington transformer station before millions of tax dollars are wasted on an environmentally sensitive project.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. John Vanthof: The North East LHIN has ordered an independent review of the Anson General Hospital in Iroquois Falls. The review is currently under way. It was initiated because of community complaints regarding the governance of the hospital, and public allegations by the hospital’s administration regarding former staff.

The community members who were most vocal in their complaints are being sued by the hospital board. So, while they are participating in a review ordered by the LHIN, they are facing legal action funded by the same LHIN and, ultimately, by the Ministry of Health.

The hospital has a whistle-blower policy which includes protection for those who present a complaint to any governmental authority. Some of the defendants have made formal complaints to me, their MPP, but are still being sued. One defendant has listed his home to pay legal fees. The community is holding a garage sale to help out. This is simply unacceptable.

The defendants are not the only victims in this saga. The board members did not volunteer their time to be dragged into a fight beyond their control. The front-line staff are under incredible pressure. But the ultimate victims are the residents, particularly seniors, who are deeply concerned about the future of the health care system in their town.

Ironically, tragically, everyone involved in this issue has the same goal: to maintain and improve the health care in their town. I respectfully request that the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care urge the board to drop their legal action so that the review can be seen as unbiased. Legal fees don’t improve health care.

EVA CHU

Mr. Bob Delaney: Last week, the Mississauga Chinese Business Association celebrated some special young men and women at its annual general meeting and networking dinner at the Summit Garden restaurant.

MCBA promotes business opportunities between Canada and China, which includes the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and speaks for the Chinese business community in Mississauga.

During the inauguration of the Young Professional Board, I presented an award recognizing Leading Women, Building Communities to Eva Chu. Eva’s award recognized her past and ongoing work to improve the lives of others through her high school and university career, in her community church involvement, as a student leader and as a volunteer for the Mississauga Chinese Business Association. Eva hails from a family in which the values of community service have always run deep.

The Leading Women, Building Communities recognition program acknowledges the contributions of individuals who improve the lives, careers and vitality of women of all race, culture and ethnic origin in their community through public service involvement and by eliminating barriers to entry in the workplace.

Eva Chu was a very deserving winner, and the whole community is especially proud of Eva Chu.

1310

WIND TURBINES

Mr. Rick Nicholls: On April 22, 2013, the Superior Court of Ontario stated that residents in rural Ontario are

experiencing a property devaluing of 22% to over 50% due to the construction of industrial wind turbines on and around their property. Rural Ontario, including the riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex, is suffering in many ways due to these turbines.

Turbines are popping up in Chatham-Kent faster than you can say “coalition.” Time and time again, this Liberal government, along with the NDPs, has consistently defeated PC bills that would have helped put Ontario back on the right path. Both parties did it prior to the McGuinty government proroguing this Legislature, and they continue to do so with the McGuinty-Wynne government.

There seems to be a pattern forming here. Perhaps the NDPs should change their call letters to the NDPP, the New Democratic Prop Party, since all they do is consistently prop up this Liberal government in defeating solid bills.

The current Liberal-Party-elected Premier Wynne has stated publicly that we need more municipal autonomy on decision-making, which includes whether or not a municipality wants wind turbines in their area. It may be too little, too late for Chatham-Kent, but it’s not too late for the rest of Ontario.

In future, I call on this government to make all the costs of turbine development known to local farmers and residents. This includes financial, health and energy costs.

Today is a momentous day for the province in the presentation of the budget. I sincerely hope that it marks a change in how the concerns of rural Ontarians are heard.

ELVENIA GRAY-SANDIFORD

Ms. Dipika Damerla: I rise today to speak about a very special person: Elvenia Gray-Sandiford or, more aptly, Auntie Elvenia, auntie to an entire community.

I first met Elvenia when she walked into my constituency office shortly after I was elected, demanding that I sign certificates for her volunteers. I remember thinking, “My God, what a go-getter.” Little did I know just what a bundle of energy Elvenia was and continues to be.

