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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

Wednesday 15 May 2013

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des débats
(Hansard)**

Mercredi 15 mai 2013

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 15 mai 2013

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

STRONGER PROTECTION
FOR ONTARIO CONSUMERS ACT, 2013
LOI DE 2013 RENFORÇANT
LA PROTECTION
DU CONSOMMATEUR ONTARIEN

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 14, 2013, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 55, An Act to amend the Collection Agencies Act, the Consumer Protection Act, 2002 and the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act, 2002 and to make consequential amendments to other Acts / Projet de loi 55, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les agences de recouvrement, la Loi de 2002 sur la protection du consommateur et la Loi de 2002 sur le courtage commercial et immobilier et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois.

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Good morning, everyone. I have two words for those of a certain age in this chamber when talking about consumer rights, and those two words are Vic Tanny's. Anybody remember Vic Tanny's?

Interjections.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Remember Vic Tanny's? You're looking at a woman who had a lifetime membership to Vic Tanny's. I took that out about a month before the place closed down.

I also bought a beautiful dining room table. It had some flaws in the wood that appeared over time. It also had a lifetime warranty. The place that made it closed down. What can I say: consumer rights in Ontario over history.

This bill deals with consumer rights. It makes some small steps forward for those who are besieged by water heater salespeople, debt settlement agencies and real estate brokers. One wonders why energy marketers aren't in the mix, because that's where we receive—certainly in my office—the greatest number of complaints.

As usual with most Liberal government bills, it doesn't go far enough—we can amend that in committee—but I hesitate to really go full scale in attack mode, as I think some of my colleagues have done, on those who come

door to door and try to sell us things. I'm also the daughter of a father who, during the Great Depression, the only job he could get was selling vacuum cleaners door to door. Quite frankly, we in this chamber all knock on people's doors and engage in telemarketing. So again, I hesitate to go full scale anti those who have to do that for a living.

Tough times call for all sorts of jobs, and many people have had to do that, including our own children. I remember that my daughter worked for a student painting company, where she went and knocked on doors to sell contracts. And hey, I just joined up with Greenpeace, a wonderful organization. How did I join up? Again, because they knocked on my door. So let's not attack small business here. Let's not attack those who try to make a go of it. It's hard enough to get small business done. However, of course, we need protection against those who would assail us unscrupulously.

I had a constituent come to me and talk about debt resettlement, who said, "I did a consumer plan through a debt resettlement company where I'm paying back"—she owed a great deal of money to a great deal of places—at usurious interest rates, I might add—on credit cards and other loans. She went to debt resettlement and they came up with a consumer plan. But this young woman was so in over her head, owed so much money, that even with a repayment plan that essentially robbed her of her right to access to credit at all, she would be in debt for a long, long time.

I said, "Did they discuss bankruptcy with you?" She said, "Well, they discussed bankruptcy with me but I couldn't afford to go bankrupt." There's a concept that only Ontarians may understand fully: She couldn't afford to go bankrupt. Why could she not afford to go bankrupt? Because the fee that the debt resettlement company was going to charge her was more than she could afford. This is absurd. I think, Mr. Speaker, on the face of it, it's absurd. Here are folk who are already in debt; they're coming to an agency for help. The agency can give them help if they so wish. Sometimes they do, but charging huge fees up front to give that help is quite frankly unethical—it's unethical.

This bill goes some small way towards rectifying that. The sad reality is, of course, that the punishment here doesn't really quite fit the crime. Taking away licences—you know what that means: That means that 12345 Inc. opens up again as 891011 Inc. Really, there have to be some serious consequences for those who engage in robbing—and that's what they're doing: robbing the public.

I, along with the member from Oak Ridges–Markham, a couple of years back actually talked and delivered a two-party bill to this assembly dealing with franchisees who were losing their life savings, particularly in racialized communities, because they had invested with a franchisor who was less than scrupulous. We're not talking about the costs of water heaters here, or hundreds of dollars for debt resettlement; we are actually talking about tens of thousands, in some instances, where again, innocent victims invest in franchisor schemes and really never get their money's worth. In fact, some of them simply leave the country, and they're left holding the debt and none of the proceeds for that investment.

The problem here—and the problem in fact across the board—is, what do you do when this happens to you? What do you do if you are the victim of someone unscrupulous who has just stolen a great amount of money from you? You can go to the Minister of Consumer Services and you'll probably get a sympathetic ear, but that's not going to get your money back. The only recourse left to most people in Ontario is the civil court system. Quite frankly, that's the recourse that most people have, and that's it. That's only available to those with money. So here you are, you've invested \$25,000 in a franchise that never panned out, you lose your life savings, and you want to go after the person. He may live down the street from you, but to go after him you have to hire a lawyer, and you have to invest thousands of dollars just to go after him to try to recoup what you've already lost. This makes no sense.

So what do we need? What do we really need? We really need a consumer advocate; that's what we need, Mr. Speaker. We need somebody who is going to go to bat for those who get robbed by anybody, whether it's a water heater, whether it's a gym membership, whether it's a table manufacturer, whether it's debt resettlement—somebody who's going to stand up for you. You need that; you absolutely need it.

0910

What else do you need? You need to be able to access the legal system and you need to be able to do that at an affordable price. This means an expansion of legal aid so that folk who can't otherwise afford to hire a lawyer could actually get some legal representation if they're trying to go after somebody who has stolen from them.

We also need some real repercussions for those who engage in this kind of practice. We don't only need to take their licence away; we need fines that are substantial. We need to actually impose those fines and collect them. We need to go after these people and make sure they don't just reopen under another name somewhere else. We need to do that too.

By the way, one of the greatest consumer frauds happening right now is in the development sphere. Just the other night I was at a meeting in my riding that was organized against a 30-storey tower or two right at the edge of High Park. This is an abomination to all those who live there. Over 100 people at this meeting all wanted a say in the kind of development that was going to happen

in their neighbourhood, and guess what? Guess what? They're not going to get it, because the developers have deep pockets. They can hire lawyers and city planners, and they can actually go all the way to the Ontario Municipal Board, fight and win there against a group of community activists who are taking a day off work and have no resources.

This is the kind of true fraud that's perpetrated across the entire city of Toronto. We in the New Democratic Party have demanded, in fact, that the OMB get out of Toronto affairs, that it not be there. We have a planning department; we have an appeal process. Why are they there in the beginning? They're the last bastion for scoundrels in the development area in Toronto. So there's a huge area that's not addressed by this. But certainly, again, as far as it goes, it's a little step, a dainty, little step forward in the right direction, which we're hoping to strengthen at committee and which needs to be strengthened.

In terms of the real estate part of this, it's very strange. I don't quite understand why the Liberal government is going after real estate agents, but who knows? Maybe there is something in it for them. I guess we'll find that out at committee as well. I wish they'd go after the OMB and go after, again, the kind of legitimized scoundrels who are really wreaking havoc in some of our neighbourhoods.

To sum up, think twice before you invest in lifetime memberships in anything. Think twice before you buy anything with a lifetime guarantee; chances are, it's not. Work to strengthen this bill and, my goodness, work to strengthen consumer protection, period, across Ontario, because we have so precious little of it. We need way, way more; way more than this bill can provide, way more than is even envisaged by this government, including getting rid of the OMB in Toronto affairs. So I'm looking forward to the committee; I'm looking forward to strengthening this. And again, don't buy anything with a lifetime guarantee.

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

Mr. Bob Delaney: It's always a pleasure to follow my friend and colleague from Parkdale–High Park. While it is not the subject of this bill, I certainly share her antipathy toward the Ontario Municipal Board.

But let's talk about what's in this bill. What's in the bill is a series of measures aimed at helping consumers with regard to door-to-door sales and protecting them from some of the naked abuses these days in door-to-door sales. We've all encountered it. It seems to happen around dinnertime.

The one I enjoyed was the guy who came and tried to sell me energy services. He kept going on about how the government required him to do this. I looked down, and all of the things that seemed to be there were there. There were very nice plastic-laminated tags; everything was all colour coordinated. But it was all phonier than a \$3 bill. Finally, I brought out my legislative ID card, because I just gotten home, and I said, "Excuse me, I am the government," and he turned tail and ran.

That gives you an idea of just how naked the abuses are these days in door-to-door sales. What does this bill do? It's going to prohibit upfront fees before services are rendered. It limits the amount of fees. It requires something we don't have now: clear contract disclosures. And it prohibits misleading sales practices and misleading advertising, because some of it is not just misleading; it's an out-and-out lie.

There's very strong evidence these days of harmful practices used by companies that offer debt settlement services. Believe it or not, at the moment there's not a lot of legislation governing misleading or predatory practices in debt settlement services. This bill is going to fix that.

In other types of door-to-door sales, this bill contains important measures that restore sanity and fairness to the marketplace, and we should get on with it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: I listened very carefully to the member from Parkdale–High Park, and I would say this bill does address some of the consumer issues and consumer protection issues. I think, more importantly, she spoke with some detail and some passion on the part dealing with the collections and debt settlement services. I tend to agree.

Now, I would say that, in Ontario today, the biggest debt and problem for most homeowners—especially seniors—is the extraordinarily expensive energy bills that people are getting. In fact, right now, if you can't pay your energy bill they'll shut the power off. If they shut the power off, first of all there's a disconnect fee, there's a reconnect fee, and then there's a—you have to give the utility a down payment or at least a letter of credit of some sort. So this government could do a lot more without this bill to affect the consumers of Ontario—protecting the consumers of Ontario—by making life more affordable.

If I look at even filling up the car with gas today—there's a good example. We get a lot of complaints in the riding about the price of gas. When they added the HST to the gas, that was about 10 cents or 12 cents a litre overnight when they harmonized the HST, just on the tax increase of the provincial portion of the HST—eight cents per dollar. If gas is \$1.50, that's 12 cents. That's 12 cents overnight on the price of gas.

I don't dispute that this bill has three sections, and the three sections are dealing with the consumer protection with respect to the door-to-door salespersons, the people aggressively selling hot water heaters or whatever else they are selling you at the door. I think the cooling-off period is a good idea. I would say the real estate industry—I'm supportive of the industry; it's regulated—but by providing some clearness that there can't be fees and commissions, those are appropriate covers for consumers in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

M. Michael Mantha: Ça me fait plaisir de rejoindre le débat ce matin. Ma collègue de Parkdale–High Park a

vraiment indiqué de bons points dans son discours où elle a apporté son point de vue du coin de sa région. Puis c'est de quoi qu'on devrait tout le temps apprécier dans la Chambre : de regarder d'où ces points de vue-là viennent et comment ça peut protéger les consommateurs.

Je veux juste rajouter à ce que mon collègue de Durham a indiqué sur les prix d'hydro. Oui, c'est vrai. Quand on regarde à vraiment trouver des mesures qui ne sont pas incluses dans ce projet de loi pour vraiment aider nos aînés et puis les personnes dans nos communautés, il faut vraiment qu'on regarde les décisions qui ont été faites dans le temps sur la TVH. Le soleil s'est couché et le lendemain matin les gens se sont levés et puis ont trouvé une augmentation ridicule, en fait, sur les prix des consommateurs. Et puis c'est vraiment ce que réellement il faudrait qu'on regarde.

Dans ce projet de loi, oui, il y a de bonnes étapes. Oui, il y a de bonnes mesures pour commencer la discussion et pour vraiment trouver une façon de protéger nos gens. C'est une bonne étape, mais il faut qu'on regarde aussi à implémenter des étapes où on voit qu'elles ont démontré du succès.

Pour vous donner un exemple, monsieur le Président, dans les communautés autochtones ils ont développé un genre de loi, un genre de politique où, avant qu'un vendeur de produits vienne dans leur communauté, il faut qu'il s'adresse au conseil; il faut qu'il s'adresse au chef de la communauté autochtone et lui demande avant de se présenter dans la communauté pour venir à bout de vendre ses produits. Et puis si ça ne se rend pas place, il ne peut pas rentrer. S'il rentre sans la permission du chef, de cette façon-là, les ventes sont plus ou moins éliminées.

On a eu beaucoup de succès dans mon bureau, à mon office. Ce sont ces idées mêmes qu'on peut retrouver et qu'on peut vraiment implémenter dans ce projet de loi.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Merci beaucoup. The minister responsible for seniors.

Hon. Mario Sergio: Thank you very much, Speaker. It's good to see you in the chair. We know that we are going to have a good day today.

I have to say that I appreciate the comment by the member from Parkdale–High Park, and I have to totally agree that I think this bill should travel to committee and make it even stronger. I think the intent of the bill is excellent. I'm very pleased that the minister has—she acted very quickly in bringing this piece of legislation to the House here, but I think the member is quite right: Let's move it on to the committee and let's get more information; let's bring it back; let's bring a better bill. I think the best thing we can do is give more protection for our consumers, for our people. I will be speaking on it shortly and I will address some of the issues that I've been facing.

0920

One of the comments that the member made—she doesn't know why there's a real estate portion. Again, it's the same thing, like all the others: protecting consumers. When you have a greedy real estate agent and

brokers who, for the sake of making a bit more commission, if you will, or getting more money for the vendor at the expense of other people—they've been causing a really serious problem on the market.

At the end, it is protecting the consumers who are there in the various fields. It doesn't matter who; it doesn't matter in what form. They are still our consumers. I think it's good to see this bill here. It does a number of things. I hope that we can expand on it and include lots of other things. I have some examples that I'm going to give during my few minutes later on, and I look forward to that. I commend the member for her remarks.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Parkdale–High Park has two minutes.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Thank you, everyone who had input. Certainly one of the things I would say to the member from Mississauga–Streetsville is: Exactly. Why aren't energy retailers included in this bill? Energy retailers surely are the ones we get the most complaints about.

Again, I go back to how we're the only province, I think we can say, where it costs too much for some folk to go bankrupt. This is an absurdity, but it's a reality. This bill makes some small steps. It needs to make bigger ones. It needs to have more repercussions on those who actually commit this kind of fraud.

Finally, something I didn't have a chance to speak about but is critically important in terms of consumer protection is payday lenders. Payday lenders are the scourge of this province. They charge over 500% interest. I tabled a bill a few years back to limit the interest charged to 35%. It had the backing of a great many consumer advocates. It is, in fact, the law in Quebec. That's why in Quebec they do not have payday lenders. If we really want to protect consumers, we would actually do the protection where it hits the most vulnerable. It hits the most vulnerable, with payday lenders who are springing up everywhere across the city and who—let's face it—only those who have no other resources go to. It's essentially legalized usury. The government knows that; we know it. We need to do way more about that.

Consumer protection, as far as it goes—yes, it's fine. Let's make it stronger. Let's make the repercussions more serious. But let's also look at the bigger picture of consumer protection in this province, and the best place to start is by shutting down all the payday lenders and actually allowing people to get out of debt in the first place.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Always a pleasure. Onward and onward.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Hon. Mario Sergio: I have a few minutes to address some of the content of this proposed legislation. We are dealing with Bill 55; it's called, properly, the Stronger Protection for Ontario Consumers Act, 2013.

Let me say, first of all, that I'm delighted to debate this particular piece of legislation. I have to compliment the Minister of Consumer Services for bringing it

forward quite expeditiously. I think it's high time. It's needed. I think the people we serve are very happy to see this piece of legislation coming through.

I have to say that if we lived in a perfect world, when we had a good piece of legislation like this one here we would immediately send it forward and do our very best to approve it as quickly as possible. At the same time, often we get not-so-nice pieces of legislation and we should do away with those pieces of legislation expeditiously as well. But reality sinks in and we are not living in a perfect world. We have to do what we have to do. I hope that the democratic process will take place and we'll send this bill to the proper committee and bring it back, hopefully, with some good amendments strengthening the bill and strengthening protection for our consumers.

I have a very active constituency, and part of this very active constituency is composed of many, many seniors. I don't have to tell you, Speaker, that one of the big problems that we have—it's not a problem, but it's a concern in Ontario here—is that some 35% of our senior population does not speak any of the two official languages, neither French nor English. Those are very vulnerable people.

Just to show how bad it is out there, on two particular occasions I happened to be home and my wife answered the bell. She goes and she's there talking for quite a while. It happened to be a young man. So I went to the door myself and I said, "What's up?" "This man wants to come in and he wants to inspect the hot water tank." The young man showed me the name tag. I looked at him and I said, "I don't think it's necessary. I don't think we have to. We have a fairly new furnace, a fairly new"—"I have to come in and take a look at your water tank." I said, "No, you don't have to. I thank you very much." "But I have to. I've been told by the company that we have to do this service." I said, "No. Thank you very much." So my wife is looking at me like, why am I treating this young man a bit harshly? I said, "I'm sorry. We know what we're doing and we don't have to have you in to take a look at the water tank." So he left—murmuring, but he left. This was one of the occasions.

One of the bad ones, Speaker, again comes from this active constituency that I have. Friday mornings I usually reserve for seeing constituents who want to speak to their local member. I have these two ladies, middle-aged if you will. They come in. One was smiling and the other one was very serious. So I said, "What can we do for you?" One says, "I have a problem," and the other one starts to laugh. I said, "Okay, who has the problem: the one laughing, or the one who is more serious?" She said, "Look, we have two contracts here bearing the signature of my husband. Why I am so upset"—and the other one is still laughing—"is because my husband passed away 10 years ago. There's no way that my husband has signed this particular contract." It was from one of the gas companies. As with many others that we receive from time to time, we managed to have it cancelled, but it took some time, and I wonder how many other people are out there

who are being taken. They may not be aware, and they keep on going and they get ripped off. I don't think that's fair.

I think this bill goes a long way in providing some protection for our consumers. Sometime even ourselves, Speaker—and I have to give you this example, because there could be other people out there who very innocently will be taken, and then they will have to suffer the consequences. As the member from Parkdale–High Park said, once it happens, what are you going to do? Are you going to go to court? Last year we made some changes to the patio. Our house is an older house; we have a little patio there with some pressure-treated wood, and some of the planks were quite old and cracked. We decided to change some of those. We had this acquaintance we knew, this contractor, and we didn't get anything in writing, I have to say. I'm ashamed to say, but we did it because we trusted the person. Maybe if there is a solution, some member of the House or someone listening there can tell me what to do. But he changed some of the two-by-fours, pressure-treated wood. What happened—and you would think that someone doing that type of work would know what kind of wood they have to buy. The wood was very fresh. What happened immediately after the installation? With the hot weather, the sap started to come out, so we couldn't use the patio anymore; it was just impossible. I have tried everything to make sure the sap wouldn't come up anymore—nothing doing. So I still have a problem; I still have to decide what I'm going to do with it. Perhaps I'll get cement. I may have to get it done again and have well-seasoned pressure-treated wood.

But addressing the bill itself, Speaker—

Hon. Jeff Leal: You should get the Speaker to help you. He's just built a home.

0930

Hon. Mario Sergio: I hope so—anyone with some knowledge of what to do, because it is a shame. I felt bad to go back to the guy, because, as I said, if he knew better, he wouldn't have done it. Like the member from Parkdale–High Park said, “Well, now that you've got it, what are you going to do about it?” It's one of those things. I have to live with it; I've got to make some changes, probably some more expenses, but I have to find a remedy.

But the bill that is in front of us is a good bill for protection for our consumers, for the people of Ontario. As I said before, I feel sorry, especially for a lot of our seniors, that they have difficulty. Sometimes they feel much compassion when somebody comes to the door, and it's very nice when they offer some help. They may not know; they do not understand.

A young lady came one day, a Saturday afternoon, and she spoke with respect to conserving energy and whatever; she gave me the big spiel. She said, “We are giving a dozen light bulbs once you sign the contract.” I said that's very nice, that's a nice incentive, but I said, we really don't need it. “You mean you don't want to take some freebies from the company?” I said, “I love your offer, but we really don't need it.”

They come with all kinds of ideas, all kinds of scams, and how many people are not prepared to be aware that we do have people—and we have people out there who want to make a living. This is the sad part. Sometimes, while they try to make a living, other people are being scammed, and we have to be very careful. It is our responsibility to see that our people are not ripped off and that the proper contract gets signed. So I'm glad to see the door-to-door sales and especially the debt settlement services as well—this has been a big issue for a long time.

I think I have mentioned very briefly a bit on the real estate side. I hope that we can do something because it can be very traumatic, especially for a young couple, when they drive around. They put in all kinds of offers, and they say, “You know, we are sick and tired of playing the game.” They may even pull out from the market or they end up even getting ripped off even more in some cases.

It's good to see the legislation here. I do hope that, indeed, it will go to committee quickly. I hope that we will have a good consultation from the public, from stakeholders, and bring it back quickly, as soon as possible, and enforce it on behalf of the consumers that we are trying to serve.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jack MacLaren: I'd like to commend the member from York West on a very interesting speech and touching on some very important and real situations, especially 35% of the people in this country have immigrated here and have trouble with the English language, or French even. For them to speak to somebody at the door who would be selling them a product or a service—or even debt settlement situations, but more commonly a salesman at the door—they could be somewhat vulnerable. I guess what I would say is generally most of those folks, I feel, are pretty sharp people. They had the initiative and ability to immigrate to this country, which is a major challenge. So they have their faculties with them. Even with language troubles, I would suggest that they're not without the means to make a decision and accept the responsibility for what they're doing.

We do live in a free country. We have to remember that, within this democracy and the freedoms that we offer—which is what's wonderful about Canada—you have the right to succeed and enjoy all the benefits of success, but you also have to accept the responsibility that there could be failure resulting from bad decisions. Most of us realize that, as mature adults in a free country, we want that opportunity to succeed, and we accept the responsibility that there could be failure.

I think that through education we can inform people that they have to be responsible for themselves, that there could be unscrupulous people knocking on their doors, offering them services that are inappropriate or too expensive, or something that's wrong. I think there are other ways than just legislation in helping people who are vulnerable to be protected from the odd person who might be unscrupulous, shall we say.

At the same time, I think we have to acknowledge that most salespeople are well-intentioned, good and honourable people. They're trying to make a living. They can't make a living unless they have a good reputation and are well thought of in their community, otherwise their career would be over very quickly. So we must be careful not to condemn a worthy industry that provides a good service.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Miss Monique Taylor: I'm happy to stand in response to the minister responsible for seniors. He absolutely made some really great points.

I know, myself, when I was an assistant to a city councillor, the many calls that I received from folks who had to deal with Direct Energy. I have to say, I hope that when we get to committee we can make sure we're putting energy into this bill, because the calls that I received about people who knocked on the doors and had seniors signing contracts, people who didn't speak very good English signing contracts—it was a major issue. This bill would protect them. But we need to really see that direct energy focused in here on this bill.

I was very fortunate to be able to get a lot of seniors off these contracts because they were seniors. But for folks who don't speak English very well, they didn't have that ability. There was no piece in the contract that said if a person wasn't able to understand correctly, then they would be given a second chance and be allowed out of it. Seniors do have that ability, so I'm happy to see that.

People knocking on doors—you know, everybody does need to make a living. Door-to-door sales is an important part, it's part of history, it's what folks have been doing for many years. But making those phone calls and making those appointments beforehand, I think, are a crucial part of that decision. That would only protect consumers further, by knowing that if someone does show up at their door, they shouldn't be allowing them in because there was no appointment made previously. We need to make sure that our seniors and our citizens are safe.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: First let me say that I'm very pleased this morning that we still have our beloved Ottawa Senators in the game. Thank you for allowing me to say this.

