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Monday 6 May 2013

Lundi 6 mai 2013

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 6 May 2013

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 6 mai 2013

The House met at 1030.

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

Prayers.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Hon. Michael Chan: Today the captain of the pages is Anjali Sharma. She lives in Markham–Unionville. I would like to welcome her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Jag Sharma, to the House today.

Hon. Reza Moridi: It's my pleasure to welcome representatives from the Hearing Foundation of Canada to Queen's Park: Dino Sophocleous, president; Gael Hannan, program specialist; and Janice Eales, manager of development and programs. Please join me in welcoming them to Queen's Park.

Mr. Rick Bartolucci: I know they're on their way in, but our page captain Megan Gauvreau wants to welcome her father, Sam Gauvreau—Sam was a page here 30 years ago; her mother, Mary Sabo; her sister, Colleen Gauvreau; her uncle, Paul Sabo, who's joining us—Paul has the distinction of being coached by me in basketball, and he almost made the pros; and cousin Lidija Rasa. They're all here to support Megan Gauvreau, who helped ensure that this set of pages set a new record when they delivered the budget.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Mr. Speaker, on a short point of order: It has to deal with the use of props in the Legislature. Shortly before I came into the Legislature today, a member of the opposition challenged the wearing of this particular tie, saying that it was a prop. It's a tie that some people mistake as an Ottawa Senators tie. I just want confirmation that it's appropriate for me to wear this tie which features some Roman centurions.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I can't quite tell if that's a point of order, a point of interest, a point of bragging or a unanimous consent to wear the tie. I'm not sure which one it is, so I'm just going to leave it alone.

Further introductions?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I'm pleased to let members of the assembly know the following people are here from the regional municipality of Niagara for Niagara Week: the regional chair, Gary Burroughs; Pelham's mayor, Dave Augustyn; Niagara Falls's mayor, Jim Diodati; Councillor David Barrick; Councillor Barbara Greenwood; Councillor Bruce Timms; the chief administrative officer, Mike Trojan; Ken Brothers; Debbie Elliot;

Patrick Robson; Diane Simsovic; and Matt Robinson. Welcome to the Legislature today.

Mr. Frank Klees: Speaker, I would like us all to extend a warm welcome to all of the Maple Leafs fans who are watching us today and who are celebrating the Leafs' victory and the predicted victory for tonight.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would ask Hansard to duplicate my answer to the member from Newmarket–Aurora, as I did to the Minister of Energy, which I'm now going to do to the member from Nepean–Carleton.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you, Speaker. It's a pleasure to be rising today after a blow-out game in which the Ottawa Senators defeated roundly the Montreal Canadiens last night. I echo my colleague from Ottawa Centre and Ottawa West–Nepean. We may not be united today on the floor of this House, but rinkside, we are united behind the next Stanley Cup champions, the Ottawa Senators.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I only promise to carry this on if this jocularity continues during question period. I'm not sure if I need to continue.

The Minister of the Environment, please.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to inform members of the Progressive Conservative caucus that they should be supporting their leader, who is a Boston Bruins fan. I'm not trying to detract from his support of the Boston Bruins.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Nepean–Carleton might want to know that I've been, since birth, a Montreal Canadiens fan, so I don't know if I can carry on with this.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: That explains it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I could be in deep trouble.

I do have some guests to invite us to welcome. We have with us in the Speaker's gallery today a delegation from the Education and Culture Committee from the Parliament of Finland. We are welcoming them here to learn about our education system.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is to the Premier. Premier, in Thursday's budget you put your foot on the accelerator of government spending and deeper debt

when you should have hit the brakes and headed in the other direction altogether. Let me put this into perspective: If that Liberal budget were to pass, that means a little girl born in the province of Ontario tomorrow will have \$20,000 of provincial debt on her back—the moment she comes into this beautiful world, Speaker, \$20,000 in provincial debt on her back because we couldn't make the decisions to live within our means today. By the way, Speaker, that's doubled under the Liberal government.

1040

Premier, don't you think it is morally wrong to slap \$20,000 on the back of a newborn child in this province simply to keep the Liberal Party in power?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: That little girl born today, when she turns four or maybe even three, if she's born late in the year, she'll be able to go to junior kindergarten full days, Mr. Speaker. That little girl, if she's born today, her family will have access to the best medical care in the world. That little girl, if she's born today, she'll be able to grow up into an excellent post-secondary education system that I hope, by the time she's there, will have a better connection with the workforce so she'll be able to find a job in this beautiful province of Ontario.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I can change channels, too, so let's just keep it down.

Supplementary, please.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I think the problem here is that the Liberal government is failing basic economic math here, Speaker: \$11 billion is the debt interest payment each and every year, \$11 billion that could go to build stronger universities and colleges; \$11 billion that could go into building subways and highways and opening up new jobs in our province.

Instead, you're spending \$11 billion to send to largely overseas lenders, Premier. Don't you think that that shows a government that's become morally bankrupt, when \$11 billion that could go to health, could go to education, could go to transportation, is actually going overseas to our lenders instead of helping that child grow into a province where she has good job opportunities and a healthy future? You can't build future prosperity on a foundation of debt. Doesn't the Liberal government understand that basic premise?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We have a plan to eliminate the deficit by 2017-18. I am very confident in the ability of the businesses in this province to work with us to create jobs. What this budget is about is creating the conditions to create jobs in the province, to work on the issues that affect people's everyday lives and to invest in the future, so that that child who is born today has all of the advantages that he or she deserves. That's what this budget is about.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to say to the party opposite that there are initiatives in this budget, like the acceleration of the capital cost allowance, that will create opportunities for business in this province. I would have

expected that the party opposite would have been supporting that.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: You know, Speaker, I think the Premier understands that the capital cost allowance acceleration is a federal initiative under Prime Minister Harper that you're simply emulating here.

Speaker, back to the Premier: You know, it's telling that within days of the most recent Liberal budget that increased spending and brought our debt hole even deeper, we saw two more—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, come to order.

Mr. Tim Hudak: —manufacturing plants close up. Waterloo lost a furniture company, 200 and some jobs now going to Michigan. Caterpillar has now closed down their second plant in the province of Ontario. I know, Premier, that you've dismissed the loss of manufacturing jobs as—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Cambridge, your leader is asking a question.

Mr. Tim Hudak: —but certainly in light of the latest two closures and the men and women who are now out of jobs in our province, doesn't this tell you that your budget and your plan are actually on the wrong track and we should go down a different direction altogether?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know it's always painful for families, for workers, when businesses leave, when jobs are lost. But the reality is, we've regained more than 400,000 jobs since the economic downturn.

It seems to me that it is even more imperative that we have a plan in place—and the member opposite talks about the capital cost allowance. If this budget doesn't pass, our part of that equation will not be in place, and it's very important for businesses. It's the number one ask of businesses in the province, particularly manufacturing.

I would suggest that if the Leader of the Opposition is interested in economic growth and stability and job creation, he would read our budget and he would support it.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Premier, Speaker: Premier, I think we'll respectfully disagree. When I talk to business owners, managers and workers, the number one advice I get from them is that it's time to change the government in this province and it's time to go down a very different path in Ontario.

Back to my illustration on the fact that your Liberal spending budget will put \$20,000 on the back of a newborn child in the province—by the way, that has doubled under the Liberal time in office; or nearly doubled, to be perfectly accurate about it. But, Premier, I think you understand also that people don't lend us that

money for free. They don't simply hand it over; we need to pay it back, plus interest. That means that our overseas lenders are using that money, the billions of dollars, to invest in their own subways, to invest in their own highways, to invest in their own post-secondary education. So when that little girl grows up, she's going to have a tougher time getting a job because those jobs will go somewhere else.

Don't you understand what's at risk, Premier? When you think about the impact, the morally bankrupt approach of that much debt today, and then taking away future job opportunities, don't you think it's time to take a very different approach in our province: to focus on jobs and make government spend within its means?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I really believe that it's not an either/or proposition. For the fourth year in a row, we've beaten our fiscal targets. We're the only government in Canada to have done so. We are on track to do that again for a fifth year and we're on track to eliminate the deficit by 2017-18. That's very important to us and supporting business—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Northumberland, come to order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: But if the Leader of the Opposition had his way, he would park all of the service enhancement, he would park the investments in the future for that young child, the baby who's either born today or the young child who is starting school today—and I don't believe we can do that. I believe that simultaneously we have to continue to be fiscally responsible, we have to stay on track to eliminate the deficit and we have to make sure that we continue our services, our education, our health care, our investments in infrastructure, because those are what guarantee that the future will be bright for that baby who's born today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: The Premier says that it's not an either/or proposition. I obviously disagree. It's either further decline or moving our province forward again. It's either staying deep in debt or actually building future prosperity for the great province of Ontario. It's either embracing, as the Liberals seem to do, that we're a have-not province with hands out for payments or actually saying that our great province of Ontario can actually lead again—the best in jobs, the best for business—and in so doing, the support we could have for important public services.

Premier, the choice is very clear. You say on page 109 of your budget that you're actually going to dig a deeper deficit. I'm incredulous that at a time that we're so deep in debt, you're actually going to increase the size of the deficit, put us deeper into debt. You are condemning that child born into the world tomorrow to a less prosperous province of Ontario than we want to see. We want to see that Ontario recaptured again, that leads this great country of Canada. Premier, why don't you?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I have huge confidence in this province, and the reason I do is because of our well-

educated workforce, because of the excellent health care and education systems that we support and because of our commitment to investing in infrastructure, creating jobs.

What the Leader of the Opposition does not outline is what the impact of the cuts that he would make would be. That would mean that we would be taking teachers out of the classroom, we would be reducing the support to people who are in need of health care, we would not be able to continue to invest in home care, and we would not be able to build the roads and bridges and make sure that the infrastructure in northern and rural Ontario is repaired and built as it needs to be. That is what is at risk if the Leader of the Opposition has his way. We're not going down that road.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Clearly this budget was nothing more than a blatant attempt to buy the support of the NDP. You chose to spend about a billion dollars to close gas plants in Mississauga and Oakville to save political hides of Liberal members in those areas, and now you're going to use, ironically, another billion dollars to try to buy support from the NDP.

I ask you again to think about that newborn child in our province tomorrow, whether she's born at Sunnybrook or in Niagara. We owe it to that child to make sure that we don't become the Greece of Canada. We don't want to become the California of this great country of Canada. We want to see an Ontario that's strong, prosperous and proud.

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Premier, I think you know this: that any government that spends beyond its means year after year after year is—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Answer.

Mr. Tim Hudak: —to decline. We want to surge ahead to a more prosperous, stronger province of Ontario, to spend within our means and bring jobs back to our great province. Premier, won't you do the same?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: In our budget, we're proposing a Youth Jobs Strategy, Mr. Speaker. What we believe is that it is really important that we put in place the supports for young people. We know that the youth unemployment rate is unacceptably high at 16.5%. It's unacceptable. We need to do something about that. That's the plan that we've put in our budget.

There are seniors who are waiting for home care. We have put in our plan money to address that need.

Those are issues that affect people every single day. They're not NDP issues, they're not Conservative issues, they're not Liberal issues. They are the issues that are confronting the people of this province. That's what this budget speaks to.

I really believe that that baby born today needs to be part of a family and part of a society that has opportunity. That's what this budget is about.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. As the Premier knows, her government signed an agreement with Ottawa to create a new tax loophole, starting in 2015, which will allow Ontario's largest corporations to write off their HST on entertainment and other expenses. Now, according to budget estimates at the time, this is going to cost Ontario about \$1.3 billion a year.

Last week, in advance of the budget, Ontario's Minister of Finance wrote to his federal counterpart in the hopes of delaying this plan until the budget is balanced. My question to the Premier: Is the Premier aware of any response yet?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm not aware of a response. As the leader of the third party said, the Minister of Finance has written to his federal counterpart, and we will continue to work with the federal government. The reality is that they collect 75% of Ontario taxes, and so we have to work with them.

But I think it's very important to reiterate what the Minister of Finance has said many times: This is not a loophole. It's not a tax break, it's not a tax giveaway and it's not new. This is something that has been on the books and has been known about. It wouldn't save \$1.3 billion, as the leader of the third party suggests.

I think what we're dealing with today is the reality that there is a budget that has been read in this House. There is a budget that now is on the table. I believe that it is time for all of the parties in this House to look at that budget and make a decision on whether they're going to support the budget or not.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: On Thursday, while many of us were in budget lock-up, Jim Flaherty, the federal Minister of Finance, was asked about the letter in the House of Commons. He said, "There is a long-standing agreement between the government of Ontario and the government of Canada on this issue. We are not going to abrogate that agreement...." Does this come as a surprise to the Premier, Speaker?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As I said, we have been in contact with the federal government, and we will have that conversation.

But I really believe that we should talk about what is in the budget so that we can get some kind of read on whether the third party is interested in having that discussion and coming to a decision about what they're going to do.

This budget is about creating jobs. It's about helping people in their everyday lives. It's about every person in every region of the province having the supports that they need while we stay on track to eliminate the deficit by 2017-18.

This budget reflects the needs of the people in the province. We have connected with over 600,000 people at jobs round tables, in face-to-face town halls and in

tele-town halls. I really hope that the leader of the third party is going to work with us and get this budget passed.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: In the budget lock-up, officials from the Ministry of Finance indicated that the request would not come as any surprise to the federal government. They knew that they'd be asked particularly about this corporate tax loophole. So I ask the Premier what the federal government said when they were told that this letter would be coming.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I don't know what they said, but I think it's a good thing that they knew that the ask was coming, because they know it's of concern to us, and we will be working with them.

But the reality is that there is another conversation that we need to be having, and that is about what is at risk if this budget does not pass. We need to understand that if this budget doesn't pass, then the enhancement to the Ontario child benefit will not go ahead; that the investment in a jobs strategy for youth will not go forward; that the investment in enhanced home care and making sure that home care gets to people when they need it will not go forward; that the investment in infrastructure in northern and rural Ontario—the roads and bridges fund—that will not go forward. All of that is at stake.

I do not believe the people of Ontario want an election at this point. I believe that they want to see these initiatives go forward. That can only happen if the support of this House will allow us to get this budget passed.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Ms. Andrea Horwath: To the Premier, Speaker: Unfortunately, this is exactly the sort of move that's making people very cynical about government, particularly this government. The government says it would be unfair to open this new corporate tax loophole while we're trying to balance the books—that's what the letter said. But instead of working hard to get that job done, the minister wrote a hasty last-minute letter the day before the budget was released. There was no mention of closing that \$1.3-billion loophole anywhere in the budget speech or the budget document.

