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Tuesday 28 May 2013

Mardi 28 mai 2013

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 28 May 2013

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 28 mai 2013

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

2013 ONTARIO BUDGET

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 27, 2013, on the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, everyone.

Applause.

Mr. Steve Clark: Thank you very much to the government House leader for that roaring applause this morning.

I'm pleased to join the debate this morning. It gives me a great opportunity to speak on behalf of the people of Leeds–Grenville that I'm so privileged to represent here in the chamber. Before I get too far, though, I want to talk about this government's budget, in terms of what it does to Ontarians. I think it's very important that we need to act responsibly here in the chamber this morning.

When the budget was actually tabled—I know this is the motion—the government talked about “a prosperous and fair Ontario.” Those were the words they used. In fact, I think this government's budgetary policy does the opposite. It makes Ontario less prosperous and less fair. How can we create a prosperous province when the trend this Liberal government has had has seen Ontario's debt double during their 10 years at the helm? The fact is that we aren't creating a more prosperous province, because everyone knows—everyone—that you can't spend your way to prosperity. If we could, with the record runaway government spending we've seen over the last 10 years, there wouldn't be that 500,000 or 600,000 Ontarians who woke up this morning without a job. Instead, they'd be headed to work providing a better life for themselves and their families.

To be fair, how could we say this budget is fair when every child that's born in Ontario this morning inherits a \$20,000 debt? How fair is it that that baby boy or girl will grow up in a province where health and education are jeopardized for years to come because this government refused to make those tough decisions today?

That's really the choice that I think this Premier and/or her finance minister faced when they put together this budget.

They could have followed the responsible path, the path and the ideas that our party, the official opposition, and our leader, Tim Hudak, put on the table. We put a number of exceptional policies forward to put us back on the right path. That's the path that would have started for us to reduce the deficit, which we've seen increase with this budget and this budgetary policy of this government. Instead of being responsible, though, the government chose to act as the government always does: in its own political self-interest. They put themselves ahead of the future of the province of Ontario. By choosing to keep piling up the debt in a really desperate attempt to buy support of the third party to save their political hides—maybe someone on the government benches can explain to me how fair that is, because, personally, I just don't see it.

The government's strategy, again, has been to spend their way out of control. Last week, we all know, the leader of the third party accused the government of being corrupt and untrustworthy in the morning, and then she and her party worked out a budget deal with the government in the afternoon. It was pretty inconsistent. I still can't understand how you can explain that to your supporters; I just don't see it. During question period, you would see that you would have this brought forward, and then they would back down in the afternoon.

At the same time, no one seems to want to co-operate and bring forward a confidence motion, which to me is a very important motion to be discussed here. We've tried through our opposition day to have that brought forward, to no avail. I think a vote like that would show whether we have confidence in this government's policy. That's the question that Ontarians wanted answered. For an increasing number of them, the answer to that question is no. The fact that we won't have a confidence vote on the scandal is the NDP's problem to deal with now, and I think it's a big one.

I want to address one comment that we've heard from the government and the third party when it comes to their thumbs-up review to their co-written budget. The NDP like to say they are getting results for Ontarians, and they like to recite all the goodies that the government's put on their credit card: things like a cut in auto insurance, home care support, a youth employment program, infrastructure spending and cash for the recording industry. I guess if you're going to increase spending in two out of every three ministries by \$3.6 billion overall, it's inevitable that

you're going to at least find something that's going to appeal to some folks. We always hear criticism—at least I do—from the benches opposite and beside me about, “Is there nothing in the budget?” I think there is something when you look at one line item that everyone can see is there for them.

The thing that I was shocked about—and we brought it up in question period yesterday—is the government's willingness to gamble \$900 million to cancel a couple of gas plants during the last election. We know the total cost of the seat-saver program now stands at \$585 million and counting. That's wasted money that didn't buy anything for Ontarians, just a few Liberal seats.

I'm actually proud of the people of Leeds–Grenville, because the comments I've heard since the budget have really showed me that they understand that we really can't afford that type of spending. We really can't afford that type of government waste, where the government would put millions and millions of dollars just to save a few seats rather than getting their fiscal house in order.

0910

I've put together my share of budgets. I was involved in municipal politics and have done my share of municipal budgets. I've done my share of budgets in the private sector. I worked in municipal management before I was elected to this place. So I think I understand how the process works. I know, as I said earlier, that you can go to anyone, show them a little line in the budget, a little program, and something is going to appeal to them. But responsible budgeting requires that you focus on the big picture, not just those individual line items. Someone has to be the adult in the room and basically say, “Enough is enough.”

The problem that we have here is that there were apparently no adults in the room when this budget is put together. That's why the people I'm hearing from in my riding are so concerned about the direction the province is heading in. They worry, like so many parents, including myself, that they'd be waving to their kids as they put Ontario in the rear-view mirror to find opportunities in other provinces. I know I have a couple of boys who have always chosen that path. It's sad that the opportunities just aren't here in this province.

One of those parents who wrote to me was Joyce Pringle, a constituent of mine in North Grenville. She wrote to me recently to tell me the struggles that her two sons are having as they try to get their construction business established. This isn't really because they don't know their stuff; they certainly do. They've got customers that want to hire them. It's because government is increasingly taking more and more of what they make. Here's some of the things that Joyce wrote to me about recently:

“Now it's the WSIB at the provincial level. We faithfully send them a percentage of the employees' gross salary each quarter. Last year was 8.8%, and that has increased (once again beyond inflation) to 9.1% this year.

“But the WSIB now requires payments for each of the partners in addition to the payments for the workers—at

the same rate, based on the business' net income. With two partners, that comes to 18.2% of their income, almost one fifth!

“When I expressed surprise, the person on the phone told me, ‘It's the law.’ I'm reminded of the old joke: They have a new, easy two-step method to figure out your taxes. Step 1: How much did you make? Step 2: Send it. Except that no one is laughing.

“In February one son and his wife moved into my basement so that they can save a bit of money because they would like to start a family.”

Joyce Pringle goes on to say how close government regulations are to killing the small business and ruining her sons' dreams. I'm wondering if Joyce and her sons are really going to be excited when this budget when they realize that it's inevitable that they're going to be giving more and more to the government because of excess spending. I think we all know the answer to that question.

This is a budget that creates more hardship because it puts off those tough decisions I mentioned earlier that, frankly, should have been made years ago. In fact, there's a startling admission about how negatively this government's runaway spending is impacting our economy. It's right there on page 163, where we see that the finance minister expects the economy to grow by a mere 1.5% this year. That represents the third year in a row that economic growth will decline. Again, when it comes to economic fundamentals, Ontario, under this government, is headed in the wrong direction. Ontario used to be the proud engine of Canada and our economy. Now we're being pulled along by others. We're a have-not province with a \$273-billion debt, double than when the members opposite took over. We're a province that has increased revenue by taking more from hard-working Ontarians, to the tune of \$42 billion over the last 10 years. Even flush with all that revenue, they can't balance the books because their spending has increased at an even faster rate—\$48 billion.

I think it was the *Globe and Mail* that did a good job summing up the state of affairs with this description of our fiscal situation:

“Nevertheless, \$11.7 billion leaves Ontario with far and away the biggest deficit among Canadian provinces. And while it is also the country's biggest provincial economy, Ontario also has the country's worst deficit relative to GDP. Its net debt—estimated at more than \$250 billion and set to grow by a forecast \$20 billion in the current fiscal year—is the second-highest in the country on both a per capita and a debt-to-GDP basis. It's not pretty, and this budget does little to put ... lipstick on it.” That was the *Globe and Mail*.

I know that people's eyes sometimes glaze over when we start throwing around those types of numbers when we look at dealing with budgets. Again, I mention my experience in municipal politics. When you do a budget there, people want to know what it means to them. Forget all the numbers; forget the stack of paper; forget all the rhetoric; people want to know how it affects their services, how it affects their taxes. That's what they want to know. Those are the questions you get asked.

I want to remind people watching at home today of one thing: This kind of horrible fiscal management will negatively affect all the services that you count on, because even with a government where spending is as out of control as we see with this one, there are consequences to running up large debt and deficits. You can see examples of where people are paying the price today for reduced services.

One of those examples that I'm hearing quite a lot of is in the office of the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, and it's the \$44-million cut to physiotherapy services. I'm hearing from families and their loved ones in long-term-care facilities who rely on these services. They're concerned at the consequences of a plan that will see the \$110 million spent for physio services for seniors in long-term care cut to \$58.5 million. To my shock, the minister has tried to spin this as an enhancement; but certainly no one is buying it; certainly not the 20 members of the seniors' exercise group at the Executive Condominium who called my office this week upset that their twice-a-week program is disappearing.

Gary Rehan, a physiotherapist who provides great care for seniors at Rosebridge Manor in the community of Jasper in my riding, wrote to me to express his concerns about what he sees happening: "The physiotherapy I provide enables patients to live in relative independence for as long as possible. I worry that the patients I currently treat will see their mobility deteriorate after Aug. 1, 2013.

"The physiotherapy services provided to these seniors, along with enhancing their quality of life and improving their functional abilities and mobility, also helps to reduce the risk of morbidities including fractures, pneumonia and blood clots, to name a few.

"I know that this cut in the critical physiotherapy services will potentially result in an increase in these ... and, in turn, health care utilization." That was from Gary.

He told me that seniors he's treated have improved so much that some of them have been able to return home. Others, he stressed, are able to remain at Rosebridge rather than the much more expensive alternative of being admitted to hospital. The physiotherapy he provides is actually saving money in our health care system in the long run. That's the bottom line that I think most of us on this side of the House want to hear.

The government that is so desperate to make some cuts in some spending areas, basically with its dance partner, has to make better decisions in the long run for Ontarians. I could give you lots of examples of how those decisions should be changed. Physiotherapy is just one of them.

So when someone questions me on why I'm not going to vote for a budget that promises, for example, a \$100-million infrastructure program for small municipalities, I ask them to take a step back. I want them not to focus on one or two things that they may find appealing in a disastrous budget, but to look at the budget in its entirety. If they do that, I'm confident that they'll see that they're like so many others I've talked to in the past who feel we

just simply can't afford it. So I'm not voting against the \$100 million for infrastructure. I'm not voting against \$260 million in home care or \$400 million to increase social assistance or \$100 million for the Ontario Brain Institute or \$290 million for youth jobs—the list goes on and on; I'm sure everybody is getting the picture.

0920

I think we have to stand and vote against the budget because we have a responsibility to do it. We have a responsibility to be the adult in the room and to be the party that sets our fiscal policy back on track. We can no longer be the economic caboose; we need to be the economic engine.

I think it's not about whether you're PC, Liberal or NDP; whether you're red, blue or orange. I think you have to go back to that baby boy or baby girl, that new Ontarian that I spoke about earlier, one that could be my grandchild, that inherited a \$20,000 debt because we didn't fix this province's crisis when we had the chance. I think that's really what we're talking about this morning. That's the type of fiscal policy that people expect us to do.

I'm going to share a quote from the Fraser Institute. Here's what they wrote:

"Had the Liberals actually spent prudently over the past decade there would be no deficit; in fact, the province would have a \$12-billion surplus!

"Since 2003-04, actual program spending increased from \$70.4 billion to \$113.6 billion in 2012-13. Had program spending increased by the rate of inflation and population growth, current program spending would be \$22 billion lower. That means the province would already be in surplus and would have accumulated significantly less debt over the last decade."

That's what I hear from folks in Leeds–Grenville.

The budget forecasts an \$11.7-billion deficit at the end of the fiscal year. The Fraser Institute analysis shows that if the government had only increased spending to account for inflation and population growth, we'd have a \$12-billion surplus. That's a difference of \$23.7 billion from where we are to where I think we should be.

I only have a few seconds left. I think it's very important that when we talk about budget policy, we have made some sensible and some pragmatic suggestions for the budget that the government has ignored. We've seen the soap opera play out this year again with the New Democrats and the Liberal government members. So I'm not going to support this government's budgetary policy. I think we owe it to those young Ontarians that are being born today to stand up with them and stand up for a better Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Before I ask for questions and comments, I wish to welcome to this chamber a former member of this House: Mr. Wayne Wettlaufer, the MPP for Kitchener Centre and Kitchener in the 36th and 37th Parliaments.

Questions and comments?

Mr. Paul Miller: I'd like to thank the member from Leeds–Grenville for his perspective on this situation.

Mine's a little different, Speaker. Frankly, I'm a little tired of the official opposition saying things like "coalition" and "NDP budget" on and on. Well, folks, here's the real truth: The NDP got results for the people we represent. The official opposition got nothing because they said no and they didn't read it. Why? Because their real agenda is to get power, and once they get power, this is what you're going to get, folks: You're going to get a right-to-work state. You're going to attack unions. You're going to get more tax breaks for big corporations. You're going to attack construction people. You're going to attack teachers. You're going to attack nurses. Nothing for the most vulnerable in our province; nothing for the needy. You're going to force people back to work even though they have a collective agreement; you're going to ignore that. So the bottom line, Speaker, is, if you really want to read the white paper, you've got to look through the lines because, as I said yesterday, the white paper, in my opinion, is two-ply or one-ply. It's not really a white paper. The bottom line is that I'm sick and tired of them criticizing.

You know, I'm not 100% in favour of what's going on, but at least I've fought for my people and what they wanted. We consulted with the people of Ontario. We consulted with my constituents. They told me what they wanted, and with all due respect, I've got one of the toughest ridings for being rebellious in the whole province. I've got tough unions. I've got tough people. But the numbers aren't telling us that people want an election. The numbers aren't telling us that they aren't happy with what we've done.

Andrea Horwath and the NDP did the right thing: We sat down, we negotiated, we got results from the sitting government, and we're going to stick to what we do. I am not going to go back to my people and say, "I said no. We got nothing. I'm just going to say no to everything, and I'm not going to read anything." Not good.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: That's a bit of a tough act to follow, but I have to agree with the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek in many ways. At the end of the day, we have a budget, but what counts the most is how Ontarians feel about the budget. That is indeed what we're trying to do—I believe that's what the third party is trying to do—in terms of making sure that not only are there things in the budget that resonate with Ontarians and that strike that balance between fiscal responsibility and a fair society, but it actually resonates with people in their everyday lives. That's what's very important.

I know, for me, right after the budget came out, the very next day all the Scarborough MPPs—I'm one of six Scarborough MPPs—went and did a budget breakfast. That's what we did, the very next day, with the local chamber of commerce—actually, it's Rotary now. It used to be a chamber of commerce; it's now the Rotary group. So that was the beginning of a process to go out and talk about the budget and get feedback on it. Having said that, there was also a lot of feedback to the building of the budget.

I think when the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek spoke, his feedback is similar to what I hear in my own riding of Pickering–Scarborough East, and that is that people are generally happy with it. People want to move forward. People do not want an election. They want us to govern. They want all the parties to work together and do what's in the best interests of Ontarians.

The feedback I've had is very consistent with what the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek has heard. It's one of, "Get the job done. Do what you were asked to do when you got elected, and make this minority government work." I think that it behooves all parties to do that, and that's what I'm certainly going to do on behalf of my constituents of Pickering–Scarborough East.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Todd Smith: It's a pleasure to stand and comment on the 20-minute presentation by my friend from Leeds–Grenville, Mr. Clark—a very thoughtful presentation. He kind of walked everybody through the entire process and the fiscal challenges that our province is facing right now, the responsible budgeting that hasn't occurred for the last 10 years under the McGuinty and Wynne governments, and the lack of adults in the room when it comes to planning for the future of not just our generation but the generations to come. That's something that's been lacking on behalf of the government.

Mr. Clark comes from this from a number of different angles, being a municipal politician, where you can't run up a \$12-billion deficit year after year because your people expect more than that. But for some reason, this Liberal government doesn't seem to realize that there are responsibilities that come with managing the people's money. They continue to run up record deficits and double our debt during that time. So I think the member from Leeds–Grenville did an excellent job at outlining where we're going.

He made a very thoughtful presentation for 20 minutes and then, in two minutes, this typhoon came in and blew any kind of reason out of the water. This NDP that is propping up this scandal-plagued government that for months and months and months stood here in the House and talked about how they were killing harness racing, and they talked about how they were ringing up \$100 million for this gas plant cancellation and \$900 million for another gas plant cancellation—and yet, when given the opportunity to finally bring down a scandal-plagued government, what do they do? They vote along with them. They turn their backs on the people whom they've been fighting for for the last 18 months for lower hydro rates, to bring harness racing back to the province, to bring responsible government to the province. They missed the opportunity. They turned their backs on the people of Ontario—a missed opportunity. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I would remind the House that interjections are out of order.

Questions and comments?

0930

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for that poignant reminder. It seems that, in here, the opposition has decided to replace any rationale with an increased level of decibels, and it certainly isn't effective. It's something that they've done for the 18 months that I've been in this House. The only ideas, the only action I've seen from them, are a ringing of the bells that occupied a massive amount of time, and pounding on the desk, as if a corporate boss was just absolutely adamantly against any type of agenda.

I want to say that I caught the end of the member for Leeds–Grenville's speech. He spoke to the fact that some of the cuts that are built into the budget will affect program delivery and ultimately service. There's no question about that, that cuts do affect program delivery and service. But his remedy for that is deeper cuts to program delivery and service, and he says that deeper cuts will lead to better, increased services. I don't understand that rationale.

I also don't understand how they can, despite any economic theology that they may subscribe to—and we know roughly what it is; it's a right-wing, corporate, capitalist, free-market agenda. Despite that, they avoid the fact that we need to look at the revenue side of the equation in budgetary measures—never a spoken word about how this province needs revenue—and are reluctant to acknowledge that tax cuts are actually spending measures. They'll never make that equation; they'll never connect the dots on that. Tax cuts are just an automatic, reflexive response by the government that should be a staple of any governance model—it shouldn't be. It should be done strategically and specifically, and that's what New Democrats have long proposed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Leeds–Grenville has two minutes to reply.

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to thank my colleague the member for Prince Edward–Hastings, the Minister of Consumer Services, the member for Essex and the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek for their comments.

I'm just going to continue to talk in light of what I spoke of earlier.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I can't hear you, Steve.

Mr. Steve Clark: Sorry, Rosie; I'm a little hoarse this morning.

We can continue to burden our children and grandchildren with more debt and we can continue to put off those tough decisions, or we can resolve to do better. We can spend within our means, and we can get government out of the way, to create some private sector jobs in this province.

I'm pretty proud of our party. We've put forward dozens and dozens of very good ideas that would set a different path, a more prosperous path, a fairer path for Ontarians.

I don't think this government was ever interested in hearing our ideas. If they were, we'd have a public sector wage freeze in this budget. We'd have arbitration reform. We would have taken Mr. Wilson's bill, his very thought-

ful arbitration proposals, and put them in the budget. But of course, this government didn't do that. That's why in my riding, taxpayers are facing a retroactive double-digit pay hike from an arbitrator's award last week.

The government had a choice, and they chose what they've always done: They've decided to buy the support of the NDP. They've included \$1 billion of gifts and goodies to be able to secure their support. They've doubled down on this runaway spending that has been, really, the hallmark of both the McGuinty and the Wynne governments.

I think it's going to be very clear, as we move forward in this vote, who is standing up for Ontarians.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate on the budget motion?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I'm happy to have this opportunity to speak to the budget motion. I'm going to begin by referencing a number of things that my friend from Leeds–Grenville mentioned. I count him as a friend of mine; I do. But I disagree with him and his party on a number of areas, and it has to do with the things that he referenced.

He says we can't spend our way to prosperity, which is something that he and all the other Conservative members raise each and every time that they are in this debate. Here's the problemo, as I see it—and I could be wrong, of course: Governments need revenue; is that not correct? To run a government, we need revenue.

Here is the problem: When you cut corporate taxes each and every year, which the Conservatives have done and the Liberals have colluded with over the years in terms of cutting corporate taxes, when you lose revenues to the tune of \$17 billion or \$18 billion over a 20-year period, you and my fine Liberal friends, what it means is that revenues go down, and according to the Conservative political ideology, therefore, you are spending a whole lot of money on services that you then argue you cannot afford. You get the picture: Less revenue—

Mr. Randy Hillier: We're spending \$120 billion a year.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: But you missed the first part. You see, Speaker, they don't listen, and that's the problem. I was trying to produce a simple argument, and then they say, "Yeah, but you can't spend your way out of it." I understand the argument. If revenues were up here, then the costs to government would be less than what we raised by way of income, or at least equal to, or at least we would be able to manage our budgets. But when revenues are down, then all of the costs go up. That's inevitable.

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: Sort of like my auto insurance.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: What about the auto insurance?

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: It just went up 5%, thanks to the government.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Right. And if your revenues of income do not keep up with it—

Interjections.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You're not listening; that's the problem. You're blah, blah, blah, blah, and he doesn't

listen; that's the problem. The member from Northumberland argues that the auto insurance rates have gone up, and—I don't know the point. But the point I'm making is, if auto insurance rates go up and your salary doesn't keep up with it, those auto increases are going to whack you and you're going to feel the weight of the auto insurance increases. Is that not correct?

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: That's what you just did. Thank you.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Okay. So the non-sequitur doesn't connect.

The point I make is that if revenues are down, you can't keep up with your costs. The Tories keep on saying, "You can't spend your way out of prosperity," and they're right, except they don't say that the revenues need to be maintained. And you cannot cut corporate taxes forever; you can't. What is the answer of the Tories with respect to how we grow the economy? My good friend from Lanark-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington—my God, is it ever a big riding—argues that the best way to move the economy is to give the corporations further tax cuts. That's their argument each and every time, and quite frankly, my friends from Lanark and Leeds-Grenville, you guys have it wrong. You guys have it completely wrong. If you were right—

Interjections.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You see, the Speaker is—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm sorry to interrupt, but I would ask the member for Trinity-Spadina to make his comments through the Chair. I would ask the members of the official opposition to stop heckling him so that I can hear him.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: There you go, Speaker. I thank you for that, because I would speak to you all the time if it were not for the heckles that I get, and then I've got to look at them. It's hard to be heckled by the members and look at you as they speak. You understand that, right?

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: You see what I'm saying? I have to look at him because he's talking to me. And I'm okay with talking to him—

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: —or him, or them, but I want to speak through you, Speaker. So every now and then you stand up and you remind them to shut up, if you know what I mean.

So the argument about how you make the economy grow by cutting corporate taxes is simply fundamentally wrong, because it hasn't worked. We have looked at the evidence—and I don't know what Tories look at by way of evidence, but we have looked at the evidence, and the jobs are not there.

Not only are the jobs not there, but they're not well-paying jobs, either. Most of the work that is available is part-time casual work, contract work. That's what we have. So when my friend from Leeds-Grenville says that he's worried about that little boy and little girl growing up and they won't have the opportunities, he's absolutely

right. I worry about that too, but for different reasons. He says that if we cut down on our expenditures, that little boy and that little gal are going to have a better future. No, they're not. That little gal and that little boy, under a Conservative ideology, are not going to do very well. We can see that under a Liberal government, a Conservative government—those little gals are suffering today.

0940

Now, we look at the university students that are coming out of universities and, yes, they are well educated. We have a more well-educated public than I've ever seen before, except they are not getting the jobs that they study for. They're not getting the jobs for which they studied. Not only that, they're not making the income they hoped they would make as a result of leaving with a four-year degree or a master's degree or, indeed, a PhD. Most PhD students can't get a job in a university anymore; they've got to go out of the country to find a job. What kind of hope do we have for that little gal and that little guy when PhDs have to try to find work outside of the country?

Mr. Randy Hillier: They can go to Alberta and Saskatchewan where the Conservative governments are, right?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I beg your pardon?

Mr. Randy Hillier: They go out to Alberta and Saskatchewan to get those jobs—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Right.

Mr. Randy Hillier: —where there's a Conservative government.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: And if we could just keep cutting corporate taxes, they would stay here, wouldn't they, member from Lanark? If they could just cut those corporate taxes, everything would be rosy in rosy land, right?

The fact of the matter is, that's not true, and they keep perpetuating a myth that some people buy, and God knows that there's a few intelligent people out there fighting back. The Lord can be merciful, but sometimes you wonder whether they're paying attention because the ideology of the Conservative Party works for a lot of people. They believe it.

Their attack on civil servants seems to connect with the public. We believe in civil servants; we believe in governments. We believe in governments existing to regulate an economy that sometimes goes overboard, as we saw in the dot-com collapse, as we saw in the collapse of properties in America, and not yet here, but it may come.

We have seen the collapse of the banking industry all over the world started by the US and we have seen anywhere from \$5 trillion to \$11 trillion spent by governments to bail out the banks, the very institutions that Tories love to support. Close to \$11 trillion has been spent by governments to support a market that doesn't work, that often fails us. Unless we regulate that industry, we're going to see, each and every time, a collapse of countries. So then Conservatives and the banking industry call upon governments to become socialist and bail

them out. No sooner do they get the \$11 trillion from the government, so-called “socialist,” that as soon as they recover they’re back into their \$11-million salaries, \$20-million salaries—God bless them—and they’re back to work when we get stuck with the debt. We, the taxpayers, get stuck with the debt.

You got to love them capitalists; you got to love them Tories. They love governments. They love governments to be there to bail out their markets as soon as they collapse. It works so well for them; it works so well for you.

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: You’re bailing out the Liberals.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: That’s a different discussion we’re into.