Back on Bill 55: It's amazing that in 2012 the ministry received over 3,200 complaints and inquiries on water heater rentals, which continues to rank number two on the ministry's top 10 complaints list.

I just want to thank the member from York West, the minister for seniors, for his presentation. My advice to the Ontarians who are listening to us this morning is never, never, never sign anything that is presented to you at the door. Take the contract, take the time to read it. You know that you have time to cancel it after. But never, never sign anything.

Currently, the Consumer Protection Act only has limited protection for consumers with regard to door-to-door water heater rentals. This legislation proposes a change, with better consumer protection for door-to-door sales of water heater rentals: It requires plain language. It prohibits delivery during an extended 20 days—because they wanted to come in the next morning to install it—so now the consumer will be protected. It provides stronger consumer remedies when these rules are breached, so you can cancel the contract. It requires mandatory recorded verification calls of key terms in contracts.

All of this needs to go to committee as soon as possible to make sure that Ontarians are protected.

0940

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rob Leone: I'm pleased to respond to the minister responsible for seniors' commentary today. I certainly hope that his skills as a minister are far superior to those as a handyman. Those stories, I think are obviously much—one of the things I like about this legislation, if I can be totally frank, is that everybody has a story about a time where they had wished, perhaps, that the consumer protection legislation was much more robust than it is. I think people have to navigate and, certainly as the Minister for Correctional Services alluded to, there has to be some degree of trust, which is at stake here.

From my perspective as well, Mr. Speaker, I think that an element of competition, where people are able to choose from a variety of providers, will not only ensure that a company can meet the best price for consumers, but also customer service factors in when consumers choose to go with a company or not.

Interestingly enough I had that constituent talk to me very recently about consumer protection legislation in the province of Ontario. His name is Ryan Smythe from Cambridge. He talked about how there is sporadic consumer protection with respect to return policies of products in Ontario. He was looking at other jurisdictions and modelling what we should do in Ontario after other jurisdictions. It just goes to show, Mr. Speaker, that people are actually talking about these sorts of things.

I think it is one of the responsibilities of legislators to come up with ways to protect consumers. From that perspective, I hope to contribute further to this debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The minister responsible for seniors has two minutes.

Hon. Mario Sergio: I want to thank all members who made a contribution to the bill: the member from Cambridge; the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services; the members from Hamilton Mountain and Carleton–Mississippi Mills, as well, Speaker.

The member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills is quite right: An older person, even though older, should have the knowledge of the “buyer beware” situation. But of course, Speaker, when I came to Canada—back in the 1950s and 1960s, we used to leave our car open in the driveway with the keys inside and our house door open—nothing would ever happen. But we are not living in that world

anymore; things have changed. Therefore, I think we have to be a bit more aware. We agree with that.

Let me say, Speaker, and I want to correct my record here: When I said 35% of the 55-plus speak no official language, actually it's 37%. Just to say a bit more, 68% of 55-plus are immigrants as well. Why do I say this? I think we are known as Canadians to be very affable, very trustworthy people. Sometimes, even though now it's changing, the views and mentalities are changing, we are still the type of people very trustworthy, gullible, and sometimes we do get taken.

I take the advice from my colleague, the Minister of Education; she has had some experience. I'm looking for some advice on how to get rid of my particular situation, but one of the good things in the bill is: no installation, no delivery of services whatsoever, within 20 days, for 20 days. I think this gives some time to consumers to think about what they have just signed, probably.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's my pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill 55, Stronger Protection for Ontario Consumers, and also to follow the minister responsible for seniors in this debate—a true gentleman.

All too often, those in good standing in many professions are marred by a few bad apples that tend to sour consumers. As politicians, I think we can all sympathize with this reality. But it's also important to set up rules across the board that are proactive, not simply react to the hot issue of the day. This bill is, in my opinion, yet another knee-jerk reaction following in the footsteps of some of the other Liberal bills, such as the Local Food Act and Wireless Services Agreements Act, which are somewhat light in substance. But watching this bill get introduced, I feel like I'm watching CBC's Marketplace: every week a new exposé on a shady practice that is hurting Ontario consumers. This episode it's water heaters; next it'll be wireless bills. While it makes for entertaining and informative television, it may not be the proper way to enact legislation.

Firstly, Bill 55 seeks to tackle the topical problem of door-to-door water heater sales. Getting tough on door-to-door sales is an easy thing for folks in this province to rally around. We've all had the unpleasant experience of a salesman stopping by, using high-pressure tactics such as asking to see your bills. Never, ever let them see your bills. They usually come at dinnertime. Maybe we should amend this bill to stop them from showing up at dinner. Maybe they're hungry and they want to be invited in. But in all seriousness, there are many concerns with this industry.

A recent report by the Homeowner Protection Centre outlined the key problems that currently plague the industry right here in Ontario. It's a thorough report, and it appears that the ministry didn't read it, as this bill misses several of its recommendations. In their report it was found that Ontario water heater renters often are not aware of the details of the rental. As we so often see in consumer issues, the real danger is when a person does not know what they are agreeing to.

Prior to my entering politics, I ran a successful training and development company for over 25 years. In that profession I also taught professional sales training, whereby individuals could in fact earn a professional designation in sales. Earning what I called the CMS, certified marketing sales designation, required not only study but a proven ability in salesmanship, which also involved honesty and integrity.

Speaking of which, let's talk about wind turbine sales reps. I heard earlier today about the discussion regarding energy sales reps. I'm not suggesting that all of the industrial wind turbine salespeople are unscrupulous, but unfortunately, in many instances, these particular reps approach members from my farming community with the hopes of walking away with a signed contract to install a few industrial turbines on a farmer's property, and they offer huge government-funded annual subsidies in exchange for co-operation. I've learned that if it's too good to be true, it usually is. What they don't tell you is that turbines will drive up energy costs. What they don't tell you is that they may create potential health concerns. And what they also don't tell you is that it will devalue properties. I was also taught in school, in Latin class, caveat emptor: buyer beware. If Ontario consumers were adequately protected across all industries and sales reps were required to be transparent, many farmers would not agree to these contracts.

Back to the bill, Mr. Speaker. The knowledge gap for rental heaters is of major concern. This bill does little to address this critical aspect. All contracts should be written and recorded, as the bill calls for, but moreover, they should also be written in plain language that the consumer can in fact understand. Further, this bill does not do enough to address the problems associated with cancelling a water heater rental agreement in this province. The bill doubles the cool-off period, meaning that a consumer has 20 days to opt out of a contract and get their money back. But as we know, consumers often do not understand water heater rental agreements in the first place, and may miss the cooling-off period. People rarely complain about a new agreement immediately after signing. They complain once they experience a problem. These usually occur after 20 days, and consumers would be left high and dry under this proposed legislation.

Some of the barriers that hinder consumers trying to cancel are high buyout fees, restrictive appliance return depot hours, and even instances where consumers calling companies and trying to cancel were put on hold for long periods of time or even dropped entirely. How does the cool-off period resolve these issues? This bill does provide a few positive changes for consumers, but it does fall somewhat short. Getting it to committee can hopefully create a stronger bill to protect the vulnerable consumers.

0950

Ontarians who are deep in debt are also vulnerable individuals. They feel that they have nowhere to turn, and often they look at debt repayment agencies as their only hope. Unfortunately, there are many who prey upon the less fortunate for a quick profit.

Advertisements for debt repayment agencies are all over the radio, television, Internet, and even through direct calls. I wouldn't be surprised if we started to see some come around Queen's Park, given how bad our provincial debt is.

In times of economic crisis, more and more Ontarians will be forced to turn to debt repayment agencies. The Ontario Association of Credit Counselling Services receives more than 100 complaints a month about debt settlement companies. Many more likely go unreported.

As it stands today, much of the risk for consumers occurs at the onset of the agreement as they are forced to hand over large service fees. This leaves consumers ripe for the picking. This bill would prohibit settlers from charging upfront fees, mandate that contracts be in writing and place a cap on the total amount of fees that can be charged. I hope this can help Ontarians who are in a very tough spot.

One of the more shocking concerns about debt settlement is that even after you enter an agreement with an agency as your chosen settler, you are the recipient of collection calls. Many people reach out for help in a desperate attempt to stop harassing calls from collection agencies. This bill does not address this concern.

How many years will pass while we try to crack down on businesses one by one? The Bibby family—Robert, Connie and Sydney from Chatham, my hometown—contracted out to have a new pole barn constructed. The project was valued at \$16,500. The contractor demanded \$15,500 upfront to purchase materials. I think all members in this House can see where I'm heading with this. Sure enough, the contractor never delivered or installed the new pole barn.

The diligent pursuit for answers by the Bibbys and other families led to consumer services of Ontario charging the contractor with nine counts of deceptive business practices and led to a settlement payment to local families. However, this settlement was much lower than the families had anticipated, as the company argued it didn't have the ability to pay.

We must ensure that there are, in fact, the proper regulatory tools to avoid these practices across a wide range of businesses. We must strive to achieve true consumer protection, like the Consumer Protection Statute Law Amendment Act, 2002, which was introduced by our leader, Tim Hudak, when he was the Minister of Consumer and Business Services. By broadening the scope, you're less likely to miss an industry and be forced to chase after them, one by one, as this government has been doing.

Showing their wisdom, the Bibbys emerged from this unfortunate affair with a number of solutions to help families avoid being scammed in the future. They suggested that companies should not be able to take more than 20% deposits upfront. This would help mitigate the damages incurred by families and individuals preyed upon by unsavoury businesses.

Second, they feel the consumer should have the right to put liens on contractors for incomplete or non-started

projects, or for deposits to be returned with interest. In order to ensure proper documentation, we should enforce the issuing of receipts for values paid throughout the project.

Lastly, the appropriate penalties found in current legislation should actually be applied to those who disobey the code of conduct.

Instead of a patchwork of legislation aimed at solving the issue of the day, let's do more to lay a foundation to solve the problems of the future before they happen. We owe it to the families across this province, like the Bibbys, to ensure that all consumers are protected, not simply the ones dealing with industries that are in the news.

I do support this bill in principle, but in my opinion, it does require several amendments to make it even stronger.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Sarah Campbell: This morning and throughout the course of this debate, there's been a lot of discussion about energy retailers. There's a good reason for that. That's because—I mean, the rules and the regulations that are laid out in section 2 of this bill are modelled after those that had been applied to energy retailers in 2010, by this government, when they brought in some new rules to “protect energy consumers” that involved disclosing how the contract price the companies are offering compares to the price offered by the local utility, providing training programs to their staff to ensure that staff know, understand and abide by the new rules, and to cancel a consumer's contract without penalty in a number of circumstances; and to limit the cancellation fees that energy retailers can charge consumers.

Despite these changes, every quarter the Ontario Energy Board releases a top 10 list of complaints that are brought forward to the energy board, and some of the top complaints are miscellaneous contract issues; cancellation charges that are either being unfairly applied or are way too high; reaffirmation not taking place; the continued misrepresentation of the utility, where agents claim affiliation with the government utility or the Ontario Energy Board.

Really, what is happening is that we have rules and regulations that are in place to protect people against energy retailers, but they aren't working. I don't know that this is necessarily the model we should be using to protect consumers against other long-term contracts. We need to look at what's already in place. There need to be a number of reforms. We need to crack down on energy retailers and, further, we need to apply some serious reforms to the sale of water heaters as well.

This has a long way to go. I'll speak in my remarks later in greater detail about some of the other things I'd like to see.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Soo Wong: I'm pleased to be given an opportunity to speak about Bill 55, following my colleague from Chatham-Kent-Essex.

I love what our colleague from—what is his riding? Cambridge. He talked about how each one of us in this House has a story, but I think each one of us probably also has a nightmare story—because it isn't a good story. That's what we're trying to address.

I already spoke yesterday about the concern about consumer protection, because for a significant number of my constituents, English is a second language. Furthermore, this proposed legislation will help to address potential fraud and misreading the contract, and more importantly, it will protect them. We hear all these stories in the House now, but how do we get that message out to the community? That's our job in the Legislature.

I recognize some members opposite call it drive-by legislation, Mr. Speaker. We are intending to support and protect our residents, especially those who are the most vulnerable: the seniors in our ridings, the new Canadians in our ridings, and those for whom English is a second language. We also have a very high proportion of our constituents who are Canadian-born but who are illiterate in either English or French. Through this legislation, we will address the issue of making sure the contract is in clear language that they can understand—and the cooling-off period is really critical.

I was very pleased to hear my colleague from Hamilton Mountain talking about strengthening the bill when we get to committee, and to hear some of the great suggestions from all three parties coming forward.

More importantly, this is the right thing to do. We need to bring this bill to committee as soon as possible so that we can have this bill passed—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. Questions and comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: The member from Chatham-Kent always brings an expertise and a commitment to the legislation that we're discussing this morning, Bill 55. I would suggest that he is a very strong advocate for consumer protection, and just his remarks would endorse that.

In my case, I would look at it from the point of view of the collection agency business. That, to me, is the part where very vulnerable people who have fallen into difficult times are being preyed on again by unscrupulous bill collectors. There have to be some protections and rules around that, so that the individuals who have fallen into these tough times or circumstances are protected. I'm not sure this bill actually goes far enough, in this respect, in protecting consumers.

There's a lot of language in here, and there are three particular sections: collection agreements, the door-to-door salespeople, and the real estate group. But it's that particular group by itself that I think if the member from Chatham-Kent, in his rebuttal, will address the collection agency business—because if you look at the details, a collection agency is required to enter into an agreement with the debtor. Plain language is what's most important in that. The contract—these people, who are destitute in many cases, are being victimized by having these long,

complex documents, not realizing they're going to pay back 10 times what they owed if they are pressured into these agreements. In that case, I would hope the member from Chatham-Kent discusses that in his two-minute wrap up.

1000

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

M. Michael Mantha: Encore, ça me fait plaisir de me lever et d'ajouter mes commentaires à ce projet de loi. Je suis extrêmement d'accord avec les commentaires qui sont venus de mon collègue de Chatham-Kent-Essex, où il parle de pommes pourries. On regarde une industrie où—on ne veut vraiment pas la peindre que tous les vendeurs de produits n'ont pas de conscience et qu'ils cherchent, à des moments, à prendre avantage de personnes en difficulté, mais certainement il y en a, des pommes pourries, parce qu'on regarde les 3 200 plaintes qui sont sorties de cette industrie-ci.

La collègue de Scarborough-Agincourt aussi a mentionné des cauchemars. Oui, parce qu'il y en a plusieurs de ces 3 200 plaintes-là qui sont des cauchemars. Puis c'est vraiment de quoi qu'il faut qu'on regarde parce qu'il y a plusieurs gens qui se prennent—soit c'est une honte, une peur ou une façon d'intégrité. Ils ont peur d'approcher leur famille pour leur expliquer qu'eux autres, à leur tour, se sont fait prendre avantage. Ils se cachent dans leur maison et puis tu n'entends pas parler de ces concernes-là, de ces plaintes-là ou de ces problèmes-là.

Quand on regarde les vendeurs, c'est vraiment décevant, mais ils ne regardent pas surtout à seulement regarder vers les aînés et puis prendre avantage des aînés en les mettant sous pression à leur porte en leur disant : « Il faut que tu prennes ces démarches-ci pour te sauver de l'argent. » Ceci c'est de quoi qui a été présenté de la part de la ville, ou c'est à cause qu'il y a une grosse possibilité qu'il va y avoir une augmentation d'hydro, ou il y a eu des changements de régulation—peu importe si ce sont des aînés.

Ils font aussi cela dans des régions et puis des communautés qui ont été prises par leur économie, où il y a eu des fermetures d'industries. Et puis, les agences de financement que mon ami, mon collègue de Durham, a aussi mentionnées—c'est important qu'on cherche à protéger ces gens-là. Je regarde aux commentaires de fermeture de mon collègue pour vraiment les adresser.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Sorry; two-minute response from the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I would like to thank the members from Kenora-Rainy River and from Scarborough-Agincourt, and my colleagues from Durham and also Algoma-Manitoulin, for their comments and response to my 10-minute view.

We take a look at what has been happening, and of course, I think we've all been victimized in one way or

another through high-pressure tactics throughout our years, whether it be hot water heaters, energy companies or even condo sales, where they try to high pressure you because you're down in a beautiful resort, and the next thing you know they're exerting high-pressure tactics to force you to—"You can't leave without it; this is the deal of the century."

Well, we all know that these people use very high-pressure tactics in order to force people to maybe even feel guilty and that they need, in fact, take advantage. Perhaps what we should legislate is to have companies put all of their sales reps through a comprehensive, professionally designed and accredited international sales training program that will ensure honesty and integrity, and of course protect consumers as well.

I look at the farmers down in my area, and I spoke earlier about the industrial wind turbines. Again, I don't want to come right out and say that they're unscrupulous. I'm not suggesting that. However, they do use high-pressure tactics. They are not transparent and, of course, their contracts are steel traps. They've been written by lawyers and it's just page upon page upon page filled with nothing but legalese. They kind of skim through it and say, "Listen, you don't have to worry about this and this. Just sign here and you'll get your \$20,000 a year for 20 years." Of course, people hear and see the money, and that's what they do.

We need to protect even the elderly because they're very trusting people. I believe personally that these salespeople will in fact take advantage. Again, thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Ms. Sarah Campbell: It's a privilege to be able to rise this morning and speak on Bill 55, which is titled the Stronger Protection for Ontario Consumers Act, which is said to offer new protections for door-to-door water heater sales, real estate transactions and debt collection.

While this bill is a step in the right direction, there are other steps that could be taken and other areas such as the door-to-door sale of energy contracts that also require attention.

Previously, I did a two-minute hit where I explained how the sale of door-to-door energy contracts is related to this, and that's basically because schedule 2 is modelled after some of the reforms that this government made in 2010. There is a correlation between the sale of door-to-door energy contracts and water heaters, and many of the companies that offer one service offer the other. The very fact that we tolerate door-to-door sales of these goods makes it extremely difficult to monitor the tactics and the techniques that are used by these companies and basically ensures that abuses will happen.

In fact, when it comes to energy retailers, the Ontario Energy Board has now released a list of the top 10 complaints from consumers, and despite action aimed at curbing these behaviours in 2010, as I mentioned, it's clear that they are still occurring across this province. These issues, like the general contract not conforming to regu-

lation, cancellation charges being too high and unfairly applied; the re-affirmation call, which is something that the act wants to add to the door-to-door sale of water heater contracts, either is not happening or the customer trying to get out of the contract at that time is not having their wishes respected. Despite clear changes that are supposed to curb this behaviour, the misrepresentation of identity—in other words, the salesperson claiming to be with a government agency or a utility—continues to be high on the complaint list, as is the failure of companies to process cancellations.

Another problem that has always existed is that the customer is not receiving a copy of the contract, which has been a considerable problem, particularly in the cases of forgery and fraud on the part of the salesperson, which has been mentioned by a number of speakers, even just this morning. In addition to the Ontario Energy Board continuing to report the failures and these changes—failures to properly verify the contract and the persistent sales tactics often are happening still, and they scare people.

The question is, why do these abuses exist? I believe they exist largely in part because we continue to allow the door-to-door sale of long-term contracts, particularly in the case of energy retailer contracts where the retailer is nothing more than a middleman and the retailer doesn't provide any good or service in return for the huge profits they reap. The only real cost for doing business for these retailers is the cost of commissions that feed the greed of the door-to-door salespeople and the fines that may or may not be levelled by the Ontario Energy Board when we can catch somebody in the act of these violations. Again, it's extremely hard to prove that misrepresentation happens when it happens on the doorstep, because it's often a case of, "One person says; another person says."

Why do people turn to these services? In my experience, in a lot of cases it's fear or coercion, but with a lot of people it's also desperation because of the artificially high prices that we're paying for energy in Ontario as a result of government policy. The 2011 report from the Auditor General noted that about 15% of residential customers had signed on with electricity retailers in the hopes of driving their costs down, but, instead, they were paying 35% to 65% more. At the same time, he noted that of 17,000 complaints from the public in the last five years, the overwhelming majority were regarding electricity retailers, leading one to question why, if the government is so concerned with consumer protection, they're not taking meaningful steps and not tackling this problem head-on in banning the sale of door-to-door long-term contracts altogether, to force these operators to appeal to potential customers through more traditional means such as advertising, which can be done with greater government scrutiny. Yet, despite the apparent failure to get the energy retailers under control, the government seems content to transfer many of these failed strategies to the door-to-door sale of water heaters which, at best, is kind of a questionable tactic.

What's worse is that the people who are victims of these circumstances are often those who can least afford it, like people on Ontario Works, WSIB claimants, seniors, those living on a fixed income, those with mental disabilities, students just out of school and others who are struggling to pay their bills. Many of these people are so desperate for relief from their high bills that when someone comes knocking on their door guaranteeing them savings on electricity or natural gas, they're quick to sign on the dotted line. While the government has set regulations on what can be promised, and in fact that savings can't be promised, it continues to allow these sales to be made using methods where the enforcement is really negligible, like on the doorstep.

1010

That said, it's good to see that the government is trying to do something to protect consumers. If nothing else, this bill is at least a general recognition on the part of the government that it has a role to play in consumer protection, although I believe that the government has a stronger role to play.

But it's not just government; we as MPPs have tremendous power at our fingertips if we choose to use it. If we choose to speak up on an issue, people will listen to us, and many of us are provided with the tools, like weekly columns, members' statements and other activities where we can take part to raise consumer awareness. One of these initiatives that I have taken on personally to raise awareness is with RFID identity theft—that's radio frequency identification—and the steps that consumers can take to protect themselves. I've purchased some sleeves that people can put their bank and credit cards in. And I've let people know that starting next year, they're going to have to be wary of their passports because they're going to have the same technology. So we do have some power as MPPs.

Other things that the government can do: The government can have a boosted role in raising awareness of issues such as scams, phishing schemes, email fraud and other things. That wouldn't be a bad thing. In fact, I would say it would be a big positive. It's something that won't cost a lot. Again, it's just that we need to have the will to do it.

Certainly, this government has been involved in ad campaigns before on things like health care and education, and while some of those may have been employed at questionable times, others haven't been—such as organ donation. I believe that the government could go a lot further with raising these issues. Reaching out to communities and sponsoring awareness sessions and other events could go a long way towards promoting consumer awareness.

Part of the reason why I'm so passionate about this issue is that I've worked with so many people across Kenora–Rainy River over the past number of years who have been scammed, mistreated and even lied to. Before I was elected, I spearheaded dozens of information sessions on energy retailers across my riding. I targeted Ontario Works administrators, and I asked if it would be

possible for me to organize an information session and speak to all of the Ontario Works recipients about their rights, about energy retailers and what to look for, and to show copies of some of the prepaid credit cards and the cheques that they may not realize that by just depositing them into the bank, they're entering into a five-year contract.

I've seen the sense of helplessness and the embarrassment that people feel when they have been misled. Many of them are reluctant to come forward because they feel like it's their fault. They don't realize that these abuses are happening to people across the province, regardless of any mitigating factors. I've personally helped doctors, nurses, teachers and community business leaders just as often as I've helped seniors and people on Ontario Works or WSIB.

The point is, regardless of the steps we take to crack down, regardless of the fines that we levy or the threats that we make, the only way that we're going to ultimately curb these behaviours is through education, making the public aware.