Does the Premier understand that people want to see real results in this budget, not just empty promises that leave the same old status quo in place in this province?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: This is not a loophole. It's not a tax break. It's not new, and we're working with the federal government to address it. But, Mr. Speaker, there is a large range of initiatives in this budget that speak to the needs of the people in the province, speak to the issues that I have heard, that my colleagues across government have heard about the need for jobs, particularly youth. The need for opportunities for youth to find internships and placements—that's what our youth strategy is about; the need for young people who want to start new jobs to have access to some capital and to have access to some advice around entrepreneurship and busi-

ness plans. Those kind of supports are part of our youth employment strategy, and I hope that the leader of the third party will be able to support that.

I believe that this is a time for decisiveness. There has been a lot of conversation, and we all know I believe in conversation, but now is the time to decide.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, I've been hearing from a lot of Ontarians since this budget was tabled last week. Many people saw that that budget reflected New Democrat proposals to take a balanced approach to balancing the budget and to make life more fair for people. But they also see a government that constantly makes promises that they don't intend on keeping. Does the Premier understand why this kind of behaviour makes people cynical about politics?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I've been part of a government that said we were going to bring in full-day kindergarten. We're doing that. I'm part of a government that said that we were going to invest in transit in the GTHA and beyond. We've done that, Mr. Speaker—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek will withdraw.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm sorry. Now that I remembered what I'm supposed to do, would you please return to your seat to withdraw?

Mr. Paul Miller: I withdraw, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Speaker, I'm part of a government that said we were going to reduce wait times in this province. We went from last to first in terms of wait times in our health care system.

We have delivered on the issues that we said we were going to work on and we will continue to do that if we can get this budget passed.

Interjections.

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

Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, people want to trust their government. We put forward some ideas to ensure that the budget would deliver for people and be accountable to them. But whether it's a failure to include a guarantee for home care wait times or any timelines at all to ensure that auto insurance premiums will actually come down in this province, whether it's hundreds of millions of dollars wasted on cancelled private power deals, on top of which we've seen hundreds of millions diverted to well-connected insiders, or the lack of any serious effort whatsoever to close the \$1.3-billion corporate tax loophole, people fear that they're going to be getting more of the same. Is the government ready to listen to some new ideas to make this budget more accountable and genuinely work for the people of this province?

1100

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm sorry; there has been ample opportunity for the people of the province and for the third party to give their input. To say at this point that

we have not listened borders on the ludicrous. If you look at our budget, you will see that we have addressed the issues that the NDP raised, largely because they were issues that we were concerned about too. That's a good thing; I've said that there was common ground, and there's common ground with the party opposite as well.

But to suggest now that we start all over again, that we start from scratch and build a new budget—it's just not going to happen. We have presented a budget. It is a responsible budget, it is an even-handed budget and it is a budget that is in the best interests of the people of this province. I hope that the third party will support us and we can get that budget passed.

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister of community services, come to order.

New question.

POWER PLANTS

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is to the Premier. Premier, we've heard the story about the power plant documents. Can you assure us that there are no other cabinet documents that you've signed without reading or that you don't understand?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: It's always amusing to hear the Progressive Conservative Party ask about power plant documents. In an effort to be as transparent as possible, the Premier asked government members to put forward a motion which would have produced all documents related to the power plant over a very long period from a variety of ministries and agencies, the Premier's office and the Cabinet Office, covering exactly what she spoke of.

To the astonishment of everyone on this side of the House, the members of the Progressive Conservative Party and New Democratic Party voted against it. But you know, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to transparency, I guess the big question we have for them is, when are Progressive Conservative candidates going to appear in front of the committee? We have sent out numerous invitations, and yet they refuse to come forward.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mrs. Christine Elliott: I'd like to readdress this to the Premier, because it's really a pretty simple question. You said last week that you'd signed a cabinet document without reading it, so I'll ask you again, what other cabinet documents are out there that you've signed without reading?

Hon. John Milloy: Again, the Premier was in front of the committee for, I believe it was, 90 minutes and answered a great number of questions related to documents related to the situation, but do you know what's very in-

teresting, Mr. Speaker? Do you know who we haven't heard from? The Leader of the Opposition.

Let me go through the chronology, Mr. Speaker. After they stood up and refused to apologize and threw out terms like “construction snitch” and “make sure the Premier doesn't play calendar,” their Leader of the Opposition—talk about a double standard—was asked to come on April 30. All of a sudden, he was too busy. He wrote a letter that said maybe May 7 or the 14th, so we asked him for May 7, and do you know what, Speaker? He's too busy. Maybe May 14; who knows? When are we going to see the Leader of the Opposition, who appeared in his own YouTube video to talk about the cancellation of the plants, come before the committee? When are we going to see—

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader and the member from Simcoe–Grey, come to order. New question, please.

HOME CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. Ontariens want to know that home care will be available when it is needed. They are looking for a guarantee that no one, no matter where they live in Ontario, will be forced to wait longer than five days, and they want the system to be funded responsibly, not at the expense of other health care services. Can the minister explain why her government is refusing to take these logical steps?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Quite the contrary: This budget is great for people who are advocating for more care for people in their own homes. In fact, we've had to make some difficult decisions along the way to get to the point where we can, in fact, invest more in the community sector.

Speaker, we estimate that 46,000 more people will have access to home care this year alone, thanks to this budget. We have been shifting. We are providing more care at home. It's where people want to be cared for. If they're ready to go home from hospital, we need to be there in their own home.

This is a really great budget for people who have been advocating for more home care.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: New Democrats' plan for home care would eliminate the wait-list for care, guarantee services for everyone within five days and fund these changes through savings, like a hard cap on CEO salaries. But the plan presented by this government not only leaves Ontarians without guarantees, it cuts hospital services in order to fund home care. Can the minister explain why her government refuses to introduce the

cost-saving proposal and instead cuts hospital care to fund home care?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: What's important to me is that patients are getting the care that they need. If we can care for patients at home instead of in hospital—they're getting higher-quality care at home; it's where they want to be—then we have to be prepared to make the tough decisions to serve more people where they want to be cared for: at home.

That's what we're doing, and it hasn't been easy. You'll remember that we've had some difficult challenges to get to the point where we're able to make this investment. When we took on the price of generic drugs, I'm not sure I remember the opposition standing with us. When we had to have that difficult conversation with Ontario's doctors to hold that envelope steady, I don't remember opposition standing with us, supporting that decision.

It's because of changes like that that we have been able to really invest where patients need that investment, and that is in the home care sector and community care sector.

HOME CARE

Mrs. Laura Albanese: My question is also for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. The single most important thing to seniors in my riding of York South–Weston, and I believe all across Ontario, is their health and well-being. They want to know that they can access hospital care when they need it, drug prescriptions when they need them and home care when they need it. It is our responsibility to provide that balance.

Most seniors wish to remain in their homes as long as possible but sometimes need some extra help in order to do so. Can the minister please tell us what we are doing as a government to ensure that people who need care at home and in their community are able to access it?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I thank the member from York South–Weston for being a tireless advocate for providing better care for people in their own home.

We know that if we can deliver care at home, that's better for patients and it's better for our health care system. So whether people need help getting to the appointments—

Interjection.

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: —if they need resources for community mental health and addictions care—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, don't help him.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: —whether they need PSWs or nurses to come to their home, our commitment is very strong: Health care starts at home.

Our commitment in this budget will strengthen community. We'll be increasing funding by \$260 million,

beginning this year. That's growing to \$700 million if this budget passes.

This is a very important initiative in our health care system. I really do hope that members from all sides will understand how important this is to seniors in this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Laura Albanese: Thank you to the minister. Care at home and in our community does make a difference, sometimes a very big difference, in the lives of our seniors. My constituents are concerned about wait times for home care services. It's important that they get the services when they need them. Can the minister please tell us a little more about how long seniors have to wait, and how will the government be able to increase support to community health care?

1110

Interjections.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The members who are heckling across the way might recall that the ask was for \$30 million. We're putting in \$185 million, Speaker—six times the commitment when it comes to dollars. These new investments will allow us to set the target of a five-day wait for people with complex conditions who need home care from a nurse or personal support worker.

We are demonstrating that we are standing with patients. We are standing with people who are asking for care to be delivered in their home. We have a five-day target for people, no matter where in the province they live.

Together, we can get this done. It's the right thing for the people of this province. We all benefit when people get the care they need in the right place.

POWER PLANTS

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question this morning is for the Premier. Premier, last week at the justice committee, we learned the gas plant scandal leads all the way to your office. You outlined eight cabinet interactions you had regarding the Oakville and Mississauga gas plant cancellations. You admitted that you personally signed off on one of the side deals that led to the \$275-million Mississauga cost, and you personally signed off on the arbitration agreement for Oakville in July 2011. You knew, Premier. Yet despite our questioning, you refused to tell us when you knew the tab for Oakville was more than \$40 million. Premier, is the reason for that because that would prove that you and your entire cabinet would be held in contempt?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, the Premier had, I believe, 90 minutes in front of the committee, and I think the most important thing to talk about when it comes to Oakville is the fact that she personally asked the Auditor General to look into it.

Let's go back to the arrogance of the Conservatives. The member from Leeds–Grenville stood and said to the

Premier—listen to this: “Next Tuesday you've been invited to appear before the justice committee. Will you confirm to the House today that you will order and instruct your staff to not play calendar or scheduling games?”

Now, Mr. Speaker, who's playing calendar and schedule games? On April 30, we requested the Leader of the Opposition to appear in front of the committee to talk about his costing, his estimates. He refused. On May 7, we asked him to appear in front of the committee. He had even written a letter saying that he was available. He has refused.

When are we going to (a) get an apology for the way in which they addressed the Premier, and (b) see the Leader of the Opposition—

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Still no answer from the Premier on when. No answer equals contempt coming up; Speaker, I know that's a fact.

Premier, Ontarians are fed up with the obstruction and obfuscation we've seen from you, putting Liberal interests ahead of the people.

We've had Liberal witness after witness appear before the committee and continue to sidestep the truth. We've heard from a Liberal staffer that he illegally deleted emails. Today we've learned from an FOI request that the emails of the former chief of staff, principal secretary and deputy director of policy conveniently no longer exist and cannot be recovered from the tapes.

Premier, how can you condone this contemptuous behaviour of your government? Will you bring the confidence motion to the floor of this House for a vote?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. I ran through my Rolodex in my thesaurus head here, and I did know that the member said something that was unparliamentary. Could you withdraw, please?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I withdraw.

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

Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I have a handy timeline here.

April 16: We requested four opposition candidates to testify, including PC candidate Geoff Janoscik, of robocall fame, and Zoran Churchin, the Mississauga East–Cooksville PC candidate. They all declined.

April 30: The Leader of the Opposition is asked to testify. He declines. Backup witnesses Janoscik and Churchin also decline. We then invited PC candidate Mary Anne De Monte-Whelan. She accepts, but a few hours before her testimony, she declines.

May 2: Janoscik, Churchin and De Monte-Whelan are called to testify. Janoscik tells the Clerk of the committee to “stop calling” him, and the other two do not respond.

Then, May 7: Once again—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke will come to order. Thank you.

Just wrap up.

Hon. John Milloy: May 7, we asked the Leader of the Opposition to appear before the committee, something he has indicated in writing—and yet again, he—

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

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question is to the Premier. In 2010, this government slashed accident benefits to the tune of 70% in major areas in the GTA. The slashing of our benefits resulted in—I repeat—a 70% reduction in payouts in major areas in the GTA. Yet in three years, despite this reduction in payouts, hard-pressed drivers have yet to see a penny of those savings trickle down to them in the form of lower premiums. I ask this government, how long do they think people should wait for their premiums to actually go down?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I guess the easy answer to that is, “Support the budget,” because the moment you do that, that’s as soon as possible that we can start getting FSCO to get some teeth, to provide the oversight necessary to ensure that the costs that are saved in those claims can be translated into premium reductions.

We’re on the same page on that. We want to see that happen as soon as possible. We know we’ve been able to translate a portion of that already. We need to do more. We need your support to make it happen.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: The problem is that the budget bill does not include any timeline whatsoever for these reductions, so the 15% reduction in premiums could take two years, could take three years, could take five years. Nobody knows how long it will take.

After three years of waiting, after seeing the benefits slashed that consumers receive, how long does this government think people should wait to see the reductions come through in the form of lower premiums? I ask again, how long does this government expect consumers to wait to see a 15% reduction in auto insurance premiums?

Hon. Charles Sousa: I mean, the member opposite recognized the complexity of the situation. It’s why he put in his private member’s bill that it should be a gradual reduction, knowing that we need to take this in a very concerted effort.

We have to get at the root causes. We’re taking steps necessary—a couple of years ago—to go against the anti-fraud initiatives. We’re working now with the industry to ensure that we pass on those savings to the drivers, to the premium holders, to the consumers.

This is for the benefit of nine million drivers across Ontario. We recognize the importance of doing this. We recognize the importance of doing this quickly. It’s one of the reasons that in this bill we’re asking FSCO to reduce the ROE by 25%. That’s why we’re asking FSCO to provide the oversight necessary to work with the

industry to pass along those savings and forcing them to do so. It is why the industry is prepared to work with us, because together we’re going to reduce the costs of claims well beyond that which is existing in other parts of Canada.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: My question is to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment. Every day, I speak with young people living in my riding of Scarborough–Rouge River. They tell me about the number of challenges they face to entering the workforce and embarking on a career. These young people want to find meaningful employment that will take advantage of their skills, talents and knowledge.

We all know that the unemployment rate among young people is disproportionately high, and I’m concerned about the impact this could have on the long-term strength and sustainability of our workforce here in Toronto and in Ontario.

For our province to be competitive and for our economy to grow, we need to ensure that young people have opportunities to access good, meaningful jobs. Can the minister please explain the steps this government is taking to help our young people find good jobs and contribute to our economy and our communities?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I want to thank the member from Scarborough–Rouge River for his advocacy on behalf of young people, not just in his riding but right across this province.

I’m pleased to say that in Ontario’s 2013 budget, this government is making an unprecedented investment in our young people. We’re investing in programs that will help them find jobs and put their considerable skills and talents to work, to help grow Ontario’s economy not just now but for decades to come.

I want to thank the NDP for working with us—in fact, for bringing this issue to the fore early on. I have no doubt, as we find the exact way to make this program work, that we’ll continue to work together on this important issue.

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With an investment in our budget of \$295 million, our government will work with businesses to create 30,000 new jobs for young people in this province. I look forward to the member’s supplementary so I can provide more details about this important initiative.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Bas Balkissoon: It is good to know that this government is committed to giving young people the boost they need to succeed. The initiatives that the minister mentioned to create opportunities are especially good for young people in Scarborough–Rouge River and across the province who are keen about finding meaningful employment.

Speaker, we know that the economy is changing, and today, more than ever before, young people need skills in entrepreneurship to allow them to start their own busi-

nesses. In my riding, I hear great and innovative ideas from youth who are ready to put their ideas into action and become job creators themselves.