I have disagreed with Tories over the years and I’ve disagreed with Liberals over the years, particularly under the regime of Dalton McGuinty, the then Premier, who colluded with the Tories in cutting corporate taxes and cutting income taxes when we have huge deficits. How do you explain that? We have huge deficits, and Tories and Liberals keep cutting corporate taxes when we don’t have the money, when we need that money to pay for the programs that people rely on. The government was laughing—not laughing, but proudly proclaiming—“We’ve cut income taxes to the tune of \$1.3 billion.” They were cheerful about it; happy, smiling: “We cut income taxes to the tune of \$1.3 billion and we got a deficit”—the then deficit—“of \$20 billion.” You need revenue and you cut revenues from governments. How do you explain that, as Liberals?

Mercifully, we have a new leader that sounds a bit more lefty, and we might be able to arrest some of the corporate tax cuts. The NDP forced McGuinty to freeze the corporate taxes, which was a positive development. We hope to be able to squeeze a little more from Liberals with respect to that, but they are a bit reluctant in that regard.

Our role, as New Democrats, is to make government work, because that’s what people want. People want parties to try to solve their differences. They do not like governments and opposition parties that are in constant conflict with each other. They want governments to work for them. Our job, as a political party, is to make it work. It’s to find ways to improve the lives of Ontarians as best we can. That is the job of this opposition party. Our job is to try to make minority work for them—not to work for us, not to work for the Liberal Party, but to work for people. And that is what we need to do.

What have we fought for? We have fought for better home care with a five-day guarantee. Why? There are 6,000 people on a waiting list—over 6,000 people on a waiting list—who are not getting home care. The ones who are getting home care are getting inadequate care. And Liberals know it, because they get the same calls we do. I know it from a personal perspective. They probably know it from a personal perspective, but they also know from their constituents that the home care that they’re looking for is simply not there for them.

Tory governments and Liberal governments have de-institutionalized care and have said, “What we need to do

is provide the care in their home.’ The problem is, the care in the home is not there. Wealthy Ontarians can take care of themselves, and people who don’t have money have to take care of themselves in the best way that they can. And what is that? The best way that they can protect themselves is to have their children, their extended family, look after them. Is that what we want? It apparently seems so, because both Tories and Liberals have allowed this to go on.

We have divested ourselves as governments and put the responsibility of care on families. The problem is, the majority of families no longer have the time or the money to take care of their own. It’s becoming a social disaster.

So we push for better home care, and we push, particularly, for a five-day guarantee. Why, do you say, a guarantee? Because unless we have a guarantee, people are not going to get the care that they need.

Liberals are saying, “We’re going to have a target.” A target means that 6,000 people waiting probably will not get the care that they need, and the home care that people get now is completely inadequate.

You have people with Alzheimer’s getting an hour or two a day of support. We’re talking about Alzheimer’s, which means that family members who want to take care of their own relatives in their own homes get very little support in their homes. They might get, at best, one or two hours a day—at best—which means that the bulk of the time has to be spent by families to take care of their own.

That’s why I want to be a millionaire. I want to be a corporation to get the tax credit, to get the benefits—the loopholes—that the Liberals and Tories have allowed over the years. I need to be a company so I can have extra money to help my own.

I often say to the Liberals and the Tories, “I don’t want to get old in this province.” Why? Because without a pension, I and 65% of the population out there are going to suffer in the future, because our children—

Interjection.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Member from Northumberland, where are you going?

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: You won’t retire because you have no pension.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: People without an adequate pension are going to be on their own. Hopefully, they will have—

Interjection.

0950

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Member for York South, I’m so glad you’re fighting for a pension within your own Liberal caucus. So far, we haven’t gotten very far. Without adequate pensions and without adequate incomes, people are going to be on their own, struggling. So we pushed for home care.

We pushed for a reduction in auto insurance. Why? Because the auto insurance rates are the highest in the country. My friend from Bramalea–Gore–Malton has been pressing the government on this for the last year.

We said we need to help people out. We need to reduce auto insurance rates by 15%. Why? Because their profits—God love them, God bless them—have been good. They have been good, but they constantly complain they're not earning enough. They constantly complain, "My God, fraud is the biggest thing we have since sliced white bread. Unless we deal with fraud, we won't have any profits." The problem is, insurance companies are making good money, and they're making good money on the backs of the cuts we have made to their benefits. It's just not right; it's not fair. So we said we need to reduce the auto insurance rates by 15%. We're not going to get it. We're not quite sure what the timeline is going to be, so we need to continue pushing Liberals in that regard.

But my friend from Bramalea–Gore–Malton has reminded us that in some of the areas of the GTA, insurance companies are slowly increasing their insurance rates by up to close to—

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Some 10%, 15%.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: —10%, 15%, which will allow them to reduce rates by 15% by the time the Liberal government gets through with these changed initiatives.

In the end, what's going to happen? How are the Liberals going to make the insurance companies accountable for those increases while we have the highest rates of auto insurance in the whole country? It's simply not right for people. It is simply not right.

We talked about youth unemployment as a serious issue. Youth unemployment is serious and getting more serious. They're unemployed and will be continually unemployed and will be underemployed in spite of the degrees that they have and in spite of all the debt they're incurring because of the incredible tuition fee increases under the Conservative government and, incredibly, 5% increases under the Liberal government for the last 10 years. They come out with huge debts, with great degrees, and they'll be largely underemployed and in most cases, or at least some cases, they will be unemployed. So we pushed the Liberals for an employment strategy that gets them working, and that's important.

We finally fought for better accountability of governments. How do you hold governments accountable? It doesn't matter whether you're Liberal, Tory or NDP. How do you hold us accountable? We have proposed a financial accountability office that would have the same power the budget officer had in Ottawa that held Tories up there accountable. And, boy, did Harper hate that budget officer.

Mercifully, we had a budget officer that held governments accountable constantly. Where governments would say the—

Mr. Taras Natyshak: The F-35s.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: —the F-35s only cost \$16 billion, the budget chief says, "No, no, it's more than double."

You need a budget officer that is there to expose the dissembling of governments, without which governments would do what they want, and there would absolutely no accountability of a party or a government. So we urged

the government to set up this financial accountability office. We believe that's important. The Liberals have said they're going to do it.

We're happy. We are happy that we made some gains for working men and women out there who desperately need support of governments and opposition parties, and we give them what we possibly could give them.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm pleased to respond to the remarks from the member for Trinity–Spadina on the budget.

I must begin by saying I totally agree with his observation that what our constituents expect from us—my constituents in Guelph, his constituents in Trinity–Spadina and, I dare say, the constituents of the official opposition as well—what our constituents want is for us to make government work. They want us to look for the ideas that we have in common and to build on the ideas that we have in common.

The member from Trinity Spadina spoke at length about the issue of youth unemployment, and we agree: That is a huge issue. We need to do something about it, so what we have done in this budget is that we have included a \$295-million allocation to work on the problem of youth unemployment. Some of that—the bulk of it, \$195 million—will be used on some more conventional approaches to working with employers to make sure that they are giving youth a first job. Actually, they're the sort of programs that Conservatives quite often like, traditionally, but then, I guess they haven't read the budget, so they don't know that it's there.

But \$100 million is going to some more unconventional approaches, if I could say. There's some money which is going to an entrepreneurship fund to help young adults set up their own business, because we know we need to encourage entrepreneurs in our economy. Some of it is going to an innovation fund, because we know there are lots of students who are working in research settings in their academic programs who may have some innovative ideas that they could turn into jobs and into businesses, so there's some money there for the innovators in our society. I think that we're really making inroads on this problem.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: It was quite stirring to hear the member from Trinity–Spadina ramble on about past governments and how devastated the province was when Mr. Harris was here. I just want to say to the member that I respect his anecdotes, and of course he's a well-instituted individual here, but at the same time, I think he's forgotten how well the province of Ontario actually was doing when Mike Harris came in and made the changes needed after Bob Rae was the Premier here. Actually, even when I go back home, there's many a CUPE member in my riding who, to this day, idolizes Bob Rae—not. Bob Rae is a bad taste in their mouth, and these are strong union people.

But I want to talk about what has actually transpired here. When I'm at home, I do hear from some people, and they don't say, "We don't want an election." They say, "We can't afford to have an election." That takes me by surprise, because once I point out to those individuals that, in fact, this Liberal/NDP government and the deputy premier, Ms. Horwath, are spending \$2 million an hour more than we're bringing in in revenue, I say, "Well, if it costs \$96 million for an election, the election would be paid for in two days." Two days, Mr. Speaker, right? How can the province of Ontario not afford to have an election on this train wreck that this NDP and Liberal government is on?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: I am so pleased to rise to comment on my colleague from Trinity-Spadina's eloquent and somewhat—I think it's poetic. When he stands to deliver, people rush in here to hear what he has to say, but are they actually listening? We know that often when he points out some of the real structural failures—I would even say some of the cracks in the Conservative argument—they tend to just plug their ears, and they don't want to listen to what he has to say.

But on the topic of just triggering an election, I can tell you that we canvassed this province wide and large to get the sentiment of what people wanted—

Interjection: Wide and large?

1000

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Far and wide. We know that the opposition party, the Conservatives, are eager for an election, but I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, myself personally, as an individual, I am not anxious to get rid of Tim Hudak as the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party. I want him there for as long as possible; in fact, I need him there as the leader of the PC Party.

Stephen Harper is actually someone whom we should continue to look at. He does a good job in absolutely destroying any real semblance of what true conservatism is. It's the Reform Party incarnate. It's easy to pick apart those arguments when it comes to a good, healthy economy, because they have done nothing, proposed nothing, to help the men and women and communities in this province and in this country.

We are, as New Democrats, proud to deliver on some results that haven't been delivered in quite some time. I'm thankful that this budget has put our ideas forward and actually is going to deliver those results.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Mr. Grant Crack: I listened very intently to the member from Trinity-Spadina, and also the Minister of Education, Northumberland-Quinte West and the excellent comments from the member from Essex.

I was particularly intrigued by the member from Trinity-Spadina when he talked about and actually lectured and taught the Conservative opposition about what revenues and expenses and budgeting are all about, and he's absolutely right. It's a matter of making this government work.

In October 2011, Ontarians did make a decision. They decided: Liberal government, NDP third party, Conservative opposition. Ontarians didn't want the Conservative Party, Mr. Speaker. They remember back to the days of the slash-and-burn. They are relying on this government—it looks like, with the co-operation of the third party, because we're not getting any co-operation at all whatsoever from the Progressive Conservatives. Their position was rejected. They've worked with us, and they make Ontario work, and that's what we want.

I listened intently to the member from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek, and he referred to two- and three-ply white papers. I'm going to think he was referring to Kleenex, because if, God forbid, if the Conservatives ever got into power again, there'd be a lot of Kleenex. There would be a lot of people on the front lawns. There would be cutting and slashing and burning—something that Ontarians don't want to go back to.

I congratulate the third party for working with us in government. I respect what they're doing. They respect Ontarians. If the Conservatives would just, again, respect the decision that was made—let's have a four-year term, working together for Ontarians, instead of only working in their own self-interest. This is a good budget; let's get it passed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time for questions and comments. I return to the member for Trinity-Spadina for his response.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: What New Democrats want is to improve the lives of working men and women in Ontario. That's our objective, and that's what we believe we have accomplished in this budget. We believe we have made it better for working men and women.

We talked about increasing revenues, and that's why we said to the Liberals, "We need to eliminate the employer health tax exemption on the first \$400,000 in payroll for companies with more than \$5 million. We don't believe they need that break." So they did that; they eliminated that break. Except businesses with up to \$5 million in payroll will see their employer health tax exemption increase to \$450,000, which effectively eliminates from provincial coffers that revenue, which we believe is close to \$100 million that we desperately need. Why would they do that? That, I do not understand.

Then we talked the corporate tax loopholes, which are set to come into effect and would allow corporations to write off the HST on entertainment and meals. That comes off in 2015. What we said to the Liberals is, "You've got to make that a permanent delay." Corporations do not need an entertainment tax writeoff. Corporations don't need a meal tax writeoff. I need it; they don't. Ontarians need that tax break, not the corporations, who are doing fine—just fine.

We urged the Liberals to send a strong message to the Conservative Party, and they didn't include any of that in the budget. We're talking about \$1.3 billion that we could bring back into government revenues. The government refuses to put it in the budget. What did they do before the budget motion comes into effect? They simply write a letter to Jim Flaherty saying, "Please"—

Mr. Taras Natyshak: “Dear Jim.”

Mr. Rosario Marchese: “Dear Jim: Help us out.” It seems half-hearted. Their heart was not in that revenue-generating idea that we put forth.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate on the budget motion?

Mr. Bill Mauro: I’m pleased to rise and become part of the debate on the budget motion this Tuesday morning. I understand we’ll probably break in about 10 minutes. I’ve got 20 minutes here this morning, and I guess I’ll have to resume this afternoon after routine proceedings. I look forward to doing that.

I thought, Speaker, I would begin by speaking a little bit this morning about our budget, of course, but specifically about the deficit and where we find ourselves. It has been something that, obviously, both opposition parties have had something to say about when they’ve risen and spoken on the budget motion. I think the part that I find most interesting when the budget discussion ensues, as it often does, and the deficit position that we find ourselves in, would be that a person who perhaps has not been following these issues too closely—and there are not many people like that—might be led to believe and conclude that Ontario was the only jurisdiction nationally or sub-nationally on the planet that went through the recession, the greatest recession since the 1930s. We know, of course, that that’s not the case. We know, of course, that across the globe, through the recession that hit in 2008, that began in around 2008, some 30 million to 40 million people lost their jobs—30 million to 40 million. Of course, Ontario was not spared from that economic carnage. But the opposition would like you to believe that they were.

We took a different path. We took a very clear different path, as did many other jurisdictions across the planet. What they decided to do, largely, for many of them, based on lessons that were learned from the Great Depression in the 1930s, is, as bad and as difficult as it was going to be as a result of the economic collapse across the globe—there was a decision made that we needed to invest in the economy, that we needed to find mechanisms to stimulate the economy. Yes, that was done through borrowing money, and yes, those decisions in 2008 did lead us to the position that we find ourselves in today: in a deficit position.

I would say, Speaker, that achieving a balanced budget position by 2017-18 is the same target that was picked by both opposition parties, and that the budget document clearly lays out that we are on track to meet that deficit reduction and come back into a balanced position. We’re doing it. And not all jurisdictions are able to achieve that. We do know very clearly that, at the federal level, they are having severe struggles in terms of making that budget target, or the targets that they have set for themselves.

For my friends in the official opposition, I always feel I need to provide a little reminder about what we came into in 2003. People who have been here since then—and that was the first year that I was elected—will remember

very clearly that we were promised, in the lead-up to the 2003 election, that the books of the province of Ontario were balanced. We were very clearly told that. Of course, not long after the election, we found out that, in fact, far from being balanced, the books of the province of Ontario had a \$5.5-billion deficit. That’s a Provincial Auditor number; that was not a government number. The auditor of the province of Ontario, an independent officer of this Legislature, clearly said that, in fact, we had a \$5.5-billion deficit.

It’s important to remember that that \$5.5-billion deficit that was left to us by the outgoing Conservative government was left to us at a time when the economy in Ontario, the economy in Canada, the economy internationally, was doing incredibly well. The Canadian dollar was trading at 63 or 70 cents, and the price of a barrel of oil was far lower than it is today. All of the variables were in place to help the Ontario economy do very well as a primarily export-driven economy. With the United States as our biggest trading partner and the US economy red-hot and all of those things working in favour of the provincial Conservatives at that time, they still somehow managed to leave the incoming Liberal government with a \$5.5-billion deficit. How is that possible under those circumstances?

1010

I always feel it’s necessary to remind people about that because, of course, it’s the Conservatives who like to remind people, or say to people, “We’re the party who will take care of your pocketbook for you. If you want to have a well-managed province fiscally, you need us to be in charge because we can do it.” During a period of incredible economic growth, we were still left with a \$5.5-billion deficit.

Speaker, it’s important to put another piece on to that because, in fact, that \$5.5-billion deficit was much higher, wasn’t it? Because in the lead-up to the 2003 provincial election, the provincial Conservative government of the day in Ontario decided that they needed to try and minimize that debt, that deficit they were hiding, and what did they do? Well, they did a couple of significant things. They did several things, but they did two significant things.

One, they downloaded, or had been downloading, starting from the late 1990s, a tremendous amount of what were always, historically, provincial government services. They downloaded them onto municipalities and stuck them into the residential property tax base, so that the people in Thunder Bay–Atikokan and all the municipalities that I represent and all municipalities around the province had embedded in their residential property tax bases the responsibility for the delivery of services that had heretofore been a provincial responsibility. That was valued at billions of dollars off-loaded from the books of the province of Ontario, and yet we still came in with a \$5.5-billion deficit. That’s one of the things that they did.

Another one of the things that they did: They sold a piece of highway—was it the 407?

Mr. Vic Dhillon: The 407.

Mr. Bill Mauro: I'm not familiar with the highways in southern Ontario.

The 407: I'm told that that highway, when it was sold by the outgoing Conservatives, was valued at \$11 billion, \$10 billion, \$8 billion, \$12 billion—who knows? It was valued at \$8 billion to \$12 billion. They sold it. What came into the treasury, on a 99-year lease of privatization—we went to court to try to get the tolls reduced for the people, the drivers in southern Ontario. We weren't successful. For the treasury, that yielded \$3 billion.

So my point is simply this—we could talk about that for an hour. My point is simply this: That \$3 billion came into the treasury—what year did they sell the 407? I don't know.

Mr. Vic Dhillon: In 2002.

Mr. Bill Mauro: In 2002. So the \$5.5 billion we found ourselves with would have been \$8.5 billion had that highway not been sold. If we were able to actually capture the costs of the downloaded services into the municipal residential property tax base, the deficit that we would have been left, as the incoming Liberal government, would have been \$10 billion, \$11 billion, \$12 billion a year at a time when the economy of Ontario, of Canada, of the United States, our biggest trading partner, was red-hot. You know, this has taken up almost eight minutes of my time, but I always love to tell that little story.

I would say only one more thing on the deficit. If you think it only happened in Ontario, you don't have to look any further than our federal Conservative cousins who, when they came in—

Interjection.

Mr. Bill Mauro: Their federal Conservative cousins. Thank you.

When they came in—remembering that this was the reformed Conservative group that came in in 2006—they were left with a \$13-billion surplus by the outgoing Liberal government of Paul Martin. A \$13-billion surplus in 2006, and today the deficit number federally is somewhere in the magnitude of about \$26 billion. I'm not sure. Their number seems to keep changing.

If people are interested in the deficit, I ask them simply: If it's the Conservatives who can manage your books for you, what happened at the federal level? When they're trying to tell you that this only occurred in Ontario—I know that the people of Thunder Bay–Atikokan and the riding that I represent, and I think most people across the province of Ontario, understand very clearly that we went through a very difficult economic circumstance in Ontario, as did the rest of the provinces, and the suggestion—the absolute suggestion—that we were the only jurisdiction to be dealing with these challenges is, quite frankly, ridiculous. I think most people understand that. I do believe that most people were pleased with where we landed.

Speaker, I see you looking at the clock. Are you looking for me to—

Interjection.

Mr. Bill Mauro: And I will continue about 3:30 or 4 o'clock today. All right. Thank you, Speaker.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much. It being 10:15 of the clock, this House stands in recess until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Bill Walker: I don't believe they're here yet, but they will be. They're en route: a high school from my area, OSCVI from Owen Sound. Michael Harris is the teacher, and Michael used to be a staffer here at Queen's Park. We welcome them to Queen's Park for the day.

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I would like to welcome to the Legislature Julie Pontarollo, who is the mom of page Jessica Pontarollo from the great riding of York South–Weston. She is in the gallery this morning, and I would like to welcome her to Queen's Park.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It's my pleasure this morning to introduce to the Legislative Assembly two members from our great riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex—namely, the other part of Essex, which is Leamington. I'd like to introduce Tony Vidal and, of course, Jeremy Pilon. They're here with us today.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I'd ask the House to join me in welcoming one of my constituents, Ms. Susan Colbert Wright.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further introductions of guests?

I would like to make a comment about the individual who has decided that whistling is something we should be hearing in the House, and I'd ask them to stop.

On behalf of the member from Davenport and on behalf of Simon LiVolsi, the page—his dad, Roberto, is here, and we welcome him to Queen's Park today.

A group from Brantford is visiting question period and the Legislature from Branlyn Community School in Brantford. Grade 5 teacher John Tipper and his class are here to visit Parliament. We welcome them.

Finally, in the Speaker's gallery today we have a group from the Ontario Real Estate Association, Brant-Brantford: President John Oddi is here, along with his delegation—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm absolutely sure that the Minister of Rural Affairs—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm absolutely sure that the Minister of Rural Affairs would allow me to do my introduction.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Okay. Shall we try again? Thank you.

In the Speaker's gallery today—that makes me feel much better, to use my inside voice—is the president of the Brant-Brantford Ontario Real Estate Association, John Oddi, along with his delegation, and the chair of the

government relations committee from OREA, Richard Leroux, is here. We welcome them for visiting us today.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Now that I do have your undivided attention, I'd like to introduce you to this session's pages, if they would assemble, please.

From Scarborough–Rouge River, Lamiha Abdullah; from York–Simcoe, Farzan Farnaghi; from Mississauga South, Melanie Forbes; from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, Andréa Franche; from Ottawa Centre, Laura Halpenny; from Oak Ridges–Markham, Alex Hu; from Sarnia–Lambton, Hannah Lacey; from Kitchener–Waterloo, Jeffrey Zihong Lin; from Davenport, Simon LiVolsi; from Simcoe–Grey, Christine Majer; from Etobicoke Centre, Edgar Martinez Chavez; from Toronto Centre, Hooriya Masood; from Mississauga–Erindale, Sean Mathew; from Halton, Jack Mogus; from Burlington, Eric Orosz; from Perth–Wellington, Vanessa Ortelli; from Ajax–Pickering, Carlo Miguel Padilla; from York South–Weston, Jessica Pontarollo; from Don Valley West, Michael Sambasivam; from Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale, Jakob Walter; and from Richmond Hill, Jimmy Yan.

These are your pages for this session of the assembly. It is now time for our question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

TAXATION

Mrs. Christine Elliott: My question is to the Premier. The release of the Metrolinx report yesterday opened up a whole new realm of taxes and fees for Ontario's taxpayers. You may call them revenue tools, but a tax is a tax. These taxes will cost the average family \$1,000 per year. Low-income students who don't even drive will get taxed \$140 a year, and seniors on fixed incomes will be taxed \$120 a year.

Premier, why don't you do the hard work of combing through your budget to find \$2 billion worth of savings before you go to your automatic default provision and hit Ontario families, seniors and students with yet another tax?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: To paraphrase my colleague the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, congestion is congestion is congestion. The reality is that we are going to have to deal with the congestion in the greater Toronto–Hamilton area. The reason we're going to have to deal with that is that for decades, there has not been the work done that should have been done. That's the reality. We are playing catch-up.

There are projects that were started. There was a line that was to be built along Eglinton. The hole was dug; the hole was filled in by the previous government. If that subway had been built, it would be running today—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm going to start right off. Normally I have to deal with—stop the clock for a moment. Normally I have to deal with the opposition while the Premier is speaking. Now I'm dealing with members of her own cabinet and her own side heckling while she's trying to answer. That doesn't change anything. It doesn't change anything. I'm asking for some spiral up instead of down. So if those people who want to heckle—they'd better be in their seat, so that I can tell them to stop heckling. I think somebody has got my message.

Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. To respond, the point I'm making is that there has been a neglect of this file for many years. When we came into office in 2003, we started building transit. We need to keep going. That's why we need an investment strategy.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Christine Elliott: The reality is, your government managed to find \$2 billion to pay connected eHealth consultants. You found another billion dollars to cancel two gas plants. Heck, you even found a couple of million dollars to buy Chris Mazza a speedboat.

Premier, based on your government's track record, surely you can find \$2 billion if you do the hard work of combing through the budget, if transit is truly one of your government's priorities.

1040

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Let's talk about what we actually need to do here. This is a \$50-billion plan. It's over a couple of decades in the future. We need to continue the building that is going on right now in the GTHA and we need to build out to that broader plan.

This is an annual investment that needs to be made, and the reality is that that kind of commitment has not been made in this province. We need now to recognize that our economic growth and our economic stability, quite frankly, are at stake, because every year we're losing billions of dollars in productivity by not having that transit in place.

We need to work on people's quality of life. We need to recognize that building transit affects people's daily lives, and that's why we need to make these investments.

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

Mrs. Christine Elliott: Well, Premier, this is ultimately about your government's priorities. Over the last 10 years, you have consistently spent money on your partisan priorities and not those of the average Ontarian. Your government does not have a revenue problem; you've got a management problem.

It's time to do right by Ontarians. Show some leadership. Will you promise us and the people of Ontario today in this Legislature that you will not implement these new taxes, and you will do your job and find \$2 billion annually from the existing budget going forward?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: This most certainly is about our priorities, and I am very proud of our priorities.

Our priorities are and have been to make sure that we deliver the services that people need every single day. Our priorities are making sure that we have the teachers in our schools that kids need; making sure that we have the doctors, the nurses, the nurse practitioners and the midwives that people need in their lives; and making sure that the infrastructure that has been neglected in this province for decades is built. I am proud of those priorities.

The reality is that this province has needed a dedicated plan for building transit and repairing and building infrastructure for years. They haven't had it. We're going to put it in place and we're going to provide that infrastructure that's needed in the future for the children and grandchildren in this province.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Premier. In looking through the gas plant scandal treasury board documents last week, it would appear that your white-out team missed a few gems. In the House leader's—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Carry on, please.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Thank you, Speaker.

In the House leader's notes for last year's budget meeting to buy the support of the NDP, the last sentence reads, "The proposals should be enough to avoid an election." That's your government's sole mission: to stay in power at all costs.