I'll admit the government has some documents out there that are intended to protect consumers, and many of them are helpful. Some of the documents that the Ontario Energy Board has are a prime example of that. But the problem is that nobody wants to believe that they're going to be the ones who are going to be swindled; nobody wants to believe that they will be the ones falling prey to a scam. People are proud, and they don't want to admit weakness. That's why we need a strong consumer advocate. That's why we need to enhance our roles in the community. There's no reason why ServiceOntario or the OPP can't be holding information sessions across the province to make people aware of some of the scams and to bolster some consumer awareness.

Most importantly, we need to crack down on the practices that we know are unethical. I think it's fair to ask why we allow energy retailers to continue to offer contracts when we can virtually guarantee that they can't provide savings.

There are always going to be scams, but why aren't we taking steps to level the playing field? Maybe we need to take drastic steps, by eliminating the cancellation fees of certain services, by allowing cancellations at any time, by increasing the fines and penalties for violators, revoking licences and taking stronger actions. If the steps that we are taking aren't working, we need to be willing to admit it and to take immediate action.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It being 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30 this morning.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's a pleasure to welcome the family of Fiona Marshall-Young, our page. Kristin Marshall, Paul Young, Anne Marshall, Richard Marshall Sr.,

Madeline Burghardt, Richard Marshall-Burghardt Jr., Raffi Marshall-Burghardt and Tonnán Marshall-Burghardt. Welcome all to Queen's Park.

Hon. Jeff Leal: In the members' east gallery today I'd like to introduce an individual from Peterborough, Jay Amer. Just to remind everybody, Peterborough Day, 228 to 230, between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Be there; it'll be a great event.

Mr. Todd Smith: It's a pleasure to introduce a constituency assistant from my office in Belleville: Ashley Harnden is here today. She's very excited to try some Kawartha Dairy ice cream in the Peterborough reception.

Mr. Norm Miller: It's my pleasure to introduce in the members' west gallery Deanne Vincent and Stephen Kupfer, who are friends of my legislative assistant Adam Bloskie. They're here watching question period today. Welcome.

Hon. Brad Duguid: It's my pleasure to introduce two awesome interns from my office: Michelle Johnston and Katrina Sands. I have no doubt they'll be taking this place over at some point in time.

Hon. Reza Moridi: It's a great pleasure to introduce my guests Cynthia Antony, Maheisha Ravendra and Scott Dallen, sitting in the east gallery. Please join me in welcoming them there.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Page Jack Dawson from London West—his mom, Tracy Peifer, and dad, Blake Dawson are here to visit Jack. Thank you for being here—appreciate it.

ORAL QUESTIONS

POWER PLANTS

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question this morning is for the Premier. Last night on TV you apparently apologized for the gas plant scandal. My question is, what did you apologize for? Are you sorry for not listening to the residents of Mississauga and Oakville? Are you sorry for building power plants in residential neighbourhoods? Are you sorry for paying companies not to build power plants? Are you sorry for buying five Liberal seats with \$585 million? Are you sorry for destroying documents and keeping the truth from Ontarians? Or are you just sorry you got caught?

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: Withdraw.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I would have thought there might have been a bit of a preamble to that question that would have said something like you, "You know, you did the right thing, Premier. We've been asking for an apology, and you apologized." I would've thought that that might have been what he said.

However, that is not what the member opposite said, so I will just say what I said last night, Mr. Speaker. I believe that it was important for me as the Premier in this chair now to say that I apologize, and I'm sorry for the process as it unfolded. I'm sorry that the decision was made in the first place to locate those plants where they were located, and I'm sorry it cost so much to undo that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Well, Premier, I'll give you a little history. The Liberals failed to win a majority which would have covered your tracks; there would have been no scandal hearings. When we tried to get to the truth—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Energy, come to order. Next time you have to be quicker.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: —the Liberals prorogued this House then redacted, deleted and destroyed documents that would have gotten us to that truth. Now your political advisers have all told you that every one of those delay strategies have failed, so the next move is to concoct a political apology. You're sorry you got caught.

Premier, Ontarians want more than a hollow apology; they want a refund. Will you order the Liberal Party to pay the money back?

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Attorney General, come to order. Minister of Community and Social Services, come to order. Member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, come to order.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I really believe that my primary political relationship is with the people of Ontario, and I was speaking to the people of Ontario yesterday. Since I have been in this role, I have been as open and as transparent as I could possibly be. I answered questions at committee. I made sure that we opened up the process so that all the questions could be asked, so that all the documents that were asked for could be provided. That has happened. We have heard many perspectives at committee. I believe that it was important for me to take personal responsibility, and I have done that.

I really believe the committee can continue to ask questions and continue to do its due diligence. But I have taken responsibility now to put in place a process that will ensure that this will not happen again.

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Premier, it would have been a lot better for Ontarians if you did something about this scandal back in 2011, when you first saw the documents

in cabinet. You knew this was a bad deal back then, and you—you—could have stopped this from ever happening.

But your late apology comes with consequences. If you're really sincere, you would arrange for the Liberal Party to pay back the money. If you're really sorry, you would order your Liberal witnesses to return to committee and tell the truth this time, and you would stand here and answer the pivotal question in this scandal: When did you know the costs were more than you publicly stated? If you are not prepared to, Premier, then call our confidence motion and let this House decide if your apology was sincere.

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Interjection.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Speaker, I'm glad the member opposite—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me. The member from Cambridge will come to order.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I apologize, Mr. Speaker.

I'm glad the member mentioned confidence, because it is important now, I believe, that we have this discussion about the budget. The budget is the confidence issue that is before this House that will have a direct impact on the lives of people in Ontario.

I have visited a couple of manufacturing companies in the last couple of days, and they are very happy with the measures that we have in the budget that will support their purchase of new equipment and new technology, and will support young people getting the skills training they need in order to be able to work in their businesses. That's the kind of measure that needs to be in place. That's why we need the budget to pass. I look forward to a debate on the budget and getting the budget passed.

POWER PLANTS

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is, as well, for the Premier. For a number of months in this House and in the committee room, we asked you to apologize to the people of Ontario. Only last night, when you decided to seek absolution from a taxpayer-funded journalist, did you offer that.

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Did your apology for the Liberal seat-saving plan that cost Ontario families hundreds of millions of dollars for thwarting democracy include saying sorry for co-chairing the Liberal campaign team that made the crass political decision to cost taxpayer dollars? Did it include you signing a memorandum to cabinet that you either did not understand or chose to withhold from the public? Are you sorry for not telling Ontarians that you knew the true costs were higher than \$40 million? Are you sorry that you are hiding from calling the PC confidence motion? Or was your Steve Paikin climbdown a PR stunt?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I've answered a lot of the issues that the member opposite raised. I went to committee; I answered all the questions that were asked of me.

Again, the member opposite—her voice is one of the voices that have been calling for a taking of personal responsibility, and I did that last night, Mr. Speaker. I made it clear that I take personal responsibility; that I'm sorry about the mistakes that our government made. We have said that there were mistakes made. We have said that the process was not what it should have been, and that those gas plants should not have been located where they were in the first place. We need a process going forward that will make sure that doesn't happen again. That is what I apologized for last night.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: This has been an interesting PR exercise. But Speaker, you are well aware that my colleagues and I have asked 130 times what this Premier knew, when she knew it, when that cost ballooned well past \$40 million, and she has refused over 130 times to offer that.

So excuse us, on this side of the House, for expecting your staged apology last night with a taxpayer-funded journalist to be nothing more than a PR stunt.

Speaker, we on this side of the House suspect that that Premier—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Finish, please.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I think I touched a nerve, Speaker.

I suspect she refuses to acknowledge what she knew and when she knew it because she will be held in contempt of Parliament if she—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Question.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Isn't it true, Premier, that you're only sorry right now so you can take attention away from this scandal?

Premier, if you were truly sorry for scamming Ontarians out of hundreds of millions of dollars—

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

Interjections.

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

While the clock is stopped, I would remind this member and all members that when I stand, you sit. If you don't look at me, that's not my responsibility.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member, come to order.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I just want to make a commentary on the political environment that we operate in. I understand why the member opposite would talk about PR, but I honestly believe that the frame that she is putting around what I said last night actually says more about her than it does about me.

I'm a human being doing this job, and I have to do this job in the best way that I can. I have done everything I could to open up this process. I continue to get calls from

people of Ontario who said, “You know, we want to see that personal responsibility taken.” That’s what I did last night. It had nothing to do with public relations; it had nothing to do with a political stunt. It had to do with me taking personal responsibility, and whether the members opposite believe that or not is really immaterial, Mr. Speaker. I did what I knew I needed to do.

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Of course she knew what she needed to do. She needed to say she was sorry to the public because her PR stunt is the only thing that’s going to move her past this and divert attention from the matter at hand, which is, she has come to this House repeatedly and said that this cost \$40 million when she knew for a very long period of time it wasn’t. She came to committee and evaded 11 questions from me at that moment and another 29 from my colleague from Nipissing.

I will say this, Speaker: This is a Premier who has spent hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayer money in order to save Liberal MPPs’ seats. She decided to go to a taxpayer-funded journalist last night with a script to stage a PR campaign so she could distract the public from telling the truth. If her saying “sorry” really means that what she did was wrong, she would know that she needs to call the Ontario PC contempt motion to the floor of this House—not only for debate, but for a vote—and further, that she should bring a judicial inquiry—

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

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, I think we should come to the defense of Steve Paikin, over here, and of TVOntario. I think TVOntario is a terrific institution.

But quite apart from that, let me talk about the confidence motion—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Premier.

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

Let me just talk about the confidence motion that is before us, because clearly the members opposite want to have the opportunity to vote on a confidence motion. The budget is the confidence motion that I believe is extremely relevant to the lives of people in Ontario. There are measures in the budget that will create jobs in this province and that will deal with issues that will affect people in their day-to-day lives. I look forward to that debate. I look forward to seeing that budget passed, because I believe that we need to get on with the business of, just what I said, creating jobs and making changes that will affect people’s day-to-day lives. That’s what our confidence motion is about.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. As the Premier knows, we’ll be sitting down this afternoon, and I’ve been clear with the public that this is a—

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Well, I’m waiting for two parties to tone it down.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I’m not asking for extra comments.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Thanks, Speaker. Gee, that was an unexpected bit of excitement there for a minute.

Nonetheless, I’ve been clear with the public that it’s going to be an open and transparent process that we engage in, so I’m going to ask this question in public: Is the Premier ready to move forward with measures that are going to make this government more transparent and more accountable?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We will have a good conversation this afternoon. Terms of endearment take different forms.

I look forward to sitting down with the leader of the third party and having a conversation about the suggestions that she has made. I will just say that I’m not going to comment on the specifics, because that’s why, I think, we need to have a face-to-face meeting, but I believe that finding ways for government to be more accountable and making sure that we do everything we can to be accountable—that, absolutely, is what I would like to talk with the leader of the third party about.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I’m pleased to hear that, because Ontarians are the people who actually want to be hopeful in this process. They want to see real change that makes the government more transparent and more accountable to them. After all, the government is here for them, not the other way around.

Yesterday, the Premier finally apologized for the gas plant scandal, but it is a day late and a buck short. The money has already been wasted, and the scandal has already happened. Now we need to make sure that it never happens again. I hope we all agree in this chamber that Ontarians deserve better.

Will the Premier agree that her government needs to be more accountable and transparent, and that New Democrats are proposing effective ways of doing just that?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I look forward to that meeting that we’re going to have this afternoon, and I think that accountability is an evolving reality. We have, in fact, as a government, put in a number of accountability measures that I think were necessary. In 2010, the Broader Public Sector Accountability Act put new rules and higher standards in place in terms of lobbyists. We put those rules in place. When we were newly elected in 2004, the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act put in place a framework for the conduct of fiscal policy.

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We have put those measures in place, but there is always more that a government can do to explore where

accountability gaps exist. I know that that will be part of our conversation this afternoon.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Families want to have confidence in the future. They don't want to be waiting for the next scandal and then waiting for the next apology. A financial accountability office will give families assurance that their money won't be wasted. Ontarians want to see transparency and accountability. Will the Premier agree that creating a financial accountability office is actually the right thing to do?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I would say to the leader of the third party: Let's talk about that this afternoon. Let's talk about what some of the specifics of her suggestions are so that I can understand better where she's coming from and whether the suggestions are prudent and whether they can actually be implemented.

We need to have that face-to-face meeting. I'm glad we're finally able to have it, Mr. Speaker, because I do believe people want to see government working. They want to see the parties in this Legislature working together. I have heard that over and over again: that people want to see us realize and understand that we're in a minority Parliament and that it is our responsibility to work together. I appreciate the willingness of the leader of the third party to now sit down and have this conversation.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also for the Premier. Ontarians have told us over the last week or so that they wanted to see fairness, balance and transparency. They want to have faith in a health care system, making sure it will be there for them when they need it and for their loved ones as well. But they've seen a system instead that's rocked by scandals and waste and haven't had anyone to turn to in that process. They want to know that someone will always be in their corner, someone who's independent and who will stick up for them—someone exactly like the Ombudsman. Will the Premier make the health care system more accountable and allow the Ombudsman to have oversight in our health care system?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Again, Mr. Speaker, I look forward to having that conversation this afternoon with the leader of the third party, because it's one of the suggestions she has made. But I would just say that there are a number of accountability mechanisms that already exist within government, and one of the things I'd like to talk with the leader of the third party about is how we might be able to tighten up or improve accountability mechanisms that already exist, because they're there and I think we need to come to some kind of agreement on whether they can be improved or not. That's one of the things I would like to put on the table as we have our conversation this afternoon because I do believe, as I said earlier, that there is always room for improvement.

Let's look at what's already there, let's see if those things can be improved because I, like the leader of the third party, believe that accountability is an expectation of the people of Ontario, and we need to do everything we can to be accountable for our actions.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, I have three things to say to the Premier's comment about the accountability of the Liberal government thus far in Ontario: eHealth, Ornge and the gas plants scandal. People are tired of that. Ontarians told us for the last week and a bit that they are tired of not being able to trust that their government is going to use their money wisely and prudently and for their needs instead of the government's needs or the Liberal Party's needs.

They told us they want to see some fairness in this budget as well. They see a government handing a brand new \$1.3-billion tax loophole to corporations while Ontarians are told that they're going to have to belly up \$300 million on a bill to start tolling our carpool lanes. Does the Premier think that's a fair solution to fund transit and transportation infrastructure?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As the leader of the third party knows, the Minister of Finance is in communication with the federal Minister of Finance on the issue around the corporate tax regime. We understand that that's something we need to work on. But we have to work on it with the federal government.

That's one of the things that I want to talk to the leader of the third party about. What is doable? What exactly is doable in terms of the provincial government's jurisdiction and the possibilities that we have to make changes? Because I can't make a commitment, Mr. Speaker, either in public or in private, to do something that we don't have jurisdiction over. What we commit to has to be doable and prudent, which is why, in our budget, we have tackled some of the issues she raised in terms of auto insurance and home care accountability. We have tackled those things in a way that's prudent and that we can actually deliver on.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I hope there are some negotiations happening with the federal government because it wasn't in the budget to get rid of that \$1.3-billion upcoming corporate tax loophole. There was a last-minute letter sent by the finance minister to the federal finance minister. That's not good enough for Ontarians; it doesn't show a real commitment.

New Democrats asked Ontarians what they thought of the budget. What they told us is that it can stand to be improved, particularly on accountability measures. They're tired of broken promises. They're tired of wasted money.

Is the Premier going to listen to Ontarians and add much-needed accountability and transparency to this budget?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I look forward to our conversation this afternoon.

I have been listening to the people of Ontario and will continue to do that because I really believe that that is

how good policy gets made. I think it's very important that politicians—all of us—listen to the people in our ridings and listen to the people across the province about their concerns.

That's what our budget reflects. There has been a lot of talk about where the ideas for the budget came from. They came from the concerns of the people of the province. Those concerns are about jobs, making sure that people's children have jobs and that people themselves can find their way into the economy. Those concerns are about their everyday lives, making sure that the issues that affect them on a day-to-day basis, like the provision of health care for their parents and grandparents—for our parents and grandparents—making sure that people get the home care, the health care that they need in a timely way. Those are the things people talk to us about. There was common ground with the third party, and there was common ground, I believe, with the official opposition. That's why I hope we can get this budget passed and we can start to implement those measures.

POWER PLANTS

Mr. John O'Toole: My question is to the Premier. The gas plant fiasco is the biggest scandal in Ontario's history. You've tried the denial game. You've tried the cover-up game. You've tried the blame game, and now you—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Put your question, please.

Mr. John O'Toole: You've tried the blame game, you've tried the cover-up game, you've tried the apology game; I'm asking you to show some integrity and do the honourable thing—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Excuse me. There was a word used there that is unparliamentary, and I ask you to withdraw.

Mr. John O'Toole: I withdraw that single word.

I'm asking you to do the honourable thing. Look straight in the camera, Premier, and tell the people of Ontario either yes, the scandal deserves a vote, for you to hold a confidence vote in this House, or no, "I refuse to let the people of Ontario hold the Liberal government accountable."

Premier, please tell the people of Ontario—it's a very simple question—yes or no.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: I want to assure the member, and indeed all members of this House—I can guarantee it—in the next several weeks, there will be a confidence motion in this House. We will be bringing forward the budget motion, which is a matter of confidence, and members will have a chance to both debate and vote on it.

But, Mr. Speaker, to the first part of the honourable member's question, I go back to some of the comments I made yesterday. Could he explain to us why—when the Liberal Party decided in the last election to promise the cancellation of the gas plants, according to them it was

the worst thing to have ever befallen western civilization, but when the Leader of the Opposition made the exact same promise, it was somehow okay. Why, when the Leader of the Opposition appeared in front of committee yesterday, would he not even deign to explain the difference between the two positions?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. John O'Toole: Back to the Premier: In your speech from the throne, you talked about "Your government, and your cabinet ministers, will be accountable to all the people of Ontario...." It boggles my mind that any member of this House could prop up this scandal-plagued government in good conscience.

Premier, once again, I ask you, will you call on this assembly to debate our want of confidence motion so that, once and for all, we can deal with this issue and truly restore accountability in Ontario? Will do you that, Premier?

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Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, he wants to talk about accountability. Let's review that facts: When the new Premier came into office, one of her first actions was to ask the Auditor General to look into the Oakville situation. The second thing she did was, she proposed a special committee of the Legislature to look into it. That party said no because they wanted to have a witch hunt over a former member of the Legislature. She produced 56,000 pages of documents and offered to have a wide search throughout government for more documents, and that party and the NDP voted against it. She appeared in front of committee when asked and answered all the questions. We saw the Leader of the Opposition had to practically be dragged there, invited over and over again and refused to answer any questions—28 times. We asked him simple questions and he would not come forward with any answers.

When it comes to transparency, this side of the House—

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

TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Rosario Marchese: My question is to the Premier. The government is refusing to share basic information with Ontarians about its scheme to toll highways. The Minister of Finance says tolls will generate \$250 million to \$300 million while Metrolinx says it will generate \$25 million, and the Minister of Transportation won't tell us anything. No one in government will say how much it will cost to build the lanes, where the lanes will be, what the toll will cost or whether this expensive scheme will actually break even. Why won't your government be open about the basic elements of this risky and costly tolling scheme?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I really do believe my friend is asking questions with the best of intentions, but I

would like to direct him to the Metrolinx website; on that website, you can actually see the entire costs. Metrolinx has carefully planned out which routes are optimal. Metrolinx can actually tell you that the price per kilometre is 47 cents. You could also read today's Toronto Star, which points out the very successful HOT lanes across North America are used mostly by people with under \$60,000 income, that it's been a benefit to middle-income families, especially moms who are trying to get their kids to school. It's a very cost-effective option, and it's had a significant impact on reducing congestion.

This is hardly something used by only affluent people, and it has not compromised the role of HOV lanes one iota, and those are the facts.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The experience of tolling high-occupancy lanes in other places is that the cost of construction and enforcement is high while the revenues generated are low. In many areas, these lanes have lost money or have struggled to break even—I think the minister knows that. Just last month, we learned that the new HOT lanes in Los Angeles had actually increased overall congestion. I also think the minister knows that as well.

Why is the government committing to an expensive and risky scheme that is not a serious revenue tool for transit without providing any reason at all to think that it will work?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, we have, right now, well into construction the biggest transportation/transit build-out in the history of Ontario. Soon, the boring machines on Eglinton will be pulled out and people all across north and central Toronto will be able to whisk across the city efficiently in some of the most beautiful LRTs and subways ever.

In Durham region, just the other day, Mr. Anderson and I launched the Durham BRT system from Oshawa to the Scarborough campus of U of T. For now, people all across the eastern GTA and Ajax and Pickering can now get their kids to school. We have two-way, all-day GO service every half-hour on the Lakeshore line, ending the bedroom communities and ending the suburbs being a—

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, I hope he can get excited—

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

BREAST CANCER

Mrs. Laura Albanese: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Regular mammograms are the best way to detect breast cancer. Yesterday, I heard in the news that a study by Cancer Care Ontario researchers found that one type of digital mammography, called digital computed radiography, is less effective than other types of mammograms.

As a woman, I'm concerned about these findings. Women across Ontario should be able to rely on the most

effective technology to detect breast cancer. Could the minister tell us how the situation is being addressed?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I would like to thank the member from York South–Weston for this question. Breast cancer is a disease that affects too many of us, too many of our mothers, our sisters, our daughters and our friends. Those women deserve nothing but the best possible care.

The decisions we make in health care are guided by the best available evidence. Scientific evidence is always emerging that guides our decisions about what we need to do to improve our medical practices.

There is new evidence, recommendations by cancer experts, so we are updating the technology we use for breast cancer screening. We're investing \$25 million to replace computed radiography devices with direct radiography devices across the province. This will ensure that women will continue to get the most effective screening for breast cancer using the best technology available.

I want to say thank you to the researcher, Dr. Anna Chiarelli at Cancer Care Ontario, who conducted this groundbreaking study. It will help us provide better care for women.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Laura Albanese: This issue needs to be taken seriously and addressed with strong action, as the minister is doing. Breast cancer is a deadly disease, and early detection is key. If a woman learns she has breast cancer, she needs to be reassured that the health care system will be there with her in her fight against cancer every step of the way.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the minister: Can women across Ontario who suffer from breast cancer be sure that they will get the best-quality care?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I share the member's commitment to ensuring that women with breast cancer are given the support they need to beat this disease. Ontario is a leader in cancer care; 88% of women who are diagnosed with breast cancer in Ontario are alive and well five years later, and an Ontarian who gets cancer has one of the best chances of survival anywhere in the world, according to the Cancer System Quality Index.

This is a result of our government's commitment to cancer care. We have tripled funding for cancer-fighting drugs under the new drug funding program. We are funding 49 additional drugs for 74 indications. We have cut wait times for cancer surgery, and last year, 97% of Ontario's cancer patients started radiation within the four-week national target.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Ted Arnott: My question is for the Premier. This afternoon, the House will debate and vote upon our opposition day motion, which, if passed, and if the government respects the will of the House, would require the government House leader to call our non-confidence motion for debate and a vote on May 28.

An affirmative vote by the House today should compel the government to abide by hundreds of years of parlia-

mentary tradition and explicitly and directly test the confidence that this House has in the government.

If our motion passes this afternoon, can the Premier commit to respecting the will of this House?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: I have a couple of points. The first is, I want to confirm to the member, as I did to his colleague, that this Legislature will be dealing with a confidence motion in the next several weeks when we deal with the budget motion, and, God willing, we'll also be dealing with the budget bill at various stages, and that too will be a confidence motion. So he should not be worried; there will be plenty of confidence motions.