Can the minister explain what this government is doing to expand opportunities to young people so they can succeed as entrepreneurs and contribute to the growth of Ontario's economy?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Our member is absolutely right: Our young people have the skills and creativity to become job creators themselves and to help to grow our economy and ensure that we stay competitive through the 21st century. As announced in the budget, as part of our Youth Jobs Strategy, we propose to create a \$195-million youth employment fund, which is a fund that's going to expand job opportunities for youth.

But we're going further. We propose to also create a youth entrepreneurship fund, valued at \$45 million over two years, that will support young entrepreneurs through mentorship, start-up capital and outreach. And we're going even further: We're proposing to create a \$30-million youth innovation fund to help put new innovation research into action, turning ideas into job creation.

Finally, there is a business-labour connectivity and training fund to help make connections and bridge those skills gaps so all our young people can have access to prosperity.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is to the Premier. You only needed to go to a picnic, a walkathon, a bake sale or a ribbon-cutting this weekend to know that your government is in big trouble. No one believes your government didn't know everything about the gas plant cancellations and no one believes your government has any principles left after delivering a made-by-the-NDP budget.

You signed the memorandum to cabinet on the cancelled Oakville gas plant, which either means you have not been telling the whole story or your competency is in question. Now that you have demonstrated your disregard for the public, proven that you're not up to the job and lost the confidence of the people of this province, will you put our PC confidence motion to a vote?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I would suggest that this question is actually even less relevant today than it was last week, because now the budget is before us, and that budget is a confidence motion by definition.

I really believe that the member opposite will have an opportunity to weigh in on her opinions around youth unemployment, more home care for the seniors and the people with disabilities in her riding, and infrastructure investments. She will have an opportunity to weigh in on all of those initiatives when she votes for the budget motion. I look forward to her support.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Big news flash: I won't be supporting that budget, haven't in my career, and I'll never

support that government after the devastation that they have put across the manufacturing sector in this province.

But I just want to say to this Premier, every game that she plays, every story that she stretches, every concession that she gives to the New Democrats to stay in power delegitimizes her in the eyes of everyday Ontarians. No one trusts you anymore. You said that the cancelled Oakville plant only cost \$40 million. That was off by 775%. You said that you didn't know the true cost, but David Lindsay, David Livingston, Shelly Jamieson, JoAnne Butler and Colin Andersen all say that's not true.

When will you either call our confidence motion to the floor of this assembly or go directly to the polls? Because the people of this province want to have their say on you.

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: I think we have all been impressed with the openness of the Premier. When it comes to the Oakville plant, the Premier personally asked the Auditor General to come forward with a figure. The simple fact of the matter is, we learned at committee last week that there are now, I believe, four estimates for the Oakville plant and that we need the level of certainty that the Auditor General can bring forward.

We've heard of the move by the Premier to have Liberal members of the committee move a motion to make all documents available. She herself appeared when requested in front of the committee. In fact, the former Premier, the member from Ottawa South, will be appearing tomorrow.

But the real question is, where is the openness on the Progressive Conservative side? Where is the Leader of the Opposition when he's requested over and over and over again to appear? Where are the PC candidates who are refusing to appear? Because we want to hear about their analysis and their costing as they headed into the last election.

CASINOS

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Premier. Even the bookies in Toronto can't peg the odds on whether Toronto will hit the jackpot for hosting a casino. The Premier stood in this House and said—and I quote her—“There is no special deal for any municipality in the province.” But media reports on the weekend suggest that the OLG is anteing up \$100 million for a downtown site. My question, is somebody bluffing or is this Liberal government laying a huge side bet on a Toronto casino?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Thank you for the question. I'll reiterate again that there is no special deal for Toronto. Everyone in the province, every municipality, every region, everywhere that we're dealing with regards to the OLG transformation to try to bring in another billion

dollars more to build hospitals and to build schools and to help with our infrastructure—those transformational changes will continue, but not at the expense of any municipality. There is no special deal. We haven't landed on a formula as yet, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Prue: As Kenny Rogers once sang, “You got to know when to hold ’em, know when to fold ’em; know when to walk away, know when to run.”

The OLG doesn't seem to be folding. They're not walking away, and they're not running. So it looks like they're at the table and getting set to raise the stakes for a Toronto casino to \$100 million. Is the Premier, is the finance minister ready to go all in now, even though the Premier said there would be no special deal for Toronto?

Hon. Charles Sousa: The member opposite can play all he wants, but we're not playing a game here. This is serious business. We recognize the importance this has for the province of Ontario; we recognize the importance this has for the people of Ontario. It's incumbent upon us to ensure that whatever we do is consistent, fair and transparent and the same right across the province. That's what we're going to be doing. What you're reading and what you're saying is speculation. I wouldn't bet on that.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Mr. Grant Crack: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels.

I know that our government has made significant investments in emergency management, and we are committed to a safe Ontario for everyone.

Today marks the kickoff of Emergency Preparedness Week. This particular week gives us the opportunity to take the time and ensure that we are able to deal with an emergency, if and when one happens.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please tell us what the government is doing to increase Ontarians' awareness and ability to face emergencies?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: First of all, let me say thank you to the good member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell and my parliamentary assistant.

Last year, we successfully responded to 24 declared emergencies. Through Emergency Management Ontario, we coordinated between provincial and federal ministries to provide the most efficient assistance to municipalities and First Nations communities that needed our help.

Municipalities also play a very important role. They set their emergency plan, and I encourage everyone to know about their community safety procedures.

Finally, I always say that emergency preparedness is not just the responsibility of your government; it's everyone's responsibility. So make sure that you have a plan. Make sure that you know about the plan of your municipality and especially have a survival kit ready.

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The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Grant Crack: Merci, madame la Ministre, pour votre réponse en détail.

I'm glad to hear that our government is actively promoting emergency preparedness by working collaboratively with municipal and federal governments.

Speaker, I've heard that there will be a focus on seniors this year for Emergency Preparedness Week, and it's very important that seniors are aware of potential dangers and know what they can do to be prepared in the event of an emergency. Seniors are sometimes the most vulnerable, and everyone needs to ensure their safety. Can the minister please tell us what we're doing to make sure that in the case of an emergency situation, our seniors have the tools and the knowledge to be safe?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Last Friday, I was in my riding at the Centre Pauline-Charron with the minister responsible for seniors, and I announced that this year we want to focus on seniors because they can be especially vulnerable during an emergency.

Mr. Speaker, EMO, in collaboration with the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat, has developed a new emergency preparedness guide for seniors. This guide shows how easy it is to be prepared for different emergencies and outlines the circumstances that seniors should consider when they plan for an emergency.

I also want to encourage everyone to take part in this week and help build a safer community for all Ontarians.

It was very interesting, because the head of the franco-phone seniors in Ontario was there, and she told us that they have to be ready, but they also are grandparents—often, they babysit their grandson or granddaughter—and they need to be ready for them too. So it was a good message.

POWER PLANTS

Mr. Rob Leone: My question is to the Premier. Premier, I have a simple question for you based on the findings of the justice committee. With \$600 million in waste, a resignation of a minister and a former Premier, the failure to produce documents on three separate occasions and your refusal to say exactly how much the Oakville and Mississauga cancellation costs are, is there any reason why this Legislature should not find your government in contempt?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, it is a case where they can't take yes for an answer. The Oakville situation is one that is a concern to the justice committee. It's a concern to this government, and when the Premier assumed office, one of her first actions was to ask the Auditor General, an officer of this House, to look into it. She made herself available for 90 minutes in front of the committee, and the former Premier, the member from Ottawa South, is going tomorrow.

But I ask the member again, and perhaps he can address this in his supplementary, what are the Conservatives trying to hide? Why will the Leader of the Oppos-

ition not appear in front of the committee? Why will Progressive Conservative candidates who sent out thousands of pamphlets talking about how they were in favour of the cancellation of the plants, who had robo-calls, who appeared in YouTube videos with the Leader of the Opposition, who sent out tweets—why will they not appear in front of the committee and tell their side of the story?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Rob Leone: I think that the government House leader just said yes, that his government is in contempt of this Legislature. I can't believe it. But I'll ask the Premier once again.

Your numbers are wrong. You botched document dumps, and you haven't been forthright about what you knew and when. The people of Ontario have lost confidence in your government. We on this side have lost confidence in your government. The only people who seem to have confidence in your government are you and your government and half of the NDP caucus.

When will the Premier admit that her government botched this file and say "I am sorry" to the people of Ontario? Regret isn't enough; Ontarians demand an apology. Premier, will you look into the camera—you can choose the one over my right shoulder, but I think you might like the one over my left—and tell the people that you are sorry for what you've done to this province?

Interjections.

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

Hon. John Milloy: Let's review: The Premier assumed office, and she asked the Auditor General to look into the Oakville situation. She went to the opposition and offered a select committee. The opposition said no; they'd rather have a witch hunt against a former member of this Legislature who's now in private life. She offered to broaden the terms of reference of the committee, and it took them a week and a half to finally get back to us.

One of the first actions of the committee was for Liberal members, at the advice of the Premier, to go forward and ask for a complete look through government agencies and ministries to deliver documents. And you know what happened, Mr. Speaker? The official opposition voted against it.

The Premier made herself available for 90 minutes to answer all questions, as did the member from Ottawa South—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Oh, boy, I wish I knew who said that. If the member is honourable, stand up and withdraw anyway.

Go ahead.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, all we are asking is the same level of co-operation from the Progressive Conservative Party: that they will make their candidates available, that they will make the Leader of the Opposition available, to talk about their support for the cancellation of the gas plants in the last election.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Residents in London are deeply concerned about the cuts they are seeing in our local hospitals. London Health Sciences is eliminating 60 positions, as is St. Joe's health care. The one-of-a-kind rehabilitation pool at St. Joseph's is closing, and the hospital is warning of longer patient wait times for MRIs, PET scans and CT scans. Can the minister explain why her government is cutting care?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Well, Speaker, quite the contrary, and it's disappointing that the member from London-Fanshawe is not paying attention to the transformation that is under way in health care in London and across the province.

We are reducing ALC rates dramatically in London, because we are providing more care at home. If we can provide—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Kitchener-Waterloo and the member from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek, come to order.

Carry on.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: What matters to me is that patients are getting the care they need, and if we can provide that care in their own home, where they want to be, then that is what I want to be doing. That's where I want to be investing.

If we can provide supportive housing, if we can provide day programs for people with Alzheimer's so they don't have to go into long-term care before they really need to, those are the investments that we must make to transform our health care system.

If you value universal health care—and I know we sure do value universal health care—then you'd support this—

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I think I should have asked for the member from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek's help an awful lot earlier.

Supplementary?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: New Democrats want to see improvements in our broader health care, like in home care, but we do not want to see this being done at the expense of hospitals. We provided this government with a plan to improve home care by guaranteeing service within five days and to fund these changes through savings like a hard cap on CEO salaries, but our advice was ignored. Can the minister explain why her government has refused to implement our cost savings proposals and is recklessly cutting hospital services?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, as I said earlier today, we have made some difficult choices when it comes to reducing the price of prescription drugs, when it comes to holding the line on physician compensation. These have been difficult issues, but we've done them for one reason and one reason only: so that we can expand

access to home care, we can support people in day programs, we can provide respite care. That is where the future of our health care system must go—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Okay, I am going to offer some help, and that is to the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. I'm going to warn him, and I'm going to also warn the Minister of Community and Social Services.

New question.

JUSTICE SYSTEM

Ms. Helena Jaczek: My question is for the Attorney General. I know that adjudicative tribunals play a vital role in Ontario's justice system. Tribunals help keep many disputes out of courts by using their specialized expertise to adjudicate on a wide variety of disputes in an independent and impartial manner. I also know that since 2010 this government has begun the process of clustering tribunals together in order to realize cost savings and efficiencies in this area. Mr. Speaker, could the Attorney General please tell us about the clustering process and how the people of Ontario stand to benefit from it?

Hon. John Gerretsen: First of all, I'd like to thank the hard-working, dedicated member for this question. She's extremely hard-working on an annual basis.

Speaker, there are over 600,000 hearings held annually before our administrative tribunals in the province of Ontario. Since 2010, we've been clustering them together under the Ministry of the Attorney General. Through that, we are building a more effective, efficient and accessible system of justice by clustering all of these administrative and adjudicative tribunals. By allowing the tribunals to share resources, expertise and best practices while reducing duplication, clustering improves access to justice while getting better value for the taxpayers' dollars.

We know that it works, too. Feedback has been very positive from both the environmental and land tribunals in Ontario and the social justice tribunals. They've been clustered since the last two or three years.

In fact, the Drummond commission recognized that this ministry has benefited, in particular, from the co-location of offices, common administrative functions and procedural improvements. As a matter of fact—

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

Hon. John Gerretsen: —Drummond said—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I don't want to hear what he has to say. Sit down.

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

The House recessed from 1141 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Bill Walker: Speaker, I would like to introduce all of the guests who were on the Queen's Park grounds

today and are currently in the building for Dutch Heritage Month. We have a great flag-raising, in which you participated on the front steps. I believe they're coming down here to the gallery shortly. We just want to make sure we included them and welcomed them to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you very much—to thunderous applause.

Applause.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: On behalf of the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, I would like to welcome to the Legislative Assembly a group from MicroSkills. I don't know if they're here yet, but they should be here shortly.

Interjection.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: They are up there? Oh, perfect. Oh, right there. MicroSkills is a non-profit, community-based organization in Don Valley East, and we welcome them.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you for joining us. That's not the Dutch group.

Ms. Laurie Scott: They're coming.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): They're coming. Oh, okay.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

VOLUNTEERS

Ms. Laurie Scott: On the heels of National Volunteer Week, I am pleased to rise today to recognize the outstanding contribution of volunteers in my riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

On April 21, I had the privilege of attending the Kawartha Lakes community care volunteer appreciation awards in Fenelon Falls, recognizing individuals who have tirelessly donated their time and efforts to improve the lives of their fellow citizens. They have over 900 volunteers with Kawartha Lakes community care.

The very next day, Josie Linton, an inspiring young lady from Sunderland, was at Queen's Park to be presented with a youth volunteer medal by the Lieutenant Governor. Her outstanding efforts at making her community a better place have been an inspiration to everyone who knows her.

Last Friday evening in Lindsay, I participated in the presentation of the Ontario Volunteer Service Awards. One hundred and thirty-nine volunteers from my communities, representing 37 different organizations, were recognized for their years of service to the community, ranging from five years to an incredible 64 years of service.

We cannot overestimate the importance of volunteerism in our society. One of the measures of a modern society's success and value is our willingness to extend a helping hand to our fellow citizens who may be in need of assistance. It's a commitment to offer our time and

effort to make our community a better place to live, work and play.