Premier, how can you find a billion dollars to buy NDP support, a billion dollars to cancel gas plants, a billion dollars to subsidize hydro bills and a billion dollars for eHealth consultants, but you can't find a billion dollars to build new subways and highways?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: We have found billions of dollars to invest in subways, in transit, in light rail and in roads and bridges across the GTHA and across the province. Every single year, we have invested billions of dollars in infrastructure.

Let me just be clear in terms of the work that we have done around the relocation of the gas plants and why I believe that being open and transparent is exactly what was necessary. And working in collaboration with the people in the Legislature—I ran my leadership on that. The notion that, somehow, working in collaboration with the opposition and working to put forward a budget that would allow us to continue to govern in a minority Parliament and continue to work with the folks across the floor—I think that's our responsibility.

It is what I said when I ran in the leadership. It is what we've been doing. We're going to continue to work with you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Premier, for the cost of your gas plant scandal, which your own treasury board says will reach close to a billion dollars, you could have built the entire length of the Eglinton crosstown; or you could

have paid for 40 kilometres of dedicated bus rapid transit, connecting Burlington, Oakville and Mississauga with a BRT direct to Kipling.

In your \$127-billion budget, if you found just 2% of savings across the entire government, you would have \$2.5 billion a year. That's your \$2 billion for your Big Move and \$500 million left over to pay down debt.

Premier, we don't have a revenue problem in Ontario; you have a spending problem. Why do Liberals always default to new taxes to solve Ontario's problems?

Interjections.

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

The member from Renfrew: nice and easy.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm talking to you. Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It's an interesting line of questioning because the same line of questioning is used when the members opposite talk about investment in education. The same line of questioning is used when the members opposite ask about investment in health care, because the reality is that they would cut those services across the board.

We have been working very hard to constrain costs. We know that eliminating the deficit is extremely important. We're on track to do that by 2017-18.

In the interim, we cannot ignore the reality that if we are going to have the economic growth that we need, if we're going to be able to take our place in the global economy, we've got to invest in infrastructure, particularly in the GTHA, because we're losing productivity because of the lack of infrastructure. Making those investments in transit is the economically sound thing to do.

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: London Economics International, a globally respected independent economic consultancy, said that your feed-in tariff program and green energy subsidies will cost \$46 billion. In other words, it's roughly the cost of the entire Big Move, yet it hasn't increased green energy production one bit.

How do you explain to Scarborough residents that you now need even more money from them, yet they still won't get subways? How do you explain to the people elsewhere in the GTHA that their energy bills will continue to skyrocket, their gas bills will go up, their HST will go up, all because of Liberal mismanagement?

Premier, on a personal note, how can you explain to the residents of northern Ontario that you can't afford Ontario Northland? Premier, how can Ontarians trust you with even one more nickel of their money?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: There was a lot in that question. I wouldn't know who to refer it to even if I was choosing to, so I will answer the question, Mr. Speaker.

I just want to speak to the issue of Ontario Northland because I want the people of North Bay and the people of northeastern Ontario to know that Minister Gravelle is working very hard to bring those northeastern voices into

the discussion around Ontario Northland. He has made a commitment that the advisory panel will look at what the options are and make sound decisions on that issue. I think that it's very good to have a question from the member opposite on the issue because it's important to me that we have a rational transportation plan for northern Ontario, northeastern and northwestern Ontario.

We need to invest in transit in the GTHA. There is no question about that. The members opposite are working to undermine that reality—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Okay, we'll start. The member from Halton is warned, and the member from Renfrew. Is that enough?

Interjection.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: All the questions so far from the members opposite have not acknowledged the reality that we need to build transit in the GTHA. We have to do that. There's really no debate about that, and we're working our level best to find a way to make those investments.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. New Democrats have been working hard to make life more affordable for people by giving FSCO a mandate to lower auto insurance rates by 15%.

Would the Premier agree that raising insurance rates by 30% before lowering them is not a measure that will make life more affordable for drivers in this province?

1050

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: You know, we need to get the budget passed. There's no doubt about that, because we have said in the budget that we are going to work to reduce auto insurance premiums by 15%. We said we want to get on that right away. The reality is that until we get the budget passed, we can't implement the budget; I look forward to the debate on the budget, I look forward to moving ahead and being able to implement it.

A part of that is helping people in their day-to-day lives, and one aspect of that is lowering those insurance premiums. We want to get the budget through the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Susan Wright is a driver from Bramalea, and she just got her notice that her auto insurance premiums are going up by more than 30%. Her driving record has not changed. She hasn't had sudden accidents or claims on her insurance policy. She's one of several people who have contacted us about premiums that suddenly seem to be rising—

Interjection.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: —just as the government was finally forced to take some action—

Interjection.

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

Please put the question.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Can the Premier explain to drivers like Susan why her government, right now, is approving massive increases at the same time as they're promising to provide a cut in rates?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Let's be clear: Rates have actually reduced by 0.3% year over year, since last year. What we're doing right now is we're asking FSCO to take controls and measures appropriately to ensure that rates do not go up.

The member opposite makes reference to a specific case, and I don't know the particulars of that individual, but I do know this: We need to get this budget passed. We need to ensure that we give FSCO the powers necessary. We need to provide legislation and provide the oversight that we all agree on, in order that we can reduce rates and in order that we also go after the root causes of the fraud that's also there. We're working toward that. We've taken the measures over the last two years to reduce some of that fraud. It has translated into certain reductions of some of the auto rates.

More needs to be done. I agree with the member opposite: We cannot allow rates to go up at this time. Let's get this budget passed.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Let's be clear: What needs to be done is that this government needs to tell the auto insurance industry that they can't put rates up. That's what needs to be done.

Families are justifiably skeptical. They have heard government promises to cut auto insurance premiums by 15%. At the same time—right now, Speaker—drivers are getting 30% increases on their renewals.

New Democrats want to make sure that good drivers pay less next year than they're paying today. Will the government commit to protecting drivers like Susan from increases before the decreases?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Of course we're committed; we put it in the budget. We made it clear that that's exactly what we want to do. We've already assessed the fact that rates have gone down on average, not up—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): If I have to go to the individuals immediately and do so, I've done it, and I will do it again. It is too much.

Answer, please.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Some of the measures that we're asking for are to appoint a review for any dispute resolutions, as the member opposite just made reference to. We want to continue in the definitions of certain impairments. We've already started discussions with a number of initiatives and stakeholders around the province. We want to make certain that claims are reviewed. It's part of our budget; it's part of our request.

We also know that, in our discussions with those insurance companies, we've been very direct in telling them to maintain the rates at what they are. They've actually been lowered, on average, by 0.3%.

We need to get this budget passed. We need to work together. Let's not make reference to one individual case that we don't know the particulars of. It's unfair for the member opposite to—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Thank you; that's enough. New question.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is to the Premier. New Democrats have been very clear: We don't think it's fair to ask families to pay new tolls and taxes at the same time as the government is opening new tax loopholes for corporations.

I asked the Premier about whether she would work with Ottawa to close her new corporate tax loophole. Yesterday, the Minister of Finance said, "We've had this discussion, and we're continuing to do so." What's the status of that discussion?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the Minister of Finance will want to speak to the specifics of that contact with Ottawa. I think that the leader of the third party knows that we do not have full control over those mechanisms, which is why we have to work with Ottawa. That's why the letter has been written. I'll let the finance minister speak to those specifics.

But at the root of this question, again, is a question about whether the third party supports the building of transit in the GTHA. It seems to me that the members in that party understand very well how critical that infrastructure is to the economy of this region and also understand very well that the quality of life of the people who live in the GTHA—the moms who are trying to get their kids to school, to daycare and back home again, and the dads who are driving on the highway: They know that there needs to be a responsibility taken by government to make those investments. I hope the third party will work with us.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, what we understand very well over here is that the Premier is planning to open a brand new corporate tax loophole that will ensure that corporations can write the HST off on gasoline and other items. But on the other hand, she's musing about making families pay a new gasoline tax. Does the Premier think that's fair: that families should pay more and corporations should pay less yet again?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I really have to just say that we have said many, many times in this Legislature, both I and the Minister of Finance, that the characterization of that relationship on the tax regime with the federal government is just not accurate. The fact is, Mr. Speaker, we have written to the federal government. We have said that we would like to extend the situation as it exists now. It is not a new loophole. It's not a loophole.

It's something that was negotiated with the federal government when we changed the tax system. We will continue to work with the federal government on this.

But I think the question that we do have to grapple with is, is the third party going to support the investment in transit in the GTHA? We know it's needed for people in their day-to-day lives. We know it's necessary for the economy. We need their support on that investment.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Let's be clear about what this looks like. The Premier's new corporate tax loophole will make sure that if two cars roll up at the pump at the same time, the executive in the company car won't have to pay the HST, and the mom with the kids in the minivan will.

In fact, if the Premier goes forward with the gas tax, it means that the mom in the minivan is going to be paying more and more and more. The Premier is ready to ask families to pay more while she tells corporations to pay less. Does she really think that that's a balanced approach?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: As the member opposite asked, let's be clear. And let us be clear: You're talking about restricted input tax credits. It's not a loophole, it's not a tax break, it's not a tax giveaway, and it's not new. We have written the Minister of Finance federally to extend that exception, as we all agree, in order for us to continue meeting our balance and in order for us to do what's necessary to protect the interest of our taxpayers. We agree that we want to have these extended, but we also recognize that it has to be in tandem with the federal government.

What's happening is, if they get a tax rebate—in 2017-18, because they're all relative to other different issues: It's not just vehicles, meals and entertainment; it's also telecommunications, and it's also in regard to energy. So all of this is coming up. We're asking them to have them extended. It's not a tax loophole.

TRANSIT FUNDING

Mr. Frank Klees: My question is to the Premier. It took five years for Metrolinx to deliver a funding proposal for its transit plan. The best that they could do is to come up with a proposal to add \$2 billion in taxes on to the backs of Ontario taxpayers. We reject that proposal. Ontario families and businesses reject that proposal. Even the New Democrats reject that proposal. The Premier tells us she wants to have a conversation about adding \$2 billion of taxes to Ontario families and businesses.

Here is our proposal: While the Premier is having her conversation, will she agree to a select committee of this Legislature that has a mandate to find \$2 billion of savings out of the waste and inefficiency that is rampant throughout this government?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please, and come to order. Start the clock.

Premier?

1100

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: It's an interesting question that's being asked from a member who—I could go through numerous decisions of the party opposite in power: the \$7-billion loss on the fire sale of the 407; the \$8 billion in stranded debt. There's \$15 billion that just comes to me like that. You guys majored in wasting money on a scale unprecedented by anybody who ever sat on this side of the House. We need no lessons from the members opposite on multi-billion-dollar disasters. We couldn't hold a candle to them if we tried.

Their record on transit and their neglect of it is legendary across North America. When they were in power you could not find a subnational government that so abandoned transit, which is so critical to young people and our jobs. They froze funding for GO transit, and the line-ups all along the Lakeshore line were legendary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: So much for a non-partisan approach to solving this problem.

Speaker, the budget—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order, please. Trying to understand the psychology of the situation, this is where I get the emails that often tell me, “Why don't you just throw the bums out?” And having the armchair quarterbacks advising me on how to do that—I'm not taking your advice because I honestly believe we can race to the top.

Finish your question, please.

Mr. Frank Klees: I find the government's reaction to that comment very passing strange. It's the Premier who made the suggestion that we should be approaching this on a non-partisan basis. The budget of this government is \$127 billion. The waste is rampant; we all know that. One year it's eHealth. The next year it's Ornge. The year after, it's gas plants. We know—all of us in this place on all three sides of the House know—there is a great deal of inefficiency and waste.

I'm going to repeat my question to the Premier, not the Minister of Transportation. Will she agree to strike a select committee of this House with a mandate to find the waste and inefficiency of \$2 billion so that we can fund transit?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: If the party opposite and some of the members opposite who sat at the cabinet table can point, in their almost decade in power, to one single transit project they invested in, I will do a wave and clap for them, but they can't.

What we can point to is their brilliant record, which was to take bulldozers and fill in the Eglinton crosstown line and subway. That was their transit record. This is a party that most singlehandedly in government is responsible for the transit crisis we face today. No party in this Legislature has a worse record.

While the business community is begging the party opposite to engage in this conversation because of the \$6 billion they are losing—

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

CANCER TREATMENT

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée. Yesterday, we heard from Dr. Jake Thiessen, the expert investigating the diluted chemo drugs. Dr. Thiessen talked about the fact that the outsourcing of drugs for use in hospitals has exploded in recent years, and he noted the lack of oversight and said he was worried. My question is simple: Is the minister worried about this contracting out of hospital drug preparation?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: What's vitally important is that we have the highest quality of drugs for all of our patients, and I think we would all agree that cancer patients in particular need to have the confidence that they are getting the drugs that have been prescribed for them, Speaker.

I am delighted that Dr. Thiessen has taken on this challenge to give us advice on the entire cancer drug supply chain. I think members of committee heard yesterday that he's taking that responsibility very, very seriously. He will be reporting back to us in coming weeks, and I look forward to seeing his report.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Well, Speaker, Dr. Thiessen said that in the past he wouldn't have been worried about the preparation of these drugs because most of this was being done in our hospitals, in a highly regulated environment. But as the for-profit industry exploded in Ontario, the needed oversight has not been provided by the Ministry of Health. Hospitals have been encouraged to move services out, to contract out, often to the for-profit industry, but this changes has not been properly done. Will the minister take her responsibility seriously and provide the comprehensive oversight that is her responsibility?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Absolutely. That oversight is essential. That is exactly why I have asked Dr. Thiessen to give us advice on how to ensure the safety of our cancer drugs, Speaker. I think he is a highly qualified person; I know he is a highly qualified person. He is doing his job thoroughly. I do not want to prejudge his findings. I think it's very important that we give him the time he needs to give us a thorough report, and then we will act on that.

TRANSIT FUNDING

Mr. Vic Dhillon: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Yesterday Metrolinx, the agency tasked with planning transit expansion in the GTHA, came out with their long-awaited investment strategy report. This report outlined their recommendations on how to pay for transit, and it also talked about the immense cost of congestion and gridlock to Ontarians. Many of my constituents in Brampton West can spend many hours in traffic

or on transit each day. I must say that many of them are very pleased to hear that building public transit is a priority for our government. We can all agree that there is a distinct need to reduce gridlock, improve air quality and build strong communities. Minister, please tell us why it's so important for us to move forward and invest in transit projects in the GTHA now.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I want to thank the member and our friends from Peel region for their support on this. Mr. Speaker, this is critical. I just want to stop and pause here and give a bit of reality on where we're going. We spend less per capita than any other province in Canada, so we have a lower envelope already for all of our basic services. No other jurisdiction—not British Columbia, not Alberta, not Quebec, not California, not Oregon, not Massachusetts—no one has built transit without raising some of these revenues. It has never happened. People who tell you that you can build a major regional transportation system without additional revenue are fibbing. And that's a polite word for it; my mother is probably watching.

If we don't do this, the business community alone and our residents will lose \$2.7 billion a year. That's the loss of summer jobs for their kids, it's lower household income, it's time away from families, and it's the impossibility of getting a job because if you don't—

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: —there's no bus to take you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Vic Dhillon: Thank you, Minister, for sharing some of the facts on the cost of gridlock to our economy.

The Metrolinx report recommended several revenue tools that should be used to fund new public transit expansion. Even though the cost of gridlock is estimated to be so high, and our transit system is in need of a dramatic expansion, some of my constituents want to know how some of the proposals might affect them. Now that the report by Metrolinx has been presented to the government, could the minister please tell us what the government's next steps are?

1110

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I was talking with my colleague Minister Jeffrey. It took her two hours and 15 minutes to get to work from Brampton today. We are the party in this House that thinks that's unacceptable. Her son Ryan would like to spend more time with his mom. She already is committed to a public life, which is taxing enough.

Minister Jeffrey's situation isn't any different. When I'm out in Oshawa and Ajax and Pickering, the chamber of commerce, the residents' association and the regional municipal politicians are saying, "Get this built."

We will make sure that we take as little additional revenue as absolutely possible. We are also understanding that the costs—that that \$6 billion is taxing Ontario families, and that's real money that they know is missing in opportunities and lower household income.

This government stands with the people of the GTHA to improve their quality of life, to let their moms spend—

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

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Mr. Jeff Yurek: My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Minister, in response to my question yesterday over the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre, you announced you wanted to explore the possibility of creating local oversight boards at our jails. While I always welcome increased accountability, I also welcomed your 12-point action plan last August because you said it would solve the problems at EMDC. Almost a year later, the violence continues to escalate, threatening the safety of our correctional officers. Now you're saying, "Well, we actually need a local board that will oversee the implementation of such plans."

Minister, you have hundreds of ministry staff, dozens of managers at facilities province-wide and nearly 150 correctional officers at EMDC alone. How many more people do you need to do your job?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: I want to thank the member from Elgin-Middlesex-London for his comments, but his comments are not very appropriate. As I have said, the safety of our correctional officers and our inmates is my top priority.

In Elgin-Middlesex, we have always sent our best manager there. It's a difficult situation right now, and we are working very hard with the management there, with the union and with the correctional officers to improve the situation. We just implemented 24-hour nursing, and we have also just approved 11 new correctional officers. On this side of the House, I want to make sure the situation improves at Elgin-Middlesex correctional facility.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Minister, my comments are always appropriate when I'm standing up for my constituents.

At the end of the day, the buck does stop with you. Unfortunately, with the closure of the Bluewater, Owen Sound and Walkerton jails, overcrowding continues to put a strain on EMDC. When addressing these problems, you waited until receiving multiple lawsuits from inmates and pressure from myself and others to devise your 12-point action plan. You assured us it would work and restore safety to the jail. Then, after a year that included a near-riot, a fire and regular weekend lockdowns, you announced yesterday another plan to supposedly add more oversight. You keep tossing forward promises and back-of-the-envelope plans while maintaining that overcrowding is not the issue.

Minister, do you now regret closing the Bluewater, Owen Sound and Walkerton facilities?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: Mr. Speaker, on this side of the House, we wanted to improve the situation in our correctional facilities and to close institutions that were built before Confederation. I'm not going to apologize for that.

We are working with the membership there to improve the situation, but one question that I need answered is, who is not doing his job when there are drugs going into the facility? Who is not doing his job when there is a knife going into the facility? That's something that I want answered and answered soon.

In the meantime, we are looking at appointing a new board that will help us to improve the situation there and to have also better communication with both the union and the community. Let's hope that we will see a major improvement soon in that facility.

ONTARIO LOTTERY AND GAMING CORP.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My question is to the Premier. Premier, it's clear that your government's OLG privatization plan is in chaos. You've fired the president and CEO of the OLG, Paul Godfrey, and the entire board of directors has subsequently resigned, yet you say that it's full steam ahead on this wrong-headed privatization scheme. Will the government admit that its OLG privatization strategy is a total mess and scrap this misguided plan once and for all?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I appreciate the question. What we're in the process of doing right now is, there is an interim chair and board in place. We have said quite clearly that there are aspects of the modernization strategy that need to go ahead—we want to have them go ahead—but there are some issues that we really feel need more focus.

One was the integration of the horse racing industry into the whole strategy—that was a point of divergence between us and the former chair of the board—and the issues around the fairness across the province. It was very important to us that whatever formula, whatever strategy was put in place, was even-handed in terms of its treatment of communities across the province. So those are issues that the new board will be working on. We all recognize that there have to be changes in terms of the OLG and a modernization process, but we want those two principles to be in place.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It's time for this government to admit that it has a gambling problem: It's addicted to the revenues that it thinks will pour in from privatizing the OLG. But the government should know that the first step in addressing this failure is admitting that you have a problem in the first place. The fact is that it's very unlikely that the projected revenues will ever materialize. Will this government finally admit that it has a problem and scrap this misguided privatization plan once and for all?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It is interesting, that question coming from the party that brought casinos to the province of Ontario. In terms of that revenue stream, the reality is that that revenue stream is part of the revenue that goes into the provincial treasury to pay for schools and hospitals, and it's very important money. We recognize that, but we have to make sure that the industry

functions responsibly and functions in a way that is consistent with the principles that we hold.

I have been very clear that having the horse racing industry as part of the gaming strategy, I think, is going to lead to a more sustainable horse racing industry across the province. That was the recommendation of the transition panel, and that is the recommendation that we are going to be operating on. So we need leadership at the OLG that is going to implement that part of the strategy. I look forward to that work.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Bill Mauro: Speaker, my question, through you, is to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment. Minister, our government recently tabled its 2013 budget, a budget about creating jobs and helping people in their everyday lives. We've put together a strong plan to help people across the province, and this plan will create jobs and give all Ontarians the chance they need to succeed.

One of the key elements in our plan is to work with businesses to expand markets for Ontario goods and services beyond the borders of our province so that Ontario businesses can access high-growth markets so that they can go global.

Could the minister please inform this House what this government is doing to expand its global economic presence and strengthen Ontario's capacity for innovation and job creation right here at home?

1120

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I thank the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan for his question. I'm pleased to inform the House of a recent announcement our government has made to support innovative businesses and capitalize on emerging opportunities within the global economy.

Last week, I visited the riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex to announce support from the Ontario government's Southwestern Ontario Development Fund. Mr. Speaker, I was looking forward to standing side by side with the local member, the MPP from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex. I invited him to the announcement, and I was, as I mentioned, looking forward to standing side by side, but I was forced to make this announcement on my own.

This investment has helped to attract an investment of nearly \$3.5 million from Armo Tool, a company specializing in advanced manufacturing. This investment will enable Armo to expand its exports by a third. It will help create and retain 139 jobs.

It's investments like these that generate the kind of growth that helps us compete, not only in the short term, but in the long term.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Bill Mauro: Minister, thank you for that response. It's good to hear that our government's plan to help create jobs while promoting Ontario on the global stage is working.

While it's good to see that the manufacturing sector is developing and that there are many new technologies, we need to make sure Ontario has a competitive edge with

these new technologies so that we can compete in the global marketplace.

Speaker, through you to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment, could the minister please tell the House how Ontario is helping these new technologies thrive and gain that competitive edge in the global marketplace?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Well, it is true: Ontario needs to help businesses compete on the global stage. In fact, I'd say we have a responsibility as a government to do this. That's why one of my ministry's efforts is on the water sector market, which is a global market that is growing at a very, very rapid pace. Water shortage is becoming—it already is—a global issue due to increasing population, economic growth and climate change. Ontario, we all know, is blessed with incredible freshwater resources, so we have a strong competitive advantage in the burgeoning blue economy.

Last week, I visited with the team at Anderson Water Systems and with Minister McMeekin in his riding of Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale. We announced a funding partnership that will contribute to Ontario's blue economy and help Anderson Water Systems to expand their water treatment facilities, allowing them to expand their exports all over the world.

Mr. Speaker, our support for Anderson Water Systems is just another testament to our government's commitment to a sustainable and prosperous economy.

APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Mr. Monte McNaughton: My question is for the Premier. Premier, yesterday I brought to your attention that you have put 25,000 contact call centre jobs at risk across Ontario due to your rushed decision to cancel the apprenticeship tax credit. This Liberal-NDP budget decision will kill thousands of jobs without any consultation.

Premier, yesterday I spoke with Alliance iCommunications in downtown London. Sadly, with this decision, Alliance is being forced to consider relocating their business and their 300 jobs to the United States. With 600,000 men and women out of work, why are you and the NDP so determined to drive businesses and jobs out of Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Thank you, again, for the question from across the way. We recognize how important it is to have the Apprenticeship Training Tax Credit in the past to promote those initiatives, which will stimulate employment and enable those apprentices to have full-time jobs. The fact is, it's not happening with regard to call centres.

However, call centres are still eligible for other provincial apprenticeship trade programs. Employers of call centre apprentices are eligible to up to \$1,000 bonuses for each apprentice who receives and completes their training and receives their certification.

We've also introduced, in our budget, \$195 million for a youth employment fund to enable those companies to

hire some of our young people, to provide those skills and enable them to have full-time employment as well.

We want to work, and I believe the members across are also supportive of recommendations made by Drummond. This is one of them. He's recognized that some of these investment tax credits are not doing their full extent. We want to do the right thing. We want to employ people. We want to stimulate that growth.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Back to the Premier: Premier, North Bay has an 11.3% unemployment rate, and you are putting up to 800 jobs at risk there. London has a 10% unemployment rate, the highest of the big cities in Canada. You are putting thousands of jobs at risk in London at places like Alliance iCommunications. Windsor has a 9.3% unemployment rate—a little better than London, but still failing badly under the McGuinty-Wynne-Horwath government, and you're putting good jobs at risk there too.

Premier, was the decision to kill the apprenticeship tax credit and risk up to 25,000 important jobs your decision, or was it forced upon you by your NDP puppet masters?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Before I go to the answer, I'm going to ask the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek to come together. If there's a continuation of the dialogue, I'm going to ask you to look up the old British way of saying, "Take it outside."

Hon. Charles Sousa: The member opposite also should be aware that we highlighted these initiatives in the 2012 budget. We recognized and asked those very companies to come forward with more advancements and to be more productive in terms of supporting those employees.

We also want to make reference to the fact that these tax credits existed—came into being—prior to us making substantive tax reductions for corporates, making tax reforms to make them even more competitive. We want to ensure that the environment in which these businesses operate is a competitive environment but also is to the benefit of those employees and those individuals.