In terms of the process that we have here in the Legislature, I thought the member should be very, very aware that section 44 of the standing orders outlines the process by which the motion that he is referring to can be brought forward. That's not based on hundreds of years of parliamentary tradition; that's actually a change to the standing orders that was brought in by the Progressive Conservatives when they were in power.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Ted Arnott: Back to the Premier: The government cannot evade responsibility on this. Either they respect the will of the House or they don't. There can be no weasel words; there is no middle ground. This is the Parliament of Ontario.

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Thirteen days have passed since the budget speech and we're still waiting for the NDP to make up their minds. They may very well sit on their hands again and allow the budget to pass, as they did last year, but a budget motion is a confidence motion only as it pertains to the budgetary policy of the government, not confidence in an overall, comprehensive sense. If our motion passes today the government cannot ignore the will of the House and still claim legitimacy to govern if the confidence question is still outstanding. Will the Premier do the right thing if our motion passes this afternoon and call our non-confidence motion for debate and a vote on May 28?

Interjections.

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

Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I'm kind of enjoying this debate over parliamentary procedure here. The simple fact of the matter is that a government that can't pass its budget cannot govern, so therefore it is naturally a confidence motion. Again, I assure the member that we will have a vote on that motion within the prescribed period that's outlined in the standing orders. As I say, if everything goes the right way, we hope to have subsequent votes on the legislation that accompanies it.

In terms of the want of confidence issue that he has put forward, again, I encourage the member to look at section 44 of the standing orders, which outlines the process by which it could be brought forward to the Legislature. As I say, they are not our rules; they are rules that

were brought forward by the Progressive Conservatives when they were in power.

CASINOS

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Premier. It is absolutely clear that this government's OLG privatization plan is in chaos. Ontarians want to know, is Toronto getting a special deal to host a downtown casino or isn't it? This government doesn't seem to know. Ontarians want to know, are OLG casinos going to be turned over to global gambling operators? This government doesn't seem to know. Will this government admit that its OLG privatization strategy is a total mess and scrap this misguided plan once and for all?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I appreciate the question. The member opposite has reaffirmed the need to transform the way we do business with the OLG, recognizing the tremendous amount of contributions it brings to produce and initiate more schools and hospitals, and to enable us to afford social programs. We need to ensure that the operation of the OLG is managed in an appropriate fashion to maximize the value to the taxpayers. That's exactly what we're doing.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Prue: This time to the minister, I guess: The OLG and the government's own hand-picked CEO invited global gambling operators to bid on a downtown Toronto casino and floated the idea of a sweetheart deal on the hosting formula to city council to cement that deal. These companies in turn made it clear that if they weren't going to get a downtown site and own the operation, they weren't coming to Ontario. The question: With a crucial vote coming up at Toronto city council next week, will the government finally come clean on its plans for a downtown Toronto casino and let the people and the council know in advance?

Hon. Charles Sousa: The council have before them an opportunity to make a decision; and it's up to the council, it's up to the municipality to make that decision. The province has made it clear that we won't provide any special deals to any specific municipality. We're going to be equal, we're going to be fair; it's going to be the same formula across the province. The council has before them an option and a determination if they want a proponent to bring in billions of dollars in new construction to the city of Toronto; that will be up to them. In terms of the formula, it will be determined, it will be the same, it will be equal for the entire province.

ELECTRONIC COMMERCE

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: My question is to the Attorney General. As we all know, in this age of technology electronic tools create efficiencies and contribute to economic growth. Over the past few years, Peel realtors and the directors of the Mississauga and Brampton real estate boards requested that the government use elec-

tronic tools for their business transactions. As part of the 2013 budget, our government has proposed an amendment to the Electronic Commerce Act, extending the act to land transactions.

Mr. Speaker, could the AG elaborate on the proposed amendment and how it would benefit Ontario businesses?

Hon. John Gerretsen: I want to thank the hard-working member from Mississauga–Brampton South for the question. She has really been a hard-working member here.

Speaker, I can tell you that the government supports the use of electronic communications as broadly as possible, for reasons of both efficiency and economy. That's why we've introduced the legislation as part of the 2013 budget bill. I know the member from Prince Edward–Hastings is interested in it as well, and he will vote for the budget bill; I'm absolutely convinced.

We want to extend that in the Electronic Commerce Act to land transactions as well. We believe that these land transactions would, if the legislation is passed, benefit from the standards and rules for electronic communications that have worked so well over the last dozen years or so in so many other areas. It will benefit businesses as well as consumers in Ontario and, in particular, those involved in the real estate industry. That's because we know that the real estate industry in Ontario has been requesting this change for some time. It's time to do it by passing the budget.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: I thank the Attorney General for elaborating on the proposed amendment. It's good news, not only for Ontario realtors but also for the consumers. This amendment will allow use of electronic tools to conduct business efficiently and conveniently.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the Attorney General: Are there any other ways in which this government is helping our real estate sector in the province of Ontario?

Hon. John Gerretsen: I know the Minister of Consumer Services looks forward to answering this part of the question.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I'm very happy to inform the member that we do, in fact, have legislation in front of the House right now that aims to do just what she's asking. Just like the budget we've tabled, there is another bill, called Bill 55, to help people in their everyday lives. It's called the Stronger Protection for Ontario Consumers Act. Bill 55 proposes to make changes to the real estate sector to promote a more fair and transparent marketplace.

Under this proposed bill, we will make it easier for buyers and professionals to verify that the actual number of written offers were made in a competitive real estate bidding process, as well as allow real estate professionals greater options and flexibility in delivering the services they offer.

Bill 55 and the amendments proposed in the budget relating to electronic signatures that the Attorney General referred to are the type of legislation that helps Ontarians.

I strongly encourage all members of the Legislature to support both—

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

LIQUOR CONTROL BOARD OF ONTARIO

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: My question is to the Premier. In just a few days, Ontarians will get together with friends and family and fire up the barbecue and open the cottage on the Victoria Day long weekend. As well, many tourists will be travelling to Ontario to visit over 1,500 special events across the province and enjoy the best that this province has to offer. This includes Ontario's wonderful wine, beer and spirits.

However, a dark cloud looms, threatening to put a damper on all this: an impending LCBO strike. The union has engaged in an aggressive ad campaign demanding more for their workers.

Premier, with LCBO stores all carrying Ontario beer, wine and spirits, how in good conscience can this government let an impending strike occur, imperiling Ontario's tourism and beverage industry on one of Ontario's favourite holidays? How can you do that?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: We have a situation where the LCBO and the employees are negotiating a collective agreement, and it's appropriate and prudent for them to initiate and have those discussions. We'll allow them to proceed. I'm hopeful that, in the end, they'll come to an agreement and that we're all going to be able to enjoy a great long weekend.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Given your and your government's record of buying public sector union support with massive wage increases and perks at the expense of Ontario's fiscal future, is it no wonder we are yet again held hostage at the eleventh hour by a union demanding more? This is something you brought upon yourself, Premier.

Public sector compensation is out of control, and Ontario's broken arbitration system is putting Ontario taxpayers at further risk. While your government's budgets have earned us nothing but credit downgrades, our PC plan for sustainable public sector compensation is clearly the only way forward.

Will the Premier side with Ontarians for their Victoria Day weekend and their future by preventing a strike and freezing public sector compensation by legislation for a two-year period?

1120

Hon. Charles Sousa: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I thank the member for the question. I think the member opposite very well knows how our labour relations system works in this province. It is the responsibility of the employer and the trade union to be able to come together to negotiate a settlement agreement.

We also know that the best agreements are the ones which are negotiated, that are bargained around the table, and we encourage both parties—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): This is not helpful—both sides, including the third party.

Answer, please?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, we encourage both parties to continue to work hard. I know they are negotiating. The government is focused on assisting the parties in reaching a settlement. I am very happy to report that our highly skilled mediators from the Ministry of Labour have met the parties on 19 different occasions to help them come to a settlement, and I am hopeful and confident that a settlement will be reached between the LCBO and the union.

MINING INDUSTRY

Ms. Sarah Campbell: To the Premier: Northwestern Ontario is struggling economically. For years, we have been looking to this government to support job growth and economic development. One project that could have a major impact, resulting in the investment of \$700 million and 500 permanent, full-time jobs, is the Rainy River Gold Project. But far from supporting this investment, this government is needlessly delaying it by being almost two months late with approving the terms of reference.

Why is this government not doing everything in its power to promote job growth in northwestern Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Mr. Speaker, we are very proud of the great record that we have in terms of the northern Ontario growth plan, let alone the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund, where we have provided, over the last 10 years, \$824 million in investments toward creating or retaining 22,000 jobs in northern Ontario.

I can tell you, we're obviously very excited about the opportunities returning to the forestry sector, as we see a transforming of that sector.

We're looking to the opportunities in the mining sector—not just simply the Ring of Fire, as exciting as that is, but also the other developments—and working closely with all industry to make that happen.

Certainly, this continues to be a priority for us. Last week, we were pleased to be at FONOM, the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities, to speak about how keen we are to continue to move forward with our economic vision for northern Ontario.

I look forward to your supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Back to the Premier: This is about the Rainy River Gold Project. This company has done everything right. It has engaged with First Nations and communities from the start. This delay in approving the terms of reference is in part ministry incompetence and partly the result of this Liberal government's cuts to the Ministry of the Environment, a ministry whose

budget has fallen by 45% in real terms since the 1990s and, according to the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, that lacks the basic resources to do its job.

If this government is serious about job growth and job creation, it needs to ensure that the government resources are in place to foster that growth. This is not happening.

This company needs its terms of reference approved by May 17. When will the minister finally sign off so that these badly needed and wanted jobs can move ahead?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: Minister of the Environment.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Speaker, the member may wish to consult with her environmental critic, the member for Davenport, and perhaps with the member for Toronto–Danforth on the importance of giving a full assessment of all of the environmental implications of any of these developments. I know the member is eager to see it moving forward, but her party surely would want to make sure that all of the environmental considerations have been given.

I have given this, personally, very high attention as well, and I am one who is always optimistic, I must say.

I do think that it's important for the New Democratic Party to, as it once was, be very concerned about the environmental implications of any development that happens to take place anywhere in this province.

We will have that opportunity to give a full evaluation of it in appropriate time. I am sure that the necessary approvals—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Timmins–James Bay, come to order. Thank you.

New question.

AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

Mr. Joe Dickson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew knows what I'm going to say.

Mr. Joe Dickson: My question is for the Premier in her capacity as the Minister of Agriculture and Food. The agri-food industry is one of the largest industries in Ontario. Not only does it employ over 700,000 people but it provides \$34 billion to our GDP. The agri-food industry is composed, in large part, of farmers, the men and women who till the fields, plant the crops and feed Ontarians. Another component important to the agri-food industry, and that should be recognized on this, is the food processing sector. The success of the productivity of food processing is vital. Speaker, can the minister please tell us what our recent budget will do to increase productivity in the food processing industry?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you to the member from Ajax–Pickering for the question. He accurately portrays, Mr. Speaker, the importance of the food processing industry to Ontario. I think it's not well understood generally that this is a \$34-billion industry, the agri-food industry. It's a major economic driver creating jobs, improving the economy and supporting our producers.

We believe it's important to support and to contribute to our food processing industry, which is why in the 2013 budget, which we would love to see passed, we included the proposal to extend the capital cost allowance for manufacturing and for processing machinery and equipment. This will have a direct impact on the food processing industry. This measure will reduce the Ontario tax on manufacturing and processing equipment by \$265 million over the course of the next two fiscal years, and that will support our effort to increase productivity.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Joe Dickson: Thank you, Premier. The men and women who work in the food processing sector will be happy to hear that this continues to support everyone in the agri-food industry. In my riding of Ajax–Pickering there will be a number of food processors that can benefit from the extension of the capital cost allowance.

These same food processors have addressed a concern for red tape. While ensuring that food safety and quality is maintained, duplication in the process can stand in the way of the success of these Ontario companies. Can the Premier, the Minister of Agriculture and Food, please update the House on what our government is intending to do to reduce red tape that exists in this industry?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I have heard this concern from producers and processors when it comes to unnecessary red tape or regulation; that's exactly why the Open for Business round table was created. The round table asks for input from producers and processors on how we can work together to find more ways to clear the path for business success.

The round table actually met last week to discuss the priorities of the sector; both processors and producers were at the table. There were a number of other ministries; it is important for other ministries to hear the concerns of the agri-food business. It was a productive conversation; I was very pleased to be part of that conversation.

It's important that we continue to work together, because that's where the solutions are found. When we check in with each other, we find out what's actually happening on the ground so that we can foster the innovation and productivity that's needed in the sector.

SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is to the Minister of Education. Minister, I want to tell you about a young girl in my riding named Hope Hawkins who is hearing-impaired. Hope will be entering grade 8 next year, which is the crucial year of development as one transitions into high school. Unfortunately, she'll be the only grade 8 student in her class at Robarts School for the Deaf in London, due to a declining enrolment. Hope has recently been accepted to the Ernest Drury School for the Deaf in Milton. She wants to attend the school for grade 8 before entering high school, but she has been denied transportation services because she lives three minutes outside the ministry's 70-minute threshold.

It's already been agreed that Hope will receive transportation when she starts grade 9. A public school is not a good option for Hope; EAs and support workers must be hired, special equipment must be provided and it's an environment full of stigma. Hope has attempted this route three times before and the educational experience she received has not been ideal.

Minister, could you direct the provincial superintendent to approve Hope's request to receive the transportation services in the upcoming year?

Hon. Liz Sandals: Thank you very much. Obviously, I'm not familiar with this particular issue. It always is difficult when a student needs to be transported to one of the provincial schools, and trying to make those arrangements.

I think that perhaps in this instance, it would be best if we could get some more information about the particular case, and then we'll endeavour to see if we can find a resolution.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?
1130

Mr. Jeff Yurek: [*Inaudible*] receive more information. She's hit so many roadblocks just trying to get to a school where she can be with her peers.

Minister, I meet with many constituents who deal with the black-and-white nature of some of this government's rules and regulations. We need to understand the need for rules and guidelines, but the inflexibility in a situation like this bespeaks to a failure of the delivery of essential services. This situation takes nothing more than a little common sense, and I hope to get it resolved. I hope that we cannot be beholden to the bureaucratic rules, and do the right thing in this situation. Can you let me know soon whether Hope will receive the transportation services to attend school next year?

Hon. Liz Sandals: If we could get the information fairly quickly and get some contact information for the individual student—because we obviously will need to talk to the individual families involved to get the accurate information—then I will certainly be very happy to have my ministry look at the situation very quickly.

HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. It would seem that it's almost a regular occurrence now that we have to ask you questions or we have to have meetings with you to talk about the failure of the privatized system of maintaining our highways across Ontario.

Last week it was the city of Timmins and area that lost access to highways because of a snowfall that is quite normal for the month of May—no snow plows to be dispatched.

Now we had a three-day closure of Highway 101 as a result of MTO not doing what it has to do to inform the contractor on what they have to do to be able to open up a ditch. As a result, Highway 101 by the town of Wawa was closed down for a number of days. When will you

admit the system doesn't work and do something about fixing it before we get in really serious trouble in northern Ontario?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: The member is quite right. We do meet regularly. I meet with members of the opposition who have concerns, as well as members on this side of the House. As I said to a question the other day, it was very evident in the discussions I had with northern mayors that we had hail, rain, and snow in sequences that were quite serious. I have shared with some of his colleagues the snow and ice reports that have come out and the weather updates. We've been very transparent about that. This was one of the most difficult winters we've had, and I look forward to continuing to work with the member opposite.

We are looking at—and he knows, because some of his members have been involved in those discussions—modifications that we can make to snow removal in the north that obviously couldn't happen in the middle of the last contract season. But I appreciate—

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray:—his comments and the issues he has raised, and I'm hoping that we—

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Minister, the only thing that's changed is the way you maintain these highways. Northern Ontario and the rest of this province have been under this type of weather for years. It's not as if it doesn't snow in the month of May in northern Ontario. It's not as if ditches don't freeze and the ministry doesn't have to thaw them and make sure that the water runs in order to not shut down highways. The issue is that MTO has lost the capacity to respond to what the conditions on our highways are and to keep them open.

So I'm asking you a very simple question: Will you commit to actually reviewing this system so that we don't end up in this situation every time it rains or snows somewhere in the province of Ontario?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: We are now in the period between April 22 and May 22—

Mr. John Yakubuski: Just say you're sorry, or go on Steve Paikin and say you're sorry.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew, last time.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: For many years now we reduce the snow equipment—this has been going on for decades—by 50%. The issue was raised by the member from Timiskaming-Cochrane, and I said I would get back to him, so I can address that today as well. That was the reason, because we're in the transition period right now, so contractors phase out about 50% of their equipment. We've had exceptional late-winter snows that have caused that.

I do want to renew my commitment to the members opposite that we said—and you and I have met several times now, and I've met with other members—that we will review that and put changes in place for next winter, that I've accepted the—

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

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I've got a question this morning for the Minister of Education. Today, we're joined by eight-year-old Elizabeth Yamoah and her dad, Peter. She's eight years old and attends Sunningdale school in Oakville.

Last week, our government introduced a budget that, if passed, is going to help create jobs and build a prosperous and fair Ontario for all. One of the ways we'll do this is by continuing to invest in our world-class education system. We've made tremendous gains in that education system with test scores and graduation rates that continue to rise, but we know that better student achievement will give all young people like Elizabeth the tools they need to succeed in the future labour market.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister please tell this House and the students at Sunningdale school how the proposed budget is going to help improve student achievement?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'd like to thank the member from Oakville and welcome his constituent Elizabeth, wherever she is, to school here. Hi, Elizabeth.

I'd like Elizabeth and all the students at Sunningdale school to know that our government is committed to enhancing student achievement, closing the student achievement gap and supporting those students who may be struggling.

We know that learning experiences for children in the summer can help students further develop important literacy and numeracy skills.

Mr. Speaker, as you will know from your experience as a principal, what often happens—particularly with students who are struggling—is that they actually go backward over the summer. That's why we have introduced specific literacy and numeracy summer camps, summer learning programs.

So if the budget is passed, we will nearly double the funding for the summer programming, up to \$3 million, and in addition—

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

Mr. Todd Smith: Point of order, Speaker?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you. I remind the Minister, when I stand, you sit.

Point of order from the member from Prince Edward-Hastings.

Mr. Todd Smith: Earlier in question period, the Minister of the Attorney General in response to a question that was in violation—in my opinion—of standing order 23(i) and (j), he actually stated that he knew how I was going to be voting on the Ontario budget. I'm not exactly sure how the—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's not a point of order.

VISITOR

Mr. Norm Miller: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Parry Sound–Muskoka on a point of order.

Mr. Norm Miller: I wanted to introduce the mayor of Kapuskasing and president of FONOM, the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities, who's in the visitors' east gallery here today watching question period, Al Spacek.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Point of order, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Point of order from the member from Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I didn't notice my good friend up there so I'm glad that somebody picked it up, and I apologize for not having seen you up there, Al. We'll see you later.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Al, we're glad you're here.

DEFERRED VOTES

LOCAL FOOD ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR
LES ALIMENTS LOCAUX

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

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

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

The division bells rang from 1138 to 1143.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All members take their seats, please. All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Gerretsen, John	Milloy, John
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Gélinas, France	Moridi, Reza
Arnott, Ted	Gravelle, Michael	Munro, Julia
Bailey, Robert	Hardeman, Ernie	Murray, Glen R.
Balkissoon, Bas	Hillier, Randy	Naqvi, Yasir
Barrett, Toby	Horwath, Andrea	Natyshak, Taras
Bartolucci, Rick	Hoskins, Eric	Nicholls, Rick
Bisson, Gilles	Jackson, Rod	O'Toole, John
Bradley, James J.	Jaczek, Helena	Oraziotti, David
Broten, Laurel C.	Jeffrey, Linda	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Campbell, Sarah	Jones, Sylvia	Piruzza, Teresa
Cansfield, Donna H.	Klees, Frank	Prue, Michael
Chan, Michael	Kwinter, Monte	Qaadri, Shafiq
Chiarelli, Bob	Leal, Jeff	Sandals, Liz
Chudleigh, Ted	Leone, Rob	Scott, Laurie
Clark, Steve	MacCharles, Tracy	Sergio, Mario
Colle, Mike	MacLaren, Jack	Shurman, Peter
Coteau, Michael	MacLeod, Lisa	Singh, Jagmeet
Crack, Grant	Mangat, Amrit	Smith, Todd
Craitor, Kim	Mantha, Michael	Sousa, Charles
Damerla, Dipika	Marchese, Rosario	Tabuns, Peter
Del Duca, Steven	Matthews, Deborah	Taylor, Monique
Delaney, Bob	Mauro, Bill	Thompson, Lisa M.
Dhillon, Vic	McDonnell, Jim	Vanthof, John
Dickson, Joe	McKenna, Jane	Walker, Bill
DiNovo, Cheri	McMeekin, Ted	Wilson, Jim

Duguid, Brad
Fedeli, Victor
Fife, Catherine
Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Forster, Cindy

McNaughton, Monte
McNeely, Phil
Meilleur, Madeleine
Miller, Norm
Miller, Paul

Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Yakabuski, John
Yurek, Jeff
Zimmer, David

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 93; the nays are 0.

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

Second reading agreed to.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'd like to ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

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

There are no deferred votes. This House stands—

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I will recognize the point of order. If the Sergeant-at-Arms had stood up, I would have said no.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Sorry about that. I just wanted to ask the House to join me in congratulating Premier Christy Clark, who won an outstanding election last night.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1148 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Paul Miller: We have some special guests in the west gallery today. From ACTRA, we have Tabby Johnson, Theresa Tova, David Sparrow, Lisa Blanchette and Hugh O'Reilly; and from Equity, we have Lynn McQueen and Jeremy Civiero.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

MAC McKENNA

Mrs. Jane McKenna: You learn the most about yourself when you have children. As a mother of five, I can attest to that, and I'm thankful for each moment, good or bad, with my children.

I'm especially mindful of that this week, because tomorrow my youngest child and only son is graduating from Burlington Central High School. I feel a special pride in Mac's achievements this year, his dedication to schoolwork—despite every cell in his body screaming out to go skateboarding with his friends or playing his

drums for long hours—and his growth into a young man. I'm immensely proud of him.

Any graduation is cause for celebration, and it's not just the prospect of an empty nest. Over the last year, I have seen Mac rise to a greater purpose. I get my self-worth when I look into my son's eyes. I get my share of zingers too. He has inherited my sense of humour and can cut me off in mid-rant with his razor wit, which is a mixed blessing. But I wouldn't change a thing.

I know I will miss those late nights driving in my housecoat to pick him up, gosh knows where, at the end of a Friday night, but I'd like to thank Mac for those wonderful years of his journey for the last 17 years, and I look forward to the next. Congratulations to all of Burlington Central High School's class of 2013.

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. Jonah Schein: I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the people of Davenport for sharing their feedback with me about the provincial budget. I want to ask the Premier to listen carefully to their concerns. I've listened; I've heard clearly that people want to see all MPPs working together. People value the constructive role that the NDP has played in this minority Parliament, and they want the government to work with the NDP to avoid an election right now.