The volunteers of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock whom I've recently had the honour of recognizing are to be commended for all that they have done and all that they will still do to make their community and our society a better place.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: This past Saturday, I joined our leader, Andrea Horwath, to meet a group of inspiring men and women in London who are trying to save their hydrotherapy pool. It is located at St. Joseph's hospital and it's the only one of its kind in our city. The hospital wants to close it this summer because it can't afford to keep it open, but ultimately it may cost more in pain, disability and health care dollars to close the hydrotherapy pool than to keep it open. The pool has only been in use for 12 years. These extraordinary men and women are doing everything they can to save it in spite of the debilitating illnesses they struggle with each day.

I want to express my admiration for their tireless efforts. They have written letters to the hospital's managers and to the board of directors, and they started a petition collecting more than 500 signatures.

Lorraine Gray, who is 84 years old and has severe arthritis, wrote the following, "St. Joseph's hydrotherapy pool helps keep my muscles strong, and without it, I will soon be unable to do anything; a further burden on the health care system."

Deborah Hall is a 47-year-old former figure skater. After back surgery, she began to lose strength. Nothing helped. She was in bed "wasting away," she wrote. Then Deborah discovered the hydrotherapy pool program. "It's working," she writes.

This group of brave men and women are doing everything they can to keep St. Joseph's hospital hydrotherapy pool open, and now I believe it's the government's turn to step in and do its part.

CANADA'S WONDERLAND

Mr. Steven Del Duca: I'm happy to be here today to announce that Canada's Wonderland reopened for the season just this past weekend. As many of you know, Canada's Wonderland is located in my community, in my riding of Vaughan. As the MPP I'm extremely proud to have one of the country's biggest and best attractions in my own backyard.

What's great about this theme park is that it truly has something for everyone. Families and friends can enjoy countless rides, attractions and even live entertainment throughout the summer months. Attractions like these give us a unique opportunity to spend much-needed time with our loved ones.

Also of particular importance about the reopening of Canada's Wonderland is the tourism that it will bring to

my community of Vaughan. Millions of people visit this park on a yearly basis to take in the sights, and this means increased travel to Vaughan and the surrounding areas. Increased tourism allows local businesses to flourish and ensures that our province's economy continues to grow and strengthen.

I'd like to take a moment and recommend that members of this House who have an eye for adventure take some time during the break and over the coming months to visit Canada's Wonderland. I know that I, for one, am excited to take my daughters there this summer. I look forward to seeing all of you in Vaughan in the near future.

NORFOLK ARTS CENTRE EXHIBITION

Mr. Toby Barrett: There's a meticulous collection of paintings and drawings at the Norfolk Arts Centre in Simcoe that all should see, particularly those of Dutch heritage. It's titled *Immigrant*, by Rosemary Slood.

Like many Dutch families in the post-war decades, the Sloods travelled to Canada on the *Waterman*, a Dutch immigrant ship that sailed from Rotterdam to Canada. They arrived in 1952. Rosemary was born just two months later.

The exhibition should appeal to anyone who wants to understand the eternal pull that the immigrant experiences—between old and new, between there and here—regardless of ethnicity. In her highly accomplished and at times almost photographically realistic style, Ms. Slood's paintings bring the emotions of the immigrant and his burden. We should be thankful to Ms. Slood for rescuing a forgotten era—a forgotten tragedy, in many cases—from obscurity.

Ms. Slood's collection encompasses the dress, the objects, the letters, and Dutch post-war images—the years when every Dutch family had one of those paraffin burners that we see. The inscriptions "Origineel" and "Ned. Fabrikaat" on the burner speak volumes. Rosemary's exhibition speaks to the common universal themes of loss, uprootedness, family, sacrifice, persistence, hope and faith.

This visual story of Dutch immigration is a must-see. I invite all to visit the gallery during Dutch Heritage Month.

FLOODING IN NORTHERN ONTARIO

Mr. John Vanthof: This year in northern Ontario and probably most of the province, we didn't have a spring. We went from a very cold, snowy winter to summer, and that has caused—

Interjections.

Mr. John Vanthof: No, no. It's a serious issue. Because of that, we're having big issues like Parry Sound had, but now we're having it in my part of the north. I'm doing this statement on behalf of Mr. Bisson because Mr. Bisson is dealing with it as we speak, in Timmins, Moosonee and Kashechewan. I'd like to direct the Legis-

lature's attention to the flooding problems that are happening across the province to the north. In my riding, OPG controls the dams, and that's a big problem.

I'd like to commend the local mayors for doing what they can, especially the mayors of Elk Lake, Glasford and Temiskaming Shores. Temiskaming Shores has also declared a state of emergency, not because they're under immediate flood threat but because they're taking in people who are being flooded out from Moosonee.

I'd really like this Legislature to know what's going on and to know where my colleague, Mr. Bisson, is. Thank you for your attention.

BIRMINGHAM BANK BED CHALLENGE

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: As you can tell, it was a sunny weekend in Oakville this weekend. I had the opportunity yesterday to participate in the eighth annual Birmingham Bank Bed Challenge for the Oakville Hospital Foundation.

Along with my fellow judges—the foundation's CEO, Tina Triano; Dr. Hanif Jamal; and Halton Regional Police Constable Leslie Baylis—I watched local banks wage a friendly competition by racing hospital beds in front of hundreds from the community.

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Throughout the month of April, Oakville's six major banks—BMO, CIBC, HSBC, Royal Bank, Scotiabank and TD Canada Trust—were challenged by the late Bruce Birmingham to raise money at their local branches to purchase beds for the new Oakville hospital. This year's event, held at Oakville Place, raised more than \$143,000 and helped the challenge surpass the \$1-million mark.

In addition to my judging duties, I had the opportunity to update the community on the construction of the new hospital and tell them that it's on time and on budget. At last year's event, I was able to tell the people that cranes would soon be appearing on the site. Less than a year later, the hospital has already reached its highest point.

Speaker, I'd like to congratulate Betty Birmingham and the Oakville Hospital Foundation for their ongoing work, and all six banks that participated yesterday, with a special mention to Scotiabank, the all-around winner of this incredible event.

MENTAL HEALTH

Mrs. Christine Elliott: It's my honour to rise this afternoon to mark Mental Health Week and speak to an issue that I personally am very passionate about.

In our current system, mental health has been consigned to the shadows. People with mental illnesses are stigmatized, misunderstood and even blamed rather than helped. And the scope of mental health problems is astounding: one in five Canadians experiences a mental illness, and up to 70% of mental health problems begin in childhood and adolescence. Meanwhile, our aging population is increasingly vulnerable to mental health challen-

ges. But, in Ontario, we have no coherent mental health care system. Rather, care is scattered over 10 ministries and thousands of agencies.

As representatives, most of us in this House know of the struggles that Ontarians endure as they try to find care for themselves or for family members. Last week, Amanda Telford left her son Philippe at a government agency office because she could no longer care for him. Philippe has severe autism, Tourette's syndrome and the intellectual capacity of a two-year-old.

As a social worker, one would imagine Amanda Telford would know where to find care for Philippe, but the reality is that there are simply not enough services to help people like the Telfords. As a government, we need to deliver more and better services to Ontarians with mental illnesses and intellectual challenges, and this care must be made an integrated part of the overall health care system.

There's a lot of work to be done, but we are well poised to make a difference, and we should start now, during Mental Health Week.

As Clara Hughes would say, "Let's talk." She's a huge mental health advocate. Let's follow her example. Let's talk this week.

ANNIVERSARY OF POLISH CONSTITUTION

Ms. Dipika Damerla: On May 3, 1791, the Polish people gave a priceless gift to Europe: the first constitution rooted in democratic principles in Europe and the second one in the world, after the United States. For this act of courage and progress, Poland and her people were rewarded with hostile political and military responses from her neighbours and nobility, scared of the notion of giving power to ordinary people, leading to the eventual wiping out of Poland from the world map for 123 years. Yet, fittingly, it is this very document, this very constitution, that became a beacon of hope for the Polish people throughout her darkest years of history. In times of despair, in times when everything seemed hopeless, the Polish people never gave up their dream of a democratic and free Poland inspired by this constitution.

This historic day, called Polish Constitution Day, was celebrated by the Polish-Canadian community over the weekend across Ontario. In Mississauga, I attended a moving and beautiful ceremony at the Maximilian church—a beautiful mass, followed by a parade and the raising of the Polish and Canadian flags.

There was another ceremony at Queen's Park, where it was so touching to see veterans who'd fought in World War II walking up University Avenue to Queen's Park to celebrate the very historic day.

It's important to recognize this not just because it's important for Poland, but because it's important for our young to remember this, because those who forget their history are destined to repeat it.

SOUTH ASIAN COMMUNITY

Mr. Todd Smith: Today, I rise to recognize contributions of Ontario's South Asian community, as we mark May as South Asian Heritage Month. I'm proud that this month was initiated by a former Ontario PC MPP, Raminder Gill. South Asian Heritage Month is an opportunity to recognize the countless contributions made by Ontario's South Asian community since the start of the 20th century.

As I've mentioned many times in this House, I've had the opportunity to meet with leaders in the South Asian community. Whether visiting small businesses, Diwali celebrations in Brampton, partaking in Punjabi International Film Festival celebrations, or walking the Nagar Kirtan here in Toronto a couple of weeks ago, I feel the strong sense of unity exhibited by this community.

From our belief in strong families to our vision that Ontario should always be a place where our children have better opportunities than we did, there are many shared values between the South Asian community and conservatives across Ontario. Your values are our values.

Mr. Speaker, I've had the opportunity to celebrate Vaisakhi, Diwali, birthdays and more in our South Asian community over the past year. We share common interests as members of the Commonwealth. Canadian soldiers from Belleville and Trenton and Indian soldiers from Mumbai have bled together in peacekeeping missions around the world. So great is our belief in the institutions of democracy that we have sacrificed together.

On behalf of our leader, Tim Hudak, and the Ontario PC caucus, I want to thank the South Asian community for their extraordinary contributions. I look forward to working with you for many years to come.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

EDUCATION WEEK

Hon. Liz Sandals: Today we mark the official kickoff to Education Week in Ontario. I am proud to stand up today to applaud the excellent work of students, teachers, principals, support staff and parents in our publicly funded schools. We know that Ontario's school system is among the best in the world, and our students are leaders across the country and around the globe.

Over the past nine years, we have seen significant improvements in student achievement, and I would like to thank our many partners in education for making this possible.

This year, our theme for Education Week is "From Great to Excellent in Education." It is fitting because, together with our education partners, we are building on our momentum and moving our education system from great to excellent. Test scores are up, class sizes are down and our graduation rate continues to rise.

Some 83% of our students are now graduating, up from 68% in 2003. That's amazing, and it means that 115,500 more young people are on a completely different path than they would have been without a high school diploma.

Ontario students continue to be high achievers, with 70% of grades 3 and 6 students mastering reading, writing and math skills. The number of students reaching the provincial standard is up by 16 percentage points compared to 2003.

Speaker, we can all be proud of these achievements.

We also continue to move toward a more innovative learning environment, one that includes greater attention to early education. I'm pleased to say that full-day kindergarten is now available to half of Ontario's four- and five-year-olds, and the program will be fully implemented by 2014.

We're preparing our children to be the workforce of the future by beginning the next phase of innovative education reform, with our focus on 21st-century teaching and learning. This will ensure the educational experiences of our students prepare them for the increasingly competitive global economy.

We've built an education system that is the envy of the world, but it's time to take the next step. We will be engaging with Ontarians to ask questions, create discussion and set out a plan to achieve excellence in our publicly funded education system.

Today, we'll kick off a number of fun activities planned in schools across the province. This week-long celebration is a perfect opportunity for students, teachers, principals, support staff and parents to applaud the excellent work that happens in our schools each and every day.

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I would like to thank our teachers, support staff, administrators and school boards for continuing to put students first and for making Ontario a leader in the education sector.

To my colleagues, I hope you will have the opportunity to visit your local schools and communities to celebrate the wonderful work happening all across this province.

DUTCH HERITAGE MONTH

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Today I rise to celebrate, with our colleagues, May as Dutch Heritage Month in Ontario. First, I would like to take a moment to congratulate His Majesty Willem-Alexander on becoming the new King of the Netherlands following the abdication of his mother, the much-loved Queen Beatrix, after a 33-year reign. I know that all of us within this chamber wish the new King well.

Canada and Ontario have long shared a special relationship with the people of the Netherlands and those of Dutch heritage. Over the course of the Second World War, during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands,

Canada provided shelter to Princess Juliana and her daughters.

It was during this refuge that Princess Margriet was born. The Canadian government designated the maternity ward of Ottawa Civic Hospital, which is located in my riding of Ottawa Centre, as international territory so that the princess would not be born in another nation state, and thus would inherit Dutch citizenship from her mother.

The Netherlands celebrates Liberation Day on May 5 each year. This is a day that marks the end of the oppression in the Netherlands, suffered for five years during the Second World War, and a return to liberty for the Dutch, freedoms which Canadian soldiers gave their lives to help achieve during the Second World War.

In 1945, the Dutch royal family sent 100,000 tulip bulbs to Ottawa in gratitude. The following year, the royal family sent another 20,500 tulip bulbs, requesting that a display be created for Ottawa Civic Hospital. They promised to send 10,000 more tulip bulbs each year to Ottawa.

This display has grown into the Canadian Tulip Festival, which is celebrating its 61st edition this year in Ottawa from now to May 20. It is the largest tulip festival in the world, and attracts 600,000 visitors annually.

I would like to take a moment to express my thanks to the current Dutch ambassador, Mr. Wim Geerts, who, on the weekend, helped launch his last tulip festival in Canada. Ambassador Geerts has dedicated his time and service to many causes in Canada, and in Ottawa in particular, some of which being the promotion of cycling in our community and equality for the LGBT community. I wish the ambassador all the best in future endeavours and thank him for his involvement in our community.

Today, there are almost half a million people of Dutch heritage living in Ontario, including three current members of the Legislature: our Attorney General, Mr. John Gerretsen; the MPP for Oxford, Ernie Hardeman; and the MPP for Timiskaming–Cochrane, Mr. John Vanthof.

The Dutch national spirit and work ethic have enriched Ontario beyond measure and will continue to do so in the years to come. The bonds between Ontario and the Dutch have been established and are strengthened through our shared values: building strong communities and fair societies for the benefit of all.

Ontario's Dutch-Canadian community has made a tremendous contribution to Ontario's economic, social and cultural well-being. On behalf of this chamber, I call on all Ontarians to join us in celebrating Dutch Heritage Month.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It is now time for responses.

EDUCATION WEEK

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: It is my pleasure to rise today on behalf of Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC caucus and recognize the 83rd annual Education Week.

High-quality education is paramount to an individual's success in today's global economy. Literacy, numeracy

and science skills are increasingly important for individuals to be successful in today's job market. Therefore, it is vital that we ensure curriculum and teaching approaches foster skill development in these three critical areas.

