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(Hansard)**

**Thursday 30 May 2013**

**Jeudi 30 mai 2013**

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Thursday 30 May 2013

Jeudi 30 mai 2013

*The House met at 0900.*

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

*Prayers.*

WEARING OF UNIFORM

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Point of order.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** A point of order from the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I seek unanimous consent to wear in the House later today a full War of 1812 regimental officer's uniform.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Mr. Miller has requested unanimous consent to wear his full regalia this afternoon for statements. Do we agree? Agreed.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 29, 2013, on the amendment to the amendment to the motion to apply a timetable to certain business of the House.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further debate? The member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's one of those very long riding names.

I'm pleased to have the opportunity to speak today on the Liberal-NDP programming motion regarding the scheduling of the budget bill and the government's hand-outs to the NDP, which is the price of their support.

Since the Liberal-NDP alliance didn't consult with the PC Party regarding this programming motion—and I know the member from Simcoe–Grey was very eloquent the other day in saying what had happened historically, because he is House leader—I can only assume that this is a continuation of the government's refusal to consider any ideas or proposals from the official opposition which might differ from their own view of the world. Of course, we've heard that throughout the debates in the Legislature, but nevertheless we have the right to bring forward those ideas. I guess the member from Simcoe–Grey was saying to the House leader from the Liberals, "Pick up the phone and give me a call."

Anyway, we've seen this pattern develop with the McGuinty-Wynne government. A few months ago we listened to the, I say, Kumbaya, feel-good throne speech that contained lots of idealistic rhetoric—little substance

that is going to back it up. The budget contains much of the same, which is partially the thrust of the debate here today.

The finance minister also delivered one of those touchy-feely budget speeches that really did nothing to address the problems that are facing Ontarians, which I hear about every day in the riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock.

For a bigger picture, I think we have to say our economy has weakened under the Liberals. They have called their budget plan "a prosperous and fair Ontario." We on this side of the Legislature would say that you can't have the second, which would be fairness, without the first, which is prosperity, according to their title. It's ironic, then, that over the last 10 years this government has taken Ontario further and further away from prosperity.

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I know it's early in the morning, but I'm going to give you some numbers, if you want to follow along. It's replayed later in the day for those who want to see us in the Legislature in the reruns, which we hope some people do watch.

Let's look at some of the numbers. Ontario's unemployment rate is 7.7%; in Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, it's higher than that. That number is hard to wrap your head around, so I can put it another way. This morning, 600,000 men and women woke up with no jobs to go to—600,000 of our friends, neighbours, family members. They want a job. They want to be productive members of society and contributors to the economy. They're denied that opportunity. Our world-class manufacturing sector, one of the engines powering our economy forward, it once was, has shed 300,000 jobs alone under this Liberal leadership.

Underlying these dismal statistics are some worrying trends that the government should have been addressing. Let's talk about productivity. Ontarians have been losing ground in comparison with our neighbours to the south, making us less competitive for attracting businesses and creating jobs. Along with our lagging productivity, our labour costs have soared.

The end result of those two things together is a pretty bleak economy. It's projected to grow a mere 1.5% this year, our third consecutive decline year over year and trailing the US. This has all added up to not only those 600,000 people who don't have a job this morning, but we've become the have-not province of this Confederation. People are—understandably—asking why.

Well, there are many reasons, and I'll go through some that I can get to in my time allotted.

Government spending: A significant part of the blame of our province's current condition can be pinned on some deliberate choices—bad policy decisions, I say—made by this government over the past decade. My colleague from Leeds–Grenville, in his address, put it: You can't spend your way to prosperity. We are going to see an increase in our deficit this year. They are still spending, Mr. Speaker. This is largely due to something the Liberals are very good at: their addiction to tax increases and their addiction to spending. According to the Fraser Institute study, the Liberals plan to increase program spending by 3% this year, in 2013-14, but in last year's budget they promised to hold spending growth to 1.1% for 2013-14. The math is not adding up. As I said, I know it's early in the morning, but there's a lot of math here, and it's all about the math.

The Liberals have basically tripled the growth in 2013-14 spending from last year's plan to the one they put forward in front of us this year. That fact should make Ontarians pretty skeptical when the government talks about its plans to eventually balance the budget. Can we believe that? Well, the math—as I said, it's all about the math—is pretty hard to believe.

A balanced budget will only be possible if we put the brakes on growth in government spending going forward. I don't think we can expect anything you could call restraint from a government that clearly can't say no. The spending is up; I know they increased their spending, but I think it's up 75% or 80% since they took office. In 10 years, government spending is up that much. It's unsustainable, and it's affecting the way of life in the province of Ontario for the people.

Because of these increases in program spending planned for this year, we're going to see the deficit grow, skyrocket back up to nearly \$12 billion. Okay, that wasn't the plan, and I don't see how that helps balance the books by the 2017-18 year that they project.

I can talk about public sector wages. The biggest share of Ontario's government program spending goes to public sector labour costs. So naturally, you'd think that if the government was sincere in wanting to achieve fiscal balance, this is the first place they'd look for savings. But I go back to the throne speech and the appointment of cabinet: They actually increased the size of the cabinet by 25%. I think that gives you a clue to the lack of enthusiasm this government has for being frugal.

We in the Progressive Conservative caucus have called for a two-year across-the-board broader public sector legislative wage freeze, which will save \$2 billion each year and begin the process of controlling government spending. Look, ladies and gentlemen, we have all got to take our share in shouldering this debt and deficit that we have in the province. The public sector also has to be part of that. A wage freeze for two years I don't think is too much to ask at all. But instead of taking action, the government is happy to do nothing, just let that debt and deficit grow.

**0910**

As just one example, they've made no attempt to fix our broken arbitration system, which is impacting the

province and bankrupting municipalities. You hear it constantly from municipalities, and they're talking to the Liberals as well as talking to the Progressive Conservatives.

Another study said that public sector compensation now exceeds that of the private sector by 14%, and if you add in pensions and health benefits that a lot of people don't enjoy, the difference can hit a breathtaking 27%. Let me tell you, the private sector out there is rebelling every day. It is just not fair. I go back again to the title of their budget: There is no way this is fair to the people—all the people—in the province of Ontario, only a select few. When we heard a couple of months ago that the sunshine list increased by 8,823 people this year, it's clearly not hard to make the big bucks working for the government, Mr. Speaker.

Add to that the cost of the government caving in to NDP demands, which themselves add up to about \$1 billion to this bill. As the saying goes: A billion here, a billion there, and pretty soon you're talking real money.

Instead of creating opportunities for our young people to learn skilled trades and stay in their communities, this government saddled the province with the College of Trades, which is at best a tax grab, at worst gross incompetence. It's not a college building that's going to help young people get into apprenticeships; it's a tax. It's not reforming the antiquated apprenticeship ratios which are out of line with the rest of Canada, and it's not standing up for the trades, which is actually where the jobs are. We have a shortage of skilled tradespeople. So it's maintaining this artificial shortage, because if they changed the system, we would hopefully work our way, over a few years, to getting our young people into the skilled trades. Instead, I hear grandparents, when I go to anniversary parties, say, "My grandchildren are going out west, and I don't blame them. There's no jobs, no opportunities here." When a government puts society in that situation, it's a disgrace.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Tell them to come north. Tell them to come to Sudbury or Timmins.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** You bet. I was up in northern Ontario last summer, and they are like, "Send us your young." They need skilled tradespeople. We all need them in the province of Ontario. It would make it a better province. Our young people could stay. They would be adding to our economy, paying their taxes, increasing revenues for the government. Instead, we hear stories of skilled tradespeople from other countries coming to Canada because we can't fill the positions here. It's a shame that we are doing that to our young people.

There's a litany of costly scandals which I'll maybe get to later if the time allows me. The government has been wasting real money for a decade. If you say the government increased spending by 80% since they've taken office, I can tell you that people on the ground don't have a better way of life. They can't say their life is 75% better because the government is spending more money. They used our money for partisan purposes and not to help the people of Ontario. They used the tax-

payers' money to buy those seats from those power plants, Mr. Speaker, and that is not acceptable. We on this side of the House will not tolerate that.

So what has the Liberal spending bought us? Well, a mountain of debt. We're on track now to not only doubling our debt but tripling our debt. At about \$270 billion, we outclass all other provinces combined when it comes to owing people money. On a per capita basis, we even leave California in the dust. California is the most indebted state in the US. We've brought that up a few times, but I think it's important for people to compare that that is the situation we are in today. I'll repeat a statistic which we keep repeating because we want to educate the people about the crisis we are in in the province of Ontario: A baby born today owes \$20,000 as his or her share of debt, a number that has doubled during the Liberals' time in office. It's unconscionable. We have to do better for the province of Ontario. But \$20,000 is what a baby born today has as a debt. So we carry the highest debt in our province's history. Within the next couple of years, we're looking at \$300 billion in accumulated debt.

There has been a lot of talk about bond rating in the last few days. When spending outpaces our ability to pay, there are real consequences. Because the government has piled on more debt and has totally lacked a credible plan for paying it down, both Moody's and Standard and Poor's questioned and downgraded Ontario's rating last year.

You even heard the former finance minister from the Liberal government, Dwight Duncan, mention that a couple of days ago when he spoke to small businesses. He's pretty concerned that there's going to be a downgrading, and that means interest rates go up and we pay more on the debt and deficit.

Instead of showing investors and entrepreneurs that our province is a solid, stable place to do business, and wants to create jobs and wealth, we don't project that. We're not attracting them. They're not coming into the province of Ontario saying, "Hey, you guys are running a good ship. We want to come and invest here. You've got a great workforce." They're not saying that. We're going to be like Greece, and you don't see a lot of businesses flourishing in Greece right at the moment.

Another key point is that borrowing money is not free. Spending beyond our means actually reduces our ability to pay for things we care about. When we say that the third-largest budget item is servicing our debt—just the interest alone is \$11 billion—we could have paid for education, for health care, for helping those older parents who have disabled adults at home. We've heard many of those stories that break your heart, because there's nowhere for them to go, as their parents age, for the care they need and to be watched so they don't harm themselves.

Infrastructure that's badly needed across the province—again, \$11 billion has gone down the drain because of mismanagement and servicing our debt. It's a shame, as I said, that we cannot manage our books and invest in

things we all care about: health care, education, infrastructure, the many programs that are in jeopardy because taxpayers' dollars are servicing debt from a mismanaged government.

We can talk about the Drummond report. Economists like Don Drummond have told the government it needs to get its spending under control. The Liberal government hired Mr. Drummond to give us the economist's point of view. He came up with some pretty clear and forceful recommendations; namely, cut spending and stick to a strict debt-reduction plan. He made it clear that these aren't half measures; you had to do them all. Instead of following his prescription, the government has only attempted maybe 60%—you can guess that. That's 60% of his recommendations, when he said, "You've got to stick to this plan or you're not going to get your debt and deficit under control." They didn't take that seriously.

The longer we wait to tackle the program and this problem of overspending, the more the reality is going to hurt when we finally have to face it. As I said, we don't want to be Greece. We don't want to head down that path. That's the path we're on. I say to you: Listen up over there. You can call us partisan over here, but we are speaking for our constituents. We hear every day about their problems out there, about their concerns. But when mutual parties, such as Don Drummond, give you a report, which you asked him to give, and you don't follow those instructions, we are in trouble.

I want to talk a little bit about some issues from my riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. Health care and physiotherapy have been a hot topic of late. The budget makes this worse. A perfect example is what this budget will do to physiotherapy services for seniors across Ontario. The health minister can spin a wonderful web of how this is not going to impact physiotherapy treatments, mainly for seniors, but the facts simply don't support that.

In the 2012-13 fiscal year, over \$200 million was spent for OHIP-funded physiotherapy. The current budget reduces this funding to \$156 million, which includes \$20 million of exercise classes, which are not physiotherapy. OHIP-funded physiotherapy hasn't cost \$156 million for about three years. The physiotherapy funding in long-term care is going to be cut from \$110 million to \$58.5 million. In retirement homes, the funding will be reduced to almost nothing, and only bedridden and acute residents will qualify for a CCAC visit; the rest will be expected to leave the home in order to access services. The in-home therapy services currently provided by the designated physiotherapy centres will end, and those residents will have to access their physio through the community care access centre.