Technically or, I guess, officially, she is the president of TransformNation. It’s an organization that is devoted to fighting childhood obesity. She lives in my riding, and she has just been toiling away on this issue without—there are people who get a lot of exposure in the media, and, you know, they’re all about it. But with Elvenia, it’s just about working in the trenches.

After all of these years of toiling away in anonymity, she has finally gotten her day of recognition, because recently she was declared Mississauga Citizen of the Year. I cannot—

Applause.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Yes, thank you so much.

I cannot think of a more deserving person, because she’s in it for the right reasons. She truly is an aunt to our community, because she looks after everybody and she cares about everybody.

Most important of all, what Elvenia said is that as important as the honour is, the real reward is in just serving the community.

SHIRLEY PERRY

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It is my pleasure to rise today to recognize the contributions of an Orangeville resident, Shirley Perry, who has recently been recognized for her incredible 65 years as a volunteer with the Canadian Cancer Society. What an amazing achievement—an incredible gift of giving.

Shirley spends many hours visiting with others who have been diagnosed with cancer. As a cancer survivor herself, and having cared for her late husband when his own health began to fail, Shirley’s personal insight and encouragement has been a great benefit to many as she helps cancer patients progress through their own treatment. Whether it is a call to check in on how someone is feeling, or a visit to help out with exercise or a new piece of medical equipment, Shirley makes a difference in the lives of others.

The Canadian Cancer Society is an organization that depends on its many volunteers, and it is long-serving and dedicated volunteers like Shirley who help and serve as an inspiration for others. Since 1948, Shirley has been both a fundraiser and a personal visit volunteer, including participating in last year’s Dufferin Relay For Life survivors’ lap.

Volunteers are the heart and soul of our community, and last week, in recognition of National Volunteer Week, I was proud to thank all of the volunteers in my riding and across Ontario. It is especially gratifying today to highlight the significant volunteerism of Shirley Perry, who continues to be an exceptional example for many.

On behalf of Dufferin–Caledon residents and the Ontario Legislature, it is an honour to congratulate Shirley for what you have done and continue to do. Thank you for being one of our outstanding volunteers.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements.

PETITIONS

LAND USE PLANNING

Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Newmarket–Aurora.

Mr. Frank Klees: Thank you, Speaker. Sometimes it’s more difficult to be recognized here than others. I appreciate this.

I have a petition here signed by hundreds of residents of Newmarket regarding the Places to Grow Act and how it is impacting their community. It reads as follows:

“Whereas municipalities are required to produce official plans that are compliant with the Places to Grow Act and the provincial growth plan; and

“Whereas the province of Ontario prescribes population growth and intensification targets through the provincial growth plan that must be met by municipalities; and

“Whereas, even if the designated growth and intensification numbers are met, they are deemed to be minimum numbers; and

“Whereas the Ontario Municipal Board may approve densities to be located in areas not identified in the official plan, resulting in significant additional costs to the municipality because of required changes to long-term infrastructure plans, and also disrupts the character of existing communities;

“Therefore, we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass the Preserving Existing Communities Act, 2013 proposed by Newmarket–Aurora MPP Frank Klees”—Speaker, that is me—“that amends the Places to Grow Act, 2005 to provide that a decision made by a municipal council is final and may not be appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board if the following conditions are” met:

“(1) The decision is to refuse a request to amend the municipality’s official plan with respect to land that is designated for one or more of the following: stable residential area and parks and open space.

“(2) The municipal council has passed a resolution stating that the requested official plan amendment would not be in the best interests of the municipality.”

Speaker, I will affix my signature to this and look forward to this bill being called for debate in the general government committee.

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: “We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“On behalf of all the Ontario dogs and puppies imprisoned in puppy mills, let’s put an end to this unnecessary suffering. Unfortunately, these dogs and puppies cannot speak for their rights and their cries are unheard except by those inflicting their pain. They need us to speak out for them and save them from being victims of a life whose fate is painful suffering and ultimately death.