It's also important that financial literacy is more thoroughly incorporated into provincial curriculum. This is an area where we can look to education stakeholders for feedback on programs that will be the most beneficial to our young people. The Jr. Economic Club of Canada, the Investment Funds Institute of Canada, the Financial Planning Standards Council and Junior Achievement Canada are all education stakeholders that already have successful, established financial literacy programming that can easily be incorporated into our formal education curriculum. Ensuring financial literacy is entrenched within our education curriculum will create two important spinoff effects: first, that we produce well-rounded students that are prepared for the financial obligations and challenges of adulthood; second, that we will have helped instill the financial understanding necessary to foster the entrepreneurial spirit in our future leaders.

Individual students have different aspirations and career ambitions. It is time to ensure our students are aware of the in-demand careers within our economy. Post-secondary education does not merely comprise the pursuit of a university degree; for some students, it means pursuing a college diploma or trades training. We need to ensure our children are aware of all of their options and that these options reflect our labour force's needs so that student success becomes community success.

It is imperative that we allow our principals, teachers and support staff the authority to make decisions that will be most beneficial to the success of their individual schools. Decisions such as class sizes and teaching approaches are best determined by the people who work with our children each and every day. Our principals and teachers understand their schools and our children. Let's allow them to tailor a program that will be the most beneficial to our students.

As a former teacher, I wish to extend a sincere thank you to all of the dedicated teachers, principals and support staff who work in the education sector. Thank you, and happy Education Week.

DUTCH HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: This morning, I was pleased once again to be part of the Dutch flag-raising ceremony here at Queen's Park to celebrate Dutch Heritage Month. I want to recognize Consul General Hans Horbach, who is at Queen's Park for this auspicious occasion.

Dutch Heritage Month was created in 2011 through a private member's bill by PC MPP Elizabeth Witmer. I want to thank her for her leadership on that and for participating in the flag-raising ceremony this morning. I also want to thank my fellow colleagues of Dutch heritage who spoke: the member from Kingston and the Islands and the member from Timiskaming–Cochrane.

As I was on the boat from the Netherlands with his mother, I can attest to his heritage.

As you know, yesterday, May 5, the Netherlands celebrated Liberation Day. This is the day we commemorate the liberation of the Netherlands during the Second World War. My parents lived in the war zone, and I remember my mother describing the jubilation they felt when the soldiers—mostly Canadians—came. I believe it was one of the reasons that they chose to emigrate here with their 15 children.

It was a difficult journey, but we came because Canada was a land of opportunity. When we arrived in Ontario, we were welcomed by the Dutch community. It was not an easy time, and without the help of our neighbours and the community, I'm not sure how we would have made it.

Although we're all strong Canadians and Ontarians, many Dutch have retained a strong sense of Dutch heritage. In my riding of Oxford, in Niagara and in other parts of Ontario, there are strong Dutch communities that celebrate our traditions and still provide welcome and help for new immigrants.

This year, we have another reason to celebrate. Last week, we recognized the birthday of Queen Beatrix and the investment of a new King of the Netherlands, Willem-Alexander, and his wife, Queen Maxima. On behalf of the PC caucus, I want to offer our best wishes for a long and successful reign. Hartelijk gefeliciteerd.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to add on that that we're personally pleased at the name of the new king of Holland as that is also the name of one of my grandsons. With that, thank you very much for allowing me to present this here today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's a no-brainer. Responses?

DUTCH HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. John Vanthof: It's an honour to stand in this House on behalf of the NDP caucus and recognize Dutch Heritage Month. About a million Canadians are of Dutch heritage, with half of them living in Ontario. Ontario has long been a preferred destination for Dutch-speaking immigrants, beginning with the Loyalists who fled New York and New Jersey in the 1700s.

The end of the Second World War saw another wave of Dutch immigration. Holland had been occupied and destroyed during the war. The Dutch had suffered terrible conditions, and in early May 1945 were liberated by Canadian divisions of the Allied forces. May 5 is celebrated in Holland and by the Dutch around the world as Liberation Day, and Canadians are still deeply respected as the liberators.

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The Canadian government provided safe haven to members of the Dutch royal family during the war years and, to show their appreciation, the Dutch government continues to support the Tulip Festival in Ottawa. This has further cemented a bond between the Netherlands

and Canada, a bond created by a shared belief in democracy and a monarchy. Congratulations to King Willem-Alexander on his ascension to the throne, and Queen Maxima.

My father was a teenager during World War II. He immigrated to Canada because of the deep respect that he had for the Canadian soldiers and the country that they represented. My parents were among thousands of Dutch immigrants who came to Ontario in the 1950s to build a better life for their families.

Another wave of Dutch immigration started in the 1980s. Farmers were once again running out of space and opportunity in Holland, and many came here to give their families a chance to grow. My wife came in 1986, and Speaker, I know from experience that this wave of Dutch people are as hard-working as any that preceded them. If you take a drive down the concession roads of rural Ontario, you will see many farms and small businesses with Dutch names on the mailbox. Dutch people are known as farmers, gardeners and builders, and, judging by the look of the Ontario countryside, they are good at it.

People of Dutch heritage are proud Ontarians, and we continue to be very grateful as a people for the opportunities that this province has provided us, although we still can't understand why other Canadians prefer hockey over soccer. On behalf of all those who immigrated here from Holland and all their descendants, I would like to say thank you. Hartelijk bedankt.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That statement will get you brownie points from your wife.

EDUCATION WEEK

Mr. Michael Prue: I'm responding on behalf of my colleague the member from Toronto–Danforth, who unfortunately has not arrived yet.

I'd like to respond to the minister's statement on Education Week. The minister invited people to visit our local schools and to see the good work that's going on there, and I would generally agree that that's the case, but I do have to stand in this place and talk to the minister about some of the schools in my riding, some of the schools that I've asked questions about here in this Legislature.

Some of the schools are overcrowded; some of them have mouldy, raccoon-infested portables; in some of them, the children are being bused from one location a few blocks or even up to a kilometre away to other schools because they cannot be housed in their neighbourhoods, all because this government has refused to spend the money, even though the schools are on the list and have raised to the top. They are the ones the most in need in Toronto.

The view has come down from this minister and this government that the money cannot be spent and will not be spent. So the children in my community wonder about these schools that need to be visited, because what they see is overcrowded schools, mouldy, raccoon-infested

portables and children forced onto buses where it has never had to happen before.

These schools include some of the neediest schools in Toronto:

—Crescent Town school, which is largely made up of new immigrant kids, used to be up to grade 6; it's now down to grade 4 because after you get to grade 4 you have to be bused to another community;

—McGregor school, which is overflowing; the portables are there, and they're all mouldy;

—Victoria Park school, which was supposed to have been shut down and which is still experiencing some tremendous problems;

—Secord school, which is largely made up of new immigrant kids, with so many portables you cannot even believe how many are there; and

—Selwyn school, attached to G.A. Brown, which is also experiencing these great many problems.

I support the teachers, I support the work that's being done in education, but I'm asking this minister to please support the families and children in Beaches–East York. All they're asking for is that the money that is appropriated for their schools be spent. Give those kids a real opportunity that the rest of the province currently enjoys.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements. I've been out of sync a little bit. I've got to get into a routine again, so it's time for petitions from the member from Durham.

PETITIONS

AIR QUALITY

Mr. John O'Toole: I wait for these occasions to at least give voice for my constituents in the riding of Durham. This one reads as follows:

“Whereas collecting and restoring older 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 Environ-

ment and governing the installation of newer engines into old cars and trucks.”

I'm pleased to sign it and support it on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham and present it to Madison, one of the pages.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas St. Joseph's Health Care centre has decided to close its less than 15 year old community hydrotherapy pool on June 28/13. Hundreds of people in pain will be denied this imperative therapy which has been specifically ordered by their physicians and physiotherapists. There is no other affordable pool in the area with three depth levels, salt water at least 92 degrees F with excellent accessibility and hydrotherapy leadership. This decision is in opposition to the statements of the health minister to increase health dollars in the community for physiotherapy and for seniors. Pool patrons' requests to work with St. Joseph's to continue this program have been ignored. The sacrificial work of fundraising to build the pool is being ignored.

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

“We ask you to direct St. Joseph's Health Care centre to continue its hydrotherapy program in this excellent, appropriate pool. This decision will save huge amounts of health dollars both now and in the future.”

I sign this petition and I give it to page Brendan.

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

Ms. Soo Wong: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Agincourt is historically recognized as north Scarborough's oldest and most well-established community; and

“Whereas the residents of the community of Scarborough–Agincourt share unique interests; and

“Whereas historically Agincourt's electoral voice has always been found in an electoral district north of Ontario Highway 401; and

“Whereas communities such as Scarborough–Agincourt with historical significance should be protected and not divided; and

“Whereas the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Ontario has recently released proposals to redraw the federal riding map of Scarborough–Agincourt; and

“Whereas ‘community of interest’ is a mandated consideration of the federal Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act; and

“Whereas the original proposal from the commission included a unified Scarborough–Agincourt riding; and

“Whereas the commission's report would inexplicably divide the Scarborough–Agincourt community; and

“Whereas the residents of Scarborough–Agincourt should not be divided and the electoral riding should remain in its entirety;

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

“To call upon the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Ontario to recognize the historical and demographic context of the Scarborough–Agincourt community and to preserve riding boundaries that include a protected Scarborough–Agincourt community north of Ontario Highway 401.”

I fully support the petition, Mr. Speaker, and give the petition to Tenzin.

CHILDREN’S PSYCHIATRIC MEDICATION

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas there has been a dramatic increase in the use of psychiatric medication on children, especially children in care or provincial custody; and

“Whereas it is an established scientific fact that psychiatric drugs cause shrinkage and related problems to the development of the still-developing brain; and

“Whereas it is our responsibility as a society to protect and care for our children;

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

“To create a policy statement discouraging the use of psychiatric drugs on children and send it to all Ontario clinics and mental health care facilities working with children;

“To actively monitor the rate of use of psychiatric drugs on children to ensure that it is going down;

“To amend the professional misconduct regulation under the Medicine Act so that prescribing medication to children where the use of such medication has not been specifically approved by Health Canada for their age group and purpose constitutes professional misconduct; also to alter OHIP practices such that such use is not covered.”

I affix my signature in full support, Mr. Speaker.

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CYCLING

Mr. Jonah Schein: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas 28% of Ontario’s adults regularly cycle and over 50% of children cycle either daily or weekly;

“Whereas a cycling fatality occurs every month in Ontario and thousands of cyclists are injured each month;

“Whereas Ontario is lagging behind provinces like British Columbia and Quebec that have invested \$31 million and \$200 million respectively in cycling infrastructure;

“Whereas investing in cycling infrastructure in Ontario will create jobs and benefit the economy, reduce

traffic congestion and pollution, protect those sharing the road, encourage active transportation, and improve public health;

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

“That the province of Ontario release a comprehensive bicycling strategy for Ontario that facilitates the development of policy and legislation relating to bicycling in Ontario. This policy would include dedicated funding to match municipal investments in cycling infrastructure, education initiatives to raise awareness about the rights and responsibilities of all road users, and a review and update of provincial legislation, including the Highway Traffic Act and Planning Act, to ensure roadways are safe for all users;

“That the strategy set provincial targets and timelines for increasing the number of people who commute by bike and cycle recreationally.”

I agree with this. I’ll sign my name to it and give it to page Brigid.

ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I’ve got a petition today to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas Agincourt is historically recognized as north Scarborough’s oldest and most well-established community; and

“Whereas the residents of the community of Scarborough–Agincourt share unique interests; and

“Whereas historically Agincourt’s electoral voice has always been found in an electoral district north of Ontario Highway 401; and

“Whereas communities such as Scarborough–Agincourt with historical significance should be protected and not divided; and

“Whereas the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Ontario has recently released proposals to redraw the federal riding map of Scarborough–Agincourt; and

“Whereas ‘community of interest’ is a mandated consideration of the federal Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act; and

“Whereas the original proposal from the commission included a unified Scarborough–Agincourt riding; and

“Whereas the commission’s report would inexplicably divide the Scarborough–Agincourt community; and

“Whereas the residents of Scarborough–Agincourt should not be divided and the electoral riding should remain, in its entirety, with its north Scarborough neighbours;

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

“To call upon the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Ontario to recognize the historical and demographic context of the Scarborough–Agincourt community and to preserve riding boundaries that include

a protected Scarborough–Agincourt community north of Ontario Highway 401.”

I agree with this, will sign it and send it down with Jack.

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: “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 McGuinty-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.”

I agree with this petition. I will sign it and send it down—

Interjections.

PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

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

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ministry of Health is planning to delist OHIP physiotherapy clinics as of August 1st, 2013, which represents cuts in physiotherapy services to seniors, children and people with disabilities who currently receive care at designated OHIP physiotherapy clinics; and

“Whereas people who are currently eligible for OHIP physiotherapy treatments can receive 100 treatments per year plus an additional 50 treatments annually if medically necessary. The proposed change will reduce the number of allowable treatments to 12 per year; while enhancing geographical access is positive, the actual physiotherapy that any individual receives will be greatly reduced; and

“Whereas the current OHIP physiotherapy providers have been providing seniors, children and people with disabilities with individualized treatments for over 48 years, and these services have been proven to help improve function, mobility, activities of daily living, pain, and falls risk;

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

“To review and reverse the decision to drastically cut OHIP physiotherapy services to our most vulnerable

population—seniors, children and people with disabilities; and to maintain the policy that seniors, children and people with disabilities continue to receive up to 100 treatments per year at eligible clinics, with a mechanism to access an additional 50 treatments when medically necessary.”

I’m in agreement. I will sign my signature and send it with page Tenzin.

MARKDALE HOSPITAL

Mr. Bill Walker: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Grey Bruce Health Services’ Markdale hospital is the only health care facility between Owen Sound and Orangeville on the Highway 10 corridor;

“Whereas the community of Markdale rallied to raise \$13 million on the promise they would get a new state-of-the-art hospital in Markdale;

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

“That the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care announce as soon as possible its intended construction date for the new Markdale hospital and ensure that the care needs of the patients and families of our community are met in a timely manner.”

I support this and will send it with page Benjamin to the Clerks’ table.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Jonah Schein: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas social assistance benefits in Ontario leave recipients far below the poverty line, struggling to meet the basic costs of living, and without any resources to handle emergencies;

“Whereas the provincial government has announced deep cuts to the Community Start-up and Maintenance Benefit;

“Whereas this program provides emergency support to help families pay for basic utilities;

“Whereas this program provides options for vulnerable people including women, children and people with disabilities to escape domestic violence and transition to safer housing;

“Whereas the Community Start-up and Maintenance Benefit is a critical emergency program that helps to prevent homelessness;

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

“That the province of Ontario restore full funding for the Community Start-up and Maintenance Benefit and ensure that it continues to go directly to those who need it.”