We want these companies to stay in Ontario; we want these companies to provide and to serve. But we want the people who are being employed to get the benefit of why we're investing in them, and that's not occurring at this point, so we want to take the proper steps going forward.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. The MPP for London–Fanshawe wrote a letter to the Premier's Minister of Correctional Services three weeks ago, asking her to provide a progress report about dangerous conditions at the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre. Instead of progress, we learned that another correctional services officer was attacked—in fact, stabbed in the head—over the weekend at the EMDC. To this day, the minister has still not responded to the letter that was sent by the member for London–Fanshawe.

Will the Premier take real and immediate action to protect the lives of workers and inmates in Ontario jails immediately?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: In my ministry, we answer all letters in a most speedy way. I don't know—I'm not aware of when this letter was sent, but I'll make sure that we answer the letter.

As I said previously, the health and safety of both our correctional officers and our inmates are my priority. I've been working very diligently with my deputy minister and the ministry staff to improve the situation there. We have developed a 12-point plan, and we are in the process of putting it into action. Also, we have now the 24-hour nursing, as it was required, which is good progress. We have approved the hiring of 11 new correctional officers.

In the supplementary, I'll go on to express what we're doing.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, the letter was sent three weeks ago, Speaker. Perhaps if it was speedily dealt with, this injury could have been avoided this past weekend.

The Elgin-Middlesex jail is just the tip of the iceberg, unfortunately. In the last three days, four correctional officers have been stabbed in jails in Ontario: two in Niagara; one in Maplehurst, in Milton; and one in London.

Dangerous conditions in jails across the province continue to endanger the lives of workers and inmates, yet your minister cannot find the time to take action to actually correct the problems.

Interjections.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: There seems to be some giggling on the other side, Speaker. It's quite disconcerting.

Premier, will you take action immediately to secure Ontario jails for the safety of the workers and the inmates who are there?

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur: We have improved the situation there. I know that these incidents are unfortunate, and it's unfortunate when a correctional officer is being attacked and hurt. We take it very, very seriously.

But the question remains—I'm told that they have improved the situation there by making sure that they do their rounds, that everybody who comes in is investigated to make sure that they don't have drugs, they don't have matches, they don't have lighters, they don't have knives. But the question remains, and I asked my staff to answer the question as to why this is happening, whose fault it is and who should make sure that this does not happen, to make sure that the other correctional officers are safe when they are working in the institution.

Interjection.

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

1130

ASSISTANCE TO FLOOD VICTIMS

Mr. Grant Crack: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. This spring has been

specifically devastating for many municipalities across the province that have experienced severe flooding. Homes and businesses have been damaged or destroyed in places such as Minden Hills, Markstay-Warren and Moosonee. This flooding has resulted in significant damage to municipal infrastructure, but has also meant that many Ontarians have lost their possessions and their homes.

Can the minister tell us what the government is doing to help the people of Ontario who have experienced flooding and may have lost their homes?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I want to thank the member for the question. This has been an extraordinarily difficult spring for a number of municipalities across Ontario, and I want to extend my condolences to those individuals who have lost possessions, their homes or their businesses during the flooding.

I want to recognize the hard work of the residents, staff and first responders in some of the affected communities: in Bracebridge, Huntsville, Bancroft, Kawartha Lakes, Minden Hills, South Algonquin, Markstay-Warren, Ramara and Moosonee. I want to offer them my heartfelt thanks for all of their hard work.

I've had the opportunity to meet with the mayor of Bracebridge and the mayor of Huntsville, and I've seen first-hand the devastating impact the flooding has had on their communities. That's why, last week, our government committed up to \$18 million through the Ontario Disaster Relief Assistance Program to help those affected communities across central, eastern and northern parts of Ontario. The money will help them clean up, repair their homes and small businesses and rebuild essential municipal infrastructure like bridges and roads.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you, Minister; it's good to hear that there is action being taken to help rebuild after these devastating floods.

When disasters like this happen, families are often caught off-guard, and they often lose many of their possessions, in addition to their homes. Families and individuals are in desperate need to replace essential items like clothing, shelter, food or medicine, some of the basic items that we take for granted but are essential items that every Ontarian needs to continue to live their lives.

Can the minister tell us if there are any new initiatives being taken to assist those who may have lost so much because of the recent flooding in their community?

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: I'd like to thank the member for the question because it's one that has been raised with me before. While committing the \$18 million to help communities rebuild, we've also been working hard to help those affected Ontarians recover from the disaster. Affected municipalities and their appointed disaster relief committees can give interim payments to residents of up to \$1,000 to help them begin the process of recovery.

Moreover, if an individual is in need of immediate financial need, they may be eligible to receive emergency assistance through Ontario Works. This emergency assistance gives individuals immediate financial assistance they need because of a crisis or an emergency situ-

ation such as flooding. The amount provided may include money for basic needs such as food, shelter or clothing.

I want to reassure all those affected that our government continues to work with our municipal partners to help residents in all the affected municipalities recover.

MANUFACTURING JOBS

Mr. Todd Smith: My question this morning is for the Premier. Premier, over the last decade, the Liberal government is responsible for chasing 300,000 manufacturing jobs out of the province. Your budget even shows that you've tried to make up for this loss by adding hundreds of thousands of public-sector jobs to the government payroll.

Now your government is threatening even more manufacturing jobs by trying to get rid of the industrial exception. I've heard loud and clear from manufacturers across the Quinte region that this is a serious concern for them—not just keeping jobs, but it's threatening the closure of these facilities as well.

Premier, will you get off the back of the manufacturers of the province and stop trying to make government the only growth industry in Ontario?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Attorney General.

Hon. John Gerretsen: I know that the member spoke to his chamber of commerce about this last week, so I appreciate the heads-up on the question.

As I've already indicated to the member from Dufferin–Peel—

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Caledon.

Hon. John Gerretsen:—Caledon, Dufferin–Caledon, a couple of weeks ago, I was not satisfied with the overall consultation that took place. We have therefore put the matter on hold. We are doing our own consultation within the ministry right now, dealing with the industrial exemptions that have been on the books since 1984, and we will be dealing with this issue before the first of September.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Todd Smith: The last thing the manufacturers in the Quinte area need is more consultation from this government. It's consultation that's going to lead to a strategy that's probably never going to be implemented. This government, with the help of their NDP farm team, is killing manufacturing across Ontario. A Trenton VP of a manufacturing facility wrote you and me, Minister, saying that currently they estimate the cost of doing business in Ontario is 30% higher than the rest of Canada. She estimates that if this exception, which, as you say, has been in place for almost 30 years—it will add another 30% or more to the cost of doing business.

Manufacturers need room to innovate. They need less red tape, not more. They need the competitive advantage that this exception gives Ontario.

Premier, either keep the industrial exception for the manufacturers in place or tell the workers that are working today that you're not interested in keeping jobs in Ontario.

Hon. John Gerretsen: I'll refer the matter to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I have to say, it continues to be disappointing that the official opposition—the only role that they take is to berate and beat down our manufacturers and our businesses that are working so hard across this province—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Prince Edward–Hastings will come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): If you carry on, you won't have a chance to say it. The Attorney General will come to order. The member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex will come to order. The Minister of Rural Affairs will come to order. The next ones are warnings or out.

Carry on, please.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have to say that when you look at the facts, we've created over 400,000 jobs since the bottom of the recession. For our manufacturers alone, April was one of the best months, and 9,000 new manufacturing jobs were created in this province. When you look back at the 400,000 jobs created, 97% of those jobs are full-time positions. More than half of them are in the private sector.

ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: My question is to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment. Eight years after the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act was passed, people with disabilities continue to be denied service at restaurants and stores in cities like Toronto and Windsor. Advocates fear the government is failing to properly implement and enforce the act. In fact, the law requires the minister appoint an independent review panel by May 31 to review implementation of the act and get Ontario back on schedule for full accessibility. Has he done that?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I thank the member opposite for this very relevant and important question. I know she is as proud as I am of the AODA, the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, that was passed in this Legislature in 2005. In fact, Ontario was one of the first jurisdictions, as she knows, in the world to actually go from a complaints-based regime to a more proactive regulatory regime. We reviewed, as was required under the legislation, several years ago—I think the report was presented in 2010. The reviewer at that time was Charles Beer. I'm happy, in the supplementary as well, to talk specifically about what his recommendations were and how we've moved on both those and the specific question that the member opposite asked.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I repeat: The minister is to appoint an independent review panel by May 31 and he has not done that. In effect, this government is breaking

its own law. It has in fact also promised to effectively enforce the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and it's not doing that, either. Companies with more than 20 employees are supposed to have reported their customer service policies to the ministry by now. But the minister won't say how many companies actually filed these mandatory reports.

Why is the minister refusing to provide this basic information and breaking the law by not setting up the independent review?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Well, as the member opposite has indicated, the AODA requires a review every three years. When reviewed back in 2010, again, Charles Beer, a very outstanding reviewer, actually recommended strongly that we delay the next review until the spring of 2014. Mr. Speaker, we're not going to do that. We've decided that this is important and that we're going to review this this year. We're in the process of determining the scope of that review, again, based on Charles Beer's recommendations in 2010. So we're actually moving faster than his recommendations to do this, to appoint a reviewer, to determine the scope.

I look forward to having an announcement in the very near future.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Simcoe–Grey on a point of order.

Mr. Jim Wilson: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: I'd ask all members to welcome Mr. Matthew Thornton, who's in the Speaker's gallery today. Matthew served all parties in this House as a former legislative page and is currently on the staff of the Ontario Real Estate Association. Welcome, Matthew.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Premier on a point of order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: If the Legislature would indulge me, I'd like to introduce the Ho family: dad Frederick and mom Lin Ho; daughters Larissa, Stephanie and Eliza; and son Mathias. Welcome to the Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Just before I turn to the member from Cambridge, I'll correct the record, because he was my intern, too. So he was an intern. Thank you.

The member from Cambridge.

Mr. Rob Leone: In keeping with the theme of these points of order, I recognize that Professor Hank Jaczek is here today with his graduate class from McMaster University, who are here to learn about government and politics in Ontario. I look forward to talking with him later today.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound on a point of order.

Mr. Bill Walker: Again, I did this earlier, but I'd like to recognize yet another Michael Harris who did work here at Queen's Park. He and his class are here from OSCVI.

ANNUAL REPORT, INFORMATION AND PRIVACY COMMISSIONER

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table the 2012 annual report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 o'clock this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1142 to 1500.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ONTARIO AGRI-FOOD EDUCATION INC.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I rise today to recognize Ontario Agri-Food Education, better known as OAFE.

Food literacy is not a new concept. OAFE evolved from government into a not-for-profit supported by commodity organizations in 1991, with the mission of building awareness and understanding of the importance of an agriculture and food system. OAFE provides high-quality agriculture- and food-related learning materials to Ontario teachers.

With the growing interest in healthy eating and local food, OAFE is here to ensure that the message of agri-food education is technically edgy and relevant, to stick out in the classrooms across the province. But it's going to take a culture shift, a shift that delivers food learning from the traditional classroom into grocery store classrooms, a shift that also combines the excitement of agricultural careers into every high school discussion about future jobs. As the premier learning connection between agriculture and education, OAFE is uniquely positioned to address these challenges. By educating students about food and farming, OAFE creates a deeper interest in and connection with food.

The member for Perth–Wellington and I are pleased to be joining executive director Colleen Smith, her team, dedicated teachers and ambassadors as OAFE will be kicking off the annual National Agriculture in the Classroom conference, which is hosted in Ontario this year and kicks off tonight.

OAFE paves the way, and now it's up to us to continue on this path. That is why I am proud of my colleague from Nepean–Carleton and my colleague from Oxford for putting forward an amendment to make food literacy mandatory.

PRABHDEEP SRAWN

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My prayers are with the friends and family of Prabhdeep Srawn of Brampton, who is currently missing in Australia. Prabhdeep is a Canadian Forces reservist and law student who disappeared more than two weeks ago in the remote backcountry of Australia's Snowy Mountains. Australian authorities have recently announced they're scaling back on search efforts and will cease completely in two days.

Prabhdeep has an increased chance of survival because of his extensive army training and experience in

hiking, but we must help him by utilizing whatever resources we have. Family and friends have organized a campaign to pressure the Canadian and Australian authorities to strengthen the search effort. An online petition urging the commitment of more resources to the search has garnered over 7,000 signatures as of Sunday night.

I thank our federal NDP counterparts and leader, Tom Mulcair, who wrote to Prime Minister Harper; as well as the foreign affairs critic Paul Dewar, who sent a letter to Minister John Baird; and all others who have urged our government to put pressure on Australia to deploy more resources towards the search. I want to urge our Premier and the leader of the official opposition to also reach out to their federal counterparts to add their voices to this request as well.

Prabhdeep proudly serves his country, being part of the Canadian Forces, and now he needs his country's help. I ask everyone to call your MP, requesting the Canadian government to continue to apply pressure on the Australian government to increase the scope and length of the search for Prabhdeep.

It's my hope that by applying international pressure, we can encourage the Australian military as well as the state emergency services to increase resources and intensify the search, to bring Prabhdeep home to his family safe and sound.

STREETSVILLE BREAD AND HONEY FESTIVAL

Mr. Bob Delaney: Volunteers and residents in Streetsville are ready for the 41st annual event that marks the start of summer in Mississauga: Streetsville's Bread and Honey Festival. This year's Bread and Honey will be celebrating a homecoming theme, a time for old friends to return to Streetsville and to make new friends.

I will have my booth at the Vic Johnston arena on Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., to talk local issues with western Mississauga residents and visitors.

Mayor McCallion, councillor George Carlson and I will be serving pancakes at the Rotary pancake breakfast on Sunday from 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the Vic Johnston arena hall.

There will be a talented lineup of live performers.

Councillor Carlson is hoping for good weather for his annual fishing derby on the banks of the Credit River this Sunday at 9 a.m.

Local arts and crafts will be offered for sale by artisans and businesses, both local and from across Ontario.

Throughout the Bread and Honey Festival, visitors can enjoy fresh slices of bread covered in sweet honey.

Come and enjoy the legendary Streetsville hospitality at the 2013 Bread and Honey Festival. Find out more at breadandhoney.ca.

RIDING OF WELLINGTON-HALTON HILLS

Mr. Ted Arnott: Mr. Speaker, last week was constituency week, and I was glad to be in Wellington-

Halton Hills, in my riding office and out and about in the communities I'm privileged to represent.

There are so many issues that compel an appropriate response from this government.

The Halton Catholic District School Board is urging the Ministry of Education to approve a replacement for Holy Cross school in Georgetown. I've been asked to support this project, and I do. Now it's up to the Minister of Education to support it as well.

The Oppose Belwood Wind Farm Association recently received the environmental excellence award from the Centre Wellington Chamber of Commerce. With this award, our community recognizes and appreciates the work that the association is doing to highlight the risks associated with industrial wind farms. I continue to call upon the government to place a moratorium on new wind farm approvals until ongoing health studies are completed. Now it's up to the Minister of the Environment to do the same.

The cancellation of the Connecting Link program, without reasonable consultation with municipalities, is a massive download of the costs of maintaining provincial highways through built-up communities. I have heard about the problems this will cause in the town of Halton Hills and the township of Centre Wellington. We support the reinstatement of the Connecting Link program or a suitable and equivalent replacement. It's up to the Minister of Transportation to do the same.

And then we have the physio fiasco that I heard about when I visited an area nursing home, as this government plans to cut physiotherapy services to residents of long-term-care homes. I support our seniors receiving the physiotherapy services they need. Now it's up to the Minister of Health to do the same.

I urge the government to begin listening to the people of Wellington-Halton Hills.

TOURISM

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Last spring, this government closed three travel information centres in my riding without notice or consultation, claiming that they were replacing these vital centres with a travel app that it said would be better designed to meet travellers' needs.

Speaker, the reviews are in. The Dryden Observer says the ministry's app is "entirely useless.... It is so shockingly devoid of regionally relevant information as to actually be humorous."

The newspaper continues: "The entire app is centred around events, festivals and other broad strokes which run contrary to the kind of experience destination travellers are seeking in the northwest."

Speaker, this government is grossly out of touch when it comes to tourism in the northwest and its importance to our local economy.

The latest insult is proposed changes to zone 5 fishing regulations that would reduce non-residents'—our tourists'—daily catch limit from four to two. This move would drastically hurt camp owners' ability to attract business and may even force some to close shop.

Speaker, I understand the need to protect fish stocks, but the MNR is a ministry designed to prevent these things from happening, and they have clearly failed to do so.

This government needs to go back to the drawing board and return with a plan that does not penalize hard-working residents of northwestern Ontario for this government's own failed policies.

FORT ERIE RACE TRACK

Mr. Kim Craitor: I'm pleased to rise in the House today with great pride in my riding of Fort Erie. I'm very proud to say that this past Sunday marked the 116th opening of the Fort Erie Race Track. This opening day was met by one of the largest crowds in the past 15 years, demonstrating not only support from the community for the sport of horse racing but, as I witnessed first-hand, the diversity of the people and age groups and backgrounds all participating in this historic sport as friends and patrons and customers.

I could not be more proud of the not-for-profit community-based corporation, Fort Erie Live Racing Consortium, that has been able for the past four years to keep this track operating efficiently, effectively and successfully. This is the only such board constructed of horsemen, town, economic development agency and union representation.

Sunday was not only record attendance but also had increased revenues from wagering and on-track product sales.

I'm equally proud of the support of this Legislature and this government in the efforts of modernizing racing in Ontario—starting with the leadership of Premier Wynne, the tripartite panel of past ministers working with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and rural Ontario on a fast-track basis towards a more sustainable future for horse racing in Ontario and keeping Fort Erie alive and kicking.

I also am so proud of all of the employees of the racetrack, and the horsemen who made this day so spectacular.

Fort Erie is alive and kicking.

1510

TOWN OF ORANGEVILLE

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I am pleased to rise today to recognize the town of Orangeville as it celebrates its 150th birthday. Throughout 2013, Orangeville will be commemorating its incorporation—which occurred on December 22, 1863, thanks to its founder and namesake, Orange Lawrence—with the main event being a large celebration on July 6.

Since its incorporation, Orangeville has grown from a small village to a thriving town. With humble beginnings as a mill community surrounded by dense forest, Orangeville has witnessed many changes but has always retained much of its history in the many homes that are historical and founding buildings.

As you tour around Orangeville, you can see the present seamlessly mixed with the past. From the storefronts on Broadway to the town hall, the old fire station, the Orangeville library and the beautifully preserved Victorian- and Gregorian-inspired homes on Zina, Bythia and Elizabeth streets, Orangeville's rich heritage is very well preserved.

Orangeville is a busy hub within the county of Dufferin. Throughout its colourful history, our community has been home for a number of fascinating historical figures such as Falkner Stewart, a local merchant and representative for Dufferin in the Ontario Legislature, and Minerva Ellen Reid, who became the first female chief of surgery in North America in 1915.

While the past 150 years are being honoured, it is the present-day residents of Orangeville who are most proud to call this dynamic town home.

HALTON FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to rise today and speak about Halton Food for Thought. That's an organization that operates in Halton region. It promotes the connection between healthy food and improved learning. I recently had the opportunity to attend a breakfast event to celebrate their outstanding efforts.

Food for Thought started as an advisory committee in 1997. At that time, only six schools had nutritional programs in all of Halton region. This organization has since grown, under the leadership of Gayle Cruikshank and others, to more than 130 nutrition programs, and now they have close to 100 sites. More than 1,000 volunteers help more than 22,000 students.

The programs range from full breakfast programs to class snack programs to providing lunches for students who arrive at school, unfortunately, without food. There is also an emphasis on local food through the Farm to School Program, which partners with GTA farms and the Edible Garden Project.

Because we all know that students arriving at school hungry simply do not perform well in the classroom, I'd like to say thank you and applaud Halton Food for Thought and the many volunteers in the community who are helping to promote healthy eating options and better learning opportunities for our students. It's people like this in local communities who make Ontario the great province that it is.

PHYSICIAN APPRECIATION DAY

Mr. Jim Wilson: Yesterday marked the ninth annual Physician Appreciation Day in my riding. I'm pleased to rise, alongside the Alliston and Area Physician Recruitment Committee, and the community in general, to recognize and thank our many physicians for their dedication to health and wellness throughout the area.

For decades, the Physician Recruitment Committee has been working diligently to find ways to attract and retain new physicians to Stevenson Memorial Hospital and the area it serves. The committee was the second in

the province to host a Physician Appreciation Day. In fact, the province itself has now taken notice of their success and followed suit by declaring a similar province-wide Doctor Day, held annually on May 1.

Thanks to the efforts of the Alliston and Area Physician Recruitment Committee, on this day physicians are honoured with flowers, gifts and praise from patients and the community, who want to show their gratitude. It's a day when we all come together and give thanks to our physicians for the job that they do. When we're healthy, physicians help keep us that way, and when we're sick, they're the ones we depend on to make us well. Physicians are critical to our lives and are especially valued in our community for their efforts and dedication to a small-town hospital in a rural area.

As a former Minister of Health, I have a great appreciation for the work that physicians do. I also know that the people of south Simcoe are truly appreciative of their commitment to our area and its people.

As MPP for Simcoe–Grey, I am tremendously grateful to our local physicians, and I would like to thank them for their tremendous and continued contribution to our community.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): As is the custom, I'd like to recognize a former member here at the House, the former MPP for York East in the 35th Parliament, Gary Malkowski, who is in the visitors' gallery, in the west gallery up here. Gary, welcome.

SIGN-LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment for a point of order.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, as you're aware, this week is National Access Awareness Week, and I believe we have unanimous consent that during statements by the ministry and responses today, sign-language interpreters may be present on the floor of the chamber to interpret the proceedings.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister is seeking unanimous consent for the interpreters to be on the floor of the Legislature. Do we agree? Agreed.

Thank you, and that is at ministers' statements time.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

HEALTH INSURANCE AMENDMENT ACT (CELIAC DISEASE SCREENING), 2013 LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ASSURANCE-SANTÉ (DÉPISTAGE DE LA MALADIE COELIAQUE)

Mr. Mauro moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 75, An Act to amend the Health Insurance Act with respect to celiac disease screening / *Projet de loi 75, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-santé en ce qui concerne le dépistage de la maladie coeliaque.*

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. Bill Mauro: The bill, Speaker, if passed, would expand OHIP coverage for serological tests for celiac disease. Celiac disease affects nearly 1% of Canada's population, and the condition causes the immune system to react negatively to gluten in the diet, which can result in damage to the person's small bowel, reducing their ability to absorb nutrients. This can lead to vitamin deficiencies that deprive the person's brain, peripheral nervous system, bones, liver and various organs of vital nourishment.

The disease—and this is important—has also been associated with type 1 diabetes, Down syndrome, thyroiditis, arthritis, depression, infertility, osteoporosis and other serious health conditions. By increasing access to these tests within the community, more people will be able to obtain an early diagnosis and treatment of celiac disease, which increases the chances that damaged tissue will heal and reduces the likelihood of long-term and serious health complications.

WORKERS' DEATH BENEFITS PROTECTION ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LA PROTECTION DES PRESTATIONS DE DÉCÈS DES TRAVAILLEURS

Mr. Bartolucci moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 76, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 to protect benefits for spouses of deceased, retired workers / *Projet de loi 76, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la sécurité professionnelle et l'assurance contre les accidents du travail afin de protéger les prestations versées aux conjoints des travailleurs retraités décédés.*

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. Rick Bartolucci: The Workers' Death Benefits Protection Act amends the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act of 1997 to provide that if a deceased worker was diagnosed with an occupational disease after he or she retired, the deceased worker's net average earnings shall, for the purpose of calculating death benefits, be determined as of the date of the deceased worker's last exposure to the biological, chemical or physical agent that caused the death of the worker.

1520

I want to thank you, Speaker Levac, for your wisdom, your guidance and for your insight into this particular bill; J.P. Mrochek, for his advocacy; Tara Blondeau, who is in the audience, for her very hard work; but most importantly, the widows I have met with, for providing empirical evidence that this amendment is very, very important.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

ACCESSIBILITY FOR THE DISABLED

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, please allow me first to introduce some guests in the House today. Joining us today in the public gallery, I'm pleased to introduce: Dean Walker from the Ontario Association of the Deaf; Lori Archer, also from the Ontario Association of the Deaf; Gordon Ryall, from the Canadian Hearing Society; Gary Malkowski, who you introduced already and who of course is a former MPP, currently with the Canadian Hearing Society; and Mr. John Hendry, who is an author.

I'd also like to welcome all viewers who were not able to attend today but who are watching the broadcast proceedings.

Sunday marked the beginning of National Access Awareness Week. It's a time for the people of this province to reflect and act on our shared goal of making Ontario truly accessible. And, of course, it's a time for us to celebrate the work accomplished since this Legislature passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act in 2005.

Ontario is one of the first regions in the world to take a proactive approach to accessibility. We have developed standards for customer service, information and communications, transportation, employment and the design of public spaces. These standards are now in place. We are developing new ones, and we are well on our way to achieving an accessible Ontario by 2025.

We have accomplished much, but there is still much more work to be done.

In the speech from the throne, our government announced that we would move the Accessibility Directorate to the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment.

As the minister now leading our government's efforts to make Ontario more accessible and inclusive, I would like to take this opportunity to state clearly and unequivocally that accessibility is a top priority for me, for my ministry and for our government. We now have an opportunity to begin, in a serious and deliberate way, to look at issues of greater accessibility and inclusion through an employment lens. What does this mean? It means that the goal of greater accessibility must be integrated into all that we do as a ministry, and I have instructed my ministry to do just that. This is something our government is strongly committed to.