#### 0920

Now, it's widely accepted among physiotherapists that CCACs have a cost per home treatment of approximately \$120, whereas the designated physiotherapy centre members have a cost of \$12.20 billed to OHIP. Those figures alone—what are you doing? The math does not make sense. The physiotherapy file is undergoing an extremely

detrimental overhaul that will hurt many of our most vulnerable citizens. To try and portray this as an improvement in services and an increase in funding is disrespectful to the people of Ontario. To think that they can sham the people when the math doesn't add up. You can talk to the physiotherapist themselves, and I believe they are coming to Queen's Park next week.

I have so many topics to talk to. Green energy, the McGuinty-Wynne government's obsessiveness with these ideologically based green energy initiatives, has created chaos. As a result of these subsidies for wind and solar projects, we've seen our energy costs spiral out of control for individuals, businesses, community organizations. I have a Legion that comes to me—and Legions have a hard time keeping the doors open, but they are foundations in our communities. I have about 16 of them throughout my riding. They are contributors to my community which I cannot praise enough. One told me their hydro bill was \$4,000 a month. How does a community organization that has a hydro bill of \$4,000 a month survive? Its days can be numbered, because that's not going to be an unusual story. It's excessive. I think most people's hydro bills—and I've said this many times: They have had to leave homes in my riding. People who are on fixed incomes just cannot handle the increase in this essential service.

When this Green Energy Act was thought up—sure, we all want green energy, but at what cost? Putting people out of their houses? Shutting down community organizations? Shutting down businesses? And we haven't got any more green energy. It has cost us at least \$1 billion more because we keep having to pay the states or the provinces to take our water power, which is green energy. So that has been a failed energy plan that we'd like you to put a moratorium on, abandon. It's not working. It's putting businesses out of business, and it's putting people out of their homes.

I can talk a lot about horse racing and ending the Slots at Racetracks Program without warning. That has created more job losses in rural Ontario. The Minister of Rural Affairs gets up the other day and says, "You can support the horse racing industry by going to the races." Well, I can tell you, at Kawartha Downs, they used to have 100 races. Now they have 20. We're supposed to be celebrating that they did a great thing for the horse racing industry. I can tell you, they're not going to be employing the same number of people they did when they actually ran 100 races throughout the year. Now they're at 20 races. It's just beyond comprehension.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Disgusting.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** It is disgusting. I will mention that they can have the blood on their hands for those 13,000 horses that are going to have to be euthanized because this government just decided that the Slots at Racetracks Program will end, and those people can just suffer in rural Ontario.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Questions and comments? The member for Nickel Belt.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*Interjection.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I'm advised we'll move into further debate.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Sorry, Mr. Speaker, I didn't hear what you just said.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Because of the substantive motion, it's not questions and comments; it's further debate.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I'm ready for further debate, Mr. Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Okay.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Actually, before I go into my debate, I'd like to echo some of the comments that were made by the previous speaker. I too have a horse racing track in my riding. I too am seeing the devastating impact of the decision that this government has made. We used to have, I would say, 80 race days at Sudbury Downs; we are down to 20. We used to have a purse of \$50,000; we're now down to \$20,000. I will let you do the math, Mr. Speaker. The cost of feeding a horse and training a horse has not gone down. Like everything else in life, it keeps going up. But the purse money available to them has been going drastically down. So yes, some of the decisions that have been made by this government are hurting rural Ontario and are hurting northern Ontario.

Another thing that she mentioned was the changes to physiotherapy. There is a date coming: August 1. On August 1, tens of thousands of patients of physiotherapists are going to be discharged to nothing. We have no idea what's going to happen on August 2. So the comments that she brought forward are valid, except that they have nothing to do with the budget. Whether we pass the budget or not, those decisions have been made. Those decisions are happening.

What New Democrats are saying is that we have a document in front of us right now. We have a budget for the fiscal year 2013-14. Let's roll up our sleeves, and let's make this work for the people of Ontario. Let's get results for the people of Ontario that we can all be proud of.

When the House was prorogued last year, New Democrats decided to use that time to listen to the people of Ontario. We opened up the lines of communication. We were back in our ridings. We did what New Democrats always do: connect with people, listen to them, try to bring solutions, try to help out, or at least get out of the way of a good idea that is moving forward.

What did people tell us? They told us that the home care system was broken. It wasn't working for them. The wait times were too long. What did New Democrats do? We brought forward the idea that everyone in Ontario, no matter where they live, should have access to home care within five days. In some areas of the province this is going to be fairly easy to do. In other areas of the province—maybe not in Beaches–East York, but certainly in Algoma–Manitoulin and in Nickel Belt—it will require quite a bit of work. In some of the little communities that we serve, the wait times are quite long. So let's bring a measure of equity into access to home care services.

Let's make it so that everybody in Ontario, no matter where they live, will have access within five days. So we put that out there.

We continued to talk to the people of the province, and the people of the province asked us, "How could it be that mega changes have been done to the auto insurance industry, yet our bills keep going up and up and up? How could it be that we now don't have the same kind of coverage that we used to have, don't have the same kinds of benefits that we used to have? How can it be that the profits for the insurance company went skyrocketing in the billions of dollars, yet our bills for auto insurance keep going up?"

You have to realize, Mr. Speaker, that auto insurance is not like any other good or service in the province. As opposed to every other good or service, where you decide if you want to buy something or you don't, and then the forces of the market kind of work to bring prices down and competition, there's none of this in auto insurance because in auto insurance, the government tells you, "You have to buy this product." Whether you want to, whether you can afford it, whether you think it's fair, whether you can get a good price, the government tells you, "If you want to drive in Ontario, you will buy this product, and you will buy it at the price that they tell you to buy it at."

This is not working for the people of Ontario. This product's price keeps going up and up and up, and the services we get out of them were adjusted downward dramatically. What did New Democrats do with that information? They decided that the savings that had been planned through those mega changes in auto insurance were to be passed on. They were to be passed down to the consumers, to you and I, to everybody, to the nine million people in Ontario who drive. Those savings were supposed to be passed down to us, but they were not. So we put forward that idea, to roll back by 15% the cost of auto insurance because this pretty much equates the savings that the last series of regulations had brought forward.

**0930**

We continued to talk and listen, mainly listen, to the people of Ontario. Everywhere we went, like the member said before, they were telling us that the young people in their households had a hard time finding jobs, that some of them had huge debts from having gone to post-secondary education. They were well educated, they were eager, they were full of energy, they wanted to work—and they had no work.

There is work out there in our province. Hell, I come from Nickel Belt, where right now the mining industry is doing pretty well, where there are lots of jobs. But do you know what, Mr. Speaker? They want somebody with experience, so for the new tradesperson starting, for the young person out of school full of energy and eager to work and put their skills, it's hard for them to get that first job. So we put forward this idea to have a jobs creation strategy targeted at youth, targeted at those young people full of hope and energy who want to work. We put it out there.

We also put out there a way to pay for all of those ideas. The five-day home care guarantee came at a cost of \$30 million. That \$30 million did not have to come by making the deficit bigger; that \$30 million could have easily been found by, first of all, putting a cap on CEO salaries. You know, we don't ask CEOs to work for minimum wage or anything like this. We ask them to be capped at no higher than twice the salary of our Premier. Our Premier has a pretty big responsibility. She manages a budget of billions of dollars; she looks after 13 million people. So we said, "Well, CEO of health care agency, you're allowed to make twice that amount but then be capped." The money we'd have recouped would have helped to pay for the five-day home care guarantee.

We also thought that there were economies that could have been done. There have been some mega changes within—it's called CCAC, community care access centre. That's the name of an agency that looks after our home care services, and we thought that there were economies to be done there, just by changing the way—and the Association of Community Care Access Centres agreed with us. So we had put forward a balanced way. Not only did we say we want an investment of \$30 million in home care to bring equity of access to all Ontarians, but we also said how you're going to pay for it without bringing Ontario further debt, without bringing a deficit to our budget.

When it came to auto insurance, that came without any cost to the government because right now, as you know, you don't pay the government for auto insurance; you pay an insurance company, and the insurance company—so that was cost-neutral. And then, when it came to the youth employment strategy, it was coming targeted at specific jobs. So what we had brought forward was something that did not increase the deficit, did not add to the debt, but was going to deliver real results for the people of Ontario, for the people who needed it the most.

Are there other issues that need to be looked at? Absolutely. Absolutely. The previous member talked about a series of them, and I would say we would agree. But those are the ideas that we had put forward.

And there is another what I would call elephant in the room. It is a fair-sized one: \$1.3 billion. That buys you a few hours of home care when most home care workers don't make 15 bucks an hour. There's a \$1.3-billion elephant in this room, and that \$1.3 billion is a new tax credit coming to big corporations so that big corporations, when they bring their fancy friends to see—well, the Leafs are not playing any more—we all know why—but they will play again. If you bring them to a hockey game or if you go to a fancy dinner, you could expense those, and that will mean \$1.3 billion of taxes that the government of Ontario presently collects—we're not going to collect that anymore. Well, New Democrats thought that everybody should contribute their fair share. People who are able to pay for box tickets at the Leafs and fancy restaurants and all the rest of it that goes on in the corporate world that I can only dream of—if you can afford box tickets, you can probably afford to pay the

taxes on them. If you can afford the fancy dinners and the expensive wine and everything else, you can probably afford to pay your taxes way better than the people on minimum wage who have to pay HST on everything that they buy.

But no, the Liberals listened to some of our ideas. They listened on home care—kind of; they listened on a youth strategy; and they listened on the 15%. But for reasons unknown to me, they didn't listen to the other side of what the New Democrats have put forward, the side that would make sure that we don't go further in deficit and the side that would make sure that we don't grow the debt.

New Democrats are socially progressive but are fiscally responsible. We fully understand that you cannot spend your way out of the mess that they have created. We fully understand that you have to have a balanced budget. We do this in our own lives; the government has to do the same. This is the plan we have come forward with.

The budget came, and the big three that we had put forward were there, front and centre, in the budget. The budget talks about home care, the budget talks about auto insurance and the budget talks about job creation for youth.

So we did what New Democrats always do. We opened up the lines of communication again, and went to Ontarians and asked them what they thought about the budget. They had told us that this was important, and it is now in the budget. Are they happy about it? We had done the same thing last year. Last year, when we went out with the budget, the comments were coming in fast and furious. They liked this. They didn't like this. They wanted that changed.

This year the comments came in as fast and as furious, as they did last year, but people were not really talking about the budget that much. They were telling us that they don't trust the Liberals. They were telling us that it doesn't matter that what's in the budget looks pretty good—they do want the home care, they do want the 15% reduction in auto insurance and they do want job creation—but they were saying that what they were promising us is not worth the paper it's written on. They lost faith. They lost confidence.

I can't say that I blame them. I mean, I'm the health critic. I was there when all of the dirty money from eHealth was exposed for everyone to see. It was disgusting, Mr. Speaker: \$1 billion worth of disgusting. This is what eHealth was all about. We saw well-connected Liberal insiders making money hand over fist and delivering nothing in return.

Then they saw Ornge. Ornge was just as disgusting. At Ornge, we saw people paid \$1.4 million a year. We saw a shambles of for-profit companies helping themselves to taxpayers' money as if it was their own with a big Liberal lawyer at the front of the parade so that nobody looks at what's behind. That shakes people's confidence quite a bit.

Then came the gas plants. The gas plants were kind of the nail in the coffin, weren't they? Here again, you see

decisions worth hundreds of millions of dollars made by the Liberal government for the Liberal government, not for the people of Ontario. But they stick us with the bill. They use that money as if it was their own to help their own party and they stick us, as in all of us, with the bill. So we opened up the lines of communication, talked to Ontarians, and they told us that they had lost faith. What did we do? We did what we always do. We rolled up our sleeves and asked, "How do we bring confidence back?"

#### 0940

One of the two that we brought forward was a Financial Accountability Office. The Financial Accountability Officer—the name is pretty well self-explanatory—will be an officer of this Legislature, which is fancy words to mean people who report directly to all of us. They don't report to the party in power; they report to every single MPP. They report to the House. This will be an officer of this Legislature who will look at, basically, the expenses before they are made. If you think that a promise—which is what a budget is; a budget is a promise to do something—looks like we don't have the money to pay for this, or they're not sure of the way that the money's going to be funnelled will actually give us results, you call the Financial Accountability Officer and you ask him or her to have a look.

We have some of those officers right now for the Legislative Assembly. The Auditor General is a well-known one. The Auditor General comes with credibility. He knows his way around a balance sheet and a financial book, and he looks at value for money. He looks in the past. The decisions that were made, did those decisions bring us value for money? He is credible. He brings good recommendations forward, and he directs changes.