“While the Humane Society of Ontario and the OSPCA are trying to combat the proliferation of puppy mills, locating and shutting down puppy mills is an extremely difficult task. We need criminal legislation to ban puppy mills outright and empower the proper authorities to apprehend and prosecute to the full letter of the laws that protect man’s best friends our dogs and puppies.

“We, the undersigned, implore the Ontario government to take into consideration passing a criminal law which bans puppy mills province-wide and imposes stricter penalties to those who break this law. We need to stop the unnecessary suffering of these animals who share our world.

“Please hear our plea and the plea of so many others who speak on behalf of these dogs and puppies who

cannot speak for themselves. Leave the breeding to those who do it for the love of dogs and not the love of greed.

“Perhaps if Ontario passes this law, other provinces will follow and we can put an end to this nationwide cruelty forever. Please give these dogs and puppies the liberty and safety they deserve and so desperately cry out for.”

1320

AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

Ms. Helena Jaczek: “Whereas the agri-food industry is now, and has historically been, one of the primary economic drivers in Ontario; and

“Whereas the people of Ontario support local processors and producers in Ontario through purchasing and consuming locally grown and raised fruits, vegetables, meat and processed food products; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario, and the Premier of Ontario, support Ontario farmers and Ontario food producers by leading by example; and

“Whereas the province of Ontario celebrates local Ontario producers and processors and promotes the good things grown, harvested and made in Ontario;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario pass and enact, during spring of 2013, Bill 36, the Local Food Act.”

I’ll sign it and send it to the table with page Simon.

FISHING REGULATIONS

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I have a petition that’s signed by a colleague, a strong supporter who’s concerned with this issue, Bob Holden, who has joined us here today, which reads:

“Whereas the Ontario Fishing Regulations Summary is printed each year by the Ministry of Natural Resources and distributed to recreational fishermen throughout the province to inform them of all the relevant seasons, limits, licence requirements and other regulations; and

“Whereas this valuable document is readily available for anglers to keep in their residence, cottage, truck, boat, trailer or on their” possession “to be fully informed of the current fishing regulations; and

“Whereas the” Ministry of Natural Resources “has recently and abruptly drastically reduced the distribution of the Ontario Fishing Regulations Summary such that even major licence issuers and large fishing retailers are limited to one case of regulations per outlet; and

“Whereas anglers do not always have access to the Internet to view online regulations while travelling or in remote areas;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately return the production of the Ontario Fishing Regulations Summary to previous years’ quantities such that all anglers have access to a copy and to distribute them accordingly.”

I affix my signature in full support, Speaker.

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Sarah Campbell: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas home heating and electricity are essential utilities for northern families;

“Whereas the government has a duty and an obligation to ensure that essential goods and services are affordable for all families living in the north and across the province;

“Whereas government policy such as the Green Energy Act,” the HST, “cancellation of gas plants in Oakville and Mississauga have caused the price of electricity to artificially increase to the point it is no longer affordable for families or small business;

“Whereas electricity generated and used in north-western Ontario is among the cleanest and cheapest to produce in Canada, yet has been inflated by government policy;

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

“To take immediate steps to reduce the price of electricity in the northwest and ensure that residents and businesses have access to energy that properly reflects the price of local generation.”

I will support this and give this to page Eve to deliver.

AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

Mr. Bob Delaney: I have a petition that’s addressed to the Ontario Legislative Assembly entitled “Good Things Grow in Ontario,” and it is signed by people from all over Markham and Scarborough. It reads as follows:

“Whereas the agri-food industry is now, and has historically been, one of the primary economic drivers in Ontario; and

“Whereas the people of Ontario support local processors and producers in Ontario through purchasing and consuming locally grown and raised fruits, vegetables, meat and processed food products; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario, and the Premier of Ontario, support Ontario farmers and Ontario food” processors “by leading by example; and

“Whereas the province of Ontario celebrates local Ontario producers and processors and promotes the good things grown, harvested and made in Ontario;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly of Ontario pass and enact, during spring of 2013, Bill 36, the Local Food Act.”

I completely agree with this petition and will send it down with page Megan.