People have told me they want to see a jobs strategy for young people, investment in home care for our seniors, action on social assistance reform and regulation of auto insurance companies to bring down rates. And people want to see a fairer tax system in Ontario to fund public services like transit. The NDP has pushed these ideas forward to ensure that these priorities are reflected in this budget, and we have proposed new ways to make this government more transparent and accountable.

We've worked hard in Davenport to re-engage people in the political process and to restore people's faith in democracy and collective action. But it's hard for people to remain hopeful when they see this government continue unaccountable privatization schemes and unfair tax policies that deliver benefits for the few while the majority of people in Ontario struggle.

Even so, people remain concerned that, despite the positive proposals put forward by the NDP, this Liberal budget continues down a path of austerity that will not stimulate job growth or raise new revenue that could rebuild our public infrastructure and support vulnerable members of our community. This is why we hope that the Premier hears these voices and works with the NDP to bring accountability and fairness to Ontario, to help restore people's trust in government and hope for the future of this province.

PETERBOROUGH DAY

Mr. Grant Crack: I rise today, on behalf of the member from Peterborough, to recognize the fourth annual Peterborough Day at Queen's Park. Earlier today,

I had the pleasure of attending a wonderful reception hosted by local community representatives, businesses and other organizations located in the Peterborough riding. It was a great opportunity to see what fantastic contributions Peterborough makes to Ontario's economy and culture.

Some of the groups attending the reception included the Greater Peterborough Area Economic Development Corporation, Trent University, Fleming College, Peterborough airport, Crosswind Farm, Camp Kawartha, MB Graphics and Events, Minute Maid, GE Hitachi and Molehill Document Management. Also represented were members from the arts and cultural sector in Peterborough.

I particularly enjoyed the fantastic ice cream, provided by none other than the famous Kawartha Dairy ice cream company.

Peterborough is home to a diverse population of nearly 80,000 people, and I certainly appreciate the warm hospitality they showed myself and the other MPPs here today at Queen's Park. I want to congratulate all those involved for another successful Peterborough Day.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING TAX CREDIT

Mr. Victor Fedeli: For a decade now, Liberal policies have crushed growth, jobs and prosperity in northern Ontario. The latest hit from this government can be found on page 262 of the budget, which outlines the elimination of the Apprenticeship Training Tax Credit for only contact centres.

There are 25,000 contact centre jobs in Ontario. Eight thousand of those contact centres are in the north. This move directly threatens at least 2,000 northern jobs, many hundreds of them in my community. In fact, the member from Simcoe North told me that it affects 700 in his area as well. Ironically, the \$45 million that this is deemed to save is the exact same amount as the new Liberal subsidy that is being given to the Toronto music industry.

The day after the budget was released, I talked to the president of one of the largest contact centres in North Bay. He told me how valuable the training is and how vital the tax credit is to the industry. Without it, there will be no new hires, and the sector, predominantly located in northern Ontario, will shrink or close. Recently, the mayors of the five large communities in northern Ontario wrote to the Premier to ask that this budget item be reversed.

The PC Party and our leader recently unveiled a firm vision to get the north back on track. Northerners figured out long ago that this government can't be trusted, and it's time to change the team.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Earlier this week, the Conservatives held an open discussion on auto insurance in my

riding of Bramalea–Gore–Malton. It was quite ironic considering that on March 27 the entire Progressive Conservative Party voted against the NDP motion to reduce auto insurance by 15%. It's very ironic, and the people in my riding were very curious about that. The insurance plan proposed by the Tim Hudak Progressives only helps big insurance companies make more money. There's no guarantee that any of the PCs' ideas would actually lower premiums.

The Liberals and the Conservatives both just don't get it when it comes to reducing auto insurance rates. They're both set on calling everyday Ontarians "fraudsters" and specifically targeting folks like the good people in my riding of Brampton as fraudsters. They suggested they're the reason for the high premiums. Everyday Ontarians are simply too busy trying to make ends meet than commit fraud. There is a small percentage of folks who are committing fraud, not the everyday folks in my riding or across Ontario.

Auto insurance is mandatory in this province; it's regulated by this government. While auto insurance is mandatory in the province, it should also be mandatory that it is affordable. The government has the ability and the responsibility to reduce these rates to ensure that premiums are affordable. I ask them to do so immediately.

RESOLUTE FOREST PRODUCTS

Mr. Bill Mauro: Yesterday we had two great announcements in my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan, both at Resolute Forest Products—one at the pulp and paper mill and one at the sawmill.

The first one was the commissioning of their new cogeneration facility, a \$65-million project that we are very proud to support from our Forest Sector Prosperity Fund with about \$9.6 million. This cogen will produce about 65 megawatts of energy; it's going to make Resolute Forest Products very cost-competitive and very cost-efficient in the years ahead.

We're extremely pleased as well to still have contained in the budget a three-year commitment of \$360 million to the Northern Industrial Electricity Rate Program that will further decrease their energy costs by about 25%. Of course, we're going to need the support of the opposition parties to get that one through.

We also celebrated the 10th anniversary of the sawmill of Resolute Forest Products. They've just hired a third shift there—about 170 people in total working at that particular facility.

In combination with the recent announcements by Resolute—a brand new sawmill in Atikokan, a \$50-million investment; \$30 million to \$35 million invested in their existing Ignace sawmill—this amount of private sector investment by Resolute in northwestern Ontario and Thunder Bay–Atikokan is an incredibly great signal. They are now a fully integrated, very cost-competitive and efficient enterprise, and we look forward to them providing a tax base and jobs in the years ahead.

1510

SOUTH HASTINGS BASEBALL LEAGUE

Mr. Todd Smith: In the words of league president John "Bat" Masterson, it felt more like football weather than baseball, but that didn't dampen the spirits of those involved in opening day festivities for eight teams in the 80th season of the South Hastings Baseball League on Saturday. The league claims to be the oldest consecutively run senior baseball league in Canada. For many families, four and five generations have stepped onto the green grass in Thurlow and Tyendinaga—names like Reid, Sullivan, McGuinness, Farrell, Walsh, Adams, Harrison, Pascoe, Masterson and Barberstock have been synonymous with the SHBL since the 1930s.

In fact, in Saturday night's game featuring the defending champion Latta Rivermen, the starting pitcher was Marcus Sullivan and the guy catching was his dad, 35-year veteran Boyd.

At Saturday's opener, 82-year-old Les Reid threw out the ceremonial first pitch—in his original uniform, I might add—before the Melrose Shamrocks and Uens pole liners game; 86-year-old Buck Pascoe, who has never missed a single season of South Hastings baseball, was in the stands again on Saturday. He played for the very first time as a young teen when a bunch of players got stuck behind a stalled freight train.

People like Gerry Masterson and the late Thornton Portt played key roles in ensuring the survival of the league. Portt contributed financially to improvements at the beautiful ballparks and Masterson has done it all, from coaching to umpiring and heading the executive as well.

It's about time the SHBL was recognized by Canada's baseball hall of fame, and we'll be pushing that forward. Here's to another fine season, and may the call "play ball" be heard for another year across South Hastings.

ONTARIO WINE AWARDS

Mr. Kim Craitor: Last Friday I had the privilege of attending the 19th annual Ontario Wine Awards gala celebration held in my riding of Niagara-on-the-Lake. Tony Aspler, one of Canada's most acclaimed wine writers and an Order of Canada recipient, founded the Ontario Wine Awards in 1995. His vision was to catapult Ontario VQA wines into the most successful and revered wines across Ontario by promoting the top Ontario wineries for the quality product they produce.

This year an outstanding 496 wines were submitted from 78 wineries. Each entry is assessed by blind panels of accredited wine judges, with 26 categories awarding bronze, silver and gold medals. There were also distinctive awards given out honouring the winemaker of the year, white and red wine of the year and wine journalism awards.

To further acknowledge the strong ties between regional wines and cuisine, their annual charity event,

Sip and Savour Ontario, will showcase more than 25 award-winning Ontario wineries and regionally prepared food by local chefs.

During the past two years over \$40,000 has been raised for their charity partner, Houselink. The public will be able to experience Ontario wines and food first-hand at Sip and Savour Ontario, which is taking place in Toronto on the 19th of June in the historic Distillery District.

My hat goes off to our great VQA wines and to our wonderful wineries across Ontario.

BRUCE SAUNDERS

Mr. Bill Walker: I rise in the House today to recognize a lifelong dairy farmer, Bruce Saunders, who comes from the great riding of Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, and congratulate him as a recipient of the 2012 Tommy Cooper Award.

The Tommy Cooper Award is judged based on the qualities of leadership, achievement, volunteer contribution, youth participation and community service. Mr. Saunders succeeded in all of these categories, and it is my pleasure to recognize his hard work and commitment in the House today.

Bruce Saunders is a lifelong dairy farmer, volunteer and advocate of supply management. The 64-year-old recipient studied at the Ontario Agricultural College at the University of Guelph, where he majored in crop science. Upon graduation, Bruce returned home to his parents' farm near Chatsworth, where he still farms and co-manages now with his brother Brian. On their generation-held farm of farmers, they milk almost 200 cows and farm 800 acres of corn and barley.

Mr. Saunders's volunteer contributions included work to advance and promote the benefits of supply management to the provincial and federal members of Parliament. Mr. Saunders held the position of provincial director for Grey-Bruce for 24 years on the Dairy Farmers of Canada. He also served as the Dairy Farmers of Ontario chairman from 2005 to 2009.

Mr. Saunders currently works as a supply management advocate in the milk and poultry sectors. We appreciate his optimism in believing that the production quota will remain the same for years ahead.

I'd like the House to join me in congratulating Bruce Saunders on his inspiring achievement.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Parkdale–High Park on a point of order.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I just wanted to introduce some folk who have arrived from the social justice tribunal. We have Elaine, we have Breanna and we have Kim in the House. Thank you for all your hard work—not to mention Maggie.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We welcome all our guests, as always.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

WITHDRAWAL OF BILL 40

Mr. Steve Clark: First, I've discussed this with the government House leader, the House leader of the third party and my own House leader: Before I table this bill, I'd like to ask for unanimous consent to withdraw my Bill 40 that's presently on the order paper.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds–Grenville has requested permission to withdraw the present bill. Agreed? Agreed.

REGULATED HEALTH PROFESSIONS AMENDMENT ACT (SPOUSAL EXCEPTION), 2013

LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES PROFESSIONS DE LA SANTÉ RÉGLEMENTÉES (EXCEPTION RELATIVE AU CONJOINT)

Mr. Clark moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 70, An Act to amend the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 / Projet de loi 70, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1991 sur les professions de la santé réglementées.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: First of all, I just want to acknowledge, in the west members' gallery, Maggie Head, the government relations manager for the Ontario Dental Association.

The Regulated Health Professions Amendment Act (Spousal Exception): Currently, subsection 1(3) of the Health Professions Procedural Code, which is a schedule to the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991, sets out a definition of "sexual abuse" that includes certain conduct, behaviour and remarks between a patient and a member of a regulated health profession.

The new subsection 1(5) of the code provides for an exception where the patient is the member's spouse and the conduct, behaviour or remark does not occur when the member is engaged in the practice of the profession. The exception is only available to a member of a particular health profession if the member's college makes a regulation that adopts the exception.

PROTECTING CHILD PERFORMERS ACT, 2013 LOI DE 2013 SUR LA PROTECTION DES ENFANTS ARTISTES

Mr. Paul Miller moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 71, An Act to protect child performers in the live entertainment industry and the recorded entertainment

industry / Projet de loi 71, Loi visant à protéger les enfants artistes dans l'industrie du spectacle vivant et l'industrie du spectacle enregistré.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Mr. Paul Miller: The bill enacts the Protecting Child Performers Act, 2013. The paramount purpose of the act is to promote the best interests, protection and well-being of child performers in the live entertainment industry and the recorded entertainment industry.

Parts II, III and IV of the act set out rules relating to the disclosure of terms of employment, tutoring requirements, income protection, hours of work and adult supervision for child performers. Parts II, III and IV are enforced as if they formed part of the Employment Standards Act, 2000.

Part V of the act sets out rules relating to the health and safety of child performers. Part V is enforced as if it would form part of the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

The act provides that if there is a conflict between a provision of the act and a rule contained in the collective agreement, a contract or another act, the rule that provides the greatest protection to the child performer will prevail.

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POPE JOHN PAUL II DAY ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LE JOUR DU PAPE JEAN-PAUL II

Ms. Damerla moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 72, An Act to proclaim Pope John Paul II Day /
Projet de loi 72, Loi proclamant le Jour du Pape Jean-Paul II.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Ms. Dipika Damerla: The bill proclaims April 2 in each year as Pope John Paul II Day. Most of us know that the legacy of Pope John Paul II reflects his lifelong commitment to international understanding, peace and the defence of equality and human rights. His legacy has an all-embracing meaning that is particularly relevant to Canada's multi-faith and multicultural traditions and experience.

I would like to acknowledge, at this point, that I build on the work of my colleague on the other side, the member for Newmarket–Aurora, who introduced Bill 25, also titled the Pope John Paul II Day Act, 2009, which passed second reading on February 19, 2009. I sincerely hope that this time the bill will be passed in time for April 2014, which will be fitting, because it will also

mark the 25th anniversary of the fall of Communism in central and eastern Europe, something that the Pope had a pivotal role in.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

POLICE WEEK

SEMAINE DE LA POLICE

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Mr. Speaker, this week, May 12 to 18, Ontario celebrates Police Week. It is a week during which police services across the province engage with their communities to highlight the work that police do. It is also an opportunity for us in the Legislature to show our appreciation to the police for all they do to serve and protect our communities.

Ontario's communities are safer, Mr. Speaker, and our province is stronger because of our excellent police services and because our government is committed to supporting them in the challenging job they do.

La Semaine de la police est l'occasion, pour les communautés de l'Ontario, de renforcer les liens avec leurs services de police. C'est l'occasion parfaite pour montrer leur gratitude, pour prendre le temps de dire merci à ces hommes et femmes qui ont servi courageusement, et pour rendre hommage à ceux et celles qui servent encore.

Police Week is also a time when we pay tribute to those courageous and dedicated police officers who made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. Police Week is being observed in May to coincide with Peace Officers' Memorial Day, recognized internationally on the 15th. Ontario's police memorial ceremony of remembrance takes place on the first Sunday in May each year.

Last week, during the annual ceremony, we were reminded of the risks these brave men and women who wear the uniform are often exposed to as we commemorate our fallen police officers. Sadly, we mourn the passing of Constable Jennifer Kovach of the Guelph Police Service, who made the ultimate sacrifice last March in the line of duty. We honour those who, like Constable Kovach, face great risks to protect us, and as we honour their memory, we salute their families and express our gratitude for their sacrifice.

La sécurité communautaire demeure une priorité pour le gouvernement de l'Ontario. C'est pourquoi nous continuons à financer des programmes qui aident les organismes communautaires et leurs services de police locaux à travailler ensemble pour prévenir le crime.

Police Week is also a time to celebrate the steps we are taking to make the province safer.

We have been working to develop an Ontario crime prevention strategy involving police and the community in the search of a holistic and informed approach to preventing crime in Ontario.

Last year, we released a booklet called Crime Prevention in Ontario: A Framework for Action, and we are

now building on that with public consultations. At the same time, we are continuing our work with the Future of Policing Advisory Committee. The committee is determining core and non-core police services in order to provide effective, efficient and sustainable police service delivery in Ontario. Together, our Crime Prevention in Ontario initiatives and the Future of Policing Advisory Committee are helping policing evolve across Ontario.

Evolution is a large part of this year's Police Week theme, which is "Walk the Digital Beat—A New Era of Engagement." The theme highlights the importance of police officers engaging their communities to enhance community safety and the need to employ the latest technology and the most up-to-date media in that effort.

Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to say that the partnership between the government and Ontario's police services is a positive and highly effective one.

Ensemble, nous continuons de faire d'importants progrès pour régler les enjeux auxquels nous sommes confrontés. Ces progrès sont un hommage au travail des agents de la police dévoués et professionnels qui oeuvrent au service des communautés partout en Ontario.

More than 160 years ago, Sir Robert Peel, the founder of modern policing, said, "The police are the public and the public are the police." What better way to recognize that than by recognizing Police Week and by celebrating a theme of engagement?

There are many events and celebrations planned for cities and towns throughout Ontario during Police Week. I invite my colleagues in the House to join me in this expression of gratitude and appreciation to police officers in every community in Ontario.

In closing, I'd like to congratulate Gilles Larochelle, who has just been appointed the chief of police in Kingston. He's a great police officer from Ottawa.

ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Hon. Michael Coteau: I'm proud to rise in the House today to recognize May as Asian Heritage Month. This month has been celebrated in Ontario and across Canada for more than a decade. It is important to honour the countless contributions that more than 2.6 million members of Ontario's Asian community have made to our province.

Ontario has welcomed newcomers from all over the continent of Asia. Ontario's Asian community has been a vital part of this province for over 100 years. They enrich our province's cultural mosaic and strengthen our economy.

The Asian community has excelled in so many areas, from arts education, health care and science to business and politics. This month, I encourage all people from across this great province to take time to celebrate Asian Heritage Month.

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Ontario's diversity is one of our most valuable assets, and we are fortunate to live in a place where every culture and every person can contribute and flourish. Mr.

Speaker, it is an honour to celebrate Ontario's Asian community.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Responses?

POLICE WEEK

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's a pleasure to rise and respond on behalf of Tim Hudak and the Progressive Conservative caucus as we recognize Police Week 2013. "Walk the Digital Beat—A New Era of Engagement" is the theme of this year's Police Week. Like every other service that we have in society today, police are affected by technology, and the newest technology available must be engaged in all facets of society. The police are no exception. One of the very important tools of police today is engagement with the public. The use of social media has led to the solving of many, many crimes over the last few years, and the police's ability to use that technology has been a bonus to them in doing their work.

I was privileged to attend the police memorial a couple of weeks ago. I was honoured and moved as we listened to the names of 248 police officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty in this province, starting with Constable John Fisk, the village of York, in 1804, and, as Minister Meilleur spoke about, sadly, Jennifer Kovach just this year in the city of Guelph; 248 names, brave men and women who have dedicated their lives to making our lives safer and better, who have given up their lives in the line of duty across Ontario.

The opportunity during Police Week is exactly that: an opportunity for us—as it says, "A New Era of Engagement"—to engage with our police forces as well and our police officers; an opportunity for members of the public to maybe see a little more. We have the opportunity as MPPs to see a little more closely what police do, because we interact with them a little more, but it's an opportunity for the public to engage with your local police force—the Ontario Provincial Police, if that's who polices your community. If you have the opportunity, remember to say thank you, because those are the people who put their lives on the line each and every day when they leave home to ensure that our communities are as safe as they can possibly be, and our lives are better for it.

As the minister said, Sir Robert Peel said, "The police are the public and the public are the police." In order to have a successful society, we must have a strong police force, and in order to have a successful police force, we must have a society that supports them, engages with them and ensures that they can do the job they do so well to the best of their ability. Police Week is a week that we can celebrate that and say thank you to the brave men and women who continue to serve us.

ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Todd Smith: I'm pleased to acknowledge that May is in fact Asian Heritage Month. For the past 11 years, this event has given us the opportunity to commemorate the history of Asian Canadians and honour their legacy.

Over the last year, I've had the opportunity to visit temples and celebrate the lunar new year with members of our Asian community. In that time, I've acquainted myself with a community of entrepreneurs and innovators, families who came to Canada with little more than the money in their pockets and built up thriving and successful businesses that help drive Ontario's economic engine. The recent census data identified that Markham is Canada's most diverse community, making a testament to how Ontario's diversity can drive its prosperity as well.

Today, we see members of the Asian community active in their communities and successful in various fields, from Patrick Chan, three-time world champion figure skater, to world-renowned scientist and Order of Canada recipient Dr. Tak Wah Mak, to Senator Vivienne Poy, the first Canadian of Asian descent appointed to the Senate. I've had the opportunity to get to know another Senator of Asian descent, Victor Oh, over the many events that I've attended in York region over the last several months. Many Asian Ontarians are playing key roles in making Ontario a prosperous place for us.

Over the last century, Canadian soldiers have gone to Asia to defend the democratic values that we hold dear. Boys from Ontario gave their lives at Kapyong and elsewhere alongside South Korean soldiers during the Korean War. Our common sacrifice and the efforts of the Canadians we have sent overseas have created the reputation Ontario has as a destination where peace, prosperity and democracy reign.

We have always looked at ways to work together as a people and a province, and I look forward to continuing to work alongside Ontario's Asian community on issues that are important to them: respecting taxpayer dollars and standing up for stronger families. Those bedrock Conservative values are echoed in Ontario's Asian community.

POLICE WEEK

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I'm pleased today to rise on behalf of Ontario New Democrats to mark the occasion of Police Week.

Any time I get to feeling that politics is hard work, I think about the police officers I know who put their lives on the line each and every day to protect our communities.

I come from Belle River in Essex county, and I have family members who also serve the force, and two little kids who look up to our men and women in uniform.

Policing, we know, can sometimes be a thankless job. Therefore, I'd like to start by saying thanks. Thanks for all the work you do. We know you need big shoulders to carry the responsibilities that officers do.

When public safety is threatened, they're always there for the major calls. When minor calls give families major worries, they're there, too. Officers are more than just a uniform. They're our friends and our neighbours. That's why the whole province grieves together when we lose

one of our finest. We must never forget the names of those whose lives were taken in the line of duty.

On my way to Queen's Park, I pass by the Ontario Police Memorial, and only a couple of weeks ago we held the ceremony of remembrance before those statues to pay tribute to the 258 officers from every service whose names are inscribed on the memorial: good cops like Jennifer Kovach of Guelph Police Service, who lost her life on the job this March, and Constable William Rourke, who died serving the people of Cobourg 98 years ago. They stand as examples to every Ontarian, and our hearts go out to their families and friends.

We have a duty to honour their bravery and dedication, and we have a duty to honour wounded officers too, because injuries are injuries, whether they're physical or psychological. I know that police officers see a lot that they'd prefer not to see and that body armour can't protect against every threat. That's why my friend and colleague Cheri DiNovo has worked hard to help cops with injuries, with post-traumatic stress disorder. She tabled a private member's bill to help front-line responders, because police officers in this province are facing shameful delays in qualifying for benefits after suffering PTSD as a result of the job. We can and must do better.

The province also has a responsibility to help municipalities with the cost of good policing. Prompt uploading of provincially mandated services will free the funds that could be used to hire front-line police, buy new equipment and provide training in emerging fields of community safety.

We know that without decent jobs, without a livable minimum wage, without a fair chance to rejoin the workforce, people get trapped in a cycle of poverty. If parents are working two jobs just to make ends meet, then children may fall through the cracks. If First Nations kids are stuck in disgraceful conditions with no access to clean drinking water, let alone a decent education, they then become easy pickings for gangs.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Ontario New Democratic Party, I want to thank our men and women in uniform for all the work they do and for continuing to keep our province safe.

ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. Michael Prue: It's my honour to stand today to say a few words on behalf of Asian Heritage Month. Asian heritage is a unique and distinct culture—many cultures and traditions.

I've had the opportunity to travel through some eight nations in Asia and see the diversity of the culture, the diversity of the traditions and the people who live there. The temples, the cities, the arts, the food are totally magnificent, and I commend all of those places to people here.

But all of that and more can be found right here in the province of Ontario. We have people of Asian descent who have lived here for generations and some who have

just arrived only recently, but amongst all of them we have lawyers, lawmakers, entrepreneurs, teachers and men and women of science and of medicine. They have given the world a lot, and they have given a lot to this country. They have made great scientific breakthroughs in the past and continue to do that even until today. They have given Canada much.