In our efforts to work with business across the province to create jobs, we must also work to improve the participation rate for people with disabilities in the workforce. It's the right thing to do, and it makes economic sense, because if our economy is to be vibrant, if we are to thrive and if our society is to be truly fair, all Ontarians must have the opportunity to contribute. Many businesses understand this. There are numerous examples of employers who get the economic case for hiring people with disabilities—an economic and business case that has been demonstrated in study after study.

But as a ministry and as a society, we must do more to help employers understand that business case and to improve access to employment. We must do that in our conversations with business and through robust public education.

Talk is important, but it will only get us so far. We need action. So I have instructed my ministry to develop a strategy for accessible and inclusive employment so that we can all work together to improve the participation rate of Ontarians with disabilities in the workforce.

One way we have started is by ensuring that voices from the accessibility community will be heard at the youth jobs round tables taking place across the province in the coming weeks.

I'm excited to work with employers and the accessibility community, not only to raise the profile of the issue of employment, but to take action and to get results. But if we are to get results, accessibility can't be seen as the work of only one minister. We can't accomplish our goal of full accessibility when we work in silos. So I will be working with my colleagues across government to further the cause of greater accessibility through activities like the social assistance review and the Pan and Parapan Am Games. And within government, we must work to remove any remaining barriers.

There are also opportunities that we must seize in the area of business and especially trade. Because of our province's commitment to accessibility and inclusion, we have a thriving business sector producing goods and services for people with disabilities. I saw this yesterday at the Ontario Centres of Excellence Discovery conference, where I presented awards to young innovators who have come up with new goods and services that will make our communities more inclusive and more accessible.

As we encourage companies to go global with their products, we must do the same for companies producing goods and services focused on accessibility.

Through these and other measures, we will build on the results that we've already achieved, including through the five accessibility standards we've introduced, but we will also ensure that these standards are having the best possible impact.

We will be asking the new combined Accessibility Standards Advisory Council/Standards Development Council to review the customer service standard as a first order of business. I'm pleased to say that members of the new council have been invited and are enthusiastically signalling their acceptance. We look forward to announcing the committee members very, very shortly.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud of what we have achieved. We should all, as a Legislature and as a province and as a society, be proud of what we have achieved together. I am proud of what we will achieve as we work toward a fully accessible, inclusive Ontario by 2025.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Statements by ministries? Last call for statements by ministries.

It is now time for responses.

Mr. Toby Barrett: As we've just heard, it has now been eight years since this Ontario government followed the lead of the PCs with the PC government's Ontarians with Disabilities Act—in this case, with the passage of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. While in some ways we've moved forward, many disabled advocates are wondering if lately we haven't just been spinning our wheels.

With one in seven in Ontario living with a disability—it's a number projected to be one in five within the next two decades—there is an understanding among all of the vital need in this case to ensure Ontario's buildings and services are open and accessible to all residents.

In recent years, we've been told of the implementation of the AODA's customer service standard. We see troubling stories continuing to come to the fore, reinforcing the need to get this plan back on track.

The Windsor Star reported recently of a local retail outlet restricting access to the store by a patron using a motorized chair. As they reported, the store's staff did not want people in motorized wheelchairs in the store; they were concerned they would damage products that were there for sale.

Just two weeks before that, the Toronto Star reported a Toronto restaurant restricting access to a patron with hearing loss who was using a hearing ear dog. The patron and two friends having lunch were reportedly told they'd have to sit outside or sit upstairs because of this dog that was at work and were also told that either he or the dog could go outside.

So there remains a disconnect, Speaker. Government has talked the game, but when it comes to accessibility, many of the early returns are far from convincing.

For instance, where are we on the compliance of the five standards to support the act? The customer service accessibility standard required organizations and businesses to file reports of their plans—plans for compliance with the standard—as well, a written accessibility policy. All private sector organizations of 20 or more employees were supposed to submit this by December 31 of last year. So questions remain: How many of these have been filed? How many have not? The bottom line? Will there be enforcement of this act or is the act destined to become somewhat of a toothless tiger?

1530

Disability advocates are calling on the government for effective enforcement of the act—for the standard in place now and for anything coming down the road. They're waiting for government to meet the act's requirements for mandatory review. Again, when exactly will members be appointed to the mandatory Accessibility

Standards Advisory Council, so the mandatory review of the customer service accessibility standard can get under way? When will the appointment be announced for the next independent review of the AODA? Again, government is required to make appointments by May 31. It's now May 28; time is running out. The concern remains that while days pass by, government's commitment to accessibility and enforcement to ensure that accessibility seems to be growing weaker.

You know, Speaker, words like “access” and “accessibility” mean much more than just removing barriers. They mean a change in attitude and supports that allow all disabled—all of those with mobility, sensory, non-visible and intellectual disabilities—to be part of community life, and obviously work life. We all understand that required change for accessibility is not going to be brought in overnight, and the truth is, it never will be brought about without the commitment and, importantly, enforcement of government to ensure that these goals are reached.

Speaker, we await progress towards the standards for employment, for transportation, information, communication; it's so important. We ask government to get on at least with the one standard that is in place and back up the words with action. Get on with the job of creating accessibility for those of us in the province of Ontario who have disabilities.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: In fact, this government is in breach of the law where their own law is concerned. The review that you heard my colleague speak about that's due this week, the 31st, when I asked the minister about it in question period this morning, he had no answer. He's not going to do it. That's breaking the law—breaking the law where people with disabilities are concerned. That independent review panel was said to be struck and was asked to be struck. It won't be struck; it's not happening.

What's also not happening? The backdrop to these comments: 23,000 people in Ontario—more than anywhere else in Canada—languish on lists waiting for services. A hundred and fifty families, according to the Ombudsman in 2005, and it's worse since then, had to give up their children—their children—with disabilities because they could not access services. Is this the Ontario that meets the needs of those with disabilities? I say absolutely and categorically no.

Those who exist—and exist they do—in dire poverty on Ontario disability actually make less now: 18% less than they did in 1993, when adjusted for inflation. That is unacceptable. It is actually in contravention of the United Nations, and we are a signatory to the United Nations rights of those with disabilities. It's also breaking that law.

So here we have an act, unenforced, as you heard my colleague say. In fact, everybody here, I'm sure, has heard from people in their ridings—I certainly have—of people being denied services in businesses, in restaurants, because of their dogs or because of their chairs or because of their needs; that is ongoing.

In fact, I turned out for a wonderful walk that happens every year in High Park, sponsored by the Lions Club, for guide dogs and their owners. All of them came to me with the same complaint and that is if you have a seeing-eye dog, you might be in luck, but if you have a therapy dog, good luck getting that dog access to the places of employment, the places of service, that you need. That is Ontario, and that Ontario is not an Ontario that is truly accessible, not even close.

I could go on. I could talk about the 1,450 parents who are over the age of 70 who are still looking after their children with severe disabilities. What will happen to those folk, those children and adults with disabilities—who need around-the-clock care, in many instances—when their parents or caregivers die? Good question. No answer, in the province of Ontario.

What will happen to families like the Telfords, who, going forward, cannot get help for their children and their family members? This government has no answer.

The \$42 million that was in the budget to help with those on the waiting lists for services accounts for 14% only—14% only—of those people on the waiting lists.

I haven't even talked about the people who work in the field, those people who bravely staff agencies, who are paid slightly over minimum wage, who are not having either pay equity acknowledged or raises acknowledged, who are understaffed, who are chronically—are most of their agencies, chronically; a third of all agencies in the province—understaffed and in deficit.

This is not the province that is accessible and that is positive towards those who live with disabilities.

So, just to sum up, what have we done? The answer: Something. Not much, perhaps. Where do we need to go? A long, long way. What do we need to do? A whole lot more before we're even in compliance with our own laws, never mind the lofty goals of the United Nations and all of those who truly care about doing something, and not just spinning something, about rights for those who live with disabilities.

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

I'd like to offer my thanks to the interpreter who has agreed to be on the floor, and we show our appreciation to them. Thank you very much.

It is now time for petitions.

PETITIONS

LYME DISEASE

Mr. Randy Hillier: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the tick-borne illness known as chronic Lyme disease, which mimics many catastrophic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, Crohn's, Alzheimer's ... chronic fatigue and" others, "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; and

"Whereas the Canadian Medical Association informed the public, governments and the medical profession in the May 30, 2000, edition of their 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 of 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" and Long-Term Care "to direct that the Ontario public health system and OHIP include all currently available and scientifically verified tests for acute and chronic Lyme disease in Ontario, and to have 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 have had over 750 people in the last two weeks sign this petition online, in addition to the paper editions. I'm in agreement with this petition and will provide it to page Jeffrey.

1540

HYDRO RATES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I wholeheartedly support this, will affix my signature to it and give it to page Michael to deliver to the table.

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 affix my signature and send it to the table with page Christine.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I agree with this. I’ll affix my signature and give it to page Farzan.

AIR QUALITY

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: I have a petition here 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 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 of Ontario as follows:

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

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

MINING INDUSTRY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I wholeheartedly support this, will affix my signature and give it to page Michael to again deliver to the table.

PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Ministry of Health has eliminated non-hospital physiotherapy service from the Health Insurance Act;

“We, the undersigned, do hereby oppose the proposed changes, as outlined in bulletin 3095, released April 18, 2013. We feel strongly that the removal of all non-hospital OHIP coverage for physiotherapy services in the community will contribute to a decline in overall health and independence for seniors. The privatization of physiotherapy services will result in an increased financial burden for myself and my family as we grow older. With fewer opportunities to maintain a regular schedule of physiotherapy treatments in our seniors’ homes or retirement facilities, we feel that this will lead to a reduction in our ability to live independently in the community, putting additional strain on health care systems as hospitals and long-term care become the only options for those with ongoing need for physiotherapy treatment.”

Madam Speaker, I agree with this petition and affix my signature to it.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

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

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

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

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

I sign this petition and give it to page Farzan to deliver to the table.

PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

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

“Whereas the Ministry of Health has eliminated non-hospital physiotherapy service from the Health Insurance Act;

“We, the undersigned, do hereby oppose the proposed changes to the health care act of Ontario as outlined in bulletin 3095, released April 18, 2013. We strongly believe that the removal of all non-hospital OHIP coverage for physiotherapy services in the community will contribute to a decline in overall health and independence for seniors. The privatization of physiotherapy services will result in an increased financial burden for myself and my family as we grow older. With fewer opportunities to maintain a regular schedule of physiotherapy treatments in our seniors’ homes or retirement facilities, we feel this will lead to a reduction in our ability to live independently in the community, putting additional strain on health care systems as hospitals and long-term care become the only options for those with ongoing need for physiotherapy treatment.”

I agree with this petition and affix my signature and send it down with Hannah.

AIR-RAIL LINK

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

“Whereas diesel trains are a health hazard for people who live near them;

“Whereas more toxic fumes will be created by up to 400 daily trains than the car trips they are meant to replace;

“Whereas the planned air-rail link does not serve the communities through which it passes and will be priced beyond the reach of most commuters;

“Whereas all major cities in the world with train service between their downtown core and the airport use electric trains;

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

“That the province of Ontario stop building the air-rail link for diesel and move to electrify the route immediately;

“That the air-rail link be designed, operated and priced as an affordable transportation option between all points along its route.”

I agree with this and I will give it to page Jeffrey.

TIRE DISPOSAL

Ms. Laurie Scott: “Stop the Tire Fee Increases Petition.

“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;

1550

“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;

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

“Please 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.”

It’s signed by many people from my riding, and I’ll hand it to page Laura.

ANIMAL PROTECTION

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

“Whereas the process popularly known as ‘declawing’ is actually an amputation, that is the equivalent of cutting off a human’s fingers from the knuckle up;

“Whereas the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association considers ‘declawing’ to be an unnecessary cosmetic procedure;

“Whereas research has shown that declawing a cat significantly reduces a cat’s quality of life and leads to behavioural and health problems;

“Whereas declawing eliminates a cat’s ability to defend itself when in danger; and

“Whereas the process is considered to be inhumane and is banned in more than 40 countries;

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

“To ban the unnecessary and inhuman procedure known as ‘declawing’ in the province of Ontario.”

I support this petition and will give this to page Hooriya to deliver.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Jim McDonell: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care unilaterally introduced cuts to the ophthalmology funding for physician services and diagnostic testing, retroactive to April 1, 2012; and

“Whereas the legislated cuts to the funding for ophthalmology diagnostic tests are up to 80%; and

“Whereas these cuts were implemented without consulting physicians about the impact such cuts will have on the health care of patients;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to protect ophthalmology services and consult with the physicians before making cuts to our health care system.”

I agree with this petition and will be passing it to page Jakob.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

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

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

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

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

I have signed this petition, and I give it to page Jack to deliver.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

2013 ONTARIO BUDGET

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 28, 2013, on the motion that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate? The member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

Mr. Bill Mauro: I am happy to be able to resume my remarks from this morning when we adjourned. I’ve got about 10 and a half minutes left.

This morning, I spent the first nine or 10 minutes talking about the deficit situation, where we came in in 2003, left a \$5.5-billion deficit by the outgoing Conservatives, how it took us a couple of years to balance that budget, and then we ran three consecutive balanced budgets, which took us to 2008. Then, of course, the recession hit, and we all know that that has dramatically affected national and sub-national governments all across the planet.

In 2003, one of the things we talked about was three deficits. It was the financial deficit, but we also talked about a services and an infrastructure deficit, and I want to talk a little bit about the infrastructure part of it this afternoon, in the 10 minutes or so that I have left, and tie that back to how we ended up to some degree in a deficit position, because, as I said this morning, many govern-

ments chose to invest through the recession to mitigate the damage that was occurring, and we knew—I certainly knew, as a member from the north, representing Thunder Bay–Atikokan—that the money that was being spent on infrastructure projects in the years leading up to our election as Liberals in 2003 was not significant. Most people know that; they don’t argue that.

By way of example, I think I would just point to some of the things that have gone on in my riding when it comes to infrastructure spending. I’m sure all members in the Legislature here today have benefited from infrastructure investments in their ridings. I would absolutely be able to say, probably with a great deal of certainty, that out of 107 ridings, probably most, if not all of them, benefited from these infrastructure investments. It’s very, very important, and it’s very key.

In my riding, I would start, I think, with probably the biggest success story we’ve had in Thunder Bay–Atikokan, and that is what has occurred at the Bombardier plant in my riding. When we were elected in 2003, that plant, I think it’s fair to say, was probably in danger of closing. The employment level at Bombardier in 2003 was down to 200 to 250 people.

That goes right back to the 1995 announcement by the Harris Conservatives. They took a policy position—I’m not going to pass judgment on it; I will be able to tell you the result of it, though. In 1995, they very publicly announced that, “We are no longer in the mass transit game,” so from 1995 to 2003 there was no public money invested. The city of Toronto could not go it alone just off of their municipal property tax base. In the 2003 provincial election, we stepped up in a very big way, and we made a commitment to mass transit, and not just for these large projects. As well, through gas tax funding to all the municipalities, I think Thunder Bay has received about, in nine years at \$2 million, maybe \$18 million, \$15 million to \$20 million from us just on the gas tax funding.

But when we stepped up in 2003 and said, “We’re going to get back into the mass transit game”—I think we currently have about \$16 billion worth of mass-transit-related projects going on in Ontario at the moment, and, of course, we’re committed to many, many more. What it meant for my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan and the Bombardier plant is simply this: In 2003, at that point, Bombardier, internationally, had just closed about six plants across the planet. They were down to 200 to 250 employees in the plant in my riding. And I don’t know this, but I can only assume that there might have been the possibility that that plant could have been closed and we could have lost it permanently. Since we made the decision to invest in mass transit, we have announced \$3 billion worth of projects that are at the Bombardier plant in Ontario; \$1.5 billion of that is provincial money.

The employment workforce at the Bombardier plant in Thunder Bay has gone from 200 to 250 people to over 1,400 people, and that particular plant in Thunder Bay is solid for at least 10 years going forward. This is obviously, by our standard, as a population of about 120,000

people, a significant addition to the workforce. I’ll tell you, every time you tour it and you see the young faces—not only young faces, but the older faces who are now going to make it to retirement, who weren’t sure that they would make it to retirement. But many of these younger people who previously may have had to have left the community to find jobs have now been able to purchase a home.

Most of the people in Thunder Bay are familiar with what has gone on with the real estate market in Thunder Bay for the last five or six years. Prices have never been seen like this before, and bidding wars—a lot of that has been infused by the workforce at that plant, 1,200 people. That’s only part of it.

My point is simply this: That’s an example of infrastructure investments that have had a direct benefit in my community. I have to believe, given what was coming from the other parties, that this is not a decision that they would have made. So when we want to talk about deficit, that’s fine; we made a decision to invest through that. I gave the example of the federal Conservative government—remember that they’re the former Reform Conservative Alliance, this group. They were the ones that knew how to take care of your pocketbook, and they have about a \$26-billion deficit of their own. Ontario is about 40% of the Canadian economy; you could say on a relative basis that our deficit number is actually less than the federal government’s—and they’re the ones that know how to take care of your pocketbook?

Other infrastructure examples in my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan: About three months ago, we just announced the opening—we didn’t announce it. We’re going to formally announce it soon, but we just had open in my riding—this is another piece of infrastructure money that we chose and made a policy decision to move forward on the health care side: a brand new, 132-unit supportive housing project in my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

1600

We have had, for quite some time, a significant issue related to ALC patients in our hospital—alternate-level-of-care people taking up acute care beds in Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre. The opening of the new Leila Greco centre has freed up, I would say—out of that 132 people who are now living there—probably anywhere from 20% to 40% of those people, had they not had available to them the Sister Leila Greco supportive housing complex, quite possibly could have been taking up an acute care bed in Thunder Bay Regional. So not only have we, through infrastructure investments, provided people with the appropriate care in the appropriate setting; we have freed up acute care beds at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre and, at the same time, we’ve created 110 brand new jobs.

It’s an example of what the infrastructure investments have done in my riding. As I said earlier, I’m sure there are a number of people in here in most ridings that could make the same claim. It’s some of what has happened.

It’s easy to say there’s a deficit.

Interjection.

Mr. Bill Mauro: Yes. We hired 4,000 more doctors. We've hired 16,000 more nurses. When the official opposition was in power, they fired 6,000 nurses. The third party had 3,000 fewer nurses working when they finished their reign. If that's what their plan is, should they have the good fortune to form government some day in the future, they should let people know, because I can tell you, representing a community that's been chronically underserved when it comes to primary care for decades, we now have, through our investments, been able to provide primary care for 15,000 more people than was the case when we were elected in 2003. That's an example of what you can do when you make strategic investments. It helps the economy, it improves health care and it improves infrastructure.

Another piece that we talk about somewhat, but probably not often enough, as a northerner who represents small municipalities as well—Thunder Bay is the biggie in northwestern Ontario, but obviously, by southern Ontario standards, it's not big at all. In my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan, I represent six other organized municipalities: O'Connor, Conmee, Neebing, Gillies, Oliver Paipoonge and Atikokan. All of those communities have large geographic land bases and very, very small tax bases.

My friends in the official opposition will remember, when they were going through their downloading exercise, to be fair, that not only was it the social services that they downloaded, but they downloaded responsibility as well for a lot of roads and bridges. It's a fact. The small municipalities simply do not have the tax base to support that kind of road and bridge infrastructure.

So what have some of our infrastructure investments done? Well, they have tremendously eased the burden on those small communities like the ones in my riding that I've just referenced. Without provincial government support and some federal government support from time to time—we'd love to see them play a bigger role in this—they wouldn't have been able to do it. They simply would not have been able to do it.

We have invested heavily in roads and bridges, and I will say that we've heard very recently that the Minister of Transportation has announced a new \$100-million infrastructure fund for small rural and northern municipalities that we expect we're going to roll out in the fall, this October. We're looking forward to that. The minister has also announced that it's his intention to go forward with a public consultation on making that program permanent so that, for those small rural communities and northern communities with these large geographic land bases and incredibly small populations, we're going to try and put something in place for them. We're going to start designing it so that we can ensure, on a go-forward basis, that there's going to be something there to help them with that infrastructure. They cannot do it on their own. It's just a fact.

My 20 minutes are basically up. I didn't get a chance to talk about the small business pieces that we've done. The social assistance piece in this budget is incredibly

significant. I know it's always understated when the others tend to talk about it; that's a bit of a disappointment. The 1% increase on social assistance, by the way, equals about \$50 million and it totals up to about 16% since we were elected in 2003. There's much more I wish I had time to talk about on that front, but I look forward to an opportunity to respond to the comments of my colleagues.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to provide a couple of minutes of comments—maybe not some questions, but comments on the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan and his 20-minute rotation that started this morning prior to question period. Again, I spoke this morning on the budget motion, and I think where we really have the difference between the Liberal-NDP coalition compared to the official opposition is, we've put some very pragmatic ideas on the table that the government ignored.

I can appreciate the member talking about infrastructure, but you know what he didn't talk about? He didn't talk about the fact that many municipalities feel that the elimination of the Connecting Link subsidy for infrastructure is a download that the Liberal government is downloading on to municipalities. In fact, last year, many municipalities felt that the community start-up benefit was a download that the government opposite had put on municipalities.

Again, they talk a good game when they show up at AMO or ROMA. They talk a good game when they suggest arbitration reform is high on their list. Yet when my friend from Simcoe–Grey tables a private member's bill in consultation with AMO, which is supported by the Ontario Association of Police Services Boards, the mimosa coalition bands together again and defeats it.

When you look municipalities in the eye, and they ask you about Connecting Link, you give them a straight answer. When they ask you about arbitration, I think you need to look them in the face and give them a straight answer on why this budget is silent on it, why both of you voted against it.

In my municipality, there was an arbitration award last week—retroactive—21% on a long-term-care facility that is already in jeopardy of having budget cuts. That's what the government hasn't talked about—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. The member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

Mr. Paul Miller: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I sit here and I listen to this stuff, and it's really amazing.

With all due respect to the governing body, if I remember correctly, if my memory serves me correctly, I do remember a thing called Transit City. I do recall the number \$4 billion, and I do believe that the new Premier was the transportation minister when they shut it down. That was in Toronto.

When they say they're for expanding transportation in the GTA, and they say they want to expand it in the Hamilton area—I'll tell you, I've lived in Hamilton a long time, and we have been—

Interjection: How long?

Mr. Paul Miller: A long time, I'm still waiting for that LRT in Hamilton. I'm still waiting—we finally got a bus, the BLine from Stoney Creek to McMaster University. Basically, I'm not holding my breath for when it's going to happen, but I certainly hope it does because we certainly need it.

We have a busier airport now; the John C. Munro airport is busier now. It's a transportation hub. We are now actually getting domestic flights to the Caribbean, and there's a new person coming there who might want to fly to other areas, destinations.

We certainly could use an LRT. We certainly could use some financial support in the Hamilton area.

I hate to say this, Madam Speaker, but the GTA ends in Burlington. They forgot about—when you go over the bridge, there is more of Ontario there. Once they get over the bridge and start spreading around a little more money, it's going to be a lot better for my area. I think they want to. Will they? Stay tuned, folks. I don't want to be pessimistic, but I'm really watching very closely what's going to happen in the next few months.

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

Hon. Jeff Leal: Well, Madam Speaker, it's a delight for me to rise this afternoon. It's unfortunate that I didn't get to hear the first part of my colleague's speech this morning, but it goes without saying, the speech delivered by the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan was a magnificent speech, covering all the great aspects of what's contained in the budget.

He touched a point which is very close to me. I remember in the late 1990s, there was the famous Crombie report, the Who Does What committee. David Crombie did a magnificent job of coming up with a series of recommendations. But the government of the day, of course, didn't listen to the tiny, perfect mayor, David Crombie. They forgot about implementing what he recommended.

Then we got the famous report from the Harris government that I've always called the “who got done in committee.” Who got done in through that report was municipalities.

1610

Then when we came to power, Jim Watson, now the mayor of Ottawa, started the uploading exercise. I know in my community, for example, since 2008, it's \$16 million that has been uploaded from those hard-working men and women in the great riding of Peterborough. They work so hard every day to provide those services.

My colleague had a long and distinguished career in municipal politics in Thunder Bay, and I know why he ran in 2003. He ran in 2003 to correct the wrongs that were imposed on municipalities through the “who got done in committee,” as did my friend from Scarborough–Rouge River, an outstanding councillor in Toronto from Scarborough. He decided to run because he wanted to reverse the “who got done in committee,” and that was municipalities.

Ladies and gentlemen, I hope people were tuning in from Thunder Bay this afternoon and witnessed the great

dissertation that the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan did on this budget—a magnificent job.

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

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: Madam Speaker, I listened with great intent this afternoon as the verbal jabs and jousting here in the chamber continued on the budget.

The member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan talks about what a wonderful job they're doing in health care and job creation and job stimulation and fighting the deficit, when, Madam Speaker, you and I both know that this is just more Liberal posturing and spinning.

The fact of the matter is that health care in my fair riding of Northumberland–Quinte West is facing some serious challenges. The Trenton Memorial Hospital lab is being closed because of the \$10-million funding gap that this Liberal government has created. The lab, when it does close—it's going to threaten the services provided in ER. Two nurses have been lost at Trenton Memorial Hospital because of their so-called fiscal restraints and changes to health care and improving the health care system. Well, this is not improving the quality of health care in Northumberland–Quinte West.

Let's talk about the Big Move. I have listened quite often in the last day or so to constituents who have contacted my office about the so-called Big Move, and they're quite upset with the proposed 1% HST hike and five-cent gas tax hike at the pumps. People in my riding are very upset about this proposed tax grab. Just call it what it is. It's not revenue tools; they're taxes. Just be honest with the people of Ontario.