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

Mrs. Julia Munro: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario’s tradespeople are subject to stifling regulation and are compelled to pay membership fees to the unaccountable College of Trades; and

“Whereas these fees are a tax grab that drives down the wages of skilled tradespeople; and

“Whereas Ontario desperately needs a plan to solve our critical shortage of skilled tradespeople by encouraging our youth to enter the trades and attracting new tradespeople; and

“Whereas the latest policies from the ... Wynne government only aggravate the looming skilled trades shortage in Ontario;

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

“To immediately disband the College of Trades, cease imposing needless membership fees and enact policies to attract young Ontarians into skilled trade careers.”

As I am in agreement, I’ve affixed my signature—

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

RADIATION SAFETY

M^{me} France Gélinas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have this petition that comes to me from all over Ontario, and it reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

I fully support this petition, Mr. Speaker, will affix my name to it and ask Gabriel—

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

AIR QUALITY

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

“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 by the Ministry of the Environment and governing the installation of newer engines into old cars and trucks.”

I’m pleased to affix my signature and send it to the table with—

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

MINING INDUSTRY

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

“Whereas Ontario’s mineral wealth belongs to the people of Ontario;

“Whereas the people who collectively own these natural resources should stand to enjoy their benefits;

“Whereas Ontario’s Mining Act presently calls for resources mined in Ontario to be processed in Canada, yet allows cabinet to grant exceptions to the clause;

“Whereas these exceptions ensure residents of Ontario are told why our resources are being shipped elsewhere—information that can be used to better plan for infrastructure and job training needs to ensure a more competitive environment;

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

“To amend the Mining Act to ensure that people living in Ontario maximize the benefit of their natural resources.”

I fully agree, and I’d like to give it to page Benjamin.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Further petitions? The member from Durham.

AIR QUALITY

Mr. John O’Toole: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I’ve regained confidence in you.

“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 high manu-

facturing standards and 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%” today; and

“Whereas the environment minister has ignored advances in technology and introduced a new, computerized emissions test that is less reliable and prone to error; and

“Whereas the new Drive Clean test no longer assesses 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 with the new emissions testing method;”—this is interesting—

Interjection.

Mr. John O’Toole: “Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“That the Minister of the Environment”—who’s here today—“must take immediate steps to begin phasing out the Drive Clean program” completely.

I’m pleased to sign and support this on behalf of my constituents.

LONG-TERM CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that comes from the people of the northeast and a few of them from all over Ontario.

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

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

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

Therefore, they “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to expand the Ombudsman’s mandate to include Ontario’s long-term-care homes in order to protect our most vulnerable seniors.”

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

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 58(b), this House stands recessed until 4 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1331 to 1600.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

2013 ONTARIO BUDGET

BUDGET DE L'ONTARIO DE 2013

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by Ms. Wynne, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Sousa has moved, seconded by Ms. Wynne, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

I will ask for all of our indulgence and removal of our hands to seek the pages to distribute the budget.

Wow.

I must ask the obligatory question: Do all members have their copies of the budget? Agreed? Agreed.

Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, I rise to present the 2013 budget.

And it is, in every sense, Ontario's budget.

It is a budget that reflects the priorities of people across Ontario ...

That speaks to their values ...

And that includes the input from hundreds of thousands of people all across the province.

This budget also speaks to the priorities and values of our new government ...

And of Ontario's new Premier.

Representing the best interests of this province ...

Listening to people's ideas and acting on their concerns has characterized Premier Wynne's leadership.

This approach defines our government ...

This approach forms the basis for this budget ...

A budget that lays out our plan for a prosperous and fair Ontario.

Un budget qui présente notre plan pour un Ontario prospère et équitable.

A budget based on our government's firm belief that we must take a balanced approach ...

That we must build our economy and prepare our workforce for the future, by supporting one another today.

Mr. Speaker, before I lay out that plan, let me say this:

Standing in this Legislature is a true honour for me, particularly today.

And I am certain that every member of this House feels the same way ...

Privileged to serve ...