I think part of our history that needs to be said, because it is a shameful part of our history, is about the men, particularly men who came from China to build the railway—we treated them, I think, abysmally in times past. We had an Asian head tax. We wouldn't allow them to be reunited with their families.

During the Second World War, we treated our Japanese Canadians in ways that today we are very ashamed of: seizing their properties, their boats and deporting them inland, away from the British Columbia coast.

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But today we recognize—and we need to recognize—the contributions that they made, that their ancestors continue to make, and the diversity that they brought with them to this country and to this province. They have made this place a better place, and all Ontarians now recognize that.

PETITIONS

AIR QUALITY

Mr. Jim Wilson: “Whereas Ontario’s Drive Clean program was implemented only as a temporary measure to reduce high levels of vehicle emissions and smog; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Whereas this new emissions test has caused numerous false ‘fails’, which have resulted in the overcharging

of testing fees for Ontario drivers and car dealerships, thereby causing unwarranted economic hardship and stress;

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

“That the Minister of the Environment must take immediate steps to begin phasing out the Drive Clean program.”

I am happy to sign that petition.

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

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

“Whereas the government of Ontario’s newly created Ontario College of Trades is planning to hit 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.”

I’m pleased to sign the petition and send it to the table with page Samantha.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I might be shutting something down.

The member from Durham.

PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

Mr. John O’Toole: “Whereas the Ministry of Health is planning major changes to services provided by OHIP for physiotherapy as of August 1st, 2013; and

“Whereas this will drastically reduce the number of allowable treatments to 12 per year for people who are currently eligible for 100 treatments” per year; “and

“Whereas funding for physiotherapy services to seniors in long-term-care homes would be cut by almost 50%, from an estimated \$110 million per year to \$58.5 million per year; and

“Whereas ambulatory seniors in retirement homes would have to travel offsite for physiotherapy; and

“Whereas under the changes scheduled for August 1, the cost of visits under the CCAC (community care access centre) model will rise to \$120 per visit, rather than the current fee of \$12.20 per visit through OHIP physiotherapy providers; and

“Whereas these changes will deprive seniors and other eligible clients from the many health and mobility benefits of physiotherapy;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, ask that the delisting of OHIP physiotherapy clinics as of August 1st not

proceed and that the provincial government guarantee there will be no reduction in" service quality or guarantee "available for seniors, children and youths, people with disabilities and all those who are currently eligible for OHIP-funded physiotherapy" services.

I'm pleased to provide this to Kelly, one of the pages, and support it.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Before I move on to the next petition, we can do without the Elvis imitation. Thank you.

The member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry.

TIRE DISPOSAL

Mr. Jim McDonell: Thank you, Speaker. I'm no Elvis.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government has approved massive increases to Ontario Tire Stewardship's eco fees for agricultural tires, increasing some fees from \$15.29 to \$352.80, \$546.84 or \$1,311.24;

"Whereas Ontario imposes tire eco fees that are dramatically higher than those in other provinces;

"Whereas other provincial governments either exempt agricultural tires from recycling programs or charge fees only up to \$75;

"Whereas these new fees will result in increased costs for our farmers and lost sales for our farm equipment dealerships;

"Whereas the PC caucus has proposed a new plan that holds manufacturers and importers of tires responsible for recycling, but gives them the freedom to work with other businesses to find the best way possible to carry out that responsibility;

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

"To suspend the decision to significantly increase Ontario Tire Stewardship's fees on agricultural and off-the-road tires pending a thorough impact study and implementation of proposals to lower costs."

AIR QUALITY

Mr. Victor Fedeli: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

I sign this and give it to page Gabriel.

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

Mr. Bill Walker: "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 current policies of the McGuinty/Wynne Liberal 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 trades...."

I agree with this, and will sign my name and send it with page Jack.

PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

Mr. Rick Nicholls: "Whereas the Ministry of Health is planning on eliminating OHIP-funded physiotherapy services currently provided to seniors in retirement homes—and changing the current provider of the service as of August 1st, 2013; and

"Whereas the Minister of Health has announced a total of \$33 million in physiotherapy funding, or \$550 per senior for 60,000 seniors, including those in retirement homes; and

"Whereas instead of the 100 to 150 visits per year a senior may receive now from their dedicated on-site OHIP physiotherapy staff, the change would mean a CCAC therapist would provide 5 to 10 visits on-site only to seniors who are bedridden or have an acute injury. All other ambulatory seniors would have to attend other community locations/clinics for physiotherapy and exercise off-site; and

"Whereas this change not only reduces the amount of money available, but also moves funds from the lowest-cost provider (OHIP physiotherapy providers – \$12.20

per treatment) to the highest-cost provider (CCAC – \$120 per treatment); and

“Whereas current OHIP physiotherapy providers, who have been providing seniors with individualized treatments for over 48 years, will be delisted from OHIP by the government; and

“Whereas these services have been provided to help seniors improve in their activities of daily living, mobility, pain and fall risks;

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

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“To review and reverse the decision to eliminate OHIP physiotherapy services to seniors in retirement homes, our most vulnerable population and most at risk for falls; and continue with the provision of at least 100 treatments per year with a mechanism to access an additional 50 treatments, if medically necessary, with the current low-cost OHIP physiotherapy providers.”

I approve of this petition and I affix my name to it and give it to Anjali.

LYME DISEASE

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I appreciate the opportunity to present this petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Let me guess: Lyme disease.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: “Whereas the tick-borne illness known as chronic Lyme disease”—my colleague is absolutely right—“which mimics many catastrophic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn’s, Alzheimer’s, arthritic diabetes, depression, chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia, is increasingly endemic in Canada, but scientifically validated diagnostic tests and treatment choices are currently not available in Ontario, forcing patients to seek these in the USA and Europe;

“Whereas the Canadian Medical Association informed the public, governments and the medical profession in the May 30, 2000, edition of its professional journal that Lyme disease is endemic throughout Canada, particularly in southern Ontario; and,

“Whereas the Ontario public health system and the Ontario Health Insurance Plan currently do not fund those specific tests that accurately serve the process for establishing a clinical diagnosis, but only recognize testing procedures known in the medical literature to provide false negatives 45% to 95% of the time;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Health to direct the Ontario public health system and OHIP to include all currently available and scientifically verified tests for acute and chronic Lyme diagnosis, to do everything necessary to create public awareness of Lyme disease in Ontario, and to have internationally developed diagnostic and successful treatment protocols available to patients and physicians.”

I’ve received thousands of these petitions. I agree with it wholeheartedly and I’ll send it to the desk with Eve.

AIR QUALITY

Mr. Todd Smith: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“That the Minister of the Environment must take immediate steps to begin phasing out the Drive Clean program.”

WIND TURBINES

Mrs. Julia Munro: “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 Ensur-

ing Affordable Energy Act, and call committee hearings immediately on the bill.”

As I am in agreement, I've affixed my signature and give it to page Kelly.

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

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

“Whereas a want of confidence motion has been tabled before the Legislative Assembly of Ontario; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario remains in power only while it has the confidence of the assembly; and

“Whereas the debate of a want of confidence motion requires the consent of all three parties' House leaders; and

“Whereas the recent scandals, including the Ornge air ambulance fiasco, the Mississauga and Oakville power plant cancellation and eHealth have shown Ontarians that the McGuinty-Wynne Liberal government cannot be trusted with the administration of our province; and

“Whereas it is evident that the McGuinty-Wynne government has lost the confidence of Ontarians;

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

“To immediately exercise its prime duty of holding the government accountable and bring a want of confidence motion to debate at the earliest opportunity.”

I agree with this and—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The time for petitions is over.

OPPOSITION DAY

WANT OF CONFIDENCE MOTION

Mr. Steve Clark: Whereas a motion of want of confidence is one of the most serious parliamentary tools available to any opposition party throughout the Commonwealth that uses the Westminster system of Parliament;

Whereas motions of non-confidence are generally moved against governments when governments conduct their affairs that breach the trust of the people;

Whereas it is not only parliamentary tradition but convention that when a motion of want of confidence is called against a government, that the government in question will want to dispense with such a motion so as to prove to Her Majesty and the people that they still retain the confidence of the House and moral authority to govern;

Whereas the failure on the part of any party to agree to call any such motion for a timely debate and vote is not only an affront to democracy but shows disrespect and disregard toward the will of the people who elected members of an assembly;

Therefore, it is the opinion of this House that the House leaders of all the three recognized parties shall schedule for Tuesday, May 28, 2013, a debate and a vote on the motion of want of confidence standing in the name of Jim Wilson, MPP, Simcoe–Grey.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Mr. Clark has moved opposition day number 4. Mr. Clark.

Mr. Steve Clark: I believe that Ontarians want and deserve a vote in this Legislature to determine if the Liberals have the confidence of the people. I urge all members to vote in support of calling the want of confidence motion for debate.

The Liberals' unwillingness to bring our want of confidence motion forward shows the arrogance with which they have treated this entire scandal and refusal to deal with the consequences.

Premier Wynne has said that the budget motion is the only test of confidence the House needs. Well, Speaker, with all due respect, she's wrong. Taken literally, the budget only pertains to the budgetary policy of the government, not confidence in an overall sense. In contrast, our confidence motion allows for a more comprehensive test of the confidence that the House has in the government, setting aside the political auction sales that the last two budgets have become in this minority Parliament.

My colleagues and I in the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus have been hearing from our constituents and people across the great province of Ontario that this Liberal government has lost the moral authority to govern. Speaker, this is not a charge that we make lightly. This is a very serious matter requiring very serious measures. In order to understand the sentiment of frustration and lack of confidence which is present in so many Ontarians, it's important to put into context the events that have led to the tabling of Mr. Wilson's want of confidence motion.

Speaker, upon first glance at this Liberal government's record over the past almost 10 years, someone might say that, obviously, the reason why the opposition is now calling for a test of confidence in the Wynne government is because of their horrible record. I mean, in the last 10 years that the Liberals have been in power, we've lost 300,000 manufacturing jobs; and they've watched idly as 600,000 Ontarians struggle to find work across the province. In fact, the jobless rate in Ontario continues its five-year streak of exceeding the national average. The Liberals have implemented policies which favour union leaders and reduce opportunities for the individual worker by hindering economic growth. Furthermore, to fund those policies, they've increased taxes, all while managing to double our debt and turn us into a have-not province in the process.

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Unfortunately, Speaker, complete economic failure doesn't even manage to break the top five Liberal most appalling examples of mismanagement. The Wynne government has an inherent problem with mismanagement and waste. Ontarians have watched as \$2 billion was wasted in the eHealth scandal. Then countless patients

were put at risk and millions of taxpayers' dollars were wasted in the Ornge scandal.

In light of the emerging gas plant scandal, where the government schemed to understate the true cost of cancelling the Oakville and Mississauga gas plants by hundreds of millions of dollars, we contend that the Liberals have again betrayed the trust and the confidence of the people they claim to represent. They took deliberate steps to hide who was responsible for deciding to cancel the gas plants and deliberately withhold public documents. How can the government House leader continue to refuse to call our confidence motion? To me, it's a dereliction of his duty.

Hundreds of years of parliamentary tradition dictate that any vote can be designated as confidence by the government, and that any government that can't command the confidence of this House should resign. By refusing to call the confidence motion for debate and a vote in this House, the government demonstrates its belief that it might be defeated if a vote was held. If Premier Wynne doesn't believe she can command the confidence of this House and the people of Ontario, what gives the Liberal Party the right to govern? After all, we all know it wasn't the people of Ontario who gave her the mandate to govern; it was, rather, 800 Liberal delegates in a downtown convention. Perhaps that's why she's actually avoiding a real measure of confidence in her leadership.

Now, what concerns me most about today's debate is that I already know—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Cambridge and the member from Timmins–James Bay, if you want to have a shouting match or talk loudly across there, take it outside, because I can't hear him. You've got four seats between you. Why can't you go sit beside him or why can't you go outside? I don't get it.

The clock—it doesn't matter on the clock. All right, go ahead.

Mr. Steve Clark: It matters to me, Speaker, just so you know.

What concerns me the most about today's debate is that I think I already know the flawed arguments the government is going to put forward. I have to tell you, Speaker, that there's one thing the Liberals can manage to do effectively, and that's bamboozle the facts. The government House leader can stand in this Legislature and say that former PC governments never called a want of confidence motion, so why do they have to? What the Liberals fail to differentiate here is that the want of confidence motions were not put forward in a minority Parliament facing its third consecutive billion-dollar scandal like this government is facing.

To my colleagues, I can't stress enough that today's debate is vital, as it indicates a deeper problem with this government's lack of respect for democracy; specifically, a breakdown of responsible government. I think we all know how our system works in the Legislature. I think that in a Canadian democratic system we all need to be responsible. This government, in a minority Parliament,

has to speak for the 107 members, and I think today's opposition day really sets out the tone about how this minority will work.

To friends in the third party, either the NDP believes that the gas plant scandal, the largest in Ontario's history, is worthy of a confidence vote, or they are prepared to prop up a corrupt Liberal government. We look forward to the third party standing in their place and supporting us in our want of confidence motion.

Just to close, Speaker, I want to quote the leader of the third party on April 15: "Of course, we find ... that the Liberals not only spent millions and millions on their private power deals but they did everything they could over the last several months to hide the information and to downplay the real cost to the people of Ontario..."

"They put the needs of their own party in front of the needs of the public interest. Now families are stuck with the bills."

Well, to you, the leader of the third party, we in the Ontario PC caucus agree that the Liberal actions are simply unacceptable, and they deserve to be held to account. Let's get real results for the people of Ontario and vote in favour of our motion today.

If a vote on our motion determines that the will of this House and the majority of members in this Legislature express that the want-of-confidence motion should be brought forward for debate, then I think it's a serious affront to democracy if Gilles Bisson and John Milloy don't call it for debate. In my opinion, that's simply unacceptable. Thank you, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Leeds–Grenville is well aware that he uses titles, not names.

Mr. Steve Clark: I got excited, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): You got excited? I'm excited, too. Don't do it again.

The member from Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Boy, that was interesting. I didn't know that the third party House leader had so much power. I'm going to have to reread the rules of the Legislature and the standing orders to find out just how much power we really have.

Listen, let's be really clear about a couple of things here. The rules in Ontario are very different than the rules in Ottawa. In Ontario we have the right, as the opposition, to file an opposition day motion. But, unfortunately, the reality is only the government can call it.

If we were having a debate where we say, "Maybe we should make changes to the standing orders," so that the opposition, as we used to have, once upon a time, the ability to not only file an opposition day motion, but make it a matter of non-confidence—that would be one thing. But we don't have those rules in the House. They haven't existed in some time.

I might stand to be corrected, but that was changed under the Conservatives, if I remember correctly. I'm just looking over at the table to tell me if I'm correct: that the loss of the use of non-confidence by the opposition was lost at the time of the Tories is what I remember, or it

was us. One of the two. Or maybe the Liberals. I can't remember. But in recent time, that has been changed.

But the point is, this motion could be voted on unanimously by all members of the House and it wouldn't mean anything. Why is that? Because, number one, an opposition day motion is non-binding. In other words, we can all, as a House, vote to do something, but just because we vote to do it as an opposition day motion makes it that it's non-binding to the government. So we can all stand in this House, we can all vote for it, but at the end of the day, the government can or can't call it, depending on what they want to do, because, first of all, it's non-binding as an opposition day motion, but second of all, the standing orders are clear: The only way a non-confidence motion filed by the opposition could be brought forward is by the unanimous consent of the three party House leaders, and in this case the government House leader doesn't want to call it.

So what is the point of doing this whole debate? It is a stunt. The Tories have essentially dealt themselves out of the budget process. They've said, "We are not going to read a budget. We are not going to think about a budget. We're not going to look at a budget. We're not going to have any discussions about a budget. We made up our minds, and we're just going to vote it down, because we're Tories, and what do we know how to say? No." So that's as simple as what's happening here. The Tories have put themselves in a position of dealing themselves out of the budget process.

Is it easy trying to put together a budget? Absolutely not. New Democrats have done a fair amount of work, consulting with the people of Ontario—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Well, well. It was awful quiet when your guy was speaking. I don't want to have to start shelling out treats.

Continue, member from Timmins–James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: So the Tories have effectively taken themselves out of the process and have offered nothing when it comes to the contribution of the most important thing that we do here, which is a budget. A Parliament has been established over the years for essentially one basic reason, and that is in order to deal with the expenditure of money. That's the primary purpose of a Parliament. What was King John and Magna Carta all about? It was about taking the power away from the crown to tax so that we, the people, the commoners, can have the ability to decide how much we tax and where that money's going to be spent.

Here we are, many years after the Magna Carta. We're going through development of a budget, and the Tories, essentially, are saying, "We want no part of it, because we made up our minds. We're saying no to everything, and the only thing that's important to us is our Conservative political self-interest, which is to have an election." Well, that may be what's good for you as Conservatives, but that doesn't make you any better than the Liberals, because the Liberals, quite frankly, have done things for their political interest. What we're saying as New Demo-

crats is, no, there has to be an opportunity to be able to try to put ideas into drafting a budget. Once you put the ideas forward, if the government says, "No, we don't want to hear those ideas, and we're not going to amend those ideas," then it's up to the parties that are suggesting the ideas—in this case, the New Democrats—to say yes or no.

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We have given the government a number of asks. The government has come back and has responded more or less positively on those things that we've asked; there are a few little edges that we would still like to see, but then we said, "Listen, there has to be accountability."

We all know, and I agree with the Conservatives—

Interjections.

Mr. Gilles Bisson:—for once. That's what politics is about: give and take on all sides of the House and on the side of the opposition.

But I agree with the Conservatives in that this government has made lots of announcements over the last number of years. They've announced, for example, that they were going to have \$36 million at AMO a year and a half ago. That money was going to be available to rural municipalities. All the mayors and councils in our communities ran around and said, "My God. Finally we've got some extra money to deal with infrastructure." Hardly any of that money was able to be got. Why? Because they made the requirements for acceptance of your application so tough that very few municipalities got it.

We're saying there's a problem of accountability here. The government is good at making announcements. They're not very good at making good on those announcements and essentially saying that those things that are said in the budget or in a bill actually happen. That's why we, as New Democrats, after the budget was read, said, "Listen, there have to be accountability measures."

We said, for example, that we need a parliamentary budget officer that looks at the expenditures before the money is actually spent, so that if a government says, "We want to invent a new air ambulance system," the budgetary officer would be able to look at it and say, "That makes sense. That doesn't make sense. It's going to cost X, Y or Z." At least then, the House and the government know the full knowledge of what this is going to cost and how it's going to work. We possibly could have averted Ornge if we had a parliamentary budget officer.

It's interesting to note that Stephen Harper had that idea in the wake of what happened with the Liberals, the Gomery scandal with the Liberals. It was a good idea, so what was one of the first things that Mr. Harper did when he became Prime Minister of Canada? He put in place the Parliamentary Budget Officer. Guess what he did at the end of the mandate of the Parliamentary Budget Officer? He won't reappoint. Why? Because the Parliamentary Budget Officer said, "You've got a big problem with your F-15s. It isn't the amount of money that you said it's going to be; it's a heck of a lot more."

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: F-16s?

Interjection: F-35s.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: F-35s. I'm a pilot, and I don't even know my planes.

Interjection: You don't know numbers.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Sorry. That was the American F-number, I guess; I don't know.

The point is, as the Parliamentary Budget Officer has been giving greater scrutiny to the Harper government, Harper has felt uncomfortable, because he's not able to control the message. Now what is he doing? He's not doing a reappointment. He's taking his sweet time to reappoint the Parliamentary Budget Officer. Clearly, that office has had good success in averting what could be billions of dollars of expenditure unneedingly.

For example, in the case of purchasing new jet aircraft for our country, the Parliamentary Budget Officer probably saved us billions of dollars as a result of the work that he did and that the public and the opposition were able to shine light on in regard to that. We're saying here in Ontario—Andrea Horwath and the New Democrats—that it's not good enough for a government just to make an announcement. What we need to have is a process by which there is clarity, transparency and accountability when it comes to government decisions, so that we don't end up with eHealth, we don't end up with Ornge, we don't end up with gas plants, we don't end up with chemotherapy problems, as we have seen, and Presto, and others—and now HOV lanes, if they go forward with that. We need a parliamentary budget officer to look at it. And we have said that we also need to make sure that the Ombudsman has some ability to be able to look into the health sector, to be able to look at what's going on, so that hopefully we are able to deal with these issues before they become serious.

Now, will the government, in the end, accept? It's in the government's interest to do so, I think, and in the public interest. Now it's up to the Premier of Ontario to decide if she wants to accept those ideas, but here's the point: We will have a chance at the end of this process to vote up or down on the government, based on what they do. If the government says, "We don't want to have accountability," there's going to be an opportunity—either in the budget motion or, if we choose, at the third reading vote of the budget—to be able to deal with this.

There is a process by which to hold government accountable, and what's important to us as New Democrats—and, I would argue, what should be important to the public—is that we should be trying as much as possible as we are here and now, especially in the minority Parliament, to be able to effect the changes that are needed. Because guess what? If the Conservatives or the Liberals were to be elected as a majority government, should there be an election, I doubt very much that they would do a parliamentary budget officer. I doubt very much that they would do a 15% reduction in auto insurance. I doubt very much that there would be a five-day wait time for people who are trying to get home care. I doubt very much that there would be an initiative to

give youth jobs in the province of Ontario. I doubt very much that we'd stop giving largesse to the large corporate sector when it comes to tax cuts and loopholes while the rest of us at home who work hard have to pay. And I doubt very much that they wouldn't go down the ways, with a majority, of putting toll lanes all over the province to pay for their transportation initiatives. So it is—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, first warning.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I would argue that in a minority Parliament it's a good opportunity where we all have to temper our position and we all have to pour a little bit of water into our wine. The government wants to do certain things; the opposition wants to do other things. We need to find a way to be able to accommodate each other so the right thing is done for the public. I think that in a minority Parliament you can make that happen.

I'm proud to say that I'm a member of Andrea Horwath's caucus and a New Democrat, because we came to the last budget process and we're into this budget process—we didn't win everything that we wanted. There's certainly more that we would like to have done on other measures, but we were able to make changes that make a real difference to people's lives. If we can get the government to agree that accountability measures will be put in place as a result of this budget process, I think that is not just good for us as legislators, I would argue that it is good for the public. That's what this is all about.

It's interesting—my note disappeared. Oh, it fell on the ground. This is how I give speeches, by the way—three scribbled little lines on a piece of paper. I just wanted to make sure to hit a couple of points—

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I should have known that. I agree with the member; that would have been a really good thing.

I do want to say, though, on the gas plants, again I'll agree with the Conservatives. On the gas plants, clearly there has been a wrong done to the people of Ontario. The wrong was that the government, because of political reasons, made a decision to cancel those gas plants to save a couple of Liberal seats. It was a Liberal seat-saver program. I agree with you and I think we are in lockstep on that.

We, during the last election, as New Democrats didn't play that game. If people remember what happened in the last campaign, Andrea Horwath, the leader of the New Democratic Party, was asked point-bank by the media: "Would you scrap the deal that builds those gas plants? Would you scrap the Samsung deal?" And we said, "No. We will not scrap contracts that we have not seen. It would be irresponsible to do so. How much could that cost the taxpayer if we were to make a promise now during the election because of political reasons and find ourselves having to face a bill in the millions or the hundreds of millions of dollars because of cancellations?"