This budget does very little for the province of Ontario. It's devastating to the province of Ontario. Tim Hudak and the PC Party are the only ones standing up for the people here in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Bill Mauro: I want to thank the four speakers: from Leeds–Grenville, Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, the Minister of Rural Affairs, and Northumberland–Quinte West.

I have to say to the member from Leeds–Grenville, I have to thank him, because he made me smile. I've got to tell you, he actually stood up as a Conservative in the Legislature and used the word “downloading” and somehow tried to link the word “downloading” to the Liberals on this side of the House. A Conservative member; can you imagine anybody doing that? It's kind of like leading with your chin. I think the only reason he did it is because he knew in two minutes I didn't have enough time to respond. That could be the only reason he probably threw that out there. It was really quite remarkable.

I will say, quickly, on the arbitration piece that he raised: In fact, he must know that we actually had that in the 2012 budget. As I remember, it was at committee that the Conservatives and the NDP got together and voted it out. That's what I was told; I wasn't at that committee. That's how I remember it.

I would say to the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek—he said he has been waiting for mass transit for some time. I would suggest to him and his constituents that he’s going to have an opportunity to take a rather interesting position when it comes to the expansion of mass transit in the GTA in the not-too-distant future. If his constituents really are looking forward to an expansion of mass transit in southern Ontario, they’ll be very interested in what position he and his party take as we move forward on that issue.

I want to thank the Minister of Rural Affairs as well for his comments. He’s right: There were a whole bunch of us who decided we were going to run in the 2003 provincial election because we were all on municipal councils in the years preceding 2003 and we really did get to see how we were being treated as municipalities by the then Harris Conservatives.

I would say, finally, to the member from Northumberland–Quinte West—he calls what we’ve done in health care “posturing”: 4,000 more doctors; 16,000 more nurses; from \$30 billion to \$48 billion; and one small example in my riding, 15,000 more people with access to primary care. If that’s posturing, I could use a little more of it.

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

Mr. Monte McNaughton: It’s an honour to join the debate over the budget motion today and to follow the member from Thunder Bay–Atikokan.

Just before I get into my speech, I can say that I was up in Thunder Bay with the member from Brampton West and a number of other members with the finance committee. The things I heard in Thunder Bay that day I didn’t see in the budget. I know the people in Thunder Bay, when we were there for the finance committee, were very concerned about the jobs crisis in the north. Also, the one thing that I heard loud and clear that day when I was up there was the fact about the Junior Ranger Program. I know the member there will know that—I’m sure he heard time and time again, because we heard from the majority of the presenters there, about the Liberals’ decimation of the program and ending the Junior Ranger Program in the province.

I’m proud to stand up for the people who sent me to Queen’s Park from the riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex. I’m proud to stand up for all the communities that I represent in Lambton–Kent–Middlesex and to bring feedback from the people across my riding to Queen’s Park. We had constituency week last week, and I got valuable input from many people from many of the communities I represent regarding this budget, and they’re concerned about the direction that the Liberal government—propped up, of course, by the third party—they’re concerned about the direction that this province is going.

Speaker, I want to start off as well by saying that a budget should always strive to create the best environment for the people in Ontario to succeed. Unfortunately, the Liberal government has failed in its attempt to draft a

budget that does that. The budget falls short because it lacks the necessary fundamentals to create jobs and grow Ontario’s economy.

What people in my riding are concerned about is that over the last number of days since the NDP and Liberals announced their support of this budget—or since the NDP announced they’re going to support this budget—we’ve heard that the people of Ontario are going to be experiencing higher taxes to pay for Toronto transit. I know the people in Lambton–Kent–Middlesex are concerned with any time the Liberals talk about increasing taxes, because we’ve seen what’s happened with eHealth, Ornge and gas plants.

The people in my riding are concerned about the Premier talking about increasing the HST by 1%; they’re concerned about a possible five-cent-per-litre gas tax hike. The last thing the people of Ontario need, and in my riding specifically, is to be hit with a massive tax grab from this Liberal government.

Without a strong foundation and without the right economic fundamentals, our economy is not going to grow and, in fact, our economy is going to get worse. One essential element of a strong foundation is a government that represents the people. This is done through detailed consultations with stakeholders and constituents alike. I disagree with this government’s approach of implementing legislation without consultation. The people know the challenges Ontario is facing because they live with them each and every day, and therefore must be considered in government legislation.

An example of this government’s lack of consultation can be found on page 262 of the recent Wynne-Horwath budget, which announces the elimination of the Apprenticeship Training Tax Credit for only contact call centres. This change could result in the loss of over 25,000 jobs across Ontario with a single decision.

Now, it’s important to note that jobs in Ontario are hard to come by. There are over 600,000 men and women who are unemployed in the province and of course there could be, sadly, an additional 25,000 people out of work with the implementation of this single policy. The majority of these contact call centres are located in places such as North Bay, London, Chatham, Sarnia, Brantford, Vaughan and Windsor.

1620

Currently, as I’ve said in the last couple of days in question period, London has the highest big-city unemployment rate in the country. Sadly, there is 11.3% unemployment in North Bay, 9.3% unemployment in Windsor and almost 10% in London. Ironically, contact call centres, which are located in all of these regions, are one of the few industries that are managing to succeed. It makes no sense why the Liberals and the NDP would put so many jobs at risk when this industry creates so many jobs and is located in many regions where jobs are scarce.

Ontario has a 7.7% unemployment rate. This budget does nothing to help our province grow or create jobs. In fact, for residents who are employed, as I said, in the contact calling industry, it makes things worse.

I'm saddened that the Wynne government is taking the same approach as the Dalton McGuinty government. It is evident that nothing has changed. We are seeing policies that impact thousands of people being implemented without consultation. We are seeing this government do what is best for their government, and not what is best for the people in Ontario.

Again, regarding the issue that's on page 262—the elimination of this tax credit—the problem is that the government didn't consult with the industry. That's what we're opposed to. It's no different than what they did in last year's budget, which, ironically, the NDP supported, which put at risk 60,000 jobs in Ontario's horse racing industry. It's the same approach with this issue—on page 262—this year, which is going to devastate an industry in London in particular.

Of course, I said today in question period that—
Interjections.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Obviously, I've raised—I've excited the NDP I think because I've been talking the truth, and that is that they are going to pass the second Dalton McGuinty-Kathleen Wynne-Andrea Horwath budget.

In my riding, I have met with dozens of organizations and groups that represent a variety of social and economic interests. Here at Queen's Park, I have met—with a number of other MPPs, I'm sure, have—with hundreds of stakeholder groups and individuals who all tell me the same thing: that Ontario needs a new direction. Things have to change, and the people have to be involved in that change.

Since the resignation of Dalton McGuinty as Premier, the government party is sitting in different chairs, they have different titles and new business cards. But just as a zebra can't change its stripes, neither can the failed McGuinty-Wynne government.

Speaker, this lack of consultation also speaks to the lack of transparency in this Liberal government. We have seen eHealth, Ornge, diluted cancer treatment drugs and last, but certainly not least, a billion-dollar gas plant scandal. I'm not even going back more than a couple of years here. There are many, many more tales of scandal and waste. If I were to go into detail about the failures of this government, we would be here all day.

Further to my point, Premier Wynne's throne speech a number of months ago outlined her unwillingness to make the necessary and urgent decisions needed to fix the Liberals' made-in-Ontario jobs and debt crisis. When the Premier says she wants to build on Mr. McGuinty's legacy, I question how she could fail to recognize the amount of scandal that the McGuinty legacy is actually built upon. Indeed, the McGuinty-Wynne legacy is a tale of injustice and mismanagement that has cost Ontario taxpayers billions of dollars. While the scandals pile up, the taxpayers are being left with the bill. It seems that the culture of this government is scandal, waste and mismanagement.

Ontario families know that they cannot trust this Liberal government to get to the bottom of these scandals,

and that this government can no longer be trusted and no longer has the confidence of the people of Ontario. The people can't trust them, but somehow the third party—the NDP—are going to support them.

It is totally unacceptable that this government is being supported for their corruption. The priorities of the Wynne-Horwath government are not for the people of Ontario. Instead, they are about playing politics, staying in power and keeping their paycheques.

The Premier's priorities are to increase her government, and we see this through and through in her budget motion. Ironically, one of the first orders of business for Kathleen Wynne was to increase cabinet by 22%, adding over \$3 million to the province's debt. That follows deliberate choices to hand the chequebook over to union bosses at the expense of students and parents in our education system. They're going to continue the expensive Feed-In Tariff Program and park the Drummond commission's 362 recommendations permanently on the shelf.

In the budget, we see no initiatives to reduce the size and cost of government. Instead of restraint, we continue to have a government spending more, doubling our debt over the past nine years while Ontario taxpayers are getting less.

Over the past decade, Ontario has lost 300,000 good-paying jobs in the manufacturing sector, but at the same time we saw 300,000 more added to an already bloated government payroll. Soon, the only industry in Ontario will be to work in government, Speaker. If you look at the StatsCan data from the last year, the government sector has grown by 48,000 jobs. That's 48,000 more people in the province of Ontario working for the government.

During the last 12 months, we have not added a single net new job in the private sector. Fewer people are working outside the government, paying for more people working inside the government with higher wages, benefits and pensions than those who are paying the taxes.

We see reports from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business indicating that public sector workers earn 27% more in wages, pensions and benefits than their counterparts in the private sector. Again, the size and cost of government has grown above and beyond the ability of taxpayers to pay the bills.

Speaker, ignoring the issues Ontario is facing is not solving the problem. Throwing money at the province's problems is not a long-term solution. We are facing the biggest jobs and debt crisis of our lifetime. Anyone who has ever been faced with a crisis or emergency will tell you that spending more money and ignoring the core issues will not save you. The only way forward is to move confidently and boldly in the direction that you know is right.

Premier Wynne indicated that she expanded her cabinet so that she would have "the tools needed to deal with the problems Ontario is facing." Based on the 22% overnight growth in her cabinet, I would anticipate that

our Premier is expecting Ontario's problems to only get worse. She has more than enough people in her cabinet to address the issues Ontario is facing. Again, I guess our Premier is expecting a disaster.

But I have news, Speaker. This disaster can be avoided. Ontario needs a new approach, one that will create jobs and stop reckless overspending. It's clear that the current government is not up to the challenge of doing this. The Ontario PC Party and opposition leader Tim Hudak are the only party with a comprehensive plan to end overspending and grow Ontario's economy.

I am proud to say that our Ontario PC team has put forward a plan to rein in overspending, get our economic fundamentals right and grow the economy through our Paths to Prosperity white papers: bold ideas to create a leaner public service that delivers more value for less money; to lower taxes on business so they can invest and create jobs in Ontario; to reduce the heavy hand of the 300,000 regulations that stand between businesses and success; to fix the outdated labour laws that have made us uncompetitive and are costing us jobs; and to create more affordable energy for Ontario families by treating energy as an economic fundamental rather than a social experiment.

We can no longer be content by being first in debt and last in job creation. Ontario will rise again and reach its true potential, but only if we change the team that leads this province. Our party is committed to working hard for Ontario families, and that is why we are offering real solutions for the disaster that this Liberal government, propped up again by the third party for the second year in a row—the disaster that these two parties have gotten Ontario into.

Just to close in a few moments, I want to talk about the debt crisis we're faced with in the province of Ontario today.

1630

In 2003, when the McGuinty Liberals came to power, the debt in the province of Ontario was around \$139 billion. A recent report came out saying that in fiscal year 2019-20, the debt in the province of Ontario is going to hit \$550 billion. I know, coming from the private sector, that if we ran our family business or if MPPs ran their household budgets like this Liberal government runs the province, we would be broke tomorrow.

Another scary statistic is the fact that the debt per man, woman and child in this province is now \$20,000. That's just the provincial portion of the debt. You know, my wife and I are excited to be having a child in August—

Interjections: Hear, hear.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Thank you. And, you know, it's really concerning that children today are faced with this burden, thanks to the Dalton McGuinty, Kathleen Wynne and now Andrea Horwath government. This budget alone is adding billions and billions of dollars to the provincial debt, and it's just a real shame that we saw the Premier walk away while Ontario was heading down this path.

Again, our party is committed to working hard for Ontario families. We've put out a dozen policy papers; ideas that are tough decisions, but we have to get Ontario back on track. Under this government, under this apparently, supposedly new government, there has been no change and no renewal. While the politically easy thing to do may have been to let the budget pass, as I said those in the third party have chosen to do, we have a responsibility to demand a plan that brings about a major change in direction, a major change in course.

It is unfortunate that Premier Wynne has decided to ignore our recommendations and has included none of them in her budget. This Premier had an opportunity to change course, an opportunity to move Ontario onto the right path. But regrettably for Ontario, for families and businesses in this province, Premier Kathleen Wynne and Andrea Horwath have chosen to further entrench the Liberals' spending and scandal-plagued legacy.

We need a new approach in Ontario, and it starts with having only as much government as we can afford. For this reason, I'm proud that the PC caucus has taken a principled approach in opposing the budget motion, and I encourage my colleagues to join me in doing this today.

It's been an honour to provide feedback from residents across Lambton–Kent–Middlesex and on behalf of the hundreds of businesses I've met with since I've been able to serve as MPP over the last 18 months. But I can't reiterate enough that the Liberal government has failed in its attempt to draft a budget that deals with our jobs and debt crisis here in the province. The budget falls short because it lacks the fundamentals to create jobs and grow our economy here in the province.

With that, Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity today.

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

Mr. Michael Prue: I listened to my colleague as he spoke here today, and I always like to listen to him. It's too bad that someone so young is so Conservative so fast, because, you know, usually you grow into that. As you become a bitter old man, you become like what he is today. But he got there really early.

He belongs to a party that he's very proud does nothing but complain; a party that does nothing to help the people in the horse racing industry and then blames the NDP; a party that does nothing on the budget, never made a single recommendation in committee or in the House or anywhere leading up to the budget time and then complains about everything that's in it; a party that does nothing for apprenticeships or to try to save jobs and then complains when the government changes the laws.

You know, what Tim Hudak, as leader of the party, says Ontario needs is more people like Doug Ford. If we only had Doug Ford in this place, said Tim Hudak, we'd be much better off. Well, I'd like to talk about the National Post today and Chris Selley. He wrote a whole column, and at the end he concluded it like this: "Doug Ford is not some garden-variety loudmouth; he makes

Queen's Park's legacy loudmouths look like Trappist monks. He's a magnet for controversy, a sworn and virulent enemy of the media, playing a key role in a thoroughly botched attempt to manage drug allegations against his brother. If Mr. Hudak and company think he's ... what Ontarians want, and really what their party needs, I greatly fear for their prospects."

I greatly fear for the prospects of this party too.

Interjections.

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

The Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: There are moments when I listen to my friend opposite in the official opposition. We are arguably the most privileged generation in Canadian history. We're growing up with an education system that would be the envy and dreams of our parents and our grandparents. We live in a country where everyone gets to vote. We have the best school system in the English-speaking world.

I remember my grandmother came to Hamilton in 1908. She grew up in poverty. Two of her nine children died. We did not have the medicare system, nor did we have the benefits or the pensions.

What I hear is an incredible amount of selfishness when we have the most robust job creation record almost in the western world, certainly for any manufacturing economy. Our auto sector is the best it has ever been, and more dynamic. We've never produced more cars in the history of that.

But I've given the example—this is a much more challenging economy than anyone has ever gathered. You know, Pittsburgh in 1983 and 1984 saw 104 of 104 steel plants close. Today there are two steel plants in Pittsburgh—only two. And, you know, of the 243,000 people who lost their jobs in Pittsburgh in 24 months—those two plants make more steel than they ever made in Pittsburgh, including that. Do you know how many people make steel in Pittsburgh in those two plants? Some 300.

This is the new industrial economy. What the party opposite does not understand is that we are making more cars than we ever have, with less people, and it has been hard.

When Mike Harris was in, before this transition happened, Wallaceburg lost 4,000 tool-and-die jobs in a town of 11,000. We created 400,000 jobs, 70 of which require a university education system—which we have doubled and they cut. They don't understand the economy, and that gentleman—

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

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker—

Interjections.

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

Go ahead.

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: You know, I think that the fine member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex had some very,

very solid points. I have to say he represents his riding with distinction and he's great to have here in the PC caucus. The people back home should be very proud of him.

Here we have a government that likes to grandstand. The NDP—the member from Beaches–East York talks about the horse racing industry and how they were the saviours of the horse racing industry, yet they were the ones who propped up this corrupt Liberal government—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member from Northumberland–Quinte West will withdraw. I know I hadn't before, but I don't like to hear it repeated.

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: Withdraw.

This is the NDP government who propped up this Liberal government, who is scandal-ridden. Here we are, at a point when we have the Liberal government, who spends \$1 billion on gas plants and the relocations, to save a few Liberal seats, and yet I guess NDP seats aren't worth as much, because they've bought off the NDP party with \$1 billion for 18 seats—so \$1 billion for a couple of Liberal seats, or \$1 billion for 18 NDP seats.

You know, the Minister of Transportation stood across here just moments ago and said we had the greatest education system in the world. Well, this Liberal Party is the reason why I am here and left the teaching profession—because we don't have the best education system in the world and we're not preparing our students for the global economy of the 21st century. Only the PC Party is standing up for Ontarians in this chamber, doing what's right for Ontarians.

1640

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. What's clear is that people in the last election did not elect Tim Hudak as the Premier of Ontario. The people of Ontario went to the polls and they said, "We're bringing back a minority Parliament in order to be able to deal with the issues that face Ontario today."

It seems to me that what's been happening since that election is that the Tories under Tim Hudak have not understood what the voters have told them. They've said, "Listen, we don't want a majority government at this point. We certainly don't want Tim Hudak at this point"—because he was the guy who was ahead in the polls who ended up losing government last time, so it's clear that they rejected him. What they want is this Parliament to actually do something for the people of Ontario.

So yes, Andrea Horwath and the New Democrats rolled up their sleeves and said, "Listen, how do we do the best that we can, given the budget process with the Liberal government?" We put in place a number of things that we're quite proud of dealing with how we can get long-term-care services in our homes, making sure that we can get a reduction in auto insurance for people so that they have some respite in the pocketbook, dealing with youth unemployment and a number of other issues,

and the government said yes to those things, which was good.

But then the most important thing is we needed to have transparency and accountability, and we said, “We need to put in place something called the financial accountability officer. We need to make sure that the government does not bring road tolls by the back door, that it has to come through this Legislature so that this Legislature is the one to decide, because we, as New Democrats, don’t believe that the HST or any other form of costs onto consumers is the right way to go when it comes to dealing with transit. We believe transit is important, but we need to find other ways to finance it.”

So it’s clear what the people have said, and I think the Tories, at one point, have to start asking themselves a question: Is there another word in their lexicon other than “no”? Is there another word in their lexicon that allows them to do something for the people back home? Because it seems at this point that the only thing they can do is oppose, and they can’t propose any solutions to the province of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Lambton–Kent–Middlesex has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I’d like to thank the member from Beaches–East York, the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, the fine member from Northumberland–Quinte West and the member from Timmins–James Bay.

Just one thing—two points, I guess, to the Minister of Transportation. One, I’m not sure if he’s aware that Ontario’s wage growth in the last 12 months is dead last in the country, and for over 75 months Ontario’s unemployment rate has been higher than the national average, so it’s not a record that his Liberal government can be proud of.

We have this jobs crisis in the province with 600,000 men and women today. These are people that we all know—family, neighbours, friends—who have lost their job, and it’s because this government is mishandling Ontario’s economy.

There are five things that we need to do, and we talked about this in our Paths to Prosperity. One, we need to get the books balanced in the province of Ontario as quickly as possible. We need affordable energy in this province. We need to reform labour laws. We don’t think that people should have to join a union or—

Interjection.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Yes, or be forced to join a union to get a job or to keep a job. We have hundreds of thousands of rules and regulations that Ontario businesses are faced with every day. We need to cut red tape, and we need to cut taxes to create jobs in this province. As Conservatives, we recognize the challenges that this government has dug for this province, and that’s why we put out bold initiatives to get Ontario back on track. It’s going to take strong leadership and it’s going to take Tim Hudak and the PC team to get Ontario back on track.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a

change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members’ public business such that Mr. Harris assumes ballot item number 47 and Mr. Pettapiece assumes ballot item number 77.

Further debate.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I’m always pleased to stand in the Legislature and represent the residents of London–Fanshawe.

I rise today on the budget motion presented by this government. While the official opposition would have you believe that this is a co-sponsored budget between the NDP and the Liberals, I would like to say to them that it takes greater leadership and courage to seek out compromise than it does to simply walk away, sight unseen, for the second year in a row. What kind of message are you sending to your constituents? That you are unwilling to do the job you were elected to do; that once the job requires any kind of effort, you aren’t interested. Why work hard when you can simply walk away?

I can’t figure out why you are so ready to spend millions of hard-earned tax dollars on an election yet you can’t stop clamouring for fiscal restraint. If enough people wanted an election, they would have one, but currently that is simply not the case. That means it’s time once again to roll up our sleeves and deliver results for people who can’t afford to watch these kinds of petty political games; people who desperately need help now, not after an election or political posturing but right now. We all have a responsibility to deliver that aid at every and any chance we get.

While I don’t know what the opposition is trying to accomplish, I do know that I have never been more proud of my own leader and our team. Last year, we achieved some measures of improvement to a vastly unfair Liberal budget, but this year we really made our mark and showed Ontarians the kind of results that strong and passionate leadership can deliver. We have proven that we have very different ideas about leadership and that we also have very different ideas about the challenges that Ontarians are facing. We know that people are looking for action on jobs, especially our youth, who are facing double-digit unemployment rates.

Trust me: I am from London and we know intimately the pains of soaring unemployment rates. We know that people are also worried about their health care system. They are concerned that their tax dollars are being spent on abusive scandals like Ornge and eHealth while they are lining up in hospital emergency rooms for hours at a time and watching as more and more services are removed from OHIP.

New Democrats have taken the position that by genuinely listening to the people of this province, you can improve their lives, regardless of your title. It sounds simple, and the best approaches typically are. My colleagues in the opposition seem to forget that idea every time the budget comes around, and so does this government. This government seems to forget that the people did not elect them to spend their hard-earned tax dollars

on a whim. They, too, warrant a reminder that the “just trust me” approach no longer works here anymore. How can it? Not after you have blown billions on gas plants, re-election scandals, health care dollars wasted on Ornge and eHealth.

To this government, I say, we are watching you very closely. “Accountability” and “transparency” are two words you need to start learning very quickly. The people of this province will no longer tolerate scandal while you claim to be asleep at the wheel. Make no mistake about it: Your scandals hurt us all and they devalue the work we do here.

I and my colleagues take the people’s work very seriously. Once again, New Democrats took the road less travelled. We fought the hard fight for those who need relief the most, and we delivered results that Ontarians can count on.

We put forward strong proposals that would bring back the trust and balance that has been torn away. The establishment of a financial accountability office that will prevent spending scandals before they happen is a step in the right direction for this province. The people deserve to get an independent look at the province’s spending habits.

The government has been quick to place demands on the budget of everyday working families while throwing money at corporations. It’s time to restore some fairness to the process and give Ontario families a voice at the table. They might have something interesting to say about being forced to subsidize billions of dollars in corporate tax loopholes. I know that I’m very eager to see what can be accomplished when the playing fields get levelled a bit more favourably towards everyday people.

I have to admit that I am glad that this government was prepared to listen to New Democrats and implement some of our ideas in this budget. We know these ideas are right for this province because they came from listening to people and asking them what they needed. When you are guided by those principles, it’s hard to get it wrong.

1650

As people here know, I put forward a motion to help seniors get home care when they need it, with a guaranteed wait time of five days. I am pleased that we were able to negotiate this with the government to include it in the budget. From doctors to nurses to ministers to health care experts, everyone agrees that home care is cost-effective and treats seniors with the dignity that they deserve.

To date, our health care system has refused to reflect that reality. Some would say that this is due to the financial mismanagement of our health care system. I might even agree with that, but I have been raised to believe that how we treat our seniors and our children is a direct reflection of who we are as a society. Right now, I am glad to be part of a society that will implement this vital program.

According to Ontario’s Auditor General, some Ontarians have been forced to wait as long as 262 days to

receive home care services, and currently there are more than 6,100 Ontarians on the waiting list for home care. We know that a five-day guarantee is realistic and achievable. More importantly, this is a step that will make a real difference in the lives of seniors and their families. It is the positive change that Ontarians want to see. We want to be kinder to each other.

Mr. Speaker, we know that seniors worked all their lives for their families and for this province, and it’s about time that they were treated with the respect that they have already worked for. They have earned the consideration of a government that has spent their dollars for decades.

Interjection: Madam Speaker.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Speaker, I have to correct—a point of order for myself: Madam Speaker, not Mr. Speaker.

My New Democrat colleagues will be watching how this bill is implemented by the government upon passage of the budget, in a few days or next week. We know that in some communities, access to timely care is easier to provide than in others. We know that the seniors living in Timmins–James Bay and Kenora–Rainy River will not be left behind. I know that my colleagues from these ridings will be ever watchful. We don’t do this to be difficult; we do this because lives are at stake.

The numbers don’t lie. Today, 3,300 Ontarians are waiting for care by a personal support worker. An additional 2,800 are waiting for service by physiotherapists, occupational therapists and social workers. During the 2011 election, there was a home care wait-list of 10,000 Ontarians. We know the cost to clear that backlog is entirely affordable; the costs don’t even compare to the numbers that this government has blown in their seat-saver scandals. This is why New Democrats refuse to allow this neglect to continue.