Humbled by the work ...

And despite the give and take of this place ... I know I speak for all my colleagues on both sides of this House when I say there is no greater honour than to serve the people of Ontario.

I thank them for this opportunity.

Looking at our province, we see that Ontario remains a great place to live and work ...

Thanks to the efforts of men and women across Ontario.

During the worldwide recession—the worst global economic downturn in 80 years—people worked hard ...

They worked hard to protect our schools and hospitals, protect and create more jobs, and to invest in modern infrastructure.

They worked hard to help Ontario recover ...

And we're recovering.

Today, Ontario enjoys strong economic fundamentals.

We have a highly educated and diverse workforce to support greater prosperity.

Our tax reforms have helped turn Ontario into one of the most investment-friendly places in North America to do business.

We must continue to build our strong, prosperous economy ...

While protecting the high-quality public services that people expect and deserve.

People also expect the cost of these services to be sustainable and affordable.

They don't want to see excessive debt levels ...

They want to see their government take a long-term view ...

That is why our government is absolutely committed to eliminating the deficit by 2017-18 ...

C'est pour cette raison que notre gouvernement est résolu à éliminer le déficit d'ici 2017-2018.

And then reducing the net debt-to-GDP ratio to the pre-recession level of 27%.

We're taking a balanced approach to eliminating the deficit.

We reject across-the-board cuts that threaten our priorities in health care, education and job creation.

Right now, we also cannot afford further reductions in Ontario's low corporate taxes that would make it harder to eliminate the deficit.

And above all, we reject uncontrolled growth in program spending ...

Because that would increase debt and interest costs that would take resources away from key priorities.

We will not shift the burden of debt to future generations, nor will we ignore the responsibilities we face today.

This allows us to make smart investments for Ontario's long-term prosperity, while remaining steadfast in our efforts to eliminate the deficit.

Mr. Speaker, job creation is an important measure of a healthy economy.

When an economy is growing steadily ...

Jobs are being created.

The government's role in job creation is to convene people ...

Educators, labour, the not-for-profit sector and business ...

To work together towards common goals.

To encourage the right environment for businesses and for people to succeed.

They, in turn, will take risks, make investments, create jobs and drive innovation.

This approach is helping Ontario's economic recovery.

Since the depths of the global recession, Ontario has created 400,000 net new jobs.

Our balanced approach to eliminating the deficit is working.

In fact, by beating our fiscal targets, we can continue to invest in the things that matter most to people every day.

En fait, en dépassant nos objectifs financiers, nous pouvons continuer d'investir dans les choses qui comptent le plus pour la population.

Ontario's deficit for 2012-13 is now estimated to be \$9.8 billion—a \$5-billion improvement compared with the 2012 budget forecast.

Some of this progress comes from being disciplined.

It also comes from a lot of hard work ...

Sixteen out of 25 ministries are delivering quality public services while spending less than they were allocated last year.

This is the fourth year in a row that Ontario has reported a lower deficit than forecast ...

The only government in Canada to achieve this level of success.

It also marks the second year in a row that the rate of growth in program spending is projected to be less than 1%.

1610

In the years to come, controlling spending growth will take the same, ongoing effort.

As a government, we acknowledge and face ...

Challenges that are under our control, like spending ...

And economic challenges that are not under our control, like changes in the global economy.

Forecasts for global economic growth have weakened.

European economies are in recession and growth of emerging markets and market economies has slowed.

Ontario still relies heavily on the U.S. economy as a major export market ...

And we're facing serious challenges when competing globally.

Advantages we had here in Ontario, not that long ago, have changed.

During the 1990s, for example, we enjoyed a low Canadian dollar ...

Cheap oil ...

And access to strong markets in the United States.

Today, the dollar is close to parity ...

The price of oil is high and U.S. economic growth remains modest.

In the face of new challenges we will find new advantages.

Our government's economic renewal plan for jobs will help Ontario face these challenges and stimulate growth.

So here's what we will do:

One: We will maintain Ontario's competitive business climate by keeping taxes at a low level.