I agree with this. I’ll sign my name to it and give it to page Ethan.

WORKPLACE INSURANCE

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

“Whereas beginning 1 January 2013 WSIB was expanded to include groups of employers and principals who had previously been exempt from WSIB and had private insurance; and

“Whereas this new financial burden does nothing to improve worker safety and only drives up the cost of doing business in Ontario; and

“Whereas the chair of the WSIB—in committee meetings last year—admitted this will not help cover the accumulated WSIB debt, but make the problem worse by adding further liabilities;

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

“To repeal the statutory obligations created by Bill 119.”

I agree with this and I will be signing it.

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

Mr. Norm Miller: I have received many more “Stop the Trades Tax” petitions that I’d like to read in the Legislature. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the newly created Ontario College of Trades is planning to hit hard-working tradespeople with new membership fees that, if the college has its way, will add up to \$84 million a year;

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

“That the Liberal government stop their job-killing trades tax and shut down the Ontario College of Trades immediately.”

I support this petition.

WIND TURBINES

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

“Whereas residents and municipalities across Ontario want the ability to veto and/or plan for industrial wind turbines in their community; and

“Whereas ratepayers in Ontario want all forms of energy generation to be affordable and reliable; and

“Whereas residents of Ontario want the feed-in tariff program to be eliminated; and

“Whereas residents of Ontario want to protect environmentally sensitive areas like the Niagara Escarpment and the Oak Ridges moraine from the development of wind turbines;

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

“That the Liberal government support Huron–Bruce MPP Lisa Thompson’s private member’s bill, the Ensuring Affordable Energy Act, and call committee hearings immediately on the bill.”

I support this petition.

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

Mr. Robert Bailey: This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the government of Ontario’s newly created Ontario College of Trades is taxing hard-working tradespeople with membership fees that, if the college has its way, will add up to \$84 million a year; and

“Whereas the Ontario College of Trades has no clear benefit and no accountability as tradespeople already pay for licences and countless other fees to government; and

“Whereas Ontario has struggled for years to attract people to skilled trades and the planned tax grab will kill jobs, and drive people out of trades;

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

“To stop the job-killing trades tax and shut down the Ontario College of Trades immediately.”

Mr. Speaker, I agree with this. This represents hundreds of petitions from my riding. I will send it down with Megan.

1350

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I regret that I have to say that the time for petitions has expired.

A number of members wished to present petitions today. I wish I could have accommodated them. I would remind the members whom I did recognize that you don’t have to read the whole petition from start to finish. If you could abbreviate them somewhat, it would ensure that everybody would get their chance to present their petition.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

2013 ONTARIO BUDGET

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 2, 2013, on the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate? I’m pleased to recognize the leader of Her Majesty’s official opposition.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker I’m very pleased to respond to the budget motion tabled by the Minister of Finance and his budget speech on Thursday, May 2. I want to say as well at the outset that I will be splitting my available time with my colleague the party’s finance critic and the member for Thornhill, Peter Shurman.

The Ontario I want to see, I imagine, is pretty much what the vast majority of Ontarians want to see. They want to see an Ontario where they wake up in the morning with a good job to go to. In so doing, with that security, that confidence in the province, you can go out and buy a home and you can raise a family. And they

want the kind of Ontario where hard work and talent are rewarded with more take-home pay.

Speaker, we owe it to Ontarians to begin today's debate with their hopes and, yes, their worries, that are uppermost in our thoughts. So let me speak first to the hopes—hopes that I think that we all share—not only getting a good job, but Ontarians have hope for a province where children are attending quality schools, getting the best possible quality of education to take on a very competitive world, a lot different from the time, Speaker, when you and I grew up; where you can be confident that your aging parents or a young child has excellent health care close by, without delay, without difficulty; where businesses and entrepreneurs can pursue their dreams, bring new products to market and create good jobs again; with first-class roads, bridges and transportation networks. That's the Ontario of our aspirations, Mr. Speaker, a province that has more to offer than anywhere else in the entire world.

I'm going to let you in on an open secret, Speaker: It's not the Ontario that we see today in 2013. Despite all that hope, our confidence in that bright future, what I describe is not the Ontario that we reside in after almost 10 years of Liberal government. Somebody once said that "status quo" was Latin for "the mess that we're in." We all know first-hand too many human stories that reflect the tough times that abound, whether you're in Wellington–Halton Hills, here in Toronto, in Niagara West–Glanbrook or Nipissing or Kenora–Rainy River.

What does that mean? Today, Speaker, as we address the budget motion, there are almost 600,000 men and women—our friends, neighbours, somebody who lives down the street or in the same building; family members—who are out of work. They've got no job to go to this Monday. They may not have a job to go to next Monday. They worry that, come next month, there will be no job for them either. The sad thing is, Mr. Speaker, that many of those folks, those men and women, are losing hope in this great province of Ontario for themselves and for their kids.

There are also many people who have lost good manufacturing jobs. I was saddened to hear, even since the budget came out, two more sets of job losses: Caterpillar closing down another plant; I know that Waterloo manufacturing, a long-time furniture construction business in Kitchener, is sending 200-and-some jobs over to Michigan. A lot of people had counted on the manufacturing sector for their livelihood to provide for their kids. We've lost 300,000 of those jobs.

No doubt, Speaker, many of those men and women are working part-time jobs. They're proud they can put a cheque on the table to help pay for the groceries and hopefully put their kids through college or university, but they know in their hearts that we can do a lot better than this. Speaker, that's their status quo.

Over the last 18 months, I've talked to women and men, university and college graduates among them, from every corner of the province of Ontario. I've been on radio talk shows; at Tim Hortons shops—also, more than

50 town halls that I've done in every corner of the province; over 100 visits to businesses, from the smallest mom-and-pop operations to the largest operators in Ontario. Everywhere I go, people are worried. They ask me questions like, "Why are there so many people without jobs?" "When are the jobs coming back to Ontario?" "Why is our economic growth so weak, when I see other provinces racing ahead of Ontario and we're at the back of the pack?" "Why is our debt growing so fast, and what does that actually mean for the things that I care about, that I hold precious, like hospitals or our classrooms?" Then they ask me, Speaker, "Why in God's name is the great province of Ontario a have-not province?"

I've talked about the Ontario of our hopes, but in many ways, when I talk to people, they're seeing an Ontario of their fears. So, before we get to the budget, we need to talk about: How did it get this way? How did we dig a hole this deep?

Well, it starts with the very simple fact that the serious jobs-and-spending crisis we face today didn't just happen overnight. That came about as a series of deliberate policy choices that this government has made over the last decade—a direct result of individual policy choices that the government made. Along the way, through all of those individual decisions, nobody actually stopped and asked themselves a very basic question: "How do we pay for them? How are we going to finance all of these promises?"

My colleague from Thornhill, the finance critic, will talk about the 20 new promises in this budget with no way to pay for them.

I think it's a very fair question. Why did nobody ever stop at a moment in time and ask, "Where is the money going to come from?" Average businesses, families—every household in Ontario has to live within its means, so why can't government learn to live within its means just like families do across the province each and every day?

I'll make a very simple statement here, Speaker—one that seems to, bizarrely, elicit a lot of debate and controversy here in the assembly. I brought it up in question period today. It's pretty basic. It comes from my heart and my mind, and I know people across the province say the exact same thing. We've got a big problem here, and we all know that Ontario can do a lot better than this. Ontario's economic growth has stayed stagnant or anemic at best, set against government spending that's up by nearly \$4 billion this year alone. It's driven by spending increases in two out of three ministries. Despite the fact that we're in a deficit situation, Speaker, and we're on track to now not only doubling but tripling our debt, this government made a deliberate decision in the most recent budget to actually increase spending in two out of three ministries. All this means is that Ontario's deficit is actually larger than all of the other nine provinces' combined. We have the biggest debt in Canada, and our debt on a per capita basis is actually bigger than California's, the most indebted state in the US.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Three times.

Mr. Tim Hudak: In fact, my colleague says it's three times larger than the per capita debt of the state of California.

Speaker, I don't make up these statistics. I actually have a very authoritative source for these conclusions: It's the 2013 Ontario budget. As Ronald Reagan once said, "Facts are stubborn things." It's your budget. You see, the facts in the budget tell us that the deficit is actually going up, not down; that all other provinces and even the state of California are going to balance their budgets faster than we can here in the province of Ontario. The budget tells us that our accumulated debt is actually going up, not down. This year, we'll actually pay \$11 billion in debt-servicing costs alone—\$11 billion drained away from our classrooms, our hospitals, investing in subways in the GTA, highways—each year, gone.

1400

It's like, Speaker, when you get your credit card bill at home—I know you're the kind who would pay it off every month, but not everybody can do that—and you actually see that line on your credit card bill that says, "How much is the minimum payment?" You've got to get through at least that. You've got to get ahead of that if you actually want to pay it down, but your minimum payment—do you know what the minimum payment in the province of Ontario is now, on our credit card bill? It's \$11 billion, the third-highest expenditure in all the government.

It just seems to be basic that when you're heading over a cliff, you don't simply slow down the car. You have to actually hit the brake, turn around and go in the opposite direction. Instead, this budget chose to press on the accelerator by adding more debt and a larger deficit. Sadly, with last Thursday's budget, this government chose to continue down a path that's only going to send our province over the edge unless you cry "stop" and go in the other direction.

Let me put this into perspective: The most joyful event in anyone's life is welcoming a son or daughter into the world—great excitement; it's the anticipation; it's the human connection instantly, with a little child there in your arms. With that comes great expectations about what the future will hold for your son or daughter, because as Canadians and Ontarians, we want every generation to do better than the one that came before it.

Like the Hudak family immigrants from what was then Czechoslovakia, there are many stories like that within the PC caucus and members of all parties here in the assembly: the dream that that next generation will be more prosperous—better jobs, more comfort, better health care, better education. That's in jeopardy when you continue to spend beyond your means. That's in jeopardy when the minimum payment on the government credit card is the third-highest expenditure in government, ahead of highways, roads, subways and buses combined.

Back to that little girl, born tomorrow: A little girl who's born tomorrow, a family full of excitement and joy, as they should be, that little girl will have \$20,000 of provincial debt on her back—the moment she enters this

beautiful world, \$20,000 of provincial debt on her back; the moment she enters diapers, \$20,000 of provincial debt on her back.

The problem is, when the Liberals came into office, it was about \$11,000, so they've basically doubled the provincial debt in their time in office. They made that decision, which I think runs against Canadian values, to actually impose a \$20,000 debt on every little girl and little boy born in the province of Ontario.

I'll make another very simple statement, one that again elicits debate from across the floor, but I believe that Ontarians are with us on that: It is morally wrong to put \$20,000 of debt on the back of every child in our province. We owe it to that child, that next generation, and her parents to do a lot better than that.

We owe it to the next generation not to put more debt on their backs so they can actually grow up into the best job market in the world, with the kind of opportunities we had counted on in the past that you can't count on today—not a jobs market hobbled badly by debt, a debt so huge that simply making the minimum payment gives other countries a head start to take that child's future job prospects away, to take their future away from them.

So think about this in two ways, Speaker: I think it's morally wrong to put a \$20,000 debt on the back of a newborn girl or boy in this province. But think about this, too: People don't lend us that money for free. We've got to pay it back, and then we pay it back with interest. That means that all that money, all those billions, will go in the pockets of our overseas lenders.

Does anyone know here that the debt of our province is actually traded in 11 different currencies worldwide? Does anyone here believe that that money—our overseas lenders take it and they put it in the mattress? What do they do with it, Speaker? They invest it in their own subways, their own highways, their own universities and colleges and their own health care systems. They build stronger countries that actually take away the jobs in the future, so that little girl who's going to grow up with \$20,000 of debt on her back is going to enter an even more challenging job market because we gave it all away to our competitors.

Speaker, enough is enough. I want to build a future for that girl. I want to build a future for that boy or girl in the province of Ontario.

So we face a choice: spend within our means today, or deeper debt. We face a choice: creating jobs in the province of Ontario for this generation and the next, or see those jobs go overseas, so that baby girl born today with \$20,000 in provincial debt on her head, when she seeks to enter the job market, is going to be squeezed by international competition—tougher competition that this government helped to finance, because they couldn't make the necessary decisions today to live within their means. That's the other story buried inside this government's budget that they don't want you to know.

Mr. Paul Miller: It's an inconvenient truth.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I don't want to quote Al Gore in any of my speeches, so I'll leave that one. I'll do Reagan, not Gore.

So what do we do about it, Speaker? I've laid out the problems as I see it. These are the problems I hear when I talk to Ontarians across this great province. I think there's no question that you've got to do something. People understand in their gut that this problem around jobs and debt needs to be fixed, and it needs to be fixed fast, because it's not going to fix itself.

So we need two things. We need a bold, comprehensive plan to bring jobs back to the province of Ontario, to make sure government lives within its means each and every day—and that we have a team with the courage of its convictions to actually get that job done.

It starts with less spending. It starts with a government that lives within its means. Yet we keep increasing the size of the budget. How do we do that? Well, we borrow, and we borrow some more, and then we borrow some more beyond that. How have we borrowed? During the time of this Liberal government, Ontario has actually doubled its debt. Let's put that into perspective. That's about \$270 billion. Ontario's debt is greater than all the other provinces' debt combined.

But are we satisfied that despite all that spending, despite digging that debt hole so deep—are we convinced that we're better off? Are we convinced that we have great schools that are doing the best to raise the standards for our kids? Or do we instead see an education system paralyzed by a constant battle between the teacher union activists and the government of the day?

Do we think our health care system is actually prepared for the very predictable challenges of the 21st century, or does it seem like we're slipping further and further behind?

Do we think we have a transportation system, especially in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area, that is world-class, that gets people to move efficiently and effectively? Or do we believe what we actually see and experience each and every day, stuck in our car when we'd rather be home with the family for dinner, seeing our daughter play soccer?

You see, the problem with spending beyond our means is it cuts off the capacity to pay for things that we actually care about. Now, ironically, here in this debate, Speaker, those who oppose the path I've laid out will talk about the need for compassion. But their approach will rob us of the ability to be compassionate in the first place. If we don't start to resist the temptation to overspend and to pay for it with even more borrowed money, we will very soon get to a point where we cannot even have the basic programs in our province. There will truly be no money left to support them, since nobody will lend to us and we only have a very weakened private sector economy to pay for it.

That's why we call over and over again for a government that actually lives within its means, that respects every taxpayer dollar sent here to Queen's Park, that sets priorities and makes decisions. What does that mean? It

means we actually have to reduce spending, not increase it, and you've got to be smart about it. So let me tell you how.

This is no time to inflate the size of cabinet by 25% to reward your political followers. It's time to create a smaller, more focused government and actually be a leader.