The Financial Accountability Office will be sort of a similar idea, but think of it as an Auditor General for the future. That is, you don't do an audit of what has already been done; you look at the promises that are made for the future.

Putting something like this in place is one step to help regain that trust in the government, because democracy may not be a perfect way of government, but it is the best way that we have found so far. If people lose trust in their government, if they lose trust in our democracy, I have no idea what we're going to change this for, because this is as good as it comes.

There's an impetus on each and every one of us to make sure that the people of Ontario can trust their government, can trust what we represent. You can only do this when, like New Democrats, you roll up your sleeves, you look at the problem in front of you and you suggest solutions to make things better. This is what we have done.

Is this budget perfect? Absolutely not. Is this an NDP budget? Absolutely not. You still see austerity in there. I've had it up to here with the austerity agenda. But in the situation we have now, it was tangible results that we delivered and brought back a measure of confidence.

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

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's good to see you this morning. It's going to be a steamy one in the Quinte area and across the province, that's for sure: 30 degrees today—long overdue.

Listen, I don't quite know how to describe what I just heard for the last 20 minutes from the member of the third party. Here we are debating the programming motion—another year, another programming motion. This one has a little less drama in it, though, than last year's programming motion, in spite of the protests that we've heard from the members of the third party, specifically the leader of the third party. She tried to make a little bit of righteous indignation at times yesterday during question period, but we know that it's a done deal, that her caucus is going to support the upcoming budget.

Yesterday, we voted on the budget. Our party was the only party to vote against the budget, for a myriad of different reasons, but the biggest reason was the reason that the member of the third party just mentioned moments ago, and that's trust. We have no trust in this government anymore. The member of the third party just said she had no trust as well, but they're rolling up their sleeves in an effort to do the best they can for the people of Ontario with a government that they don't trust. That's the problem and that's why we voted against this budget. Quite simply, the third party has given up their duties as an opposition party. They really have. They've become the excuse for keeping the Liberals in power. The white-wash to cover the multitude of scandals, which we've mentioned throughout the morning already—it's only 9:45 and we've mentioned many, many scandals that have cost us hundreds of millions and billions of dollars as a matter of fact. Every new cost that comes out of these scandals—we're about to get a couple of hundred million dollars more, I'm sure, on the Oakville scandal in August when the Auditor General reports on that issue. It's going to come with a big orange NDP seal of approval on it. We know it's going to cost up to \$1 billion. It's going to cost close to \$1 billion. For some reason, the third party forgets the fact that we can't trust this government.

The member of the third party talked moments ago about auto insurance and the fact that she can't trust the government, but they agree with the fact that the government says they're going to do what they say they're going to do and lower the cost of insurance. Well, over the last week we've seen the insurance rates go up again. It seems to me that it's the height of hypocrisy, really, to come into this chamber every day and berate the government for being a scandal-ridden—yes, Mr. Speaker?

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I'd ask you to withdraw.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** I withdraw.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Todd Smith:** I'm not exactly sure—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Okay. I'll continue on.

It just seems to me a bit unrealistic for the party to come in here every day—it's the third party I'm speaking

of—and continue to hammer away at the government for being a scandal-ridden, elitist government and incompetent government, and then they vote after question period to keep them in power. It doesn't make sense to me. The funniest thing about this is—the member who just spoke: I have a lot of respect for her. She speaks with some degree of intelligence on many different issues. I hear her in the Legislature speaking on different issues. I hear her outside the Legislature at different events that we're at. She often speaks about the fact that we just can't trust this government anymore. So why are we continuing to support this government? Why are we continuing to believe the promises that they're making when time after time after time they break those promises over and over again?

When they were first elected in 2003, it seemed like it was minutes after they were elected that they broke the promise and brought in the health premium that was going to save our health care system. Everybody remembers when the member from Ottawa South stood in front of that camera and said, "We will not raise taxes." But then he made his case, as he often does. He talks about the fact that we need to protect our health care system, that we need to make sure that it's strong and every tax dollar that we bring in from this health premium is going to go to save our health care system. The health premium, everybody knows, was a tax, and that money doesn't go to protect our health care system; it goes into the general reserves and it gets wasted on things like a power plant scandal to save five Liberal seats in the GTA.

So now we've had the interesting debate over the auto insurance, as I mentioned. The NDP tells the government that they want a 15% reduction in auto insurance premiums. Nobody really knows where the 15% number came from. It just seems to have come out of the sky.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Todd Smith:** There it is. Mr. O'Toole just pulled it out of the air. It does seem, though, like it was pulled out of the clear, blue sky. They asked for it, and this government, as desperate as it is to stay in power, said, "Yes, sure, we'll do the 15% off auto insurance. We'll do that. We'll do whatever you say as long as you support us so that we can stay in power." That's what the people in my riding are saying. That's what anybody who knows about the auto insurance file is saying as well. We can't do that. We can't accomplish it. We can go in there and start to make the changes, and our member from Elgin–Middlesex–London has done a fantastic job at breaking down the auto insurance file, figuring out the ways that we can find savings in that file, like the anti-fraud task force, and other areas—reducing the backlog.

**0950**

That's the thing with the auto insurance file: There's this huge backlog of 60,000 cases out there. The government has taken a few steps over the past couple of years to lower auto insurance premiums. We just haven't seen those become a reality yet, and that's because that backlog exists. The cases haven't made their way through the

system that's eventually going to result in some lower premiums for our drivers across the province.

We all want lower auto insurance premiums, no matter which party we're in. But the fact that the NDP said, "We need 15% off," and the government just said, "Yeah, we'll do it," and they trust them that this is going to happen when we know it can't really happen—it's hard to determine, Mr. Speaker, whether the third party is a bit naive or just ignorant on what's happening here with this budget and this budget motion. You know, there are some very distinguished members of the third party and the veteran member who just spoke up. They've been sitting here on the NDP benches through governments of all stripes. Surely, really, they could have seen this coming, especially what's happening on the auto insurance file.

I believe that there are a number of members of the caucus—and I know there are members of that caucus over there—who are hearing the same things from their constituents that I've been hearing from mine. And my constituents are saying loud and clear that it's time for a change in the government of Ontario, and I know there are members over there who are hearing the same thing, because I talk to their constituents as well. As the small business critic I get out there across the province—I'm in lots of other ridings—and speak to people in Brantford and I speak to people in London and I speak to people all over the province. They're frustrated with the fact that this government continues to be the government of Ontario, that the third party continues to prop them up. We know that this government can't be trusted. So I know they're hearing the same things.

I really wish that they would have released the findings of their 1-800 "Call Andrea" number. I would love to know what the responses actually were on that website. I don't know if we could get them to release those findings or not, but I think it would be interesting to actually see how many people out there that responded to the website and responded to the 1-800 number actually believe that this government deserves to remain in power, or if that was even a question that they asked.

Anyway, another budget deal has gone south, so now we're subjected to this daily ritual of the leader of the third party, who's normally quite a smart politician, standing up and protesting that she trusted the Premier. She trusted the Premier—this is what's going to happen—in this budget deal and she never expected to be double-crossed. You can almost see the theme evolving here, and we've just had the vote on the budget motion yesterday. Apparently every other time this government went back on a promise over the last 10 years, it wasn't enough evidence for the third party that this was going to happen again.

Perhaps I shouldn't place sole blame for this at the feet of the leader of the third party, because I've heard here in the halls at Queen's Park that there were a number of members of the third party who actually wanted to vote no on this budget. They actually wanted to vote no because the trust is gone. They wanted to prevent this gov-

ernment from wasting one more dollar, and apparently, from what I understand, their voices were ignored. Why were their voices ignored, Mr. Speaker, within their own caucus? I think it's an important question to ask. Why, if so many members of their caucus were willing to do their jobs as members of the opposition, did the leader of the third party decide to put a New Democratic seal of approval on the actions of this government? Well, it's because there are a lot of outside interests that are tapping them on the shoulder. People like Sid Ryan and Smokey Thomas and others that are saying that—it's almost kind of scary that these big guys—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** You know so little. You know so little.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Oh, is that right? I don't think so. I don't think so. I mean, the deputy leader actually stood up in the House and read the comments over and over again in the Legislature. Time after time—

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Order.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** I'm sure it had to be boring a hole through the hearts of those members on the third side. But big labour is actually the one that's running the third party right now. They're the ones that are giving them their marching orders whether or not they should support a budget or not. I think, frankly speaking, Mr. Speaker, it's kind of scary to the people of Ontario who are paying the tax dollars that these outside interests are actually running this place. Frankly, they've shown that it doesn't matter who they sell down the river as long as those marching orders are followed.

You can talk to the people in the harness racing industry. I know that they support the harness racing industry—at least they want to stand up for the harness racing industry; they really do, in their heart of hearts. They stand up here every day and they talk about the fact that the harness racing jobs are so important. But there's this tap on the shoulder saying, "I'm sorry, you can't support that harness racing industry. We won't allow that to happen."

There are members here who have people in northern Ontario, and they rely on the Ontario Northland transportation. They rely on that, but again, they've had this tap on their shoulder telling them that, "No, you can't stand up for your constituents."

Last year in the budget process, they sat on their hands in the third party and didn't stand up for their constituents. This year, with this budget, they're actually supporting this scandal-plagued government. It's quite sad, actually.

You had members whose ridings benefited from harness racing. The member from Nickel Belt just stood up moments ago and talked about the fact that she used to have 80 race days in her riding. The member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock just stood up prior to her and said that she used to have 100 in Peterborough at Kawartha Downs. We have 20 now in Nickel Belt; we have 20 now in Kawartha Downs in the Peterborough area. Unfortunately for the harness racing industry, there is only one party that stood up for them in this Legis-

lature—really stood up for them when the rubber hit the road. It was the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario. The facts are simple. All you have to do is go back and look at the voting record. It's quite simple: There's one party that's standing up for harness racing. There's actually one party in the Legislature that's standing up for Ontario Northland. It's the PC Party. It's quite sad.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** I would like to bring the House to order. So if I could say to the member from Timmins–James Bay: Order, please.

Carry on.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** But I'm trying to protect him about Santa Claus.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** It's kind of hard to get through question period every day, Mr. Speaker. And sometimes it's hard to get through these debates, because I know the NDP really do want to stand up for their constituents; they really do. But there's this big finger tapping them on the shoulder telling them that they just can't do it.

**Interjection:** And it isn't Santa Claus.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** No, and it's not Santa Claus.

To the budget motion: Quite simply, Dwight Duncan, the former finance minister, was one of the most disastrous finance ministers that we've ever had in the province. I think we can safely say that. Under his watch, we saw the province nearly double its debt. We posted all-time record-high deficits. Billions had to be taken out of the treasury year after year to cover up scandal after scandal.

On Tuesday of this week, the former member for Windsor–Tecumseh spoke to the Economic Club of Canada. He actually said that the credit rating agencies would have stern words for the government about this budget that the NDP just supported. This is a guy who presided over three credit downgrades—more than any finance minister in recent memory.

Think of how low that bar actually is to get over; this government somehow failed to get over it. A billion dollars in new spending, and a lot of it comes from the NDP's support and the promises that were made. We'll see if they actually become reality; \$3.6 billion in new spending overall in this budget, and this at a time when the deficit is actually going up, not down.

By 2015, Ontario's debt will be over \$300 billion. In the last three years alone, this government has added 122,000 public sector jobs to the payroll, or almost half of the 300,000 that they've added since taking office, while 300,000 manufacturing jobs have left the province, for a number of different reasons: the sky-high green energy prices and the global adjustment that now appears on their hydro bills, and the thicket of red tape that exists in the province.

To say the very least, the Minister of Economic Development and the Minister of Finance get up and talk about the jobs added since the height of the recession, but we simply don't believe them. We don't. As long as the government keeps hiring people, then you'll keep adding

jobs—there's no question about that—but you'll keep shrinking the tax base because you're adding to the public sector jobs and we're not creating private sector jobs in Ontario.

**1000**

So the question is: Do we have a real deficit-cutting strategy in this budget? The answer, quite simply, is no. Do we have a debt-reduction strategy in this budget? The answer is no. You can look at the tables for 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18, and they're blank. There's just nothing there. Do we have even the smallest symbol of acknowledgement that these things are priorities for the government? No, we don't.