We will extend—

Applause.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Yes.

We will extend the accelerated capital cost allowance for machinery and equipment—providing \$265 million in assistance to manufacturers over three years.

We will provide small businesses with greater relief from the employer health tax ...

By proposing to increase the amount of annual payroll that is exempt from the tax.

The cost of this tax break for small businesses would be paid for by eliminating the same exemption altogether for larger corporations.

Two: We will continue to make investments in modern infrastructure.

Because we know that growth in Ontario's economy is supported by the movement of goods and people.

That's why Ontario's budget provides more than \$35 billion in infrastructure investments over the next three years ...

Including a new, dedicated fund to help small, rural and northern municipalities address roads, bridges and other critical infrastructure.

The province will consult on the components of a permanent program for next year's budget.

For years, Ontario has been transferring two cents per litre of the gas tax to our municipal partners ...

To help with the expense of public transit.

These partners have asked us to make this funding permanent.

This budget proposes to do just that—to provide stability and certainty for transit solutions.

We must address gridlock as well.

Every minute a worker spends stuck in traffic is a minute lost in productivity.

Every idle truck on a highway is an opportunity for a competitor to find an advantage.

Facing this challenge requires sound public policy ...

And sufficient public investment.

That's why our government will consider a range of new revenue tools to support the expansion of transportation and public transit in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area.

We will take action following the release of the Metrolinx investment strategy ...

To implement revenue tools that will provide the means to ease gridlock.

This will prevent the addition of further pressure on our property taxes.

As an example of the change required, Mr. Speaker, we will turn select HOV lanes into HOT lanes.

Toll-free options would continue to exist on all the highways that have these lanes.

We will set out our plan and consult on the design before moving to introduce this measure.

Three: We will invest in the skills and education of our workforce, particularly when it comes to our young people.

Ontario's budget proposes a comprehensive Youth Jobs Strategy that invests \$295 million over two years.

This strategy would generate job opportunities for about 30,000 young people.

We will engage with youth and young professionals to ensure they get the right training ...

The right job opportunities and have the tools they need to succeed.

Four: We will strengthen the ability of Ontario's entrepreneurs to transform ideas into goods and services for global markets.

We will continue to invest in arts and culture, including \$45 million over three years to help support jobs in the music industry.

This fund will help the industry create jobs as Ontario becomes a leading place to record and perform.

Five: We will work with businesses to expand global market access for goods and services.

We must leverage our relationships around the globe to help Ontario businesses seek out new markets for new opportunities.

So we are working with the federal government to expand trade agreements and help exporters with over 60 trade missions to new markets over the next year.

And six: We will help to ensure that all Ontario communities and regional economies benefit from new opportunities.

The Aboriginal Loan Guarantee Program continues to support economic development, helping communities make investments to create jobs.

The measures outlined in Ontario's budget will help existing industries across all sectors expand ...

From automotive to agriculture.

The government will continue to assert Ontario's pride in manufacturing, financial services, tourism, forestry and natural resource development.

Ontario's agri-food industry is one of the biggest drivers of our economy, contributing \$34 billion to our GDP and supporting more than 700,000 jobs across the province.

The food processing sector alone boasts almost 3,000 manufacturing businesses, providing job opportunities across the province.

Ontario's budget will help these industries expand and enable new ideas to get off the ground.

Small business start-ups and social entrepreneurs will be given the tools they need to take their ideas from the drawing board to global markets.

Ontario's budget will make it easier for young people to find jobs ...

And allow people across this province to travel more quickly and more safely.

I have spoken about what we will do to help create a more prosperous Ontario.

Now, I will speak about what we will do to help build a more fair society.

These two issues are closely linked.

When our government speaks about a fair society, I want to be clear about what that means in the context of our economy.

It means ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to find a job ...

Because Ontario's economy is stronger when everyone has the opportunity to be gainfully employed ...

To participate in the life of their communities ...

And to contribute to the prosperity of our province.

A fair society also means access to important public services.