We said in the last election that we should not make promises because of political reasons when it came to those gas plants. That's a tough position to take, but that's what leadership is about. I'm sure that our Mississauga candidates would have loved to have heard Andrea Horwath say something different, and I'm sure they said different things. Such are local campaigns; we all know how that goes. But the party had made a decision because of the leadership of Andrea Horwath, and that decision was that we would not scrap contracts sight unseen.

Were we troubled with the decision to build the gas plants in the first place? Absolutely. We said that we would have never built them there in the first place and, number two, we would have never done them in the way that the government was doing through the private sector; we would do it through the public utility.

We first wouldn't have built it, but when it came to the contract we were very clear that in fact we would actually not scrap those contracts sight unseen. It's been rather unfortunate that the government has tried to paint this as we're all in this together, that we all said we would scrap those contracts. We never said such a thing.

But I also want to propose something else in this. In our system of democracy, there is a presumption that a person is not guilty until they've gone through due process. You can accuse somebody of something. You can say, "You stole the thing out of that store," and the police can go and charge you based on the evidence that they have. But you have the right to a trial, and it's only after a trial, either by the judge or your peers, depending on if it's criminal or civil, that there's a decision made on how to deal with the penalty if you're found guilty.

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In the case of the gas plants, it's the same thing. This House has essentially created a process that is asking the committee to take a look at who refused to release the documents when it comes to the gas plants, what were the conditions by which the decision was made to scrap those and all matters relating to the gas plants, and report that back to the House.

For this House to all of a sudden say that before that process is finished, we're going to truncate that, we're going to stop it and we're going to jump to a conclusion before all of the evidence, is in I think is contrary to what this place is all about. We've been asked as a committee to look into this matter. Do I think the government did wrong? Absolutely. Do I think that this reporting will be damning? Absolutely. The evidence I've seen so far says the government is in a lot of hot water, and they're going to have to answer for the bad decisions they made that cost the taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars, between \$700 million and \$1 billion.

But my point is that there has to be due process, for two reasons: One is because our system of law is based on the ability to look at the evidence, allow the person to refute and rebut the evidence, and then for a decision to be made, once all the evidence has been presented. It's like that in the courts, and I would argue that this committee process, when it comes to the question of

contempt, is a very serious matter that we have to deal with. And for us to jump to a conclusion before all the evidence has been gotten—and those on the government side have to have a chance to be able to refute that in some way before this House goes back with a recommendation—it would be, in my view, somewhat premature to jump to a non-confidence motion at this point.

This committee will report. It will report this spring, and it will report next fall, and when that committee reports its final report, we will have a decision to make in this House, because the committee will say, "Here is what we found and this is what we recommend, that we deal with the contempt issues that Mr. Leone rightfully brought before this Legislature as a result of the government refusing to release those documents." At that point, we will have a decision to make. We will have a decision to make as to what happens with that motion, how we frame the motion and how we vote on that motion when it comes into the House, and in that framing of what comes to the House I have to imagine there will be some sort of penalty possibly that will come back with the recommendations.

For us to have a non-confidence motion vote at this point I think is a little bit odd. But the bigger issue to me is—I can agree with you, my friends, that there be a non-confidence motion, the government can agree that there be a vote as a result of this, but we all know that at the end of the day it is the government's prerogative when to call an order before the House, so it doesn't matter what we do on this opposition day motion.

The last part I just want to say, because I do want to leave my good friend Mr. Marchese some time—

Interjections.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'm a fair kind of guy; I've got to leave him some time.

I just want to end on this point, to say that it is easy to do nothing—it is easy to do nothing. It's easy to criticize, it's easy to point the finger and say it's all the government's fault, it's easy to look and always—

Interjections.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: All right. When you get up and debate, you can make that point. But my point is that it's easy to criticize, it's easy to point the finger, it's easy to sometimes not bring forward solutions. What Andrea Horwath and the New Democrats have attempted to do—and it's yet to be seen if it will be successful, because the government has to look at what they're going to do on the accountability measures that we've asked them for—is that we have put forward a series of asks that are reasonable, that don't cost a lot of money, that provide for accountability on the decisions the government makes, and now it will be up to the government to decide.

But we did not shirk our responsibility as legislators in the New Democratic Party. We made sure that we rolled up our sleeves and we did what had to be done. Is that easy? Absolutely not. It's a lot easier to take pure positions of saying that we're opposed to everything and we say no to everything, but in the end, it doesn't add and it

doesn't contribute to what our job here is as legislators. And for that reason, we will not be supporting this motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate.

Mr. Jim Wilson: When our PC leader, Tim Hudak, asked me to be his House leader, I was honoured. I was honoured to assume a unique role within our parliamentary system and I was honoured that our leader would trust me with this role in the midst of the minority Parliament. Sure, I knew there would be tough times, that dealing with my Liberal and NDP counterparts would come with some tension, but what I did not expect was the outright refusal of the Liberals and NDP to call a want of confidence motion for debate and a vote.

To provide some history and context in the modern era, we can look back to March 1782, when Britain suffered a defeat at Yorktown during the American Revolutionary War. The British Parliament said that it "can no longer repose confidence in the present ministers."

Well, Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that sentiment holds true today right here in this Legislative Assembly of Upper Canada, in the great province of Ontario. You see, confidence is a political concept. It is more so political than it is parliamentary. Why do I say that? Because in a minority Parliament, the government must be willing to retain and hold, on an ongoing basis, the confidence of the people's chamber.

The Premier says, in public and in this House, that the test of confidence will come with the budget. However, she says this as if it is the only test of confidence allowed. Over the weeks of the budget charade that have engulfed this chamber, it is clear that the Liberals were and are willing to stop at nothing to stay in power. To that end, they have in essence used their budgetary powers to buy off third party support to pass the test of confidence on the budget.

So is the budget a real test of confidence? Mr. Speaker, I would suggest not, because the government has already secured NDP support through promises it will no doubt break someday down the road.

In our standing orders and in the rules that govern Commonwealth Parliaments throughout the world, opposition parties, especially those who retain the title of Her Majesty's loyal opposition, not only have a duty but a right to move motions of confidence or non-confidence in the government at any time. It is not up to the Premier or the Prime Minister to say which motion is the only confidence test they're willing to take. Rather, governments of the day can declare any measure they want a confidence vote, but they also have a dual obligation to respect the will of Parliament and to bring votes of confidence put forth by the opposition.

The issue before us, precluding an automatic vote of my want of confidence motion, is an obscure clause in our standing orders unique to Ontario that requires all House leaders of recognized parties to agree to call the motion for a debate and vote. While this obscure and

arcane clause may exist, it is not right for the government to breach an ancient parliamentary code that has existed for centuries. Our system was amended many years ago to preclude opposition parties from abusing their use of want of confidence options set forth in the rules. This made sense when governments held majority status, because the result was a foregone conclusion.

However, we are in a minority Parliament. The very fact of refusing these motions when they sit on the order paper is, in and of itself, an admission that the government does not retain the confidence of this House.

This goes to the root of the problem we're all facing here in the Legislature today. The Liberals have not been working for the people of Ontario, but rather they have been working to protect their own political power and their own interests.

Mr. Speaker, on the order papers sits a motion that I moved on April 29, 2013, that calls the government to account for the fact that they have spent literally hundreds of millions of Ontarians' hard-earned tax money to save their own political fortunes through the cancellation of the gas plants.

The government opposite, under both Premiers McGuinty and Wynne, have treated the treasury as the Liberal Party's business expense. Some might call it corruption; others will call it an abuse of power. More still will call the actions, or lack thereof, of this government and of the third party to call the want of confidence for a vote an affront to democracy.

The ancient parliamentary right of confidence has not been used extensively. It's a legitimate and well-meaning tool for opposition parties in a democracy to hold the government to account. The Liberal government and Premier Wynne must be held to account for their actions in a scandal that is arguably the largest our country has ever seen. Ontarians deserve a government that puts their interests ahead of Liberal politics and the Liberal Party.

My colleagues and my deputy House leader, Steve Clark, tabled this opposition day motion today to shame the government and the NDP into explaining why the Liberals and the NDP are blocking a vote on this scandal-plagued government. Is the price for the NDP support so low that leader Andrea Horwath and her NDP colleagues could be bought with some trinkets in a budget to get so-called results for people?

1630

You want to talk about results for people? How about calling a motion that would help to rid the people of this scandal-plagued government and restore the people's faith in their political system?

Is the price so low for the NDP's support that leader Andrea Horwath is willing to look the other way while Dalton McGuinty and Kathleen Wynne buy an election and then bury the scandal by blocking access to the truth and burying the numbers deep in the books?

Ontarians deserve better, Mr. Speaker. Ontarians deserve a say. Does the NDP still have confidence in the Liberals? Does the Progressive Conservative Party still have confidence in the Liberals? And do Liberals who

actually look at themselves in the mirror after what they've done still have confidence? I suspect, Mr. Speaker, when all consider the huge waste of money on the gas plants, Ornge, eHealth and the subsequent gas plant cover-up, the answer will be a resounding, "No, we do not have confidence in this government."

As PC leader Tim Hudak said yesterday at the justice committee, if the Liberals were willing to spend the money they did to win the 2011 election, not with party money but with the people's money, how can you trust that they will not do it again and again and again?

Every extra day the Liberals remain in charge not only means more lost jobs, more out-of-control spending and more debt, but it means another day that Ontarians see their elected officials letting the government off the hook for the largest scandal in Canadian history.

The real question here today is, how will the NDP square their position of propping up such a scandal-plagued government? Any student of politics knows that motions of non-confidence are common in multi-party systems, especially in minority governments. The way to avoid losing such a motion is either to get a majority yourself or to form a coalition. So I ask, if the Liberals and the NDP have formed a coalition, then let's see who sold their soul and for what price.

If there is no coalition, then I hope the NDP will support us today. I hope the Liberals across the aisle, especially those on the back benches or those dropped from cabinet or never given the chance to guide the Liberals' moral compass, help us to pass this motion and force the government's hand to take the test that Parliaments around the world must pass—the ultimate test, one of confidence.

Mr. Speaker, there are times when the decisions we make in this place impact history and impact precedent throughout the Commonwealth. It's now up to the NDP today and those Liberal MPPs who know that what this government has done is wrong to vote with the Progressive Conservatives and pass this motion to shame the government into calling the want of confidence motion into their gas plant scandals.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Let me say from the beginning, I won't be supporting this motion—just so that you know.

I used to give the Liberals a lot of advice in the past because I thought they were going in the wrong direction. I tried to be helpful with ex-Premier Dalton McGuinty, and they didn't listen. Often I said, "I'm just trying to help you." I want to do the same thing to you because I think you're moving in the wrong direction again. I could be wrong, but I believe you are moving in the wrong direction.

I've got to tell you this: You guys are so negative. Each and every day, you are constantly saying no to everything. It used to be something that they used to accused the NDP of; it's true. You did it—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I would ask the member to direct it through me and not have

conversations with two groups. You're supposed to go through the Chair. Thank you.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: It used to be that the NDP was labeled as negative, and now the Conservatives have been doing it for years.

Again, through you, Speaker, the Tories have become so, so negative that it looks bad on you. It particularly looks bad because you are an established party that longs for power. You have been 10 years out of power, and you're itching to get it back. I know; I understand. Except, when I try to say to people in my riding that some of you are not bad—really, at the personal level—they say, "No." I say, "No, really, they're not bad as human beings. They're really nice people. I like a lot of them." They won't have any of it.

But I have to agree with them on the ideological front. Through you, Speaker: I agree with many of my constituents; you guys scare me—you do.

I want to remind you of a couple of things—

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: On the ideological front, you scare me. At the personal level, I like most of you, but on the ideological front.

I have got to say that when we look at Liberal scandals—and there are a few Liberal scandals to be sure; I'll name them in a couple of moments if I have the time—the Tory scandals are worse.

Interjection: Worse? How could they be worse?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Let me to tell you. I know you're asking. Let me to tell you.

Interjection: Through the Chair.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Through you, of course, Chair, in case I'm looking there or there. I get distracted sometimes.

The 407 was the biggest fiasco that I have ever, ever seen in my 24 years in this Legislature. Talk about scandals. That was the worst. They have so much faith in the private sector—God bless. The private sector was drooling each and every day on that one, and the spittle could be seen each and every day for years. The private sector couldn't get enough, for years.

The 407 sold for a mere \$1.2 billion for a hundred years—as the movie would go, a hundred long years—and the government helps them to collect the fees. If people don't pay up, they lose their licence or they don't get their licence renewed. That's courtesy of the Conservative government. What a great deal for the private sector. So much faith they have in the private sector that they've given it all away to them for a hundred years. How do you feel about that? Surely some of you must cringe at the thought of what you did. Oh, but no; let's just talk about Liberal scandals, because that's probably a lot better, isn't it?

Then the consultants—let me to tell you about consultants. The Conservative government came in saying, "We are the anti-establishment party. We are the non-government government. We are going to reduce government to a minimalist role, and we're going to fire thousands of workers"—which they did, and what did they do after,

the Conservatives? They hired them back as consultants. It was beautiful. You let them go, you have incredibly huge buyouts—because you’ve got to pay them—and then, because they’re experts in the field and because you need them, you bring them back at a huge consultant cost.

You’ve got to love Conservatives. You’ve got to love them. Bring down government, and pay a whole lot more to bring them back as consultants. You guys are really good. You are good. You just don’t know how good you are, and your faith in the private sector is unbending.

What did they do with Ontario Hydro, which used to be public? They privatized the whole system.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Eleanor Clitheroe, remember?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Oh, Clitheroe. Let’s not talk about her. She’s now a minister of the cloth, and she’s doing good things. It was a big payout, but it’s another problem.

They privatized hydro. So much faith they have in the private sector that Bruce was leased for 16 years, and on the first year that they leased that Bruce plant, they made \$165 million—\$165 million that government could have used to bring down its debt and deficit. But no, “The private sector does it better. We need to make sure they take the money away from governments and the public so that we can give it away in profits.” The same Bruce power plant that couldn’t give the money back to government, we privatized it by leasing it out for 16 long years. And then we’re going to get that back and pay the billions of dollars to revamp them, because they need to be revamped every 15 or 20 years, and it will be at the public cost—not at a private cost, but at a public cost.

1640

I can see how attuned Conservative members are. They’ve become silent all of a sudden—which is good. And then they created 14 gas retailers, each and every one of them with a new scam each and every year. The government can barely keep up with them, because no sooner do they come up with another scam than the Conservative Party calls for restraint on the very people they set up years ago, when they were in government. But no, “We need to have faith in the private sector. They do it better. When they don’t, maybe we’ll come up with some scheme to rein them back, or at least blame the Liberals for not reining them in.” But they’re the ones who set them up.

Do you remember the eHealth scandal that the Liberals are enmeshed in, and have been for a long time? Do you know who started that?

Interjections.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Oh, some of you do remember. It was the Conservatives. The member from Simcoe–Grey would remember, and the member from Wellington–Halton Hills would remember, because they were both here. They had spent \$250 million on eHealth and they had nothing to show for it. God bless, you guys are good; you’re really good. But the blessing you had is that the Liberals came into power and they continued with the scandal in eHealth. And then we could just blame the

Liberals for the scandal and forget about the fact that you guys started it. “But that’s history. Don’t talk so much about the past. Let’s talk about the present. Let’s talk about the scandals they’re in.” But it’s difficult, because my constituents just bring me right back and they remind me of all the things that you have done. The member from Halton Hills, your corporate tax cuts are the best. You guys are the servants of the private sector. You guys are at the beck and call of the corporations. No sooner do they call than we serve them—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Point of order.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I don’t have the standing order in front of me, but I think he is—

Mr. John Yakabuski: It’s 23.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It’s 23. He’s trying to assign motive of why we’re here to represent our constituents. The last time I checked, the people of Nepean–Carleton sent me here; 130,000 people live there. I have colleagues here from across the province who consider themselves workers of the people, not servants of business. I’d like him to correct his reference.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I don’t think that’s a point of order. The member is simply going down history lane. He will continue. Thank you.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: History lane. There was a time during those terms that the Tories were in power—I would have loved to have had a non-confidence motion each and every day that they were in power. When Mike Harris was here, I would have loved to have had a non-confidence motion. The member from Niagara West–Glanbrook is here—because he was here at the time. Boy, would we have needed these motions each and every day. They cut corporate taxes to the tune of \$13.5 billion in an eight-and-a-half-year period, and what do we have to show for it? Nada. That’s Spanish for nihil, and that’s Latin for nothing. Nada. Some \$13.5 billion that these servants of the corporate sector gave away, with nothing to show for it.

Mr. Ted Arnott: How about a million jobs—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Oh, the member from Halton Hills talks about jobs. There is absolutely no evidence that you have given \$13.5 billion away and we’ve got good jobs as a result of it. What we now have is a worldwide economy that’s moving into casual work, temporary jobs, precarious work. And you know it; all Tories must know it, because they have constituents facing that problem. We have a workforce that’s working part-time and on contract. That’s the economy that the legacy of Mike Harris has left us, continued, of course, courtesy of the Liberals currently in government.

We have a Conservative Party that people are afraid of, where they’re going to take away the defined benefit plans, the pensions of workers. If workers, I tell you, do not have the income security they desperately need, we are in trouble as a people. Now, the Conservatives say, “We can’t afford these pensions.” I tell you, we can’t afford not to have good pensions for people to retire on,

because if people don't have money, they don't spend. If people don't spend, that very economy that Tories support, that marketplace, that range that Tories love, would collapse.

We are a consumer society: 60% to 70% of our economy moves on the basis of people spending. If people don't have any money and they don't spend, capitalism—the very thing you fine Tories love—will collapse.

Mr. Rob Leone: No.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Oh, they say no. I'm looking forward to arguments from my Conservative brothers and sisters.

By the way, the Conservatives left a wonderful, strong economy with a \$5.5-billion deficit, and they sold the 407 for \$1.2 billion and left us with a huge deficit of the good economy. These are the wonderful managers of our economy. Do you want that? People in my riding say, "No. God, no. God, no. Don't put them in power ever again."

I know Tories are hungry to get back. I know that they love what their federal counterparts are doing, where they have billions of dollars wasted on consultants and we don't know what work they are doing. Who do you think those 34,000 people taking money from the public sector are except the Conservative brothers and sisters they have milking the public trust and the public trough? The Tories are in a hurry to get back so they can help their Conservative friends here at the provincial level.

Do people in my riding want more of that? No. No, no, no. They fear you a lot. And at the personal level, I like you. At the ideological level, I fear you as well, I have to tell you. So this is the problem I have with this motion of non-confidence on the Liberal government.

The problem I have is that while we've been very critical of Liberals on the eHealth scandal, which they have continued under a fine foundation that you people set up, and the Presto scandal that has ballooned from \$250 million to \$700 million, and the Ornge scandal that continued under your watch without any supervision whatsoever, and the gas plants that you continue with under their privatization scheme that you seem to continue to like—these are unforgivable scandals, no doubt. We agree with Tories on that, just as I disagreed with them on their scandals. And the Lord was merciful that when an election came, they were finally turfed. God bless.

But the former Premier whose name is Mike Harris left with a wonderful pension that he was able to get and left so many Conservatives without one. I don't know why some of you still don't burn on that one. He left as a millionaire, killing our pension. He called that pension—what did he call that? The golden pension? He takes a million dollars and leaves you broke to handle what's left. He did okay. But you guys are not here for the money, I know. You're here for the principles. You're here to serve the little guy, I know.

So while we disagree with many of the scandals that the Liberal government is plagued with, we continue to say that minority governments are here to serve people.

They are not here to serve political parties; they are here to make the lives of people better. Our job as an opposition party is to get out of a Liberal government what we believe is important to them, to make their lives a little better, which is why in the last budget we fought to make sure that the millionaires, those who earn over \$500,000, get a surtax of 2%, allowing them and us to get a little more money back that you desperately need. We needed that. We needed that amendment—we needed to get those changes in the last budget—and we got it.

1650

The Tories said no to the budget. They didn't even want to read it. They said, "No, we don't have to read it." They said, "This year we don't have to read it. We don't need to know anything. We just want the Liberals out." The NDP are saying that we want to make changes that are good for people, and to the extent that we can get it out of Liberals, we will do it. We got a surtax that even Tories—I'm not even sure Tories liked it, and I'm not sure many Liberals liked it, but I know that half of the Liberal caucus liked it, and they pushed. We got that. We got some child care, we got some health care dollars for the north—

Hon. James J. Bradley: You know we were going to do that anyway.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Oh, you weren't gonna do nothin'. You weren't gonna do nothin' unless we pushed you, and we made some gains for working men and women in this province.

We're doing the same in this budget, where we say we need a five-day home care guarantee, because people are struggling as soon as they leave the hospital, and they have no guarantee that they will get home care. We struggled to get that. We wanted jobs for young people because we know that when they leave university, there is no work for them, and so we struggled and pushed the Liberal government to make sure that we'd get jobs for young people.

We want to make sure we reduce auto insurance for people, because we have the highest insurance rates in the country, so we struggled to get that. We pushed them on closing tax loopholes so we could bring in some desperately needed revenue and bring down our deficit and debt. The Liberals haven't done that.

And we struggled to push them on accountability. All governments, no matter which party is in power, need to be held accountable. It's for that reason that we pushed for the financial accountability office, and we continue to push for accountability, because people need to have it, and they deserve it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to join the debate today. I listened intensely to the member from Trinity-Spadina, and I think he's doing his level best to try to make this Parliament work. Some of the comments clearly were aimed at us as a government, and that's part of the job here. I think some of his comments also were aimed at those people who have brought the motion forward today.

There's a process we have in place, there's a budget process that's being undertaken right now, and the idea, I think, and what the people of Ontario expect, is to see all three parties trying to work together to make this minority government work. We put a budget before the people and before this House, and the third party, I think, to the best of its abilities, has attempted to respond to that, has stepped to the plate and said, "There are certain things we like in the budget, and there are other things we'd like to see included," and that has led to a process that I think is being undertaken to ensure that this process keeps moving forward the way that people had hoped minority government would work.

The other party, however—I don't think to its credit—has decided, before it even read the budget, that it wasn't going to support the budget. How you cannot support a budget you haven't read, I don't know, and I don't think the people of Ontario understand that either. But certainly what I think has taken place is that people are trying to undermine the process here, trying to bring forward a motion that I just don't think has any place in this House. I, for one, am not a supporter of this motion. I don't suspect that it's going to receive a lot of favour from those folks on this side of the House, and from the comments that I've heard from the third party, it sounds like it's not going to curry any favour over there.

What I would like to see happen is that the three parties would try to work together to ensure that this process moves forward, that the budget is dealt with, that those things that the Conservatives would like to see included in the budget could be at least considered and the process could move forward the way it was intended to.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Further debate?

Mr. Monte Kwinter: I have been listening with interest to the discussion that's been going on now for several months, and I chuckle to myself, as someone who is now in my 29th year here—to talk about some of the financial scandals that rest with that party. They keep saying that the two gas plants is the biggest scandal in the history of the province. Compared to what went on under the Conservatives—and I want to tell you, the biggest seat-saver scandal is the Allen expressway, which runs through my riding. One day Larry Grossman said, "Jane Jacobs has got a movement going. We've got to kill this thing."