We got news yesterday that the Bank of Canada is actually looking to raise interest rates in 2014, which could be disastrous for our province. This means that the Bank of Canada basically just called this government's bluff. A 1% increase in interest rates is going to cost us \$500 million; that's a half-billion dollars. It's going to increase the costs for us to borrow money, and we're borrowing money at record speed in Ontario.

The debt clock is ringing up by \$1.8 million every hour that passes, and we're racking up on the actual debt and interest on that debt. In the budget, it clearly says we're paying almost \$12 billion this year to service the debt and interest payments. In two years' time, we'll be paying \$14.5 billion to service our debt in Ontario.

What Ontario really needed was a serious budget to deal with these problems. What Ontario needs now is a serious Premier and a serious government to deal with these problems, not a government that believes the solution to every new problem is a new tax, which we're now seeing with the Metrolinx project. The Premier's stance on that is to bring in more taxes when we have record revenue generation in the province right now because of the two largest tax increases this province has ever seen, under this Liberal government: the health premium, which I alluded to earlier; and, of course, the HST.

Government revenue is up more than \$30 billion over the last decade. We're taking in more money than we ever have before, and we can't find \$2 billion—a mere 2% of the annual budget—to pay for transit. Sometimes in government you have to make the tough decisions. You have to start to make difficult decisions. The easy decision for this Premier—this new Premier of Ontario—was to cozy up to the side that was going to allow her to rack up the credit card total even further. That was the easy thing for her to do to stay in power, and you have a willing partner because everybody knows they love to spend money too.

Sometimes you have to tighten things up. You have to make the tough decisions. Ontarians do demand more from their leaders. Now my friends in the third party are going to get up, they're going to look into the camera, and they're going to say—because they've been saying it for the last couple of days—that all the Tories know how to say is no.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** That's right.

**Mr. Todd Smith:** To them, I say, "Darn right!" Darn right, we're going to continue to say no. We're going to

say no to passing on record debt to my two daughters in Prince Edward–Hastings. We're going to say no to increasing the debt without a plan to deal with it. We're going to say no to propping up a government so scandal-plagued that it regularly blows \$1 billion for its own partisan political purposes. I say no because there's no price high enough that that government will be able to buy my support. That, my colleagues, is something that you can't say in the third party, despite the fact that you know that you should be saying no to this government. You've got that big hand on your shoulder telling you, "No, do what's best for us, not what's best for the people of Ontario." That's why we're saying no.

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

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Again, it's a pleasure to rise today and to speak to this programming motion. You know, this motion looks to speed up the passage of the budget, a budget that will add to our debt and do little to assist in the jobs crisis in Ontario; as well as establish a Financial Accountability Office, which was an item on the NDP's ransom list.

I'd like to take a few minutes and talk about the harm that the Liberal overspending has caused the province and the potential impacts of the Liberal-NDP coalition coming together to avoid action on our disastrous debt. At a time when we should be doing all we can to reduce the debt and to lighten the load that our children will be forced to carry, this budget actually increases spending by \$3.6 billion. If any one of us here has been in business before, we know that you cannot stay in business if your expenditures exceed your revenue. Well, this government, Speaker, since 2003 has increased the debt—that's the accumulated debt from Confederation. When they came into power in 2003, the debt for Ontario was \$125 billion. Today, just 10 short years later, that debt has increased from \$125 billion to almost \$300 billion, an increase of around 240%—an increase. How can any business stay successful and stay in business—how can this government, how can this province stay competitive and stay in business with a global economy when in fact we're faced with rising debt continually?

As my colleagues pointed out this morning, with the interest rates at an all-time low but threatening to increase by 2014, we're going to have very serious problems. An increase of 1%—just 1%—in the interest rates will mean that Ontarians will have to pay an additional \$500 million in interest payments, and we get nothing for it. We don't even get a hug for that. They continually add to our debt. If we take a look at it, every child that's born either at the Leamington District Memorial Hospital, in my riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex, or the Chatham–Kent Health Alliance, also in my riding, will have on their backs a \$20,000 debt load from this province.

Currently, we have 600,000 men and women in this province who don't have a job. The budget does nothing to help give them a brighter future. Every year, we toss away \$11 billion just to service the debt, as I was talking about earlier. If there was a ministry of debt retirement,

that ministry would be the third-largest ministry in this provincial government; health being number one, education being number two. It's awful when you take a look and you see what kind of money we are just losing continually. It's a sad, sad state of affairs.

We look at the track record. I'm a firm believer that past performance is an indication of future performance. I look at the budget right now—we were accused of not even looking at the budget. What would make anyone think that this year—this year of all years—would be any different than the other 10 years before, when in fact all they did was add, add, add to the debt and deficit of this wonderful province that we are struggling to hold on to? We don't want to become another Greece; we don't want to be called Ontariopolis. Speaker, we want to remain a leader in Canada today as the number one province, not a bottom-feeder, and that's really where we're at right now.

You look at the scandals—scandal after scandal. I'll start with eHealth, then followed by the air Ornge scandal. We look at the Mississauga and Oakville gas plant scandals. Those account to billions upon billions of dollars.

Now we've got this NDP-Liberal coalition. As we begin to get serious about this, we as the PC Party brought forward a number of bills, good solid healthy bills, to help slowly turn this province around. We presented them here in this wonderful Legislature. We explained it to both the government and third party opposition, how it will help. But oh, no, they think that the PCs don't have any good ideas. Unfortunately, prior to former Premier McGuinty proroguing the Legislature for four months when we couldn't get anything done, they shut down four of our private members' bills that would have helped to turn this around. Then the McGuinty-Wynne government comes in, and we had three other bills, one of them being the Ability to Pay Act, and again, they wouldn't listen. Well, they listened, but they didn't want to do anything about it. Again, the NDP propped up the government and assisted in defeating our bills.

**1010**

The NDP-Liberal coalition—I say that with a small C right now, but one of the things I might want to add is the fact that the NDP have propped up this government many times, time and time again. Maybe their call letter should be different; maybe their call letter should be the NDPP, the New Democratic prop party, because that's exactly what they're doing.

They go to this government and they try to negotiate and talk more about, "Well, listen, give us this, give us this, and we'll support your budget." Well, they held the government ransom as well, and because they held the government ransom, the government caved to seven of their demands, which will account for hundreds of millions of dollars on the taxpayers' backs. But what do they care? Right now they feel that they've got the reins of this government in their fingers, and that's not right. They don't have it, but right now they're holding every-

one ransom. What they're doing is they're holding Ontarians ransom. They're holding us all ransom. I look at it, and I go, "Come on, guys, give us a break. The cost is going to be astronomical."

I look at the budget right now. It's around \$127 billion—\$127 billion, with a B, and then we hear the papers saying, "Well, you know, the cost of an election is \$92 million," with an M. That's \$92 million; \$127 billion—let me see here—and if we don't have that election right now—well, we're not going to have that election, so what's it going to cost us? I guarantee you that between now and whenever the next election is going to be, the cost on the taxpayers' backs is going to be far more—it will be times, times, times more than that \$92 million for an election, when, if we got into power, we would slowly start to turn it around. And would we work with the Liberals and the NDP? Of course we would, but we've got to start to turn things around.

We've got to stop this scandal. I look at the people within my own riding, and they see how this government has blown its money and won't hesitate to reach again into the pockets of citizens just a little bit more. It's a sad, sad state of affairs. When we look at it, we say, there's talk about Metrolinx right now. There's just talk, but the concern that we have, and especially the people of Chatham-Kent are saying—hey, listen, we have our infrastructure problems, but we also have our infrastructure solutions. But when I look at this, they want to add 1% to the HST and maybe some other taxes along the way, once again putting their hands into the pockets of Ontarians. The people in Chatham-Kent-Essex are concerned because what will that do maybe to the cost of gasoline throughout the province? You know, 1% on a dollar means a penny, but if it's 1.5%, that's one and a half pennies on every dollar this government is going to grab, and that amounts to billions of dollars once again.

So, again, I appeal to the NDP-Liberal coalition. We need to take a look at this budget. We need to take a look at really what is actually happening here, and we need to find a substantive way to turn things around.

Even seniors in my riding are very, very upset. Last week in Chatham, they organized a protest at the Chatham Retirement Resort to fight changes that are happening with regard to physiotherapy, as an example. Physiotherapists, caregivers and even seniors themselves braved the cold and the rain to have their voices heard, and I am immensely proud of the fighting spirit of the people of Chatham-Kent-Essex.

Don Rhodes, a senior at the retirement resort, was quoted this past week in Chatham This Week. He said that changes will hurt seniors like himself: "When you're not mobile, it's a whole different story. We need these programs. We have a lot of people here that need to keep active, and without being active every day, you've got more people in wheelchairs than you've already got now." We don't need to add to that. These people need access, and there needs to be that funding available, rather than cutting \$44 million out of that particular budget.

Speaker, I get the feeling right now that you're about to stand and cut me off because it's time to break for—

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

*Debate deemed adjourned.*

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

*The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Jack MacLaren:** It gives me great pleasure to introduce special guests from Ottawa who came here today to meet with our health critic, Christine Elliott, and deputy critic, Bill Walker. It gives me great pleasure to introduce Jennifer and Deborah Wyatt from the TIPS autistic training facility; Dr. Jeff Sherman, a psychologist from Ottawa here to speak about autism; and John Light from John Baird's office in Ottawa.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It gives me great pleasure to introduce, from Access Alliance, Julie Chamberlain, Naseema Dar, Pinky Paglingayen, Mofazzal Hoque and Sheila Htoo. Also, from the Society of Energy Professionals, we have Judith Logan and Guntis Berzins. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Lorenzo Berardinetti:** I'm pleased to rise to welcome the Society of Energy Professionals to Queen's Park and to recognize all those who are in the gallery, including president Scott Travers; and Frank Pierce, from my riding of Scarborough Southwest.

The society is here to help members understand the issues facing Ontario's energy generation and transmission sector. I hope members will take time to speak to them and enjoy the reception at the end of the day in the legislative dining room.

**Hon. John Milloy:** I'd like to welcome a good friend from the great riding of Kitchener Centre: Ken Silvester, who is here with his granddaughter Katelyn, who's a grade 5 student studying civics. They're here today to learn about good government.

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** I'd like to introduce someone who has actually won a very big spot in heaven because she puts up with me all the time. She's the biggest reason why I have the privilege of serving here. I'd like to introduce my wife, Pauline.

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** It's my pleasure today to welcome Rev. David ManHong Kim and his wife, Esther, and, along with them, a delegation from South Korea: Rev. Soon Ok Jung, who is the former director of the Korea National Reconciliation Committee, and also Mr. Noh Il Kwak, the chair of the Advanced Political Society in Korea. I'd also like to acknowledge Mr. Jae Chong, who's the executive director of the Dr. Scofield Memorial Foundation; Julia Jung, who's the senior deaconess of the church; and HeeJu Yun, who's a volunteer with the Dr. Scofield Memorial Foundation. I believe they are touring the Legislature, so soon we will have them come in and partake of our question period.

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

Before I recognize the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, I'd like to announce that earlier this morning, just before the proceedings started, unanimous consent was granted, so that no one else gets the idea that they can just start dressing like that any time they want.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I would like to invite all the members of Parliament to the Battle of Stoney Creek this weekend. We're having over 800 to 1,000 re-enactors. My portrayal in the battle will be an artillery captain in the 8th regiment of Her Majesty's Royal Grenadiers.

Also, if I didn't introduce my wife, I'd be in big trouble, as she helped me get in this: my wife, Carole.

It's going to be a great weekend. We're expecting thousands of people.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Hello to Joe. Welcome back.

It's my pleasure to introduce two constituents from my riding: Andre Ramsaroop and Scott Travers, who are here with the Society of Energy Professionals. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** I'd like to welcome a constituent of mine, Mr. Ahamad Abdullah, who is the parent of one of our pages here, Lamiha Abdullah. He's here visiting with us in the east gallery.

**Hon. Mario Sergio:** Speaker, my wife is supposed to be here with a delegation from my riding, attending the Italian flag-raising today. The traffic is probably holding them up. They are here to assist and enjoy the celebration.

As well, I want to invite everyone in the House to join us for the Italian flag-raising.