A two-year public sector wage freeze across the board for all of us, whether it's teachers, firefighters, us as MPPs—that will save \$2 billion a year for a minimum of two years. That will buy us time for deeper, lasting structural reforms to the way that government operates and spends.

Moving new government employees from expensive, gold-standard pension plans to more affordable retirement savings programs, like those common in the private sector, is the right thing to do, and it's time we brought that to the province as well.

1410

Then we need to eliminate programs we simply cannot afford any longer. Look, it's not whether it's a good program or a bad program; it's what we can afford. So we will look at every government program and put it to a very simple test. If it's a priority and it's necessary and it's working, then you keep it; if it's broken, then you fix it. But if it can no longer justify its value to the taxpayers who pay the bills, you have to shut it down. Use that to balance the books and invest in priorities.

We must create a government worker salary arbitration system that recognizes and respects the ability of taxpayers to pay the bill. I referenced earlier, Speaker, how this government, instead of hitting the brakes, has chosen not simply to head over the fiscal cliff—

Mr. John Yakabuski: They're laying on the gas pedal.

Mr. Tim Hudak: —they're laying on the gas pedal. I was shocked, when I read through the budget papers: not a single mention of arbitration, and the across-the-board mandatory wage freeze has been thrown out the window. If they don't have the basic resolve to make those simple and necessary decisions, they have no capacity whatsoever to balance the books of the province, to rein in spending—another reason why we need a change in government, a change in the team that leads this great province of Ontario.

We must seek out the best deal on every project, based on merit, cost and quality—not political allegiance. We will open up all contracts for competitive bidding, because if someone can do a better job for the taxpayer at a better price, don't they deserve that contract at the end of the day? Of course they do.

I think it's time we injected in the public sector what has worked in the private. These tools of the 1970s and 1980s are no longer relevant for the economy or the rightfully sophisticated demands of taxpayers in the 21st century. It's time we brought performance pay into the public service, Speaker. I know the members of the Liberal Party oppose this, so let me explain why I think it is important.

When you look at what has worked outside of government, you actually set goals, you measure outcomes and then you reward those who helped you achieve those outcomes. We need that in the civil service in the province of Ontario. I know front-line workers in the civil service; they'd react very positively to this message. If you're working hard, if you're making a big effort, every effort you can for the benefit of those who receive those services—maybe our most vulnerable, our students, those in the health care system—you should be rewarded for that effort.

Speaker, there is some teacher out there who is doing an excellent job in the classroom working with our kids, helping to raise the bar in her classroom. She's staying after school for the extra time to help that special needs kid who is struggling to read, to learn the joy of reading a book. If she's coaching the teams, doing the field trips, shouldn't we recognize that impact on the education of our kids and pay for performance, not simply based on their seniority?

If there is a nurse applying her newest training to help people get back on their feet in our health care system quicker than humanly thought possible, shouldn't we reward that excellent performance of our nurses in the system? Isn't it time that we brought performance pay? These things are just too critical to do the old ways. Let's bring performance pay in the government in the province of Ontario.

There are some ideas, Speaker, and there are lots more about how we actually make sure government lives within its means, how we set priorities and how we improve the quality of public services in the province of Ontario.

Let me add to that: Important as all of that is, you can't simply cut your way to prosperity. We will need to reduce spending, but you need to grow the economy, too. So that's the second thing I want to talk about from our PC plan to turn our province around. We've got to get our economic fundamentals right to create the climate for economic growth, for job creation, for investment again in Ontario.

That's why, Speaker, every close call, every tough decision, every argument must get resolved on the base of what it does to grow our economy, to create jobs. Businesses today will choose to locate where costs are lower, where approvals happen faster and they have the confidence to hire.

Here's what we're going to do to put the province of Ontario at the top of that list. We'll start by uprooting a growing thicket of red tape—the runaround, the hassle that stands in the way to innovation and job creation. It's almost like somebody, if they had the audacity to create a job in the province of Ontario—there's this wall of bureaucrats, rules and regulations standing in their way. It's time we respected job creators for the investors they are in our province, the confidence they have in our economy, so get out of their way, get behind them and help them create jobs in our great province again.

We need to modernize our labour laws so businesses can turn on a dime to meet changing global demand, to

take advantage of new market opportunities, to take on a tough new competitor.

It's past time for a very sensible approach when it comes to energy. It's one of the biggest costs of doing business. So let's put aside the view that it's some sort of plaything for the politicians, and let's treat it like an economic fundamental. We need to renew our alliance with, and our reliance on, traditional workhorses of the system. There's no doubt now, Speaker, that demand is lower. We've lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs. But I am confident that our economic job creation plan will bring good jobs back to the province; that industry and manufacturing will be on the rise again. Across the board, from health sciences to tech to engineering, this is going to be the place to be in all of North America. We need to make sure we have the hydro supply at a reliable and affordable price.

That's why a PC government will be sure to build around nuclear, hydroelectricity and natural gas: to build an affordable and reliable energy system so people can pay the bills and we'll bring jobs back to the province of Ontario.

Speaker, we need to reduce the tax burden on our job creators, to encourage them to invest in new equipment and technology, to create new product lines and then hire more people again.

We need to open up the skilled trades to create more good-paying jobs in a field we all know is facing a looming skills shortage. So we'll work with our colleges. We'll take out, out of the 1970s, our outdated rules around journeymen-to-apprenticeship ratios. There may have been some good things about the 1970s, Speaker—the music was pretty good; disco, maybe not so much—but why the Liberals are bringing these outdated 1970s policies around the trades—we have a plan that will create 200,000 good, well-paying jobs in the skilled trades in our province, and in so doing, we need to build an economy that is once again a magnet for the talented immigrants who know our future depends upon them.

Speaker, it is something of great pride that Ontario has always been a beacon to the best and the brightest anywhere in the world to come to our province, to come to our country to make their way—a place where they know they'll be rewarded based on hard work and the quality of what they put in. It troubles me that our share of economic immigrants has declined by 25% under the Liberal government. I understand why. New Canadians are increasingly going to BC or Saskatchewan or Alberta because they know they can build a business; they know they can get a good job; they know that their kids will actually get work in the field in which they study. I decry this decline that sees new Canadians heading west. I want to see them opening businesses here in the province of Ontario. I want to see the talent put to work in our great province. That's why we'll build on the Provincial Nominee Program: to invite more entrepreneurs into our province to create jobs not just for themselves but for others as well.

For the talented international students in our universities and colleges, we should offer an accelerated path to residency and citizenship, to see that talent building their own families and building the province of Ontario.

Speaker, an end to gridlock here in the GTA, to restore our productivity and get our goods to market by day, and to make sure that families get home to be together by night—I will say that our plan isn't going to rip up the existing streets, like that mess on St. Clair. Our plan is not going to throw good money after bad in a system where everybody's in charge and therefore no one is. The province will seize the wheel. We'll set the priorities. We will get the job done. I believe that world-class cities build underground, they build subways, and that's exactly what we'll do here in Toronto, in the GTA.

Speaker, that is how we can get out of this mess. Is it too much to ask? Well, not for the Ontario that I grew up in, not for the Ontario that I'm proud to call home, and not for the Ontario that I know today. All it takes is a new team, with a new plan for less spending and more jobs, built on the courage of our convictions and the strength of the proud history of the province of Ontario. Our plan will make Ontario lead this great country and lead this continent again.

Here we stand, at a moment of truth for our province. It is a time of great challenge and also a time of promise. We have a choice. We can go on wringing our hands and ask, "Why?" Or we can all lift ourselves up and ask, "Why not?" So why not, Mr. Speaker?

1420

But while it's a fine thing for Ontarians to draw inspiration from our past, we now need to look to our future. The future always offers hope, because we always have a choice, and it's a choice that's not about left or right but a choice of new solutions or more problems, a choice of progress or further decline. I will not ask the people of this province to vote against the other leaders, to vote against their plans, but to vote for our plan for a better Ontario.

Speaker, here's the choice before us in the weeks ahead: Look, if you think Ontario is on the right track, if you think this is the best we can do, the good news is, you have two parties to choose from: the Liberals or the NDP.

But if you believe that Ontario can do a lot better than this, if you believe Ontario can fulfill its destiny as the lead province in Canada, the lead place in North America, then I ask you to look at our plan. It will get the economy going and make sure government lives within its means.

That's why, when it comes to this budget vote, we say with the full strength of our convictions that we must change course now. There's no time to lose. Every day's delay in turning away from reckless overspending is another day that's lost to more debt, more job losses and further decline. And the longer it takes, the deeper the hole, the worse our challenges become, the harder the lifting and the heavier the lifting will be, to actually get us back on our feet.

As the days slip away, more children will be born to anxious Ontario parents, each one with a \$20,000 debt inheritance: debt they didn't ask for, debt they're not responsible for, debt that they can't even comprehend, and certainly debt they can't afford. But that's the future they face if we don't change course today.

So this isn't about Kathleen Wynne; it's not about Andrea Horwath; it's not about Tim Hudak. It's about the future of this great province of Ontario, our vision of a strong, confident, prosperous province. The solutions to our problems: They're easy to see; they're just hard to do. But let's begin at it today.

I see an Ontario of great destiny, a province that is going to rise again. If we make these decisions now, we can bring good jobs back to our province. We can restore investment in Ontario. We can give hope to business owners and start-ups, small and big alike.

I commit here in this place and today to the people of this proud province that I will not run from the tough decisions. I will say to the people of this proud province that I will protect the things that we care about, and I propose to do exactly what needs to be done.

So until that time, I say to the business owner who's struggling to hang on: I want you to hang on a little longer. To those who have packed up and moved away from Ontario: I want you to come back home. To the moms and dads who are struggling to make ends meet, to provide for their family: Hope is on the way. And to the business owners and investors who are looking to other provinces, states or countries: I want you to take a good, hard look at the great province of Ontario that we will build, because our comeback is about to begin.

So, friends, let's stop waiting for better, and let's make better happen.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm pleased to recognize the member for Thornhill.

Mr. Peter Shurman: I'm pleased to continue on behalf of the Progressive Conservative Party. I've got to say right off the top that in beginning to prepare for this debate, thinking about the budget motion, an expression came into my mind that has been there for many, many, many years. I can't think of one that applies more directly to this situation, and I say it to all of my Liberal friends sitting on the other side: You cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.

Interjections.

Mr. Peter Shurman: And you can't.

It was Thursday. It was the day that opposition and media go early in the morning into the lock-up. For those watching us at home, the lock-up is where we get a preview of the budget before the finance minister actually delivers his speech here in the House.

I took a look at this document. In fact, I have it here with me. It's not a prop; that's what the budget looks like. I thought to myself, "Is my watch wrong? Because it seems to me like it must be April Fool's Day." But it was no joke. It was not a joke.

Here's what isn't the joke: The Liberals didn't even write their own budget. The budget is essentially a pre-

nuptial agreement between the NDP and the Liberals to serve their own political gain—both of those parties' political gain. But at least in the case of the NDP, the NDP actually believes that it's helping Ontarians; I'll give them that. It's not about you out there; it's about the Liberals saving their own backsides.

The NDP has a laundry list of demands that has basically been accepted in total by the Liberal government. It costs an additional \$1 billion annually, and, as amply illustrated by my leader moments ago, that's another \$1 billion we just don't have. And it's not about whether we have it or not; it's about keeping people in power who have no business and no legitimate claim to power in the province of Ontario today.

Springtime is supposed to be a time of growth and renewal. With this budget, the only thing that this government has renewed and the only thing that it has grown is its commitment to the old Dalton McGuinty playbook of taxing you more and then spending all of that and then some. The Wynne-Horwath alliance will increase the financial burden on our province, and it will exacerbate our jobs crisis, further endangering our province's vital signs and, more importantly, endangering your personal financial viability sitting at that kitchen table or that home office desk every night trying to figure out (a) whether you can pay the bills and (b) whether you're going to have a job to be able to pay them.

These people have failed to produce a realistic and credible debt reduction plan to restore confidence in our economy and to create jobs, two things that have been continuously missing from budgets presented by that party over a period of years. This budget is brought to you by people who are long on rhetoric and low on math skills. We need to balance the budget, but the Liberals cannot fathom what the word "balance" even means. How do you control spending without so much as a single piece of legislation aimed at doing that?

There's a favourite page that I have in this book, and this is a book that—we'll hear, over the course of the coming weeks, Liberals standing up in question period or in debate, and they'll say that we didn't read it, but my favourite page is page 109. There's a chart on page 109.

I have to tell a story. A couple of weeks ago, our party went to the public—went through the media to the public, and people will recall this—and we said, "You know, they talk about balancing the budget, bringing the deficit to zero by 2017-18. That's what they say they're going to do, but the problem is, they don't provide any detail. There's nothing in there on costs; they just have little hash marks across the cost line, and they have a zero at the bottom line in 2017-18. How are they going to do it?" We challenged them.

I have to say, they gave us an answer. They put real numbers in there. What they say is, in the interim figures as to the way we finished the year that ended March 31, that they spent about \$114 billion. According to plan, in the budget just presented, that will rise to \$117 billion in the year that we've already started. So in terms of controlling anything, they're already \$3.6 billion ahead.

Then—oh, by next year, it will only reduce by about \$1 billion to \$118 billion, and look at that: in the year after that, they'll hold it at \$118 billion. Then we take the extended outlook to 2016-17, where, guess what? The expenditures will again be \$118 billion. We go to the final year, the year in which they're going to bring to a balance the bottom line, and the expenditures that year, surprisingly, will again be \$118 billion.

This is a government that has been around through 10 budgets, that has managed to double spending in the province of Ontario over that period of time, that has doubled the debt to something pushing close to \$300 billion, and these are the people that we are going to trust to hold the line for four years? Who are you kidding?

Ontarians already pay more and work longer for this McGuinty-Wynne government. You Liberal MPPs over there: You'll stand in your places and you'll debate. You'll say that we were voting against it before we read it. Well, now we've read it, so I ask a question: Have you? Because I doubt it. Those folks were ready to vote for this budget, no matter what it said, when it came out, because that's what they were told to do. If you had read it, how could you even begin to believe that your party has Ontario's back? Because it doesn't.

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Here's some interesting factoid material. From January 1 to June 10, every single dollar that you make goes to the government. Tax freedom day for Ontarians is now seven days later than it was in 2009. We've gained a week in about three and a half years. You now work seven days more for this government than you did in 2009. That's remarkable. Anyway, you're still working for them right now. As you can tell, it's another four weeks before we achieve that point and have tax freedom.

Through the McGuinty-Wynne government's unbridled spending, Ontario has the highest debt in our history—146 years of history for Ontario—staring down the barrel of a financial gun right now, as we are at \$273 billion and looking, within the next couple of years, at \$300 billion in accumulated debt. How do you ever pay that back? You don't; your kids do and your grandkids do, if they can, if we can bail this province out in the intervening time. That's why we need a change.