Ontario is transforming health care services so that more people will quickly receive the care they need, when they need it, where they need it.

In the 2012 budget, we committed to increasing investment in home and community care by an average of 4% per year.

Ontario's 2013 budget proposes that we go farther—it would add an additional 1% per year—for a total increase of over \$700 million by 2015-16 compared to 2012-13.

Across Ontario, people need help getting to their medical appointments ...

They rely on mental health and addiction services in their communities ...

And they have complex medical needs that require nursing visits in their homes.

Ontario's budget would help ensure people get the care they need in their communities and in their homes.

We are also dedicated to improving health services for small, rural and northern communities ...

For aboriginal people, seniors and people living with mental health and addiction challenges, through the Health Action Plan ...

Because we all deserve the same great care, no matter where we live.

1620

At the same time, our government has been making investments in young people ...

To ensure they are prepared for both the challenges and the opportunities ahead.

Ontario is teaching its young about teamwork and critical thinking ...

It is building a workforce that is creative and entrepreneurial.

This sort of support starts in full-day kindergarten ...

Through smaller class sizes in the early years ...

To improved graduation rates in high school ...

And through programs such as the 30% off Ontario tuition grant and the new tuition-fee framework.

The province must continue to provide world-class education, adding to the many opportunities we have created together.

Ontario is not well served when people face barriers to employment.

That's why Ontario's budget would see us reduce barriers to employment for people who receive social assistance.

I want to thank Frances Lankin and Munir Sheikh for their excellent advice and insight.

As a result of their work, our government proposes to create a \$200 monthly earnings exemption for people who receive support from Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program ...

Because people deserve to keep more of the money they earn through their hard work.

We are proposing to increase social assistance rates by 1% ...

And to improve benefit levels for singles without children as well.

This is the group of social assistance recipients that experiences the lowest incomes.

Finally, the budget would increase cash and other liquid-asset limits for people who receive Ontario Works so they have more financial security.

Mr. Speaker, these changes are far-reaching and fundamental.

Above all, they're fair.

Without this reform, some people risk falling farther and farther behind ...

While, at the same time, becoming less likely to seek work, because the current system takes back some of the gains of employment.

Ontario's budget would put an end to that.

We also recognize that high auto insurance rates are putting pressure on families.

The cost is hard on people's wallets but it also presents a drag on our economy.

We will move to remedy that by proposing an average 15% cut in auto insurance rates.

As well, in the 2011 budget, our government introduced the Ontario Trillium Benefit, to assist low- to moderate-income families.

In our consultations we heard that some would like to choose between monthly payments or an annual payment.

Mr. Speaker, Ontario's budget offers that choice.

A fair society also recognizes that improved economic opportunities must ensure aboriginal people can work and thrive.

A new fund will offer support for housing needs to all low-income people in First Nation communities ...

And we will be providing an additional \$5 million to the First Nation, Métis and Inuit education policy framework.

A fair society protects those who are vulnerable, regardless of their income.

The government remains committed to helping those with developmental disabilities.

We will invest in reducing wait-lists, helping families in urgent need.

A fair society provides justice for all.

That is why we are committing additional support to Legal Aid Ontario, which will help low-income families, victims of domestic violence and others.

Part of ensuring a fair society is the security and safety of our citizens.

We are indebted to the men and women of our police services, who have dedicated their lives to protecting our families and communities.

That's why we will continue supporting our police with permanent annual funding for the Provincial Anti-Violence Intervention Strategy.

Ontario will also continue uploading the cost of social services from municipalities ...

Because it's the right and fair thing to do.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, we must work with other provinces across Canada to secure fair transfer arrangements from the federal government.

Fiscal transfers that would ensure that the people of Ontario are getting their fair share.

Mr. Speaker, let me be clear: Our government believes eliminating the deficit is the single most important step we can take to grow the economy and create jobs.

Eliminating the deficit makes resources available for strategic investments that will boost economic growth that leads to job creation.

As a result of our focus to balance the budget, the deficit projection for 2013-14 is \$11.7 billion ...