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** It is my pleasure to welcome Julie Pontarollo here to Queen's Park. She is the mother of Jessica Pontarollo, the wonderful page from the great riding of York South–Weston. Mrs. Pontarollo will be joining us this morning in the public gallery.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I'd like to introduce Virginia Morra and Dave Mauro, who are here for the Italian flag-raising this morning.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'd like to introduce Graham Malcolm, accompanied by his wife, Victoria. They are here to see the workings of Queen's Park. I welcome them here from the riding of Brant.

As most members can see, my other brother, Joe Peters, is here, and his son Nick. Welcome.

Depending on whether or not the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek is able to sustain himself in the House today, I may let him dress that like for the entire time.

It is now time for question period.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### TRANSIT FUNDING

**Mr. Frank Klees:** My question is to the Premier.

On February 19, just a few weeks ago, here's what the Premier told Ontarians and this Legislature, through the

Lieutenant Governor, in her speech from the throne: "For the benefit of the entire province, your government intends to work with opposition parties, in a spirit of renewed co-operation, to get the people's business done."

Speaker, we want to take the Premier up on that offer. In that same spirit of co-operation, I'd like to ask the Premier: Will she agree to strike a select committee of the Legislature so that we can help the government find the additional \$2 billion to pay for transit without burdening taxpayers and businesses of this province?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I really wish that as a result of the conversations that I had with the Leader of the Opposition and the opportunities we had to exchange ideas—once the budget was introduced, there was an immediate response that the opposition was not going to support the budget. Without even reading the budget, Mr. Speaker, that was the response.

I truly believe that I have reached out, that I have done my best to work with all members of the Legislature, and I will continue to do that.

The reality is that for decades there has been no commitment on the part of the provincial government to have a dedicated revenue stream to build transit. The member opposite knows full well—he was a Minister of Transportation—there was no dedicated revenue stream for transit. There needs to be, and we're going to make that happen.

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

**Mr. Frank Klees:** That's precisely why we're making the offer that we're making.

That spirit of renewed co-operation seems to have evaporated, or is it just in order to prop yourself up to stay in government?

I want to read further from that throne speech, Speaker: "Your new government believes that complex times require thoughtful, collaborative solutions." We agree, and that's why we are asking the Premier to take our offer very seriously.

Why will the Premier not agree to strike that select committee of all parties of this Legislature so that we can get to work, while she's having her conversations, with finding that \$2 billion in savings and waste right across this government so we can get on with the construction and dedicate \$2 billion of revenue to transit in this province?

1040

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** A few weeks ago, what the members opposite were asking us to do was to focus on implementing the Drummond commission recommendations, Mr. Speaker, and do that transformation of government that was laid out in Don Drummond's report. We're doing that, and 60% of the recommendations are already in the works or have been implemented. We continue to do the transformation of government. That is finding savings. That is constraining the costs. That is constraining our spending. We're doing all that.

All of that is not going to deliver \$2 billion a year to deal with the congestion issues in the GTHA. The member opposite knows that. He's been a Minister of Trans-

portation. He knows that that has not been a focus of the provincial government for decades. We need to make it a focus, because people need to be able to get around the GTHA, to their homes and to their work.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Renfrew will come to order.

Final supplementary.

**Mr. Frank Klees:** February 19 was not that long ago. I remember the ceremony here and I remember the awesome commitment that this Premier made to co-operation.

I want to read from the closing remarks of that throne speech: "All parties and each member will be encouraged to contribute to this process, to make their insights known.

"Your new government hopes that ideas will be put forward with optimism and purpose, and that voices will not be raised solely for the pursuit or retention of power.

"Your government is committed to finding real, creative solutions to the issues we face." And then it goes on to say that to do this, it will direct its efforts across the aisle. That's from your throne speech.

Speaker, I ask the Premier one more time. In all seriousness, I ask her: Why will she not agree to the creative idea, to work collaboratively with opposition parties, strike that select committee so that we can get on with our work and fund transit in this province?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I have appreciated the opportunity to meet with the Leader of the Opposition. We have had a number of very good conversations. There are some things where it would be great if we could find a way to co-operate on. For example, I have already mentioned it would have been great for the opposition, the PCs, to have read the budget before rejecting it. It would have been great for the opposition not to have rejected the throne speech. It would be wonderful if every single piece of legislation was not being stalled in this Legislature, legislation would protect kids from cancer, legislation that would support Ontario farmers, legislation that would bring the budget through the process. It would be terrific if we could have that kind of co-operative working relationship.

We're working to constrain expenses. We're working to transform government. We also have to work to invest in transit.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** New question? The member from Nepean–Carleton.

## TEACHERS

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity. I have a question to the Premier today.

Last summer, your government handed over hiring rights in our schools to the provincial unions. As a result of Bill 115, we said we would support the bill, but we demanded that the hiring provision be stricken. The government said that they would do that, but after the bill

passed, they snuck in a regulation, 274/12, to appease their union friends.

Now, predictably, school boards and teachers are opposed to this, and that's why our party put forward an opposition day motion to rescind regulation 274. The government opposed that.

But now the metal is hitting the floor, Premier, and school boards are concerned about next year. How is your government going to address the drastic decline of the quality of teaching in our classrooms as a result of your hiring policies? And why aren't you committed to putting the best teacher in the room, not the teacher with the most seniority?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I know that the Minister of Education is going to want to speak to the specifics of that discussion with unions, but let me just say, Mr. Speaker, that I am so pleased that in the time that we have been in office and that I have been in this office we have been able to begin to re-establish the positive working relationship with the education sector, with the teachers, with the support staff and with our school boards, because that relationship, I believe, is fundamental to the achievement and the success of our students in this province. I do not expect the member opposite to value that relationship; that has not been a cornerstone of their practice in this House or when they were a government. It is ours. We believe in that relationship. We believe that it's important that publicly funded education works best when government and the education sector are working together.

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

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Look at this caucus. Most of us have kids in the school system. We value quality education. I know I speak for all my colleagues who actually have kids in the classrooms.

Let me read from three teachers who wrote to the Premier and myself—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I want to hear both the question and the answer.

Please continue.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Let me read from three teachers who wrote to me and to the Premier. Karrie from the Upper Grand district says, "I was hired based on merit" but "with the implementation of regulation 274, I am being denied any opportunity to work within a school community that I love."

Sam from the Ottawa Catholic School Board wrote to me and the Premier and said, "Regulation 274/12 is destroying the concept of merit." And if it was "really about putting students first, let's give them the best and rescind regulation 274/12."

Chris, who wrote to me from Guelph, is very disappointed that the Minister of Education, his own MPP, refuses to meet with him and other teachers in this situation. He writes, "I am afraid the regulation is going to force me to leave the teaching profession."

Premier, will you listen to Karrie, will you listen to Sam and will you listen to Chris, and put the best

teachers back in the classroom, rescind 274 and stop putting—

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

*Interjections.*

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

Premier?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Education.

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I think it's important to understand that, in fact, regulation 274, although it does look at past experience and issues like seniority, is actually there to make sure that young teachers have an opportunity to get jobs. We want to make sure that we're not looking only at seniority, and we're not looking at family relationships and things like that—that we're actually giving young teachers an opportunity to apply for jobs. We want to make sure that they're posted so that they even know when there is a job available. Boards still have the ability to make the ultimate hiring decisions.

I think we need a bit of an update on regulation 274. In fact, as we speak, there is a working table between OSSTF and the public boards, looking at whether they can agree on modifications.

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

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** If the minister were reading her correspondence as I most certainly am, she would realize that's it's young teachers who are writing in to her and I. If she would meet with her own constituents about this she would recognize that this is a big problem. If she were to talk about boards, she would know that the Toronto District School Board, last evening, wanted to address nepotism and to make sure that not only is this regulation rescinded but that they are actually part of the process. They want to actually eliminate that through conflict of interest so that this would be redundant.

But let me talk about Leslie from Toronto. She says, "It won't matter that the schools' students already know and love the sixth most senior or the 60th most senior applicant, or that none of the five most senior applicants is interested in doing co-curricular activities or that a newly graduated teacher speaks the language of 70% of the schools' parents."

The Toronto District School Board, last night, adopted Leslie's approach. They know as well as I do and Leslie knows that regulation 274 isn't about the best teacher in our classroom. I will say this—

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

Minister?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** I'm sorry; I don't think the member opposite heard what I said about a working group looking at exactly some of the issues that have been raised by the individual teachers, by school boards and, quite frankly, by the union, because we have been working with our teachers and with our unions. We have been working with our school boards. One of the things that we agreed to was to set up a working table to explicitly look at the—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Renfrew, I want to hear the answer.

Carry on.

1050

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** We have, as I speak, a working group that's been set up between the OSSTF and the public school boards looking at whether there are changes they want to make to the regulation, because we believe that the best way to get a resolution for this issue is for us all to sit down and work together and come up with a sensible solution that solves everybody's needs.

#### ACCESS TO INFORMATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Premier. Does the Premier believe that staff in the Premier's office should follow the laws of the province when it comes to retaining documents and keeping government accountable?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Yes, I do.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Documents and emails in the cabinet offices are not the personal property of the cabinet ministers; they belong to the public and are supposed to be kept in the public interest. Does the Premier think it is acceptable that staff in the Premier's office and other ministers' offices have failed to keep—and at times deliberately deleted—emails and other documents?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We have taken these obligations very seriously. I have ensured—and the government House leader went over this yesterday—that all staff are aware of our responsibilities in terms of retaining documents. There has been training for staff, and for new staff, so that they understand what the responsibilities are.

We have provided more than 130,000 documents of the nature that the leader of the third party is asking about. So it is very important to me that we follow the rules, that we retain the documents that we are meant to retain, and that that applies to all staff.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** People are very worried today because they feel that governments that are supposed to be working for them seem more concerned about protecting their own political hides. They see it at city hall in Toronto, they see it in Ottawa and, sadly, they see it here day in and day out. Political staff in the government are supposed to follow the rules and not bury politically inconvenient details. How can Ontarians trust that this Premier won't allow this to happen in the future when the same abuses keep happening over and over and over again?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** As I said, I came into this office and I made it very clear that we were going to have an open, transparent process around all of the issues that we deal with, but the issue of the relocation of the gas plants was obviously front and centre. I made it clear that all staff were going to be following the rules, retaining

documents that we were meant to be retaining, and provide training for staff so that they would understand, even if they had understood before, that they were going to have a renewed understanding of what those rules were.

We have done all of that. We have provided documentation as we have been asked by the committee, and we will continue to do so.

#### GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is also for the Premier. In tough times, people need their government to be accountable and transparent. They've been asked to make sacrifices, to make tough choices, and when they see their government scrambling to hide facts and squander scarce public resources, they feel like they're being played for fools.

Yesterday I met with the former parliamentary budget officer, Kevin Page. We talked about the importance of real accountability and giving families access to real information about how the government is spending their money.

Is the government prepared to use the new Financial Accountability Office to give people accurate, independent information on government decisions?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I think we've said quite clearly in the process of our discussions around the passage of the budget that having a Financial Accountability Officer in place as an independent voice on these issues was something that we believed, as a team, was a good idea. It was a good idea that the leader of the third party raised, and we are going to work to that end and introduce legislation to create that office. So yes, I think it's a good idea. We've said yes, and we look forward to working with the leader of the third party and, I hope, the Leader of the Opposition on that.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The government is moving ahead with plans for a sell-off of government assets such as plans to sell ServiceOntario and Ontario Northland. The government has also made it clear that they plan to move ahead with plans for more corporate tax giveaways and tax cuts for Ontario's highest income earners as soon as the books in this province are balanced. Is the Premier ready to put these schemes on hold until the new Financial Accountability Office has a chance to actually review them?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We are going to continue to make decisions to bring policy forward, to bring legislation forward. One of the pieces of that will be the creation of the Financial Accountability Office. But everything that we are doing, we are doing with an eye to what is in the best interests of the people of the province and how we can maximize service to people and reduce costs as we go along. We will continue in that work. We are not going to put all of the work of the government on hold while we bring forward one piece of legislation. There has to be a complex introduction of various pieces of policy and legislation over time. We will continue to

do that, and one of the pieces of legislation will be on the Financial Accountability Office.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** People feel like they're falling behind. Too often, when they look at their government, they see their needs being pushed aside so the government can move ahead with plans that help their well-connected insiders, and leave them paying more and getting less. A Financial Accountability Office is one small step towards greater transparency and greater accountability, Speaker. Can the Premier ensure that she will allow this new office to do its job, and not ram through decisions before it can be established?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I look forward to the discussion on the legislation of the Financial Accountability Office; it will be a good discussion and I think that it's a good idea.