It is the same philosophy that saw New Democrats insist that the auto insurance rates be cut by a minimum of 15%. When insurance companies are posting record profits, a time to seek relief is evident. We have all heard the claims of fraud and all the other reasons why insurance companies need to line their pockets. All we ask for is reasonability and fairness. This is why it is very concerning for New Democrats to watch this government claim to negotiate in good faith and then allow insurance companies to immediately jack up rates by the very amount of the discount that is being negotiated.

We want this government to know that we are watching them carefully. We are watching to see if their words match their actions. Right now, it would appear to be a close call. This province has no room left for deception or political game-playing. There are people who are making a living in their vehicles, and they are counting on us to make it right and make it fair. If it was your livelihood on the line, how would you want to be treated?

I am hoping that this government will stand behind the negotiations that were achieved over this budget, especially those gains made to support our youth. Rising to meet the challenges of youth employment is not easy,

but it is necessary. New Democrats proposed a First Start program, and this government took that issue seriously; they proposed a \$195-million youth jobs program, which essentially mirrors what the NDP proposed. We are pleased that they are further planning on addressing youth entrepreneurship, a youth innovation fund and a business-labour connectivity fund, but we haven't seen the money and how they plan on achieving this exactly.

I suggest that this government take the time to get it right, because I have spent time in classrooms with our youth. I went to Clarke Road Secondary School and talked to the youth with Andrea Horwath, our leader. I should also say that I actually attended Clarke Road in grades 9 and 10, and it's a wonderful school. When I went to that school, they actually had a lot of shop classes, which was great to see. It gave you the exposure to a different occupation choice, and a different kind of career choice.

When my children went to school, especially my daughter, I encouraged her to take shop. She took automotive and aviation. She didn't pursue a career in the skilled trades. But I think that's the importance of us teaching our youth the benefit of skilled trades and that there are different areas where people can become professionals. All contractors and skilled tradespersons are professionals. They are valued in our world and we rely on them to make sure that our homes are reconstructed, renovated and safe.

So when we were at Clarke Road Secondary School and listening and engaging in discussions with the grade 12 students, they had some very smart questions. They wanted to know how this government—one particular student was very keen, and he said, "How are they going to pay for this program? How much is it going to cost?" I suspect he was a Conservative, because he—

Interjection.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: It's a good question. That's right.

What's it going to cost? But you know, we did our homework, and we explained to them, that we as New Democrats showed this government how to pay for these programs, how to pay for our initial proposals. One of the things we told this class of students is that there are corporate tax loopholes that can be closed. We think it's wasteful to allow a corporation to write off taxes for meals and entertainment and tickets at Blue Jays games. That's not a good way to spend tax dollars. We want to make sure that money comes back into a youth program for employment.

We also talked about procurement and that the LHINs and the CCACs could actually formulate a better system of procurement when they buy things, when they buy products, and streamline that so they're getting the best value for their money. As well, duplication in administration: the LHINs and CCACs—it's a top-heavy administration. Perhaps they could be looking at that and effectively streamline that administration to put money back into programs like the home care five-day guarantee.

We also talked about the balance that we took on this budget, and we proposed the OW and ODSP \$200-a-

month income so that people wouldn't have employment barriers and if they had the opportunity to get some experience, that that income wouldn't be clawed back from them.

I was glad to see a few other initiatives under that suggestion. One of them is if a family is on ODSP or OW and the child—let's say they're 16 years old and they want to venture out into the workforce, their income isn't going to be clawed back. So that's giving the children an opportunity to look for employment and engage and not have the parents penalized for their employment.

The other piece on the ODSP and OW was entrepreneurship. If someone who has a wonderful talent but they're not able to get a job, and they want to be creative, and they want to contribute, so they start their own business—well, again, if they can make up to \$200 a month, that won't be clawed back.

So as you can see, these are results, and the Conservatives haven't contributed to this budget. It's very disappointing to be in a minority government and know that the people of Ontario—you've had two majority governments prior to this minority government, and to know that this is my first time elected and I can actually get results. I have a voice for the residents of London-Fanshawe. But yet the Conservatives chose not to speak, not to speak out for the residents. I'm dumbfounded that they're not taking this opportunity to move and get results for Ontarians. This is the perfect set-up: a minority government. You can actually show your strength when you want to have something go through and get done.

I wouldn't want to be in a majority government. I mean, I certainly would be proud regardless of if it's a majority or minority and stand here and represent the people of London-Fanshawe—but to have a majority government and just constantly ram through whatever they want, every bill, and you don't have a say. You can't stand up here and vote against what they do, because—well, you can, but it's not going to make a difference. So the minority government makes a difference.

1700

This government has listened. We have done the hard work of our constituents. We don't take our jobs lightly. Every day that I come into this House, I am here to deliver results, I am here to articulate the concerns of my constituents, and I'm proud of that.

When the Conservatives lightly throw that responsibility away, that's like when you know you can vote and don't go out and vote. That's your right. They have a right to be part of this democratic process and they said no, and that's extremely disappointing. But we hear lots of negatives. We constantly hear negative comments from them. What they should be doing is taking those negative comments and getting results, giving some productive ideas.

Yes, they've got their white paper, and there have kind of been a little bit of jokes and innuendo that it's a two-

Interjection.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: One-ply, two-ply. If you look at that white paper, you can probably see right through it. It's called a power play. These Conservatives are looking for an election. They're looking to get power, you know. It's not about power—a minority government is what the people of Ontario sent you here for—it's about working together to get things accomplished so that Ontarians' lives are better.

I hope this Conservative government will reflect on their decision this time around—

Interjections.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Oh, excuse me. Yes, I should wash my mouth out with soap. That's a bad word.

Anyway, here's the thing. This government needs to reflect on their decision last session to say no and this session to say no. You're not doing justice to the voices of your constituents. You have to stand up and you have to contribute to this government and you have to give your voice.

I understand you're passionate, but turn that passion into results. Turn passion into results. I know you're passionate and you like to criticize, but you can channel that passion into actually getting results for Ontarians. Imagine the energy it takes to be negative and critical—imagine the energy it takes—whereas when you take that negative energy and funnel it into a positive outcome, you can actually get results for people. That's what we've done, and I am proud to stand here as a New Democrat with my colleagues and know that we participated in a democratic process, made this government listen to us, gave them proposals. We spoke to the Premier—

Interjection.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: There's my member from the opposition—yes, I'm using my hands—

Interjection: Judo chop.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Yes. But you know what? This is what it's all about. We were heard. We were heard, and the people of our ridings were heard. This government listened, and we got results for Ontarians. Really, we even proposed a balanced approach. You can say, you know, the “NDP-Liberal government budget.” However, we also gave them suggestions on how to pay for those results. It's very interesting, because, as our leader has always said, NDP governments have balanced budgets.

Interjection: You've only got a minute.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I've only got a minute left.

Interjection: Go ahead. Feel free. Cut 'em up.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'm glad the Conservatives are here, because we always need that perspective of the grey cloud, the black cloud over the world. We need that perspective, because that helps us make sure that we know there is hope. It's not always about a black cloud over everything you do. You've got to have some hope. You've got to get up every day and say, “Things may not be the way I want, things may not be perfect, but you know what? I can make a difference.” Just because the world isn't the way I like it doesn't mean I step back

and walk away and don't participate. Participate in the democratic process. Have a voice.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Pursuant to standing order 58(d), the time allotted to this debate has expired.

On May 2, 2013, Mr. Sousa moved, seconded by Ms. Wynne, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say “aye.”

All those opposed, say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Wait. “Pursuant to standing order 28(h), I request that the vote on the motion that this House approves in general will be deferred until deferred votes on Wednesday.”

Vote deferred.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

Hon. John Milloy: Madam Speaker, I believe you'll find we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding late shows.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Is there unanimous consent? Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. John Milloy: Madam Speaker, I move that the late show requested by the member from Huron-Bruce directed to the Minister of Energy scheduled for tonight be rescheduled to 6 p.m. on Wednesday, May 29, 2013.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. John Milloy: Madam Speaker, I move that, notwithstanding any standing order or special order of the House, there be a timetable applied to the consideration of certain business of the House as follows:

(a) Bill 65, the Prosperous and Fair Ontario Act (Budget Measures), 2013

When Bill 65 is next called as a government order, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill without further debate or amendment, and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs; and

That the vote on second reading of the bill may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

The committee is authorized to meet for the purpose of public hearings for one day that is two calendar days after the bill receives second reading, as follows: from 9 a.m. to noon and from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. If the second calendar day after the bill receives second reading falls on a weekend, the public hearings shall take place on the following Monday; and

The deadline for acceptance by the Clerk of the Committee of written public submissions on the bill shall

be at 6 p.m. on the day the committee meets for public hearings; and

The deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 5 p.m. on the day following the day that the committee meets for public hearings; and

The committee is authorized to meet for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill for one day that is two calendar days after the committee meets for public hearings, as follows: from 9 a.m. to noon and from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. If the second calendar day after public hearings falls on a weekend, clause-by-clause consideration of the bill shall take place on the following Monday; and

At 4 p.m. on the day that the committee meets for clause-by-clause consideration, those amendments which have not yet been moved shall be deemed to have been moved, and the Chair of the committee shall interrupt the proceedings and shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto. Any division required shall be deferred until all remaining questions have been put and taken in succession, with one 20-minute waiting period allowed pursuant to standing order 129(a); and

The committee shall report the bill to the House on the first sessional day following clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

That, upon receiving the report of the committee, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading. In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on the first sessional day following clause-by-clause consideration, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House, and shall be deemed to be ordered for third reading; and

1710

The order for third reading of the bill shall then immediately be called; and

Two hours shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

No deferral of the third reading vote shall be permitted; and

In the case of any division relating to any proceedings on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes; and

At the conclusion of all proceedings on the bill, the Speaker shall adjourn the House, without motion, until Monday, September 9, 2013.

(b) Parliamentary calendar

Notwithstanding standing order 6(a), the House shall continue to meet commencing Monday, June 10, 2013, except that this provision shall have no effect if all proceedings on Bill 65, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various Acts, have concluded by midnight on Thursday, June 6, 2013; and

No other motion to revise the parliamentary calendar shall be moved before September 9, 2013, without unanimous consent.

(c) Establishment of a financial accountability office

The passage of this motion shall constitute an order to the Minister of Finance to introduce a bill, no later than September 11, 2013.

The bill establishing the financial accountability office, or FAO, shall include:

Office of the FAO

The office of the FAO shall include such employees as the FAO deems necessary for the proper conduct of the business of the office, to be hired by the FAO pursuant to the budgetary limits of the office.

Terms of office and removal:

—The FAO shall hold office for a term of five years and may be reappointed for a further term, but is removable at any time for cause by the Lieutenant Governor in Council on the address of the assembly;

—The FAO shall be selected by a panel composed of one member from each recognized party, and chaired by the Speaker who shall be a non-voting member.

Mandate:

Provide the Legislative Assembly of Ontario with independent analysis of the state of the province's finances and trends in the provincial and national economies, including the budget; and

at the request of a committee or member of the assembly shall:

(a) undertake research into the province's finances and trends in the provincial and national economies; and

(b) undertake research into the estimates and all legislation of the government and opposition members; and

(c) undertake research to estimate the financial cost of any proposal that would impact the province's finances and that relates to a matter over which the Legislature has jurisdiction, including government agencies and ministries;

Power to decline:

The FAO may decline any assignment by a committee or member of the assembly.

However, priority to undertake an assignment shall be given to matters over which the Legislature has jurisdiction including government agencies and ministries and government legislation.

Access to financial and economic information:

The FAO is entitled to have free and timely access to any financial or economic information belonging to or used by a ministry, agency of the crown or crown-controlled corporation that the financial accountability officer believes to be necessary to perform his or her duties under this section.

Exceptions shall include:

(a) any financial or economic information that is personal health information under the Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004;

(b) personal information under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act or that is a cabinet

record that is exempt for the purposes of section 12 of that act.

Privilege:

No waiver of privilege:

A disclosure to the financial accountability officer does not constitute a waiver of solicitor-client privilege, litigation privilege or settlement privilege.

Proceedings privileged:

No proceedings lie against the FAO, or against any person holding any office or appointment under the FAO, for anything he or she may do or report or say in the course of the exercise or intended exercise of his or her functions, unless it is shown that he or she acted in bad faith.

And that the order for second reading of the bill shall be called at the outset of morning orders of the day two sessional days following introduction of the bill; in the event that the second sessional day is a Monday, the bill shall be called at the outset of afternoon orders of the day; and

Two hours shall be allotted to the second reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment, and at such time the bill shall be ordered referred to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly; and

That the vote on second reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

The committee is authorized to meet for two sessional days for the purpose of public hearings on the bill, commencing on the third sessional day after the bill is referred to the committee, as follows: from 9 a.m. to noon and from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.; and

The committee is authorized to meet for one sessional day for the purpose of clause-by-clause consideration of the bill on the third sessional day following the day on which the committee met for public hearings as follows: from 9 a.m. to noon and from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.; and

The deadline for filing amendments to the bill with the Clerk of the Committee shall be 5 p.m. on the sessional day before clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

The committee shall report the bill to the House on the third sessional day following the day on which the committee met for clause-by-clause consideration of the bill; and

That upon receiving the report of the committee, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith and at such time the bill shall be ordered for third reading.

In the event that the committee fails to report the bill on the first sessional day following clause-by-clause consideration, the bill shall be deemed to be passed by the committee and shall be deemed to be reported to and received by the House and shall be deemed to be ordered for third reading; and

The order for third reading of the bill shall then immediately be called and two hours shall be allotted to the third reading stage of the bill, apportioned equally

among the recognized parties. At the end of this time, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of this stage of the bill without further debate or amendment; and

That the vote on third reading may be deferred pursuant to standing order 28(h); and

In the case of any division relating to any proceedings in the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes; and

In the event of prorogation, the order in this section to the Minister of Finance shall endure and the bill and every schedule in it shall be introduced no later than the third sessional day of the third session of the 40th Parliament, and the other timelines in this section shall continue to apply.

Should prorogation occur after introduction of the bill, the bill shall be continued and placed on the Orders and Notices paper of the second sessional day of the subsequent session at the same stage as the prorogation, and the bill shall resume its progression through the House according to the timelines of this order; and

The commencement clause of the bill and of any schedule thereto shall provide for its coming into force in its entirety on the day it receives royal assent; and

The bill shall be presented to the Lieutenant Governor for royal assent before the House adjourns on the day it receives third reading.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. Milloy has moved government motion 19. Mr. Milloy.

Hon. John Milloy: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. My intention this evening is not to speak for very long. In fact, I don't think there will be a lot of people on our side who will speak for very long, because this is a procedural motion.

I'll just outline very briefly for the House what it does. Although it took a long time for me to read it, in fact the outcome is very simple.

We have before this House a number of issues related to the budget. One is the budget motion, where a debate has just been finished, and in fact there will be a vote on it tomorrow; the second is the budget bill, Bill 65.

As you know, Madam Speaker, and as members know, in the last number of weeks we've had 11 hours of debate on this bill. I think most observers would say that it's time to move forward with it, have it go to committee to be dealt with at committee, to deal with the public hearings and amendments, and to be reported back for third reading.

The reason why we're putting forward this motion—the first part is because it outlines a smooth path for this bill to go to a second reading vote, to be dealt with at committee in a reasonable length of time, and then to come back here for, again, a reasonable debate around third reading.

As members are aware, things have not been as smooth throughout this spring. On a number of government bills that have been brought forward, we have seen extraordinarily long debates. We've seen, really, filibustering by members of this House.

1720

I'll give you examples, Madam Speaker. Bill 11, the air ambulance act, was debated for 19 hours and 14 minutes. I think that any observer of this place would know that that's an extraordinary length of time in terms of a second reading. I will pick two pieces of legislation that don't have much controversy associated with them. Bill 14, the co-op housing act, 15 hours and 50 minutes, and Bill 36, the Local Food Act, 20 hours and 35 minutes.

The first part of this motion that we're putting forward today will allow for a smooth transition of this bill. As I say, Madam Speaker, we have already had 11 hours of debate. Members have been able to pronounce themselves on it, and they will certainly, if this passes and it moves through, have opportunities to speak to it at committee and through the third reading.

The second part of the motion that we put forward this afternoon deals with a financial accountability officer. I think members are aware of a proposal that was actually brought forward by the third party in the course of our budget negotiations for something like a parliamentary budget officer as they have in Ottawa and, in fact, in other jurisdictions across North America, an independent officer of the House who would, in a sense, look forward. I think the best way to explain it is that as the Auditor General, another officer of this House, looks backwards, a parliamentary budget officer looks forward and would be a third-party resource to all members of this Legislature when they have questions about estimates and costs related to initiatives and programs etc. that are dealt with by this government.

What this motion does, as well as furnishing a smooth passage of the budget, is that it mandates that the government commit in black and white, and by an order of this House, to come forward with legislation soon after we return this fall. Certainly, on the government side, we are very pleased to do that. I know that my colleague the Minister of Finance has already started to turn his attention—as he would be the sponsor of the bill—to what a bill might look like: as I say, modelled a bit on what's happened in Ottawa, but with a made-in-Ontario seal of approval; a bill which, in fact, would obviously come before this Legislature, and members would have a chance to comment on it.

What's at stake here? Why the rush or the urgency? I think the first part—and obviously, we've just finished eight hours of debate on the budget motion, as members are aware—is that this is a very important budget. We want to get on with it. We want to see the implementation of key parts, but in particular, the bill, which is the enabling document of the motion, contains a number of time-sensitive items that we would like to see pass this Legislature, if it's the will of the Legislature, sooner rather than later.

The most major one is an increase in the Ontario Child Benefit, which on July 1, 2013, if the bill were to pass, would go to \$1,210 and, under provisions of the bill, in the following year, 2014, to \$1,310. We have an urgency

to pass this bill so that it could go into effect as planned in the budget.

The second item that I will draw members' attention to—as I say, the entire bill is important, and we want to get it through, but there are some very specific time-sensitive matters—is changes around the Ontario Trillium Benefit. We heard from many Ontarians that this benefit, which in the past has been paid on a monthly basis—people want the option of receiving it in a lump sum. That would require us working with the Canada Revenue Agency, and again, it takes a great deal of time to have the systems in place, so we want to be able to officially go to the Canada Revenue Agency as soon as possible.

I could also mention or reference the important work that we have asked FSCO through this bill, if it passes, to do in terms of auto insurance. Again, time is of the essence. These are very complicated processes, these are very complicated subject matters, and the more time that we can give an agency such as FSCO to begin this process, the better.

I'll make one final reference, to permanently dedicating two cents of the gas tax each year to municipalities for public transportation, another item of certainty that is contained in this bill; I am sure that municipalities would want to see it go through as soon as possible.

Madam Speaker, I realize that, according to the rules of the Legislature, I could speak for an hour.

Interjection: Go ahead.

Hon. John Milloy: No. I've only spoken for six or seven minutes because this is a procedural motion. We, of course, welcome debate on it. But it's a procedural motion, Madam Speaker, and as I say, it's to create a very smooth transition for a very important piece of legislation on the one hand, and also commit the government to move forward on another very important initiative, the creation of a financial accountability officer, or in lay terms, a parliamentary budget officer, as has been outlined—the framework has been outlined in this motion.

We look forward to debate and discussion on this, but we certainly are anxious to move on with it. I think the people of Ontario and those who will benefit from the budget initiatives are anxious that this Legislature deal with it.

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

Mr. Jim Wilson: I rise today to talk about the programming motion that has just been introduced by the government House leader. Since becoming House leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition, I've learned, especially in a minority Parliament, that in order to make it work, you have to talk to your counterparts on the other side of the aisle. That's not happening, Madam Speaker.

Interjection.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I just want to say, while he's chirping up there, that I enjoy working with Mr. Milloy, the government House leader. He's a much more affable fellow and House leader than the previous one, I can tell

you that. And I enjoy working with the House leader of the NDP. Gilles Bisson, the member from northern Ontario, is a terrific fellow and enjoyable to talk to. I don't mind buying him a beer once in a while and having a chat with him.

But again, they have to talk to us, not have secret talks amongst themselves, which lead to today's programming motion, and then go out in the hallway, as the government House leader did a few hours ago in a scrum, and indicate that the PCs are holding everything up and that we're not co-operating. Well, co-operation is a two-way street, and you haven't talked to us about this motion. You haven't talked to us about our ideas around the budget; that was clear. You haven't talked with us in any way about moving forward in this Legislature since I've been House leader.

When Dalton McGuinty prorogued this House back in October 2012 to escape further scrutiny—took off with his tail between his legs to save what was left of his party and his own reputation—the main issue at the time was he was afraid to be accountable for the gas plant scandal, for Ornge, for eHealth and on and on and on. The Liberals took an unprecedented four-month soul-searching journey to find themselves a new leader—unprecedented. They closed the place down for four months. I've never seen that in my 23 years. There's nothing in the annals of the history of this place to indicate that that ever happened before. To do such a selfish act, to close this place down so the party could, as he said, lower the conversation, lower the tone, to run away, scared to face the accountability of this Legislature, is shameful.

I tell you, for you to expect us to come back here in a minority government after proroguing for four months and just blanketly say yes to everything you ask for and vote on everything you ask for—that may be the NDP's way of propping up a government that's been more than honest with the people of Ontario, a scandal-plagued government, but it's not our way. My constituents told me—I can remember standing in the grocery store in Wasaga Beach, and two people, two couples, coming up to me and saying, “When you go back”—this was at Christmastime—“don't reward bad behaviour.” It's disgusting what Dalton McGuinty did in October of last year. So keep that in mind as we debate every bill and every motion on this side of the House, which is our right to do.

One thing I note about Premier Wynne is her love for conversations. We hear that all the time. She acknowledged that her predecessor, Dalton McGuinty, seemed to rule autocratically, and she promised to be different. She promised to engage, to converse, to listen and to stop the chest-pounding here in the Legislature. I was somewhat impressed, and I think the people of Ontario were impressed that things might be different. I figured the House leader stonewalling that I had experienced under Dalton McGuinty might come to an end.

Remember, since the 2011 election, they still haven't figured out that it's a minority government. You have to talk to all parties in the House. You have to make deals,

as it were, to get things through, and you actually have to come and ask us what we need to better serve the people of Ontario. What do we need? For example, I'm sitting here with the member for Leeds–Grenville, who has a perfectly good bill that would serve the people of Ontario tremendously well, that would serve medical professions, the dental professions, and allow them to treat their spouses and their families and not be illegal, especially in rural or remote parts of the province where they may be the only practitioner in town. That's a perfectly good bill.

1730

Or we have a motion on the table that was passed on May 16 here in this Legislature by all three parties, a passed motion from the member from Whitby–Oshawa, Christine Elliott, that calls upon this place to establish an all-party select committee to look into developmental services in the province of Ontario. We all agreed on it. Do you think Mr. Milloy, the government House leader, has come over and said, “Jim, if we helped you out and establish that select committee, would you speed up the budget debate a little bit?” You know, we're willing to talk about that. If you want to talk about Mr. Clark's bill that's on the table and that's all ready to go, we're happy to talk about that. There are a number of things that I'll get to near the end of my remarks that we're happy to talk about, that Mr. Milloy knows about. So don't be fooled, folks, that they're talking to us. They're not talking to us, so we see no reason at this time to step back and let you two have your way. We have a right to debate. We will take that right, and we will debate till the cows come home, if that's what you want.

So back to Premier Wynne and her conversations. I thought, as I said, that the stonewalling and the autocratic rule of Premier Dalton McGuinty would come to an end perhaps with the rhetoric I was hearing—it turned out to be rhetoric—from Premier Wynne, because at the House leaders' level, nothing has changed. There's no new government, there's no new approach to dealing with Her Majesty's loyal official opposition—nothing has changed. The proof is in the pudding.

She was having conversations, though. Everywhere you turned, Premier Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals seemed to be in deep conversation. She had conversations with her leadership rivals. She tried to convince Sandra Pupatello to become finance minister, but instead opted for second best. After demoting the only Liberal minister who had held the line on freezing wages to the intergovernmental affairs portfolio, Premier Wynne had conversations with teachers. Those conversations must have gone well, because hundreds of millions of dollars later, the love of teachers was bought again as the Liberals retreated from their very own Bill 115.

Then the Liberals had conversations with LCBO workers, to give them more money; and the Liberals had conversations with Pat Dillon from the Working Families Coalition to, no doubt, assure their union buddies that, “All is good and well with the Liberals. We really haven't changed, folks. We just use that in our speeches and we just use that in our emails and we just use that in

the titles of our press releases, but nothing has changed, Mr. Dillon. All is good and well. We're still with you and, by the way, could you please, once again, spend up to \$10 million trying to defeat Tim Hudak and the Ontario PCs through your advertising campaigns on TV," which, Madam Speaker, any human being on this planet knows is unfair. That's more than the NDP spent on their entire advertising budget in the last campaign—I think it's more than they spent on the entire campaign—and we have these third-party interest groups which are illegal federally. We've asked the government to do something about that. Mr. Hudak, the leader of our party, has sat down with Ms. Wynne, the Premier, and asked specifically that that be dealt with in a fair manner. That's been rejected, of course, by the government.

There were conversations between Premier Wynne and the Liberals and OPSEU, and again likely for more money, but we're just not sure of the details of all of those conversations.

Then came the conversations with the NDP. That is where the NDP sold their souls, I regrettably say. When the Liberals dropped \$1 billion cancelling the gas plants in Mississauga and Oakville to save five Liberal seats, that was \$200 million to save their political skins, so \$200 million per seat is \$1 billion.