Here it is. It was built from Steeles down to Lawrence and it expropriated all the land down to the waterfront, and they stopped it. Nobody said anything about it. They just said, "Wow, isn't that great. They listened to the people." So they stopped it.

All you have to do is take a look at what happened with the subway going along Eglinton. They dug it all up and they decided, "No, we're not going to go ahead with it," and they filled it all in, again spending hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars.

But the most interesting thing was that in 2003 they tabled their budget and said it was balanced. When we

formed the government, the Auditor General said, "You've got a \$5-billion shortfall." And for months and months and months, the Conservative Party kept saying, "You don't know what you're talking about." If you take a look at the record, the Auditor General said \$5 billion didn't show up in the budget. So don't try to tell us what we are doing. All you have to do is look in the mirror and look into history and you'll see some of the things that went on with that government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Further debate.

Hon. John Milloy: I'd say it's a pleasure to join in today's debate, because it's always a pleasure to speak in the Legislature, but in terms of my attitude and the attitude, I think, of the government members towards the motion that's been put forward today, it is clearly an unnecessary motion. Mr. Speaker, as you're aware, as members are aware, the standing orders of this Legislature in fact prescribe how a motion of a want of confidence can be brought forward. It's very clear how it should be done. In fact, it's under section 44 of the current standing orders and it outlines that a want of confidence motion should be brought forward with the agreement, the consensus of all the recognized House leaders, the three House leaders.

Hon. James J. Bradley: The Harris government wrote those rules.

Hon. John Milloy: Actually, I correct the Minister of the Environment. It was not the Harris government; it was the Davis government. It was a Progressive Conservative government that brought it forward.

In a sense, the standing orders are very clear on how such a motion should be brought forward and dealt with, which makes today's opposition day motion, quite frankly, unnecessary and really not relevant to the whole process—

Hon. James J. Bradley: They're playing a game.

Hon. John Milloy: —and, as my friend the Minister of the Environment says, political games.

Mr. Speaker, I draw attention to the obvious: Had the Legislature wished at that time when those rules came forward to prescribe a specific time period, they would have done it. But instead they came forward and talked about the consensus between the three parties.

I would also remind members that this is not a new phenomenon, the situation where opposition members come forward with a want of confidence motion. It happened quite often during the Harris years. I'm not surprised, when we think about the record of Mr. Harris in government. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, those motions were allowed to sit on the order paper. In fact, they were allowed to languish on the order paper. It doesn't take long to do a little bit of research to in fact find that on many, many occasions Mr. Harris's government chose not to even call them. They sat on them for so long that prorogation or an election actually ended them.

So, Mr. Speaker, as I say, there is a process in place and there's absolutely no need to have this opposition day motion today and I can certainly assure members the government will not be supporting it.

There's a bigger question, and that is, when is the appropriate time to have a confidence motion. I would argue, Mr. Speaker, that right now it would be a redundant act because right now we are in the midst of or on the—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bob Delaney): Member for Renfrew, come to order.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, sorry, it's hard to think sometimes when we have the heckling across the way.

1700

But I would argue, Mr. Speaker, that we are right now in a situation where in the coming weeks—in fact, I can guarantee members that in the coming weeks we are going to have a confidence motion in this Legislature and that confidence motion is going to be on the budget. As members are aware, within 12 sessional days, eight hours of debate, the budget motion needs to come to the floor of the Legislature. As I stated in question period today, a government that cannot pass its budget is a government that cannot function and automatically must go to the polls.

I want to assure members that there will be a confidence motion, and should the government win that motion and continue on, the expectation, of course, is that we will have further votes on budget bills in the coming weeks, or the budget bill, the second reading, committee stage and third reading, so there will be opportunities for the opposition to vote on it.

And these are important votes, Mr. Speaker. This is an important budget that's been put forward. There's a lot at stake quite frankly, and we look forward to support from the opposition on this. It is a budget which outlines a vision for the future, a responsible vision, a balanced vision where we are on target to meet our deficit targets, but at the same time making key investments in a number of very crucial areas.

I think of my own community, the work that's being done in terms of youth unemployment and the importance there. I think of the increased expenditures in home care, targeted expenditures which, again, will benefit so many.

I think of the bill itself and the provisions in there on the Ontario Child Benefit. I think all of us recognize the important role that that initiative has played in terms of reducing poverty in the province of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, I think of the work that's been done on auto insurance and the work that we want to do to make sure that savings within the system are passed on to consumers, again, something that's part of the budget bill which will form a confidence motion here in this Legislature.

What's being put forward today is simply a game. The fact of the matter is that this House will have the opportunity to pass its judgment on the confidence of this government, which brings me to the actual substance of the want of confidence motion, which is the gas plant issue. This is a matter which is before a committee of this Legislature, before the justice committee, and I think—

Hon. James J. Bradley: Appropriately so.

Hon. John Milloy: It's appropriately so, and they are holding hearings. I congratulate the members of that committee. They are working diligently. There are concerns there about some of the activities that have taken place, but let me try to put the whole gas plant situation in a little bit of context for members, those of you who are interested.

Let's start at the beginning, Mr. Speaker. I believe there were 19 different gas plants which were sited within this province: 17 of them we got right; two of them we did not get right. We did not get them right, and the people of Oakville and the people of Mississauga rightly raised concerns. The government took a look and decided in the case of Oakville to cancel it a year or two before the election, and in the case of Mississauga we went into the election campaign and said that we would cancel it if we were elected.

But what's very interesting—and the opposition refused to acknowledge—is that we were not the only party to have gone into the last election making that commitment. In fact, I remind members that it was the opposition Progressive Conservative Party which aggressively campaigned against the gas plants in the last election.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I saw the pamphlets.

Hon. John Milloy: My friend the Minister of the Environment talks about pamphlets, pamphlets that were sent out to thousands of people saying that the only way to stop the gas plant was to elect a Progressive Conservative government.

I think of the robocalls that were sent out in Mississauga South from the local candidate, where he asked members to consider voting Progressive Conservative because it would be the only way to end the gas plant.

I think of the Leader of the Opposition, who was the star of a YouTube video, where he toured the facility and said, "If you vote for me, the gas plant will be done, done, done."

Hon. James J. Bradley: I saw him on YouTube.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I have to pause when I think of the Minister of the Environment watching YouTube. He's moved into the 21st century.

The fact of the matter is, the Progressive Conservative Party cannot have it both ways. As I said both in question period this morning and question period yesterday, you can't stand up and say that a political party that promises—or to stand up and say when the Liberal Party promised to end the gas plants in the last election, it was the worst thing to befall western civilization since the plague or the invention of the Macarena, when you yourselves stood up in the last election and promised the exact same thing.

Hon. James J. Bradley: Promise made, promise kept.

Hon. John Milloy: Yes, exactly. A promise they made—their promise—we kept.

We wanted to provide some context, so what did we do? We asked the Leader of the Opposition to come before the committee that's looking into it. We expected him to at least acknowledge their opposition to it. We

expected him to discuss the costing, because obviously, with the importance they put on this and the number of hours they've spent in this Legislature discussing it, we were all very confident that they would tell us about the costing they had undertaken, the experts they had consulted and how, when Mr. Hudak became Premier, he would be cancelling the plant—all the homework and the due diligence they had done; in other words, hold them to the same standards to which they have been holding the government.

But we were shocked. First of all, the Leader of the Opposition wouldn't appear in front of the committee. It took week after week after week. He finally showed up, and we asked him some very direct questions—simple questions; not technical questions, very direct questions. We asked him, first of all, to acknowledge his opposition to the gas plants. We asked him to talk about the due diligence into funding that they had done, and we asked him to tell us about the experts he had consulted and the work he had done with his candidates who had sent out the press releases and had the Twitterverse and the YouTube videos.

Do you know what, Mr. Speaker? He was there for 90 minutes. We asked him 28 direct questions. He would not answer a single one. He would not even acknowledge the fact that he had stood in a YouTube video and said—

Interjection.

Hon. John Milloy: Sorry, I thought you were getting up, Mr. Speaker.

He did not even acknowledge the fact that he had starred in a YouTube video where he stood there and said, "If I am Premier of this province, this gas plant will be done, done, done." It's called a double standard, Mr. Speaker. You can't stand up and say, "The fact that the Liberals promised to cancel it is a huge scandal, even though we promised to cancel it." Their words of criticism ring hollow. They are wasting the time of the Legislature with this motion that they are bringing forward.

As I said at the beginning of my remarks this afternoon, there is a process through the standing orders by which a want of confidence motion could be dealt with. It has to be dealt with by consensus among the three House leaders, and I can tell you, as the government House leader, that we have some very, very important issues to deal with in this Legislature. We have the budget, we have the budget motion, we have the budget bill and we have a very long list of bills on the order paper that we want to get through to committee.

If the question is that the opposition wants to express confidence in the government, those votes are coming. I want to guarantee you all: They are coming within the next several weeks, and that will be the opportunity they are looking for. For that reason, we will not be supporting this motion, and quite frankly, as far as I'm concerned, we've said the last words on this frivolous motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. John Yakabuski: A pleasure to speak this afternoon to the opposition day motion of my colleague from

Leeds–Grenville, Mr. Clark. I want to thank him for his insightfulness and thoughtfulness in bringing forth this motion.

I want to comment, first of all, to the government House leader, and how disappointed I am with the attitude of an officer of this Legislature who dismisses 140-some years of parliamentary tradition, the standing orders that have been worked on by parliamentarians since Confederation, which clearly state that an opposition party has the right to put forth three want of confidence motions per session.

It is not about the budget. It is not about the budget motion. It is about the right of the opposition to operate freely in this chamber. The third party has the right to bring two want of confidence motions—not ones that the government House leader is going to draw up, not ones that he wants or they want, but the right of the parliamentarians in this chamber to check and ask for a want of confidence motion as to whether or not this government continues to have that confidence.

It is not a game as you play it, when you play games every day with your gas plant silliness, bringing in the Leader of the Opposition. We're serious about the lack of confidence that we have in this government, and we have maintained that for some time.

1710

I want to point out, Mr. Speaker, that former Premier Dalton McGuinty indicated on October 15 last year that he had lost confidence in his government and in his ability to continue to govern as Premier. He prorogued this Legislature and walked away because the gas plant scandal was weighing so heavily on his shoulders that he decided, "I would rather leave than face this fight." Well, we are bringing the fight to the Legislature because you people won't.

I want to comment a little bit on my colleague from Simcoe–Grey and my colleague from Leeds–Grenville, who talked about the other scandals in this government: the eHealth scandal that is a \$2-billion fiasco and counting; the Ornge—not only hundreds of millions of dollars, but lives lost.

If this government wants to talk about scandals of previous governments, why don't they bring up the railroad scandal that Sir John A. Macdonald was involved in? They might as well.

It is your government that is on trial here—not any previous government, but your government, which was elected in 2003, promising a new era of accountability, civility and being answerable to the people. What we've got is the height of arrogance. This government has grown arrogant over its 10 years, and what we are seeing with the gas plant scandals today is just the icing on the cake. It's the cherry on top of the sundae.

I am so disappointed in the way that they have handled this.

People across Ontario lack confidence in you. They're not going to get that chance, because we already know that your friends in the NDP have made it very clear they're going to prop you up on the budget.

I am disappointed in the NDP. I am disappointed when a party comes into this House each and every day and points across the aisle and talks about the corrupt government; talks about this government that has no right to govern any longer, that has lost the faith of the people, that refuses to be accountable, and in the afternoon, when they have a press conference, they talk about how it's very important to keep it going.

I heard the member from Trinity–Spadina talk about principles. Well, he wants to keep his job. But his principles—the way they'd like to run a government, I hope when he does retire that he finds a villa in Greece, because that seems to be the country he likes to emulate.

Speaker, the lack of principles on the part of the third party and the way they've conducted themselves over this budget debate and the gas plant scandal—every day, they ask questions about the gas plant scandal and say that this government has no right to continue. And then, when the rubber meets the road, you people are going to do what you did in the past. You're going to prop them up, and we're going to have to wait while this province continues to spiral downward. Your responsibility is to stand on behalf of the people of Ontario and give them the chance to make a judgment on this party.

Speaker, we have the right, as the opposition party, to bring a want of confidence motion. We have done this in a responsible way. Yes, we do not have the power to singularly force this to the floor of the Legislature. We cannot, as the opposition, bring this motion forward. The government can stop us; the third party can stop us.

Speaker, with everything that has gone on since the 2011 election—and I've been at those committee hearings on the gas plant scandals, and the conflicting testimony from Liberal after Liberal; the attempts to cover each other; to protect Liberal operatives; to protect Liberal cabinet ministers; to protect Liberal Premiers—we've seen it over and over again. The committee has no power to actually pass judgment. The people have the power to pass judgment. So I submit to you, while we do not have the legislative power, the members of this Legislature have the moral responsibility to allow this Legislature to vote on a want of confidence motion.

If the government believes, as it submits that it does, as it claims that it does, that they have the confidence, then why would they be afraid to bring this motion forward? If they believe they have the confidence, if they believe that the third party has confidence in them, then bring this forward and let the third party tell us and let them tell everybody out there in Ontario that they actually have confidence in this government. As they say, Speaker, when the rubber meets the road, that's when we really find out where people are.

We're taking this opportunity to ask this Legislature, on behalf of the people of Ontario, who are frustrated—all you had to do was read the newspapers, read the polling, read the data: 60% of the people believe that the Liberals have actually lied and covered up this scandal. Those were the polls, and that was the question: Do you

believe the Liberals have lied? The answer was a resounding yes—a resounding yes.

We're speaking for the people of Ontario. We want this Legislature to have an opportunity to pass judgment on this government. You can do it. If you believe in democracy, if you believe that this chamber is elected to represent Ontarians, then you'll allow this motion forward. If you do not allow this motion forward, it is clear that your arrogance and your cowardice trumps what you believe is your moral responsibility to govern. If you cannot govern morally and responsibly, then I submit that you should no longer govern.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Rob Leone: I'm pleased to join the debate on the opposition day motion brought forward by my good friend from Leeds–Grenville.

A lot has been said over the last 24 hours, in the sense that the Premier has offered an apology with respect to the gas plant fiasco that embroils this government. We can certainly debate the sincerity of that apology. We can also debate the timing of that apology. But what we're doing here today is to figure out whether the Legislature actually accepts that apology. We can find out whether they accept that apology by calling a want of confidence motion right here today and supporting this opposition day motion.

To my friends in the NDP, a lot has been said over the last few weeks about holding this government accountable and making sure that we improve transparency, and they say that as if they can divorce accountability and transparency from getting results for the people of this great province.

Mr. Speaker, this Liberal government spent \$600 million of our money, the people of Ontario's money, to save five Liberal seats. If we want to improve and get results for the people of Ontario, we could have used that \$600 million to build some schools, some hospitals, some roads, some bridges. We could have done so many things with that money.

If we really want to ensure accountability and get results for the people of Ontario, we have to change that government.

Before entering this place—and I still consider myself to be one—I feel that I am a student of our parliamentary democracy. One of the central features of our parliamentary democracy is that we have responsible government. I think that what we've seen in the debate that we've had today and what I seek in participating in this debate is, we have to return responsible government back to the people of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, 1848 is the year we won responsible government in the province of Ontario. Responsible government means three things: It means that the cabinet of this Legislature is responsible to the crown, it's responsible to the people of this Legislature and it's responsible to the people of Ontario. That is what responsible government is. But we have no mechanism today to ensure that on this issue, on the gas plants issue, that this government continues to have the confidence of this

Legislature. It's why we continue to press that, on this issue, we should hear what the people of this Legislature have to say about that government and their handling of the gas plant fiasco, which is why we desperately need, to ensure that responsible government is here to stay in Ontario, a want-of-confidence motion to see what this Legislature says about how this government handled that fiasco.

1720

Responsible government is also about being responsible to the people of this province, and the people of this province obviously are represented by the men and women in this room, but at the end of the day, we can have apologies all we want, we can have excuses bestowed and uttered by that government all we want, but there is one true mechanism of accountability that the people can have, and that's to have their say, in election, on how they handled this gas plant fiasco. That is how the people have accountability in our system. It's the most obvious, most straightforward mechanism by which we can express whether we believe that the government has done a good job on this file or a bad job on this file. We have to understand what the people have to say. You can read the polls—and I know the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has done a good job uttering what the people have said in those polls—but as we know, the only poll that counts is the one on election day, and I'm pretty sure that the people of this province want to change that government.

We won responsible government in 1848, and what I'm very much worried about is that in 2013 we are losing responsible government in our province. To me, that's completely unacceptable, the fact that we're losing responsible government today. I know that we are going to have an opportunity to express confidence in this government on the budget. I can say, with confidence, that this party will not prop up your scandals. You want that budget vote to be a confidence matter, and we're happy to oblige, but what I say is this: When it comes to the mess that they created, when it comes to the obfuscation of the facts, when it comes to wasting hundreds of millions of dollars, I know in my heart of hearts—I know that Ontarians agree with me—that we no longer have confidence in that government.

I think something is happening in this Legislature that's very odd. It's very remarkable. I've heard lots of talk about the standing orders being the way they are. I know the Minister of the Environment has heckled about how Mike Harris changed the standing orders and that the NDP are agreeing with that. It's funny how the tables have turned, and that it's actually the Liberals and the NDP who are agreeing with Mike Harris. I think that's a very interesting point.

I also have to say that the member from Timmins–James Bay spoke at length about how Stephen Harper actually had a good idea. He likes the parliamentary budget office, which is fine, but I have to say that Jack Layton must be turning in his grave when the NDP start agreeing with Conservatives. I think that's something that we have to express very clearly, and when it comes

to this issue, when it comes to supporting what the gas plant file has done, we don't have confidence in this government. I urge all members of this Legislature to put this question to the floor right now.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I was not going to speak on that, but I wanted to say right away here, very clearly, that I'm not going to support that \$100-million motion—I'm not—because we, like the House leader was saying, pretty soon will have a confidence motion, and all three parties will be able to vote on the motion. They will be able to vote on the budget, but they said, even before the budget was written, that they were not going to support it, and they offer no suggestions.

I have to congratulate, in a sense, the third party, because they read the budget. Even before reading the budget, they offered options, and most of their options were in the speech from the throne, and you can read them in the budget right now.

It was very interesting that the member from Trinity–Spadina took us down memory lane—things that I had forgotten. I tend to remember good things, but I didn't remember all of these scandals from the Conservatives when they were in power: the 407, eHealth, Ornge, the Eglinton subway. So all of these, I did not remember them.

Like the Premier, I entered into politics because of what they have done. I was very happy in municipal politics and I would have stayed in municipal politics, but—

Interjection.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Thank you very much for your good comment. But I decided to come to the provincial Legislature because of what they have done.

In eastern Ontario, there were quite a few issues that were put forward by the Harris government. One that is very vivid in my mind is the closure of the Montfort Hospital. I'd like to remind them that even though it was not a recommendation—

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: No, we never closed the Montfort. That's an utter lie.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member will withdraw.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. Continue.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Even if it was not a recommendation from the committee that was tasked with reviewing health care in eastern Ontario, they changed the recommendation from that group, and suddenly, Montfort Hospital was to close. Thanks to the good people of my riding in eastern Ontario, Ottawa–Orléans, Glengarry–Prescott–Russell and the city of Ottawa, the hospital now is well. We gave them money to expand, and it's a very good and very well-functioning hospital. We have doubled the number of beds there.

I don't want to take more of your time. The \$100-million motion I don't want to vote for—they will have

their chance later on to vote for the budget, and we will see. If there is dissension within their party and they want to get rid of some of their colleagues, it's their problem, not ours, and I'm not going to support it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? The leader of the official opposition.

Interjections.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Thank you, Speaker. Thank you, colleagues. I rise this afternoon to debate our want of confidence motion, which we called this opposition day motion, because I envision an Ontario where people have good jobs to go to. It's a place where hard work and talent are rewarded with more take-home pay, and people have the confidence to buy a home, raise a family and start a business; in short, Speaker, where we can look forward to tomorrow as much as today.

But I'll let you in on an open secret: That's not the Ontario we have today; in fact, just the opposite. Ontario has a big problem, and it's time that we stopped kidding ourselves about it. Some 600,000 of our friends, our neighbours, our relatives woke up this morning with no job to go to. We know from the recent Liberal budget that spending is going up, not down. The deficit actually goes up, not down, and the debt is going up, not down.

Our economy is stalling. This Liberal government has dug a deep hole, and it's only getting deeper and deeper because this is a government that has put its own political interests ahead of the interests of average Ontarians, with another billion dollars added to the debt to buy the NDP's support for this budget and with the politically motivated decisions to cancel gas plants at Mississauga and Oakville, no matter what the cost. Hundreds of millions of your dollars the Liberals spent just to win a couple of seats, to try to buy a provincial election, and then followed by concealment and cover-up, missing and blacked-out documents.

Ontario needs a new path. For that change of direction, we need to change the team that leads this province. Only the PC Party has a plan to make government affordable again, to make it accountable again—a government that treats taxpayer dollars with the respect they deserve, a government with a focus on the number one priority of our times—jobs and the economy—and one that restores Ontarians' confidence that they've got a government that serves the people, not the other way around.

Ontarians deserve a say in whether they still have confidence in this government. Every extra day with the Liberals in charge means more lost jobs, more spending and more debt. That's why I urge all members to support this motion: to clear the air; pave the way for a more hopeful, confident, prosperous province of Ontario; to clear a path so we can finally make a decision that must be made to get our province back on the right track; to bring jobs back to Ontario; to deliver dependable health care and excellent education; to break gridlock.

That's the course that we must take. Ontario can and Ontario will do better. We can restore hope for our people, put the province they love back on track, but only

if together, in this place, right here, right now, we do the right thing. We support this motion and we—

Interjections.

Mr. Tim Hudak:—course of change to this great province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Clark has moved opposition day number 4. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard some noes.

All those in favour will please say “aye.”

All those opposed, please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

This will be a 10-minute bell. Call in the members.

The division bells rang from 1733 to 1743.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Mr. Clark has moved opposition day number 4. All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): All those opposed will rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

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

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 35; the nays are 59.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I declare the motion lost.

Motion negatived.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): There being no further business, this House stands adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1746.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough–Sud-Ouest	
Best, Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Del Duca, Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Attorney General / Procureur général
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment / Ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et de l'Emploi
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Rural Affairs / Ministre des Affaires rurales
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGuinty, Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Milligan, Rob E. (PC)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Millroy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux 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	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
Takhar, Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thompson, Lisa M. (PC)	Huron–Bruce	
Vanthof, John (NDP)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Agriculture and Food / Ministre de l'Agriculture et de l'Alimentation Premier / Première ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Vacant	London West / London-Ouest	
Vacant	Windsor–Tecumseh	

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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

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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

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Bas Balkissoon, Rick Bartolucci
Sarah Campbell, Donna H. Cansfield
Mike Colle, Rosario Marchese
Laurie Scott, Todd Smith
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
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
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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 Qaadri
Jonah Schein
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

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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
Toby Barrett, Dipika Damerla
France Gélinas, Helena Jaczek
Phil McNeely, Norm Miller
Jerry J. Ouellette, Shafiq Qaadri
Jagmeet Singh
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: John Vanthof
Margaret R. Best, Vic Dhillon
Joe Dickson, Randy Hillier
Rod Jackson, Monte Kwinter
Peter Tabuns, John Vanthof
Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

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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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