I want to just let the people of the province know that we are in the process now of bringing forward a budget that is going to make a difference in their lives. It is going to be a budget that's going to help young people find jobs, Mr. Speaker. It's a budget that is going to invest in infrastructure, in communities across the province. It's a budget, when it is passed, if it is passed, that will allow us to help people to make changes in their day-to-day lives.

The good news that we have received in the last couple of days is that the credit agencies have said that we are on the right track. Standard and Poor's yesterday said, "Supporting the ratings are what we view as Ontario's large, wealthy and well-diversified economy... The province is forecasting an improvement in its operating deficit and after-capital deficits; both deficits outperformed the government's forecast for the fourth consecutive year." We're on the right track.

#### APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** My question this morning is for the Premier. Premier, earlier this week we spoke about the 25,000 jobs now at risk throughout Ontario due to the Liberal-NDP decision to cancel the Apprenticeship Tax Credit without any consultations. We spoke about 8,000 jobs that the NDP is risking in northern Ontario and we spoke about the thousands of jobs in and around London and Windsor now in jeopardy.

In Brantford, an area that our Speaker knows well, this Liberal decision has put four call centres at risk. Together, NCO, Wipro Technologies, Union Gas and Extend Communications add over 1,000 important jobs to Brantford and Brant county. Premier, you blew nearly \$1 billion to cancel the gas plants in Mississauga and Oakville. Are you so desperate for revenue that you are willing to risk 1,000 good jobs in Brantford?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Premier.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I'm proud of this government's record over the last several years of creating more than

400,000 jobs in this province, many of those jobs in the manufacturing centre; many of those, frankly, are call centre jobs as well.

In Brantford, which is a place I know well and which I know is an important place—you know, Brantford just recently benefited from a project that we funded under the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund. I was proud to be able to be part of an announcement of \$1.5 million to a company called Hematite in Brantford to support jobs, for them to add more lines and more employment in that important city as they recover from this difficult recession that we've all. So I've had the privilege of being able to announce a number of projects, as the member opposite of course knows well, two of those projects being in his riding. The Southwestern Ontario Development Fund is making a big difference and impacting precisely the way the member opposite would like.

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

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** Back to the Premier: Earlier this week I received an important letter from the mayor of Chatham-Kent, Randy Hope, addressed to Minister Duguid. Mayor Hope expressed concerns as a result of the proposed changes to the Apprenticeship Tax Credit and the thousands of jobs at risk in Chatham-Kent and across this province.

**1100**

The letter outlines the case of Minacs, one of Ontario's largest contact centres, which wishes to continue its expansion into Ontario but is now being forced to look at US locations, putting 3,400 current jobs at risk. Mayor Hope's letter outlines a simple and easily implemented solution to your problem.

Premier, are you going to listen to the mayor and reverse your decision to kill the Apprenticeship Tax Credit? Or will you continue to risk up to 25,000 good-paying jobs throughout this province?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Of course, we respect the opinion of Mayor Randy Hope of Chatham-Kent, particularly when it comes to his views on the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund. He was instrumental in providing his support to ensure that not only the program existed—despite the fact that the official opposition voted against the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund and put measures in place to even delay its passage in the Legislature and delay these funds getting to the good people of southwestern Ontario.

The mayor, whom I've met personally as well and spoken to on this and other issues—his recommendations are always welcome on this side of the Legislature. I have to say that in terms of call centres as well, in Barrie, I was very proud to hear not that long ago of a \$20-million annual investment by HGS in Barrie. The mayor there, incidentally, was also very happy, because that's created 500 new jobs in Barrie in call centres.

#### MANUFACTURING JOBS

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** My question is to the Premier. When the government established the Green Energy Act,

it promised that green energy technology in Ontario would be built in Ontario and create jobs in Ontario. Can the Premier confirm that her government now plans to abandon provisions that require green energy companies to build equipment and create jobs here in Ontario?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** In the introduction of the Green Energy Act and the work that we've done in renewable energy over the last couple of years, we have jump-started an industry that really didn't exist in Ontario. Our commitment to continuing to work with the green energy sector and maximize the job creation out of that sector is firm. We believe this is an important industry to the province of Ontario, which is why our commitment to it remains strong.

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

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Premier, that doesn't actually answer the question. The push for renewable energy was supposed to be an opportunity to create good-quality manufacturing jobs here in Ontario. Sadly, your government's approach has been marred by broken promises and flip-flops. Now it looks like you're giving up on good manufacturing jobs here in Ontario.

Provinces like Quebec and countries around the world have been able to ramp up renewable power and ensure that the manufacturing happens locally to create local jobs. Their programs haven't been scrapped by the WTO.

Will this government finally admit it has made a complete and utter mess and look to other provinces to ensure that we keep manufacturing jobs here in Ontario?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** No, I won't admit that, because we've created 31,000 jobs in Ontario. We've built enough clean energy to power 900,000 homes. I really would have thought the member opposite would have been supportive of that initiative, that the member opposite would have thought that was a very good thing.

What we have announced today—and the Minister of Energy is speaking about it today—is that we believe that the process whereby some of the green energy infrastructure that has been sited needs to be modified. It's one of the things that, when I became the leader of the party and the Premier, I said we were going to deal with: a better process going forward for municipalities to have a stronger voice. That's what we have announced, Mr. Speaker. That's what the Minister of Energy has been working on.

We recognize that programs need to be modified and that processes need to change, but they need to change based on the evidence of good successes and the gaps we have discovered.

#### SCHOOL SAFETY

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Education. In our schools, we have some of the best teachers, we have some of the best students, working hard, and our parents are doing their best to ensure our schools remain the best, along with our teachers.

But one of the concrete issues that parents have come to me about, over the last while especially, is about the

safety of their children. They are worried about how safe our schools are. They are worried about their kids coming to school safely and going home safely. They really get upset when they hear that there's a lockdown in one of our schools, so the question I want to pose to you, Minister, is: As this education system delivers great education, what are we doing in a concrete way, as a government, to work with school boards to make sure our kids are safe in school?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Thank you to the member from Eglinton–Lawrence, who is always an advocate for the schools, parents and kids in his riding.

Our government knows that in order for our students to learn well, they need to learn in a safe and accepting school environment. Since 2003, we've invested over \$360 million in safe schools and equity and inclusive education initiatives. We actually recently reopened the Safe Welcome Program with an additional investment of \$10 million to give school staff more control over who enters the schools, so that we can keep our kids safe once they're inside the school.

Through working with organizations like the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police and the committee of youth officers of Ontario, we've developed safety protocols. Elementary and secondary schools are required to work with local police on safety protocols, on lockdown protocols, to make sure we keep our kids safe.

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

**Mr. Mike Colle:** Thank you, Minister. The principals, the parents and the students are telling me very directly that one of the things that we've done with the school boards that really makes our schools safe is our police officers in the schools. That is being very well received, and it is working to prevent crime from coming anywhere near our schools.

The other thing that is very apparent is that in some neighbourhoods, there are very few issues about safety, but in other neighbourhoods in my riding of Eglinton–Lawrence, there are some serious risks. These are in our vulnerable, at-risk neighbourhoods where—I know it's hard to believe in some situations, but some kids are basically afraid to go to school. They may get shot going to school or shot on the way home from school, so this is a very, very traumatic concern for our parents, our principals and our students.

I want to know: What are we doing to ensure that, in these at-risk neighbourhoods which are real and very, very challenged—what are we doing extra to protect the kids in those schools?

**Hon. Liz Sandals:** Thank you to the member. I too would like to thank the local police and the school boards who have worked together to provide school officer programs. They certainly have an impact.

With respect to demographic issues, we actually have something called the Learning Opportunities Grant, which is targeted at school boards that have a higher-than-usual number of low-income neighbourhoods in their communities. That's actually almost half a billion dollars a

year that goes specifically to the Learning Opportunities Grant to support kids.

Our government also provides \$10 million annually to specific high-needs schools in urban areas that face challenges like poverty and crime. We're also working to provide children in low-income areas with summer learning opportunities. If we can get this budget passed, we have an additional \$12 million targeted at summer learning camps in high-risk neighbourhoods.

## ACCESS TO INFORMATION

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Thank you, Speaker, and good morning. My question this morning is for the Premier. Premier, a few minutes ago, you spoke about a new, open and transparent style of governing. In fact, you mentioned the fact—

*Interjection.*

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

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Thank you for your new style of open and transparent speaking.

You mentioned that your staff and your government has been given training with respect to the gas plant scandal documents. My one question is: Does that training include using Gmail accounts for your staff to hide the information from the freedom of information officer?

1110

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Government House leader.

**Hon. John Milloy:** We've addressed issues around emails, both yesterday and today, and the Information and Privacy Commissioner is looking into the matter.

I would also remind the member that we've had 130,000 documents—that's an estimate of the number of pages that we've given the committee.

What's interesting is the way that the honourable member keeps trying to escape from the simple fact, and it's still there: They opposed the very gas plants.

Again, we ask what their estimate is. We also ask, when they did their estimate, whether they added the extra \$85,000 that they were paying because of the robo-calls that they had to promote the fact that they were opposed to the gas plants and they were the only ones who would cancel it, according to their very own robo-call.

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

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** Unfortunately, I didn't get an answer to my question about whether the training included using secret Gmail accounts for the Premier's staff—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Order.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I can imagine why they're a little riled this morning, Speaker.

We have melaniefrancis28@gmail.com—of course, you know who I mean. She's the lawyer in the House leader's office, using a Gmail account to talk about the gas plant transaction. We have mmsmith442@gmail.com

—that’s Monique Smith—talking about the gas plant, dealing with your office.

There are a lot of Gmail accounts here. Let me ask you a question, Premier. Are these Gmail accounts because the freedom of information cannot get at these—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I understand some of these people are gone today, but we also understand—and I’d like you to answer—were these Gmail accounts used because you have trained them that you can’t have a freedom-of-information request for Gmail accounts? Is that it?

*Interjections.*

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

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Renfrew, are you okay? Just checking.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound: The time that I’m standing, you’re not supposed to be making any sound.

Government House leader.

**Hon. John Milloy:** Mr. Speaker, it’s kind of passing strange that he’s saying we’re hiding documents and he in fact has the documents. We have made—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, even when I’m sitting, you’re not supposed to be making some of that sound. Thank you.

**Hon. John Milloy:** We have made every effort to provide the committee with documents; in fact, the Premier, when she assumed office, offered to have a government-wide search for relevant documents, and the opposition turned it down. As I say, 130,000 pages is the estimate of what we’ve given the committee. We also have, within that, 30,000 which have come from the Premier’s office.

In terms of the responsibility of all government officials, including political staff, we have instituted training and systems in various ministers’ offices to make sure that records are safe and in compliance with the law.

#### CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. The minister, yesterday, made promises to EMDC workers that she would do something about the conditions at Elgin–Middlesex Detention Centre, but the minister has made many promises, and conditions have only deteriorated in London and at jails across the province. Can the minister explain why this time we should believe that she is serious and will finally take the necessary actions?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I want to thank the member from London–Fanshawe for her question.

Yes, indeed, yesterday I had a great meeting with the leadership of OPSEU with regard to EMDC. As you know, the health and safety of the correctional officers and the inmates at EMDC is my number one priority. So we discussed the 12-point plan, what should be the first

thing that is burning, that we can do as soon as possible. We had a great dialogue. We agree on what we’re going to do from now until the end of June, and then we’ll move forward with the rest of the improvements in this detention centre.

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

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** The minister has talked about creating a board to oversee EMDC and outright dismissed my suggestion to include correctional officers on the board. Without this representation, we know that this board will be nothing more than a PR exercise. It will be destined to fail. Years of promises did not fix the problems at EMDC, and a weak board will not, either.

It’s clear that this minister is unable to do her job, and the lives of workers and inmates are on the line. Will the minister resign so her government can take action to resolve the problems at EMDC immediately?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Again, I want to thank everyone, the seven members of the OPSEU with whom I met yesterday, and those who work as correctional officers in EMDC. We had a very frank conversation. I wanted to take the opportunity to thank them, for, on short notice, they came to meet with me. Most importantly, we discussed how to work together to improve the conditions at EMDC and across the province.

The president of OPSEU was happy with the meeting and said, “I’m glad that Minister Meilleur is giving” correctional officers “the attention they deserve. If we can continue on this path, it” will “lead to much-needed improvements and will ultimately save lives.”