This is a pivotal moment for Ontario, Speaker. Our province's finances are in shambles. We have been called into question by Moody's and by S&P, have lost 300,000 well-paid manufacturing jobs, and have seen many companies pack up and just leave—two more just recently—and we don't see a lot of new ones arriving to replace those. Our province has at any given moment, right now, between 500,000 and 600,000 people looking for work. Yes, Premier Wynne, it's 7.7% unemployment. I thought you might want to know that, because you didn't last week.

This is not the prosperous Ontario where I raised my kids.

We are overachieving in debt. Equalization payments are tilting inward as other provinces take care of Ontario. If debt interest were a ministry, it would be the third-

highest-spending government department: number one, health, as arguably it should be; number two, education; and number three, the ministry of interest, just to service our debt.

With continued spending in this budget, without any cutbacks, the Liberals are trying to fight fire with wind. What do you do then? You spread the flames.

The McGuinty-Wynne government celebrates our debt and our deficit. The fact that we are not \$15 billion in the hole for last year, but “only” \$9.8 billion—they applauded that when Finance Minister Sousa read his budget speech last week. They applauded it. Who knew that sheep could clap? Only the Ontario Liberals would celebrate a \$9.8-billion deficit. Not only that, Speaker; it was a fudged number. By way of proof, the deficit in the new budget actually increases next year to \$11.7 billion. These are the people who say that they’re going to arrive at balance in 2017-18. They must have been born with silver spoons in their mouths to think that these numbers that I’m quoting are small amounts of money. What a sense of entitlement.

It is imperative to get our province’s fiscal house in order, and this government doesn’t even begin to be remorseful. The first step towards recovery is admitting that you have a problem. The McGuinty-Wynne Liberals are unable to admit that they have gravely failed this province. They have been negligent caregivers to the province of Ontario. Based on facts and figures, we know that they cannot balance this budget. There are some good ideas thrown in—there always are—but they are so drowned out by the fact that the Liberals cannot manage the books, never have and, as far as I can see, never will. But they do know how to tax, and they do know how to spend your money.

Premier Wynne’s first move was to instantly increase public sector spending through the growth in the size of the Liberal government’s cabinet—and I might say, to the point of ministries, two out of three of those ministries are sustaining increasing expenditures in the year that we’re in now, this budget year. Premier Wynne gave her friends job-title bumps and pay raises. And I think this is really worth noting, for our friends watching at home: There are no Liberal MPPs who do not have some kind of a pay bump-up through an appointed designation—not one. Pay freeze for MPPs? Well, not Liberal MPPs.

During the McGuinty-Wynne tenure, the Premier “increased program spending by an average of 6.1% annually—nearly twice the combined rate of inflation and population growth,” which was at 3.1%. Those figures are courtesy of the Fraser Institute. The Liberal government’s deficit is your money. It’s your money. They owe you money. But guess what? You get to pay it.

Even with our current record low interest rates, interest payments on Ontario’s debt will reach just about \$11 billion this year. They will consume 9.2% of government revenues, again citing statistics that come from the Fraser Institute.

Again, quoting from—or at least paraphrasing—my leader, when you take 9.2% of the revenue away just to service debt, what kinds of services are you giving up? What kinds of needs that need to be fulfilled are you missing out on? That’s money that is not going to expand health care. It’s not going towards infrastructure. It’s not going towards any kind of investment. It’s not creating jobs. You want that transit? They’ll use revenue tools. I love that phrase: revenue tools. Shall I translate? Taxes. That’s what it is. It’s taxes. This government does not have the skill or the backbone to fix our serious problems.

The Minister of Finance himself is one of the most expensive guys around. He cost \$275 million. He’s the \$275-million man. How do I draw that conclusion? His seat was one of the ones saved when they paid for the non-existent Mississauga power plant. He was the recipient of that saved seat. You had to pay even to get a date from him—no, not that kind of a date—the late budget date, which was announced where? At the Economic Club. The business elite knew when your late budget date was coming; the rest of the hard-working people of Ontario: You had to wait to hear.

By the way, poor Minister Sousa. I was there. He didn’t get any applause over there when he announced his deficit figure. He only got it here, from all of you Liberals over there.

Budgets are typically tabled in March. We are now debating this budget in May. Ontarians have been left waiting; now they will be left holding the bag.

The Liberals hired renowned economist Don Drummond to take a fine-toothed comb to each and every ministry and expense in this province. His ultimate conclusion was the same as ours: Cut spending and adhere to a strict debt-reduction plan.

His instruction, however—and this is important—was clarion clear: Do this fast and do it all. Instead, they are going to “try” to implement 60% of his recommendations. At least, we’re supposed to believe that.

This a failing grade for a government that prides itself on education. They don’t grasp the material. They don’t understand our province’s current financial state. That’s also ignoring expert advice from their own man, like your doctor telling you that you should lose weight, you should eat better, you should quit smoking, you should start exercising, you should swear off Twinkies—keep doing everything else and claim success. You just stop the Twinkies and you’re successful—I don’t think so. No restraint or self-control for this government—none. Ontario’s economy needs to immediately be jolted back to life. It needs a defibrillator. It needs resuscitation. Somebody is out there ready to do it. We’re out here ready to do it.

This government needs to get back to the drawing board or it needs to just get out of the way. The Minister of Finance and I both have past careers in the private sector; some people know that. Prior to our public life here at Queen’s Park, we share that. We both know that when you don’t produce the best possible results, what

happens? You're fired, or you're just plain out of business. That is the ultimate in accountability. It is the price for failure.

We have a government that has kicked Ontarians in the teeth. It has left them feeling winded, and now it's coming back to take another blow. Ontarians must demand action from this government to control costs, and Ontarians need proof that it's being done. This budget fails to live up to any of the expectations.

Tim Hudak and the Ontario PCs have been the only party willing to consider views and take direct input from Ontarians, the only party that has shown strong, stable and principled leadership. Our Paths to Prosperity white papers have been released on issues that mattered to people, like creating jobs and fixing our economy, health care, home care, education, and reducing red tape for business and cutting government bureaucracy.

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We have a comprehensive and a concrete plan to create jobs, to control spending and to get our economy back on track—we have it. As a matter of fact, I might point out that all of the conclusions of all of those white papers are contained in a minority section of the report that was given not only to this House but to the finance minister, done by the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, so that he could see what our plan is. It's public, it's there, but most importantly, we have it.

Ontario has lived nine and a half years with the same McGuinty-Wynne tax-and-spend agenda. The latest, greatest example of how they use your money? Imagine how far that billion-plus dollars burned by the McGuinty-Wynne election team would have gone right now, or the \$300 million and counting that they handed teachers to cover their missteps of last fall.

For the media, I have your headline for tomorrow: "Ontario Liberals: More for Themselves than for You." It's all at your expense, people of Ontario.

You know, Einstein's definition of insanity pops into my mind, and I think most people know it, but it bears repeating: Doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result. But that's what they're doing. The McGuinty-Wynne legacy is debt, lost jobs, excessive spending and bloating the public sector, all at the expense of the people of Ontario.

Now, thanks to this government, the public sector is now the new elite, funded by Ontarians, protected by union bosses, and all brought to you by the McGuinty-Wynne Liberals. You pay; they retire with a big pension. Are you okay with that? Because I'm not. Public sector compensation now exceeds that of the private sector by 14%—Fraser Institute figure; also, figures done by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. If you add in pensions and health benefits that they get, that you don't—about a 27% differentiation. Don't believe me. Take a look at the article two weeks ago in Maclean's magazine that talks about the new elite, which is people who work in the broader public sector who are the beneficiaries of this kind of perk that nobody else can get.

You know, it sounds like I'm very anti-union. I want to point out that it's not unions that I'm against. I myself was a member of a union for about 40 years, so it's not as if I'm against unions. But unions have to understand in the broader public sector, in the public service, that their members are no different than any other Ontarians and that, in the parlance of the day, we all have to take one for the team—and you know what? The rest of us have.

It's almost as if the government—and I'm quoting from the former finance minister—went after the low-hanging fruit. That's what he said about the budget last year. Well, now we're down to the pits, so what are we going to do? The pendulum has now swung in a completely opposite direction. Only the Ontario PCs are willing to stand up for taxpayers and not allow this bad behaviour to continue. We will stand up to schoolyard bullies. That's what we're going to do.

Over half of all Ontario government program spending goes to public sector labour costs. Tim Hudak and the PC caucus have called for a two-year, across-the-board broader public sector legislated wage freeze, to save \$2 billion each year and begin the process of controlling government spending—and it's fair.

I might point out that that was a bill I tabled in this House myself about two months ago, and it actually passed second reading. It passed second reading because they couldn't whip enough of their members in here to vote against it.

Ontarians have been paying for raises for unionized government workers while they themselves are struggling to make ends meet. How fair is that? We cannot cut the deficit without putting a temporary brake on excessive costs. Premier Wynne doesn't realize the financial burden that the Liberal government's political pandering to union bosses has placed on our pocketbooks. It has been nine and a half years of driving up public sector spending and putting the demands of union bosses first—nine and a half years of taxpayers footing the bill for the Liberals' political game.

They claim that it's all under control. It's not. Want an example? The sunshine list came out a couple of months ago. The sunshine list, for those who don't know, is the list of all people employed in one way or another by the government who earn in excess of \$100,000. It increased by 8,823 people—almost 9,000 more people making \$100,000-plus this year than last year. How is it possible for that government to tell us that there's no increase for anybody, that they've maintained a zero across the board, if you add 9,000 people to a list of folks who earn six figures? I don't begin to understand. Does it sound like control to you? I don't think so, Speaker.

There is no question, either, that auto insurance rates need addressing. They're high in the province of Ontario; we agree. In fact, premiums have increased by 65% in the last 10 years—65% in the last 10 years. What strikes you as coincidental about 10 years? Oh, yes, that's the period of time they've been in power—65%.

The Insurance Bureau of Canada called this 15% NDP idea in the budget—reducing auto insurance by 15%—a band-aid solution that “may score political points but for the long term all stakeholders need to continue to push for needed reforms and fight fraud.” That’s what the finance committee looked at last summer; that’s what they confirmed was the problem. That’s what we have to be addressing. But, no, we’ll just lop 15% off the top because that’s what the third party wants. You know the NDP doesn’t have much of a track record when it comes to arithmetic, and they’re the ones who are driving the process. This proposal is coming from the same party that put forward a private member’s bill last spring that would have seen convicted drunk drivers paying less for auto insurance. Fifteen per cent across the board also means that bad drivers get to pay less, too. Is that what they really want? Is that what you really want? Is that what all of you out there really want?

And who do you really want dictating how your tax dollars are going to be spent? This is an NDP-Liberal coalition in the bud—maybe not so much in the bud. It is a race to drive Ontario into the ground. Liberal-NDP coalition: What a joke. It’s a volatile comedy of errors, but it is not a laughing matter, Speaker. This is an epic tragedy for Ontario. This is a prime example of failing to address the root cause of an issue.

Auto insurance fraud: \$1.6 billion a year. What could that buy? The anti-fraud task force was created in 2011 to produce regulatory changes. Have you seen any regulatory changes? I don’t think so. What’s the first change? The third party says, “We won’t vote for your budget unless you put in a 15% drop,” so they do it. That’s regulatory change. What nonsense.

There has been a lot of talk about the good work that it did. We saw no action. We need our economy to fire on all cylinders. With all of the guessing on the cost of moving the power plants, it’s kind of like Drew Carey from *The Price Is Right* is in the Premier’s office, and he’s yelling, “Come on down. Let’s spin the wheel. Actual retail price? Well, we’ll subpoena you to find out.” With your ill-fated and convoluted attempts to cover up the cost to taxpayers, there is no doubt that Liberal Xerox machines and black markers and whiteout all work.

I want to conclude this, Speaker, by saying a couple of things. We will hold your feet to the fire. We will get to

the bottom of that scandal. The need for this negligent government to cut spending has never been more urgent. As a matter of fact, the need for this negligent government to go has never been more urgent.

Ontarians, talk to your credit rating agencies. Renowned economists like Don Drummond agree that we must get our spending under control. Because of our increasing debt and the lack of a credible plan to eliminate it, both Moody’s and Standard and Poor’s questioned or downgraded Ontario’s credit ratings last year. That was the warning, the alert. Even the most eternal optimists know that we are in dire straits and that there will be no light at the end of the tunnel without immediate action. We need to send a serious signal to investors that Ontario is ready to tackle its economic challenges and get our financial house in order.

The Ontario PC Party believes that the government should assist Ontario families, not cause a further strain on household finances. The same players and the same story for the past nine and a half years—Speaker, it has to stop. We need a government that delivers on its promises. Balancing the books by 2017-18 will be mathematically impossible. There is no plan to get our economy back on solid ground—no new jobs, no leadership, no backbone. The only alternative is clear: The Ontario PCs have a plan to get Ontario moving again and get our fiscal house in order to regain lost jobs in this province. That, Speaker, is precisely what we intend to do. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I’m pleased to recognize the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

Mr. Paul Miller: I move adjournment of the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Debate adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Orders of the day?

Hon. John Milloy: As is the tradition, I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1451.

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	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Piruzza, Hon. / L'hon. Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Agriculture and Food / Ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation Premier / Première ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Vacant	London West / London-Ouest	
Vacant	Windsor–Tecumseh	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Michael Prue
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak
Grant Crack, Kim Craitor
Vic Dhillon, Michael Harris
Rob Leone, Bill Mauro
Taras Natyshak, Taras Natyshak
Rick Nicholls, Michael Prue
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Soo Wong
Dipika Damerla, Steven Del Duca
Victor Fedeli, Catherine Fife
Kevin Daniel Flynn, Monte McNaughton
Michael Prue, Peter Shurman
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Donna H. Cansfield
Bas Balkissoon, Rick Bartolucci
Sarah Campbell, Donna H. Cansfield
Mike Colle, Rosario Marchese
Laurie Scott, Todd Smith
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day (pro tem.)

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson
Laura Albanese, Lorenzo Berardinetti
Joe Dickson, Jim McDonell
Phil McNeely, Paul Miller
Randy Pettapiece, Monique Taylor
Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laura Albanese
Laura Albanese, Teresa J. Armstrong
Steven Del Duca, Bob Delaney
Frank Klees, Jack MacLaren
Rob E. Milligan, Shafiq Qadri
Jonah Schein
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Bas Balkissoon, Gilles Bisson
Steve Clark, Mike Colle
Garfield Dunlop, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Cindy Forster, Lisa MacLeod
Bill Mauro
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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des comptes publics**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Toby Barrett
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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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Joe Dickson, Randy Hillier
Rod Jackson, Monte Kwinter
Peter Tabuns, John Vanthof
Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Ted Chudleigh
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Margaret R. Best
Ted Chudleigh, Cheri DiNovo
Ernie Hardeman, Helena Jaczek
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha
Jane McKenna
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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