An improvement of more than \$1 billion from what was projected in last year's budget.

This would be the fifth year in a row that Ontario's deficit projection would be lower than the original forecast.

Program spending in 2013-14 is being held to the same level as projected in the 2012 budget.

This shows our plan is working.

Yet, there is more to do.

I'm pleased to say Ontario is beating its fiscal targets, due in part to the transformation of how we deliver public services.

Over the last year, we began moving forward with about half of the 362 recommendations made by the Commission on the Reform of Ontario's Public Services.

This year, we will continue to move forward with a total of 60% of those recommendations.

We are also working to find savings in business support programs and refundable tax credits, as recommended by the Jobs and Prosperity Council.

The changes we put in place in 2009 have made Ontario's tax system very competitive.

Those changes will result in about \$8.5 billion in annual tax relief for businesses.

At the same time, the cost of Ontario's business tax credits is growing at a level that cannot be sustained.

So, we will receive advice within the next six months that will provide insight into the future of these programs ...

To ensure they are producing effective results that promote productivity and create jobs.

We are also working closely with the federal government to close tax loopholes and to combat the underground economy.

Taxpayers want a government that is accountable and delivering value.

These initiatives are part of the larger, ongoing transformation of delivering public services more effectively.

Mr. Speaker, we're focused on doing what is right ...
And fair ...

To ensure everyone is paying their fair share to protect public services and eliminate Ontario's deficit.

Mr. Speaker, Ontario has many strengths.

In fact, we have over 13 million of them.

Because Ontario's strength is its people.

Their diversity ...

Their skills and knowledge ...

And their hard work.

And that's why, in the face of so many global economic challenges, we continue to outperform so many parts of the world.

Because our people are working hard ...

And working together ...

To provide a great quality of life for their families ...

And to strengthen their communities.

Et les gens se serrent les coudes...

Pour offrir une belle qualité de vie à leurs familles...

Et renforcer leurs communautés.

As a government, we can do no less.

That's why, as we move through a sensitive economic recovery, we're taking a balanced approach to eliminate the deficit and make smart investments for long-term economic growth.

That's why we are committed to helping all the people of Ontario enjoy the same opportunities.

That's why we are dedicated to building an Ontario that is prosperous ...

And fair.

An Ontario that is as inclusive ...

Accepting ...

And open ...

As the people who call it home.

And, with their help, we've put forward a budget that speaks to their priorities ...

Their values.

The principles of this budget come from the people.

They have had a lot to say.

What they are telling us is that they want their government to move forward on their priorities ...

The budget also speaks to the priorities of all parties in this House ...

Because despite our differences, we are united in our wish to help this province.

Working together—and only working together—can we achieve those priorities.

Working together, we can deliver this budget for the people of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Ontario are proud.

Proud of the way they've worked together through the worst global recession in 80 years.

Proud of the way they've worked together to protect public education and health care ...

And proud of our Ontario ...

Where there is room for everyone.

Room for everyone to compete, do business and succeed.

Room to learn.

And, above all, room to help each other.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Simcoe–Grey.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the debate.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Wilson has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Debate adjourned.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We will move to introduction of bills. The Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the House to revert to introduction of bills.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Agreed? We will.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

PROSPEROUS AND FAIR ONTARIO ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2013

LOI DE 2013 POUR UN ONTARIO PROSPÈRE ET ÉQUITABLE (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Mr. Sousa moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 65, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various Acts / *Projet de loi 65, Loi visant à mettre en œuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.*

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 minister for a short statement.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I've spoken enough, Mr. Speaker. I have no statement at this time.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. Government House leader?

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

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

This House stands recessed until Monday at 10:30.

Hon. John Milloy: Adjourned.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Adjourned. Recessed, adjourned. Tomato, tomahto.

The House adjourned at 1634.

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	
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Cindy Forster, Lisa MacLeod
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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 Qadri
Jagmeet Singh
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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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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Ted Chudleigh, Cheri DiNovo
Ernie Hardeman, Helena Jaczek
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha
Jane McKenna
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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