#### SENIOR CITIZENS

**Ms. Soo Wong:** My question is for the minister responsible for seniors. Ontario has the most diverse seniors population in Canada. In fact, 55% of Canada’s immigrant seniors reside in Ontario, and one third of them speak a mother tongue other than English or French. What is more, 7% report no knowledge of either English or French. As a result, they may find themselves unable to access the services available to them in our province.

I know that in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt, many retirement homes and long-term-care facilities such as Tendercare, Mon Sheong, Shepherd Village and St. Paul’s L’Amoreaux offer programs and assistance in languages other than English and French.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, can he please tell the House what measures are being taken to ensure that seniors in diverse communities like mine, like Scarborough–Agincourt, are supported in Ontario?

**Hon. Mario Sergio:** I would like to thank the member from Scarborough–Agincourt for a very important question indeed.

Our government is dedicated to serving Ontario’s diverse population. It is my commitment and that of this government to ensure that seniors in Ontario live in a secure and very supportive environment.

We are working hard to collaborate with our partners across government to develop and support culturally ap-

appropriate services and resources which cater to the various languages spoken to and by Ontario seniors. Some of these services include: multicultural seniors' fairs; seniors' active living fairs held throughout the province, including northern Ontario communities; presentations by the Ontario Seniors' Secretariat, with a range of multicultural seniors' organizations; and also a guide to programs and services for seniors in five different languages.

Speaker, we do this and we'll continue to do more on behalf of our seniors.

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

**Ms. Soo Wong:** It's good to hear from the minister that our government has taken action to ensure that Ontario is supporting its diverse seniors population.

I know that in my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt, local agencies and community groups such as ACSA and CICS help inform seniors of some of the programs available in our province.

We also are aware that in just five years, Ontario's seniors' population will outnumber children aged 15 and under. The fastest growth will occur in the oldest age group, as over 75 years of age is projected to be more than double and the 90-plus group will be more than triple.

Can the minister inform this Legislature of some of the initiatives and public education efforts implemented by our government to improve the quality of life of all Ontario seniors?

1120

**Hon. Mario Sergio:** This government is working very hard to make Ontario the best place in North America to grow old by:

- continuing to deliver information fairs in northern Ontario and remote communities;

- funding the seniors' infoline through ServiceOntario that provides a multilingual capacity as well;

- providing a guide to programs and services for seniors in French, Chinese, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and Punjabi; and

- providing a guide called Diversity in Action: A Toolkit for Residential Settings for Seniors to increase cultural awareness in seniors' homes.

Most recently, I was also very glad to join the MPP for Scarborough–Agincourt for a seniors' round table and the Minister of Rural Affairs for the launching of the Seniors' Month kickoff in the beautiful city of Peterborough. We are continuing to demonstrate this government's will and commitment to a healthy and secure environment for all our citizens in Ontario.

## CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** My question is to the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. Minister, during your government's term of office, we've seen the prison population at the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre and other prisons in Ontario increase from one to two inmates per cell to three and four per cell. Today, Ontario's prisons are bursting at the seams. I've seen this

first-hand, Minister. Your decision to close five jails in southwestern Ontario and strip hundreds of beds from the corrections system has contributed to this.

On Tuesday of this week, you blamed everyone else for the knives, drugs, riots, fires and overcrowding in our prison system. They're wreaking havoc on Ontario's prisons.

Minister, the buck stops with you. Will you stand in this House today and admit that there's no one else here to blame but yourself and your inept government?

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Mr. Speaker, I'm very, very confused here. This question is coming from a party that closed 19 jails in Ontario and did away with almost every rehabilitation program, so I'm not about to take any lessons from that party.

What I want to do is to improve the situation in our correctional facilities, and since I've been appointed to that ministry, that's what I'm doing. That's why I have regular meetings with OPSEU, and we will continue to have regular meetings with OPSEU to make sure that the situation improves. At the end of the day, I want to make sure that everybody is safe: those workers who come to do a good job every day and those inmates that we have responsibility for.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary? The member for Elgin–Middlesex–London.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Back to the minister: Minister, I'm going to help you out with your confusion here. The problems at the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre this week are a result of your neglect. The spread of the fires on Wednesday was a result of EMDC's antiquated meal hatches. Your 12-point plan introduced last August promised new meal hatches for this very reason. However, construction has not yet begun. During these fires, correctional officers lacked enough fire-related equipment and many had to use their own shirts to avoid smoke inhalation. Adequate fire-related equipment was also on that 12-point plan that you did not deliver on.

Minister, you're not doing your job, and when there are lives at stake, you don't deserve a second chance. Will you do the honourable thing and resign?

*Interjections.*

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

Minister.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I'm going to let the member from Elgin–Middlesex know—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Minister.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Let me say to the member what we have done so far. We have hired 11 new full-time correctional officers. We now have 24-hour nursing that was implemented. We have a mental health nurse. We hired three more operational managers. We are building a new control module for staff. We have a superintendent and deputies touring many times a week. We have operational managers, and what they should do is tour every day, and that's what they are doing now. The capacity is monitored every day.

Again, the previous government closed 19 jails, slashed funding and gutted our rehab program—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm going to ask the member from Halton to come to order and the member from Prince Edward–Hastings to come to order, and if he wouldn't mind going to his seat so I can tell him the same thing just in case he doesn't get it.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** What they have done is, they have adopted a failed American state warehousing approach, and that's what we're trying to correct. Your party's decisions have led to the majority of the challenges that we are facing today.

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** Give me a break. You've been in government for three terms. Do your jobs.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Nepean–Carleton will come to order as well.

New question.

#### COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** To the Minister of Infrastructure: The Mary Berglund Community Health Centre in Ignace is one of the top health care facilities in the north, with people from across the region travelling to the CHC to access its services.

In 2010, through the Ontario Realty Corp., this government more than doubled its rent, putting their long-term viability at risk. After much pressure, the North West LHIN agreed to provide the Mary Berglund CHC with a temporary and partial funding increase to 2015, after which time the CHC will be forced to further cut staff and services or close its doors.

My question is simple: Is the Ministry of Infrastructure so short on cash that it has to pillage other departments to pay its bills?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Let's be clear here: The Mary Berglund Community Health Centre is paying \$5-a-square-foot rent. I would hardly describe that as an onerous level of rent. I don't know if anyone in this House knows of an organization that pays \$5-per-square-foot rent. Outside there it's \$30 or \$40, and in most small towns, in Peterborough, you pay a lot more. As a matter of fact, what we can determine is that the going rate for rent right now is \$12 a square foot. By any measure, Mary Berglund has a very good deal.

We have been working right now because the policy of the government, so that we don't artificially subsidize through the back door, is to have a market rent, which would in this case normally be \$10 or \$12. But there is a default position for some centres which has been in place for about 15 years which is to go to a standard \$5-a-square-foot rent.

We're working on other solutions, but right now I don't think the challenge is the rent they're paying.

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

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** Minister, this situation is not acceptable. Your department is working with facts and figures that are way out of line with a community of

Ignace's size and northern location. Other comparable CHCs in the north that occupy similar spaces pay \$60,000 rent while Mary Berglund CHC is forced to pay \$200,000 a year. Something is not right. They do not have 40,000 square feet; they have 1,700. They are not paying \$5 a square foot, let me tell you.

Minister, I urge you to fix this problem by either lowering the rent to a more reasonable amount or selling the building to the CHC for a nominal amount. We need action now to avoid another health care crisis in north-western Ontario.

Minister, what are you willing to do to ensure that your department fixes this situation?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** That being said, Mr. Speaker, I do agree with the member's point. She's absolutely right. We have to reconcile to get a rent. From what I understand—I am working with you on this and we're on the same page on it—the volume of space that I understand Mary Berglund has is part of the problem. They're in a building that has a lot of challenges with it.

What can we do about this? Well, the local LHIN and Infrastructure Ontario are working with the health ministry to try and reconcile the rent and the payment system right now because they can't afford it. We're also looking at the amount of room, which I am told—and I will be going up there as soon as the House rises to personally visit the site and I would be happy to tour it with you, to try and see if we can reduce the amount or find other ways to reduce the amount of space so that the storage or surplus space they don't need they don't have to pay for.

We're very committed to working with you on a solution. The point that rent is very high: Until someone shows me other evidence, it looks like it's about half what the going rate is.

#### SMALL BUSINESS

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** My question is for the Attorney General. Currently, on-site winery retail stores are open on Labour Day, Canada Day, Thanksgiving, Victoria Day and Family Day in areas where there is a tourist exemption bylaw as implemented by the local municipality.

**1130**

However, there are still many statutory holidays when winery retail stores cannot open for business and take advantage of opportunities to sell our fine Ontario wine on some of their busiest days. I know that the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario, an agency that reports to you, the Minister of the Attorney General, administers a variety of authorization policies for liquor manufacturers' stores. Could the Attorney General please tell us what recent progress has been made to further improve the conditions that encourage the success of small businesses that serve tourists across Ontario, particularly those in rural communities?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** I want to thank the member from Ajax–Pickering for that excellent question. We all know that wineries, breweries and distilleries form an

important part of Ontario's economy, and the culture of Ontario wines and beers has become world-famous and renowned over the last number of years.

The Alcohol and Gaming Commission was asked to revise their policy on operating days for on-site retail stores, and I'm pleased to announce that the on-site stores are now permitted to open on all nine holidays listed under the Retail Business Holidays Act, which include Easter Sunday, Good Friday, New Year's and Christmas, in addition to the days that they're already allowed to.

This new policy means that if a local municipality passes a tourist exemption bylaw, which is necessary, on-site retail stores will be able to offer tours and sell their products to visiting tourists and local residents on long weekends and holidays. Small businesses in both rural Ontario and urban communities are the cornerstone of Ontario's economy, and we want to make sure that this business prospers.

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

**Mr. Joe Dickson:** I thank the Attorney General for that answer. It's good to hear that this government supports our small businesses and local wineries and breweries.

While an expansion of days open for business is a welcome change, there is also an issue of operating hours. Currently, on-site retail stores selling alcohol on Sundays are limited to operating hours between 11 a.m. and 6 p.m., yet many of these stores are busiest on the weekend, and longer hours could provide retail stores with an opportunity to maximize their business potential and consumers with greater access to their products. Mr. Speaker, could the Attorney General please inform this House if action has been taken on this issue?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Action has been taken, because in addition to extending the operating days to include all statutory holidays that I mentioned before for on-site winery, brewery and distillery retail stores, they're now able to open between 9 a.m. and 11 p.m. all seven days of the week. By making this change, we as a government are succeeding in improving conditions that best encourage the success of small businesses as well as the options for consumers. With on-site retail stores open on more days and for longer hours, more winery and brewery and distillery tours will be offered, and more made-in-Ontario products will be sold, which is good for all of us. This is just one way in which we as a government are making progress in supporting small business and the consumers in Ontario.

#### ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** My question is for the Minister of Health. Idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis is a rare, lethal lung disease. Most people diagnosed with IPF are told that without a double lung transplant they have between two and five years to live. However, there is a new drug that is giving patients like Barbara Skinner of Georgetown hope. Esbriet appears to slow the progression of the disease and provides patients and their families with valuable time together.

Last October, Health Canada approved Esbriet for use in Canada; however, it's not covered by OHIP currently. I'm told it costs approximately \$3,800 a month—a cost most Ontarians without private drug coverage can't afford. I wrote to the minister, and spoke to her about it on April 11 in this chamber; I know she's aware of it. What is the minister doing to ensure that all Ontarians who suffer from IPF have access to Esbriet?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you to the member for the question and thank you to the many members who have written me on this particular issue. I know how important it is that when people have an illness and there is a drug that can help them with that, we do everything we can to get access to those particular drugs. However, there is a process we go through. It is not a political process. It is a process removed from government, where an independent panel looks at the drugs, looks at the evidence and gives advice on whether or not certain drugs should be funded. In this particular case, that process is well under way.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Supplementary. The member from Durham.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Like my colleague, I have also shared information with you from my constituent Laurie Fowler, who is the strongest advocate that I have ever met for her mother, Virginia Koury. Minister, you would know that she was recently diagnosed with IPF, as has been mentioned. Virginia would be an excellent candidate for treatment with Esbriet.