But the NDP sold out on this budget deal and this programming motion we have before us for a few trinkets in the budget: more spending, more waste, adding to our debt—as we say, a daughter born tomorrow has \$20,000 on her back, worse than California, California being the most indebted state in the United States, worse than any province in Canada. We are heading towards Greece, folks, and you heard it here first from the PC Party.

Of course the Liberals have promptly agreed to every demand in order to cling to power, every NDP demand there was. So Speaker, the conversations with the NDP must have gone really well. We were shut out of the process—fine. It's not what you say in the hallways, but that is the truth. The NDP was convinced to sell their 18 seats for only \$55.5 million per seat—quite a bargain in comparison to the Liberals. Well, shame on the NDP. Shame on the NDP for selling themselves so cheaply—but I digress, Madam Speaker. Back to the issue at hand: this programming motion.

For all the conversations the Liberals have had, for all the claims of Premier Wynne to want to make this Legislature work, the one party and the one group—and I repeat—that the Liberals have not talked to is the official opposition. Sure, the Liberals will say, "Well the Tories said they would oppose the budget." That is true. Given the throne speech of Premier Wynne, it was clear from day one of the new Liberal government that it was not new at all. It was clear that Premier Wynne would continue on the same reckless path of overspending and debt as Premier McGuinty. It was clear from day one that Premier Wynne was not going to follow the advice of Liberal-appointed Don Drummond.

That all said, Madam Speaker, I was certain that my good friend, my colleague from across the way, the

government House leader, Mr. Milloy, would reach out to me as official opposition House leader at some point. While we've not always agreed, I figured, per the tradition of this place, and despite our decision not to support the Liberal-NDP budget, as always is the case at the end of the spring session, the official opposition was willing to work with the government to get things through the House in the best interest of Ontarians.

But did the government reach out to the PCs to try and have a conversation? Did the government reach out to the PCs to try and get the co-operative housing act passed, which they have promised to stakeholders? No. No. No such conversation. The Liberals are silent.

Did the government reach out to the PCs to try and get the court security act passed? No. No such conversation. Again, the Liberals are silent.

Did the government reach out to the Progressive Conservatives to try and get the Local Food Act passed? I remind you, Madam Speaker, the Local Food Act, the Premier's signature bill in her dual role as Minister of Agriculture and Food, we are told is very important to the Premier—I should say, the part-time Minister of Agriculture and Food. We're told it's very important to her personally and she would like to get it through this session, so you would think that the Liberals would want this act to pass to help Ontario farmers. We're prepared to pass it with some minor amendments proposed by my friend here from Sarnia-Lambton. But nope; no such conversation or outreach by the governing Liberals.

Did the Liberals try and reach out to the Progressive Conservatives to try and get the select committee struck into developmental services, put forward in a motion passed on May 16 by my colleague Christine Elliott from Whitby-Oshawa, which her own members—again all-party support—and the NDP supported? Nope. No conversations there either.

Did the Liberals try and reach out to the PCs to try and get the John Paul II bill passed? Again, it's a bill we've all agreed should go through. Once again, no conversation either.

As we draw to the end of a long session, there are often divisions about getting the House to rise on time, to ensure no bell-ringing and to limit night or midnight sittings. Well, guess what, Madam Speaker? No conversation there either.

Now you might say, as I've said before, conversations are a "two-way" street, or at least I always thought the word meant that two of you were talking—at least two of you. In my family of seven, there were usually seven talking at once, and we called that a conversation, but I digress. Shouldn't the PCs try and have such conversations? Well, we've tried but we've been met with a closed door.

So what are we left to do? Well, we're left with few options but to remind this government they do not have a majority, and stop acting like you have a majority. We're left with few options but to remind this government that they do not have a majority, and this is a minority Parliament, not one of their making—I'm sure they would have

liked it to go another way, as we would have liked it to go another way—but the making of the people of Ontario, the wishes of the people of Ontario. The electorate has spoken. Yes, we should try and make this place work but, again, conversations are needed.

1740

Of the 13 bills the government has on the order paper, which I might add is a pathetic legislative agenda, you would think that the five of the 13 that are Dalton McGuinty retreads the government would want cleared. You would think that the five other bills that are new to the Wynne government, that they would want those passed also. I think they want these bills, but I don't know because, once again, no one is talking to us about these bills from the Liberals. They do their talking through the media and in the hallway.

Well, ignore us at your peril is what I say to the Liberals. We have a strong caucus, a determined caucus, an experienced caucus, a caucus that has shown you, every step of the way, since you arrogantly started running this place after the 2011 election in a minority Parliament—your approach has been arrogant, and we have tried, yes, to thwart you at every step by having us debate every bill, and we'll continue to do that until you have a conversation with us directly.

There are some very simple things that we are asking for, like the select committee, like Mr. Clark's bill. We even have a first responders act that everybody agrees with, put forward by the member from Newmarket–Aurora, that we're happy to discuss with you. We have Mr. Hardeman's bill—the member for Oxford—dealing with CO₂, which was part of an agreement that you've yet to live up to.

I'll give you one thing. Before prorogation, we did have an all-party agreement—by the way, by unanimous consent, so it's not like we're stuck in the mud and don't do this. We showed you last year that we're quite capable of a programming motion that we all agree on, that gets us out of here without bell-ringing and nonsense or things that border on being unparliamentary, but you drive people to that because, again, you do not talk to them; you do not have the conversation.

We are quite capable of doing unanimous consent programming motions. We proved it. Just to go back—I'll give you credit—Mr. Bailey, the member for Sarnia–Lambton, his “call before you dig”—

Mr. Robert Bailey: One Call.

Mr. Jim Wilson:—One Call act went through. But there were two more as part of that deal, and they were Mr. Clark's, the member for Leeds–Grenville, and Mr. Hardeman, the member for Oxford. I'm trying to be very parliamentary today by remembering their riding names, too, just so you don't have to get too upset at me, Madam Speaker.

Interjection.

Mr. Jim Wilson: And One Call was done. Obviously, you're capable of living up to one third of a three-bill agreement, so we'd just like to talk to you about living up to the rest of it. It can't be one-sided. It can't be, “We

want you to do this programming motion. We want out of here June 6. We don't want night sittings. We want the Local Food Act. We want the co-operative housing act. We want the court security act. We want the highway traffic amendment for municipalities to collect fees act,” but never ask us, “What do you want?” We're not asking for—

Interjection.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Yes, it's not rocket science. I wish Mr. Delaney was here, the member for Mississauga–Streetsville.

But the fact of the matter is, we're not asking for anything difficult. In fact, most of our asks have already gone through this place. Take the two bills of the member for Oxford, Mr. Hardeman, and Mr. Clark, the member from Leeds–Grenville: They've actually gone not just through committee and that, they've gone to the ministries. So the government has gone over them word for word. The government lawyers have gone through them. Why can't we move forward?

Instead, you bring through this draconian secret deal with the NDP, because we were shut out of the talks. You didn't even try to talk to us in the last two weeks. So don't go out in the hallway, as you constantly do—because I'll be out there too, all of us, and we'll be telling the truth, and that is, “They never ask us what we want to get this thing rolling around here, and we have reasonable requests.” We have to go back and face our constituents, too, who say, “What did you do this session?” “Well, we have some pretty good bills and some pretty reasonable requests.”

Madam Speaker, I don't understand. It's tradition around here, except with these guys, that we talk about whether we're going to have committees sit in the summer. We already have one request; it's here in my House leader's book, a letter from—what's Bas's riding?

Interjection: Scarborough–Rouge River.

Mr. Jim Wilson:—Scarborough–Rouge River, as Chair of the general government committee, so a Liberal Chair of the committee. The Liberal Chair has written to me and to Mr. Bisson, the NDP House leader, and to the government House leader to ask for four days of travel and sitting during the summer. So there's an all-party—and there are many more requests coming from the other committees who have already asked. Are there any conversations about that? No. Maybe there will be at House leaders' this Thursday. I hope so.

The fact of the matter is that is a request from members of all sides. It's not just a PC request. That's one thing we would like to talk about. Committees have to be able to sit this summer.

You can't expect us to let you get away with the biggest scandal in Canadian history. It amazes me—and as an aside, yes, the Senate is in trouble, and Rob Ford is in trouble, but the biggest scandal is here. It may not get the media attention every day, although I think it will. I think it will. The privacy commissioner, Ms. Cavoukian, came out today and gave a hint of her report coming forward. There's a CP story on it, and there's a Globe

and Mail story on it that I just read about senior Liberal staffers—one being a chief of staff—purposely destroying documents.

That's against the law. We're not just talking about sneaky buying Liberal seats in the last election, which should be a Criminal Code matter but apparently isn't. We're not just talking about contempt of probably up to 10 ministers, including Minister Wynne, when she was a minister, who got up in this Legislature and said one of the scandals was only \$40 million—Oakville—when we know we're close to \$700 million now. On that one alone, I think we're—what are we on Oakville alone?

Interjection.

Mr. Jim Wilson: It's several times, 19 times the \$40 million, and yet they consistently said one thing in this Parliament. Now, it's interesting in this whole gas plant thing: We can't get the Premier to admit when she was told it's going to be more than \$40 million. That's key to contempt, because if she knew—now, we know she chaired the cabinet committee. We know she signed off on the cabinet minute to verify that that minute is accurate. We know she would have been briefed both as Chair and as a member of the cabinet committee that approved the Oakville gas plant cancellation.

Surely to goodness, we have cabinet ministers over there that are at least responsible enough to say during that meeting, "How much is this going to cost?" Surely to goodness, if they were listening to the people at the OPA—many of whom I know; they were former Hydro people when I was Minister of Energy.

I know Colin Andersen would have told them the truth. I know that for a fact. He was a senior civil servant in our government, and he made it through the ranks up through previous governments. We relied on him to give us accurate figures when he was an associate deputy minister at the Ministry of Finance. He, more often than the Deputy Minister of Finance during the Harris-Eves government, was the fellow who would brief cabinet on where we were with deficits and debts and whether our spending was on track and our savings on track. I know him to be a good man.

I felt horrible that you put him up at committee the first time to lowball the figures, lowball what advice he gave. Basically, when they had their press conference there, he and the chair of the OPA, I felt sorry for them. Colin Andersen is a loyal civil servant. He will do what the government tells him.

When he finally got back with a little more freedom, because you had been caught with your pants down, everybody knew—and he confirmed at the end of his testimony when he came back to the committee that everybody knew it was more than \$40 million.

If you didn't tell the truth to Parliament, including Premier Wynne when she was minister, and again chair of the cabinet committee, we still have the issue of contempt to deal with. Should we allow a Parliament to not tell the truth about factual matters?

Maybe it's not this scandal—but we can't let this scandal go by, because what about the future? As Mr.

Hudak, leader of the PCs, says, if we let you away with this, you'll do it again and again and again.

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: Rewarding bad behaviour.

1750

Mr. Jim Wilson: It's rewarding bad behaviour, as my colleague says.

My point in all that was that we need committees to sit in the summer. I know that the NDP would agree with that, but the track we're on—you rascals are going to take off, or try and take off, with the help of the NDP and close this place down; we'll have no Ornge committee and no gas plant committee. We have a very serious issue that they're dealing with downstairs in the committee rooms on the pharmaceutical cancer drugs issue. We'd like to have a committee on developmental services. We still haven't gotten to the bottom of eHealth; that's still coming around. We know that the auditor is going to bring forward another report on the gas plant, this time dealing with the true cost of Oakville.

There's lots of the people's work to be done. Through this programming motion, you're trying to squirm out of all of that. If we have to sit here, as it's said, until the cows come home, that's what we'll do, I guess. It's the only tool we have. It's a legitimate tool.

We tried our want of confidence motion. One of the things I'd like to discuss is that we think that with all of these scandals, a confident government would have the confidence of the House. In fact, the tradition in a minority is that it does get tested from time to time. Sure, majority governments will allow the opposition to have their want of confidence motions because they know what the outcome is ahead of time, but it's also a tradition from time to time in a minority to test that.

We tried to do that with my motion earlier this month in, I thought, a rather interesting way—a way that probably sets a precedent, although I'm not sure; I'd have to defer to the table—in terms of Mr. Clark's opposition day motion to order the three House leaders to set a date for the debate and vote on the want of confidence motion. Of course, the want of confidence motion, for those at home, deals with the gas plant scandal primarily, and says that because of all these scandals, we don't think the government is ruling legitimately. We don't think it has the legitimate support of the people of Ontario. We can test that through an election, if you'd like, or we can do it here in the House with a want of confidence motion.

In a few minutes, Madam Speaker, I will be moving an amendment to this programming motion that will ask the government and the third party to bring back our want of confidence motion and to include it as part of this motion.

I just want to mention a couple of other people in terms of a conversation I'd also like to have. It goes back to gas plants again. We have a former minister, Bentley, clearly under oath to cover up a massive scandal and withhold documents ordered by a committee of this Legislature. We can't let this pass. This is a court of law when it decides to act as a court of law. If you did that in front of a judge—if she said to you, "You need to

produce documents. You need to produce a person. You need to produce things,” and you say, “The heck with you, Your Honour,” I think Her Honour would say, “There’s the jail cell. Officer, take this plaintiff to jail.”

Hon. Jeff Leal: You want him to go to jail? Is that what you’re suggesting?

Mr. Jim Wilson: No, we’re not suggesting Mr. Bentley should go to jail, but maybe some of you other people should, you know.

Interjection.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Well, there will be one big political jail cell for the whole heck of you.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I would ask that the conversation go through the Chair.

Continue.

Mr. Jim Wilson: I don’t think it will come to that, but the fact of the matter is that we need the committees to keep doing their work and get to the bottom of it. The Premier has said, time and time again, that she wants to get to the bottom of it, but again, actions speak louder than words. She’s not a new government; she acts the same way as the old government. They say one thing. It sounds great. It gets reported in the Toronto Star, mainly. Then when we actually have House leaders’, none of these things are talked about. I bring them up; Mr. Bisson brings some of this stuff up as House leader for the NDP; and it just doesn’t get done.

We want to have a conversation about Bob Delaney, the member for Mississauga–Streetsville, comparing the gas plant scandal to the cost of the American moon landing. You just threw the dice, I guess, when you made this horrendous decision, didn’t bother to figure out what the cost was, and said, “We will save our political seats regardless of the cost.” Clearly, it was two weeks left in the last election, the 2011 election. They obviously saw the same polls that everybody else saw and that were reported widely in the media, that they were headed towards either a loss or a clear minority—not even a slim majority—so they had to buy some seats. We cannot allow any political party to buy seats in an election, and that is, plain and simple, what it is.

You knew you were doing things wrong, because you knew the government can’t spend large amounts of money; the civil service won’t allow cabinet to do that during an election. So you announced the cancellation of Oakville on Liberal Party letterhead, to skirt the rules.

We could see at the time what you were doing. You were going to spend an awful pile of money—although I don’t know if everybody knew it was going to be this amount of money—and you were doing it in the sneakiest way possible. You have to be held accountable for that.

As House leader, Madam Speaker, I’m not prepared, and we’re not prepared—I speak on behalf of all of our caucus and Tim Hudak, our leader—to let another week of mistruths and political interference go by.

Premier Wynne says that the budget motion is the only test of confidence the House needs. Well, she’s wrong,

and frankly, she’s wrong to have even the audacity to say that that’s the only want of confidence we need and the only one we’re going to have—how unparliamentary and disrespectful of the rules. A very legitimate tool in our tool box, that is used by parties in both minority and majority Parliaments in those situations, is the want of confidence test, and we demand that we have that want of confidence test.

But again, it will be part of a conversation that we would like to have with the government, and we don’t want to have it through the media—although if that’s the way they want to do it, I’m as good at it as anybody else, and so is every member of our caucus.

The fact of the matter is, we don’t have to go to the wall as parties. We can make this thing work. I’ve given you just about 99% of our list that I can think of—I kind of had to make up notes rather quickly in the last few hours—and we’re willing to talk about whatever you want to talk about. But the fact of the matter is, we’re not going to support this programming motion that was done in secret and behind our backs, nor should we be expected to support this motion. I think that’s fair.

Again, we’ll have all the conversations you want. We don’t have to stay here all summer. If you want to stay here all summer, we’ll stay here all summer, even if it’s just me and a few good colleagues stuck here all summer.

Mr. Robert Bailey: We’ll be here—and the Clerk.

Mr. Jim Wilson: We’ll be here—and the Clerk. I think it’s overtime for the Clerk, at that point, and her fellow elves.

In my last two minutes, Madam Speaker, I move that the programming motion be amended by adding the following:

Adding a new section, entitled “Section D: Want of confidence,” and that the new section include the following sentence:

“That the want of confidence motion, standing in the name of the member from Simcoe–Grey, shall be called for debate and a vote no later than June 6, 2013.”

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Mr. Wilson has moved that the motion be amended as follows:

Adding a new section, entitled “Section D: Want of confidence,” and that the new section include the following sentence:

“That the want of confidence motion, standing in the name of the member from Simcoe–Grey, shall be called for debate and a vote no later than June 6, 2013.”

Further debate?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Madam Speaker, I hope the government will take the amendment into consideration. As I said, we look forward to having some legitimate conversations with them about making this place work.

Debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): It being 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 9 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1759.

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 | |

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

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

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

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

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

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

Chair / Président: Bas Balkissoon
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Donna H. Cansfield
Bas Balkissoon, Rick Bartolucci
Sarah Campbell, Donna H. Cansfield
Mike Colle, Rosario Marchese
Laurie Scott, Todd Smith
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / 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
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

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

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

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

Chair / Président: Garfield Dunlop
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

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norm Miller
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Toby Barrett
Toby Barrett, Dipika Damerla
France Gélinas, Helena Jaczek
Phil McNeely, Norm Miller
Jerry J. Ouellette, Shafiq Qadri
Jagmeet Singh
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: John Vanthof
Margaret R. Best, Vic Dhillon
Joe Dickson, Randy Hillier
Rod Jackson, Monte Kwinter
Peter Tabuns, John Vanthof
Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

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

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

**MEMBERS' STATEMENTS /
DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS**

| | |
|--|------|
| Ontario Agri-Food Education Inc. | |
| Ms. Lisa M. Thompson | 2268 |
| Prabhdeep Srawn | |
| Mr. Jagmeet Singh | 2268 |
| Streetsville Bread and Honey Festival | |
| Mr. Bob Delaney | 2269 |
| Riding of Wellington–Halton Hills | |
| Mr. Ted Arnott | 2269 |
| Tourism | |
| Ms. Sarah Campbell | 2269 |
| Fort Erie Race Track | |
| Mr. Kim Craitor | 2270 |
| Town of Orangeville | |
| Ms. Sylvia Jones | 2270 |
| Halton Food for Thought | |
| Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn | 2270 |
| Physician Appreciation Day | |
| Mr. Jim Wilson | 2270 |
| Visitor | |
| The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac) | 2271 |
| Sign-language interpretation | |
| Hon. Eric Hoskins | 2271 |

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS /
DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI**

| | |
|---|------|
| Health Insurance Amendment Act (Celiac Disease Screening), 2013, Bill 75, Mr. Mauro / Loi de 2013 modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-santé (dépietage de la maladie coeliaque), projet de loi 75, M. Mauro | |
| First reading agreed to | 2271 |
| Mr. Bill Mauro | 2271 |
| Workers' Death Benefits Protection Act, 2013, Bill 76, Mr. Bartolucci / Loi de 2013 sur la protection des prestations de décès des travailleurs, projet de loi 76, M. Bartolucci | |
| First reading agreed to | 2271 |
| Mr. Rick Bartolucci | 2271 |

**STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS
MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES**

| | |
|---------------------------------------|------|
| Accessibility for the disabled | |
| Hon. Eric Hoskins | 2272 |
| Mr. Toby Barrett | 2273 |
| Ms. Cheri DiNovo | 2273 |

| | |
|----------------------------------|------|
| Lyme disease | |
| Mr. Randy Hillier | 2274 |
| Hydro rates | |
| Ms. Sarah Campbell | 2274 |
| Ontario College of Trades | |
| Mr. Steve Clark | 2275 |
| Social assistance | |
| Mr. Jonah Schein | 2275 |
| Air quality | |
| Mr. Rob E. Milligan | 2275 |
| Mining industry | |
| Ms. Sarah Campbell | 2275 |
| Physiotherapy services | |
| Mr. Jeff Yurek | 2276 |
| Hospital services | |
| Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong | 2276 |
| Physiotherapy services | |
| Mr. Robert Bailey | 2276 |
| Air-rail link | |
| Mr. Jonah Schein | 2276 |
| Tire disposal | |
| Ms. Laurie Scott | 2276 |
| Animal protection | |
| Ms. Sarah Campbell | 2277 |
| Health care funding | |
| Mr. Jim McDonell | 2277 |
| Hospital services | |
| Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong | 2277 |

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

| | |
|-------------------------------|------|
| 2013 Ontario budget | |
| Mr. Bill Mauro | 2277 |
| Mr. Steve Clark | 2279 |
| Mr. Paul Miller | 2279 |
| Hon. Jeff Leal | 2280 |
| Mr. Rob E. Milligan | 2280 |
| Mr. Bill Mauro | 2280 |
| Mr. Monte McNaughton | 2281 |
| Mr. Michael Prue | 2283 |
| Hon. Glen R. Murray | 2284 |
| Mr. Rob E. Milligan | 2284 |
| Mr. Gilles Bisson | 2284 |
| Mr. Monte McNaughton | 2285 |
| Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong | 2285 |
| Vote deferred | 2288 |
| Adjournment debate | |
| Hon. John Milloy | 2288 |
| Motion agreed to | 2288 |

Order of business

| | |
|------------------------------|------|
| Hon. John Milloy | 2288 |
| Mr. Jim Wilson | 2291 |
| Debate deemed adjourned..... | 2296 |

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Tuesday 28 May 2013 / Mardi 28 mai 2013

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

2013 Ontario budget

| | |
|-------------------------------|------|
| Mr. Steve Clark | 2247 |
| Mr. Paul Miller..... | 2249 |
| Hon. Tracy MacCharles | 2250 |
| Mr. Todd Smith..... | 2250 |
| Mr. Taras Natyshak..... | 2251 |
| Mr. Steve Clark | 2251 |
| Mr. Rosario Marchese..... | 2251 |
| Hon. Liz Sandals | 2254 |
| Mr. Rob E. Milligan..... | 2254 |
| Mr. Taras Natyshak..... | 2255 |
| Mr. Grant Crack | 2255 |
| Mr. Rosario Marchese..... | 2255 |
| Mr. Bill Mauro | 2256 |
| Debate deemed adjourned | 2257 |

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

| | |
|------------------------------------|------|
| Mr. Bill Walker | 2257 |
| Mrs. Laura Albanese | 2257 |
| Mr. Rick Nicholls..... | 2257 |
| Mr. Jagmeet Singh | 2257 |
| The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)..... | 2257 |

Legislative pages

| | |
|------------------------------------|------|
| The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)..... | 2258 |
|------------------------------------|------|

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

Taxation

| | |
|------------------------------|------|
| Mrs. Christine Elliott..... | 2258 |
| Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne | 2258 |

Government spending

| | |
|------------------------------|------|
| Mr. Victor Fedeli..... | 2259 |
| Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne | 2259 |

Automobile insurance

| | |
|------------------------------|------|
| Ms. Andrea Horwath..... | 2260 |
| Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne | 2260 |
| Hon. Charles Sousa..... | 2260 |

Taxation

| | |
|------------------------------|------|
| Ms. Andrea Horwath..... | 2261 |
| Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne | 2261 |
| Hon. Charles Sousa..... | 2261 |

Transit funding

| | |
|--------------------------|------|
| Mr. Frank Klees | 2261 |
| Hon. Glen R. Murray..... | 2262 |

Cancer treatment

| | |
|-----------------------------|------|
| Mme France Gélinas | 2262 |
| Hon. Deborah Matthews | 2262 |

Transit funding

| | |
|--------------------------|------|
| Mr. Vic Dhillon..... | 2262 |
| Hon. Glen R. Murray..... | 2263 |

Correctional facilities

| | |
|-------------------------------|------|
| Mr. Jeff Yurek..... | 2263 |
| Hon. Madeleine Meilleur | 2263 |

Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp.

| | |
|------------------------------|------|
| Mr. Taras Natyshak | 2264 |
| Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne | 2264 |

Economic development

| | |
|-------------------------|------|
| Mr. Bill Mauro | 2264 |
| Hon. Eric Hoskins | 2264 |

Apprenticeship training

| | |
|----------------------------|------|
| Mr. Monte McNaughton | 2265 |
| Hon. Charles Sousa | 2265 |

Correctional facilities

| | |
|-------------------------------|------|
| Ms. Andrea Horwath..... | 2265 |
| Hon. Madeleine Meilleur | 2266 |

Assistance to flood victims

| | |
|-------------------------|------|
| Mr. Grant Crack | 2266 |
| Hon. Linda Jeffrey..... | 2266 |

Manufacturing jobs

| | |
|--------------------------|------|
| Mr. Todd Smith..... | 2267 |
| Hon. John Gerretsen..... | 2267 |
| Hon. Eric Hoskins | 2267 |

Accessibility for the disabled

| | |
|-------------------------|------|
| Ms. Cheri DiNovo..... | 2267 |
| Hon. Eric Hoskins | 2267 |

Visitors

| | |
|------------------------------|------|
| Mr. Jim Wilson..... | 2268 |
| Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne | 2268 |
| Mr. Rob Leone | 2268 |
| Mr. Bill Walker | 2268 |

Annual report, Information and Privacy

Commissioner

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac) | 2268 |
|-------------------------------------|------|

Continued on inside back cover