Minister, your drug review process in Ontario is broken. It does not take into account the life-threatening risk of IPF and the need to take Esbriet in the mild to moderate early stages of the disease. Minister, patients simply do not have the time to wait for your bureaucratic review process. In Canada, there are 3,000 deaths per year related to IPF. Esbriet, as well as a promising new drug, pirfenidone, have been approved by Health Canada. Why are you not approving this drug for Ontario patients today?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The member opposite knows very well that Health Canada approval does not mean instant approval on our drug benefit plan. We do have a process. I have written to these members and others to confirm that both of these drugs are being reviewed by the independent panel.

I think it's important that we take our responsibility very seriously when it comes to putting the process in place and putting the funding in place to back up these drugs, particularly for patients with very high drug costs. I am very pleased with the work of the review panel. They are doing the very diligence that is required to make sure that the most people get access to the drugs that they need.

#### HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Ma question est pour la première ministre. Sudbury Downs, the racetrack in my riding of Nickel Belt, will be racing for the first time this season

at 1:30 on Sunday. It should have been a happy day, but they cannot fill their race cards, in part because of the limited purse; yet they have \$2.5 million in their purse pool. Can the Premier confirm that this money, which was collected in the north, will stay in the north?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Rural Affairs.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** First of all, it's good news that they're back racing at Sudbury Downs. They're also racing at Kawartha Downs, Dresden, Flamboro Downs, Woodbine, Mohawk, Hanover, Rideau Carleton, Sudbury Downs and Western Fair. We want to thank the panel—the honourable John Snobelen, the honourable Elmer Buchanan and the honourable John Wilkinson—who are doing an incredible job in restructuring the race industry in the province of Ontario.

I tell everybody to take advantage of Saturdays, Mondays and Wednesdays to get out to your local racetracks; there are wonderful cards. Horse racing is here to stay in Ontario, and this government is supporting an important industry in rural Ontario.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** That was a very disappointing answer. There is \$2.5 million in a purse account in northern Ontario that is at risk of being shipped elsewhere. It looks like this government is trying to run this industry into the ground. The number of race days at Sudbury Downs was 63 last year. We raced twice a week this year; we got 20 days. The purses at Sudbury Downs used to be \$50,000 a race night. We're now at \$30,000, yet the cost of feeding, training and caring for those horses is not going down. Will the government change their minds and their wrong-headed ways, and allow Sudbury Downs enough race days and purse money to maintain this industry, the only racetrack in northern Ontario, and sustain the thousands of jobs that it supports in Nickel Belt?

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I want to thank the member from Nickel Belt, of course, for her great interest in a very important industry to rural Ontario. Particular to Sudbury Downs, if the member would be so kind after question period today to provide me with that information, I would certainly take it to the officials—Karen Chan, who works within the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, and, of course, the horse racing panel: the honourable John Snobelen, the honourable Elmer Buchanan and the honourable John Wilkinson. I'll take a representation today after question period, and we'll take a look at it.

#### CORRECTION OF RECORD

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Kenora–Rainy River on a point of order.

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** I would like to correct my record. In my supplementary, I mistakenly said that the Mary Berglund CHC occupies 1,700 square feet. It actually should be 7,200, which makes their rent at about \$27.70 a square foot.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member has the right to correct her record, and that's a point of order. A point of order from the Premier.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I just want to remind everyone and encourage them to come out to the farmers' market on the lawn of Queen's Park and enjoy some great Ontario food.

#### VISITOR

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Speaking of the farmers' market, my other, other brother is here in the Speaker's gallery, and that is the former Speaker of the House: Steve Peters is here. I suspect he's going to be outside eating some good Ontario product as well.

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

*The House recessed from 1140 to 1300.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I'd like to introduce, in the west members' gallery, members of the Ontario Dental Association who are here for debate on my private member's bill, Bill 70: President Dr. Arthur Worth; President-elect Dr. Rick Caldwell; Vice-President Dr. Jerry Smith, and some of the board of directors: Dr. Victor Kutcher, Dr. Ron Yim, Dr. Raffy Chouljian, Dr. Grace Lee, Dr. Larry Tenaschuk; Mr. Tom Magyarody, executive director, and Mr. Frank Bevilacqua. I'd like to welcome them. Let's give them all a round of applause.

*Applause.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Welcome.

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** I'd also like to welcome two of my constituents who are coming, but they're not here yet. They are here to support the member for Leeds–Grenville as well for Bill 70. They'll be joining us later, I'm going to say in an hour or so: Dr. Larry Pedlar, co-chair of the Coalition to Restore Spousal Rights and Freedoms, and Dr. Vipani Maini.

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### WATERLOO AIR SHOW

**Mr. Michael Harris:** This weekend marks the fifth annual Waterloo Air Show in my riding of Kitchener–Conestoga. Over the years, support for this exceptional event has grown steadily among fans and the Canadian military, which has and continues to showcase some of its most impressive planes to thousands of spectators each year.

For the 2013 show, I'm proud to welcome the return of the world-famous Canadian Snowbirds, along with the crowd-pleasing CF-18 Demo Hornet. This year, the theme of the CF-18 Demo Team is "The Common Thread," which signifies the ties Canadians of all backgrounds have to this country.

For the first time at the air show, Disney's newest character, Dusty, from the film *Planes* will come to life

and join in the excitement in the sky. Jane Wicker will also perform the breathtaking wing walk across her Stearman aircraft.

I encourage all members and those watching at home to come out with your friends and family to enjoy a fantastic weekend full of great activities and performances by talented Canadians. Gates open at 10 a. m. and the air show begins at 12:30 p.m., running until 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

I would also like to take this time to thank the hundreds of volunteers who make this event possible, as well as the co-producers, David White and Richard Cooper, who will also be flying his Aero L-29 Delfin plane.

I would also like to make a special mention of the Canadian military members who participate in this event. I look forward to having you in the region this coming Saturday and Sunday.

#### BATTLE OF STONEY CREEK

**Mr. Paul Miller:** This weekend marks the 200th commemoration of the June 5 Battle of Stoney Creek. Battlefield Park will be awash in re-enactors in uniforms brightening the landscape with their vivid colours but, more importantly, with their vivid reminders. As I've said many times before, this was a pivotal battle that ensured our place in Canada, not the United States.

The re-enactors will represent the British, aboriginal and American participants in the battle. They will be remembered:

- Friday evening at the Smith's Knoll parade, memorial service and Battlefield Cemetery rededication;
- the 100th anniversary of the Battlefield Monument on Friday at 1 o'clock;
- and the re-enactments on Saturday and Sunday.

It is my honour today to have the support of this chamber to wear my uniform for this weekend's re-enactments. I am representing a British captain in the 8th Regiment of the Grenadiers, who fought in the Battle of Stoney Creek.

This weekend has been made possible by the stellar efforts of the city of Hamilton and Battlefield Park staff, very ably led by curator Susan Ramsay, who I'm proud to have worked with as a re-enactor in the past. I want to extend my sincere appreciation to Susan and her staff for their unwavering dedication to the history of our city, their unfailing enthusiasm to meet the goals of Battlefield Park and their loyalty to the citizens of our city.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Just so the member knows, I did correct someone out in the hallway. They said that you were in part of a ballet of the Nutcracker, and I said no.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** You said no?

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I said no, just to make sure you are aware.

#### MARK CREEDON

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** This is a tribute to recognize the career and to celebrate the achievements of a good friend

of mine, Mark Creedon. Mark is retiring after a generation of service as the executive director of Catholic Family Services of Peel Dufferin. Mark will devote more time to himself and to his family as a retiree, beginning July 4, 2013.

For more than 38 years, Mark Creedon has dedicated himself to social work, helping families and youth in Peel region. His exceptional contribution has built countless careers among the fine people that he has trained and led. He has spawned many more leaders just like himself. His leadership has meant comfort, understanding and support for people and families in Peel facing crises, life and family challenges.

Last November, I presented Mark with the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal. Mark's award recognized his outstanding contributions to Mississauga and Brampton, and the organization-building that he did to make Catholic Family Services so essential to families in Peel region.

One of Mark's proudest moments came when the William G. Davis Centre opened to house a full suite of human service providers to serve us all in Mississauga and Brampton.

Live well, Mark. Ontario thanks you for your lifetime of work and service.

#### PASQUALE PALETTA

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** On June 6, at its annual signature event, the Burlington Economic Development Corp. will formally induct Pasquale Paletta into Burlington's Business Hall of Fame as its 2013 Entrepreneur of the Year.

In doing so, he joins an esteemed group that includes: Harry Voortman of Voortman Cookies; Mark Chamberlain of Trivaris; Michael Lee-Chin of AIC Ltd./Portland Holdings; Michael DeGroot Sr. of Laidlaw/Republic; Ron Joyce of Tim Hortons; Murray Hogarth of Pioneer Petroleums; Ron Foxcroft of Fox40 International; and Reg Pollard of Pollard Windows.

Mr. Paletta came to Canada as an Italian immigrant after World War II and founded Paletta International. The company has grown from 10,000 square feet almost 50 years ago to more than 200,000 square feet today, and now exports to more than 17 countries worldwide.

The Paletta family has also developed thousands of residential units; constructed over half a million square feet of buildings; developed hundreds of acres of property for retail and employment; farmed thousands of acres; and most recently, branched out into film, media and entertainment.

The Paletta name is a familiar one to residents of my riding, and the family has always been a big part of the vitality of Burlington. We would like to have a huge congratulations out to Pasquale Paletta.

#### ESSEX COUNTY

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** As always, it is a pleasure to rise in this House to talk about the extraordinary people

in Essex county doing extraordinary things. Essex county has been the venue for many of the significant historical events that have shaped Ontario and Canada. We know these events through the pages in our history books, but back home in my riding of Essex, the Maidstone Historical Society and the Kingsville Historical Park museum have taken the initiative to preserve and display the tangible artifacts of this history, and staged re-enactments to engage the community.

I want to thank the following members of our community for their dedication to telling our story. From the Kingsville Historical Park museum: Katherine Gunning, Lynda Lynch, Wayne Bagshaw, Larry Moynahan, Ilene Watt, Lyle Rhea, and Ed and Helen Buckler. As well, from the Maidstone Historical Society: Victoria Beaulieu, Elizabeth McInnis, Barb Townsend, Anita Goegabeur, Mary Helen St. Pierre, Mary Campeau and Elaine Klein. Mr. Speaker, as you can see, there are those in our province who go above and beyond to preserve history and the significance of the War of 1812 in founding this great country.

I want to thank them for those endeavours, and I encourage all members of this Legislature and the province of Ontario to visit Essex county and take in these important places, these important testaments to our history, and enjoy our shared history together.

1310

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Let me offer my special congratulations to the member from Hamilton East–Stoney Creek for his portrayal during the Battle of Stoney Creek. I'm just sucking up to avoid confusion over that last comment.

### STOPGAP

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** I would like to recognize the efforts of Luke Anderson, from my great riding of Oak Ridges–Markham. Luke and his co-worker, Michael Hopkins, started an organization in Stouffville called StopGap, which seeks to increase accessibility in local businesses.

StopGap is run by volunteers and funded entirely by donations. This evening, they will be having a fundraiser to support their efforts to increase and raise awareness about accessibility, one of our government's important priorities. Funds will go toward initiatives such as the community ramp project, where StopGap works with local volunteers to provide free portable, weatherproof and slip-resistant ramps to local businesses, including 16 already in Stouffville.

In addition to constructing ramps, StopGap also does presentations to students where Luke focuses on the theme of inclusivity and overcoming obstacles. Luke was paralyzed in a mountain biking accident 10 years ago, and uses the community ramp project as an example to teach students how to recognize a challenge in life and how to overcome it.

In fact, one grade 6 class that Luke visited was so inspired by his advocacy efforts that they created a picture

book called *The Ramp Man*, and \$3 of each sale goes toward StopGap.

Thank you, Luke and Michael, for working with local businesses and volunteers to create a community where every person can get where they want to go.

### MARJORIE LIPKA

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I rise in the House today to pay respect to a long-time Sauble Beach resident. Marjorie Lipka passed away at the Grey Bruce Health Services hospital in Wiarton on Tuesday, May 14, at the age of 87.

Marj was a dynamo, a people person with charisma, a spring in her step and a sparkle in her eye. She was instrumental in just about every project in the community, including physician recruitment and the building of many major community projects: the Sauble Beach Community Centre, the Sauble Beach library, the United Church and, most recently, the Sauble Area Medical Clinic, of which she was the heart and soul of the Vision 2002 campaign. After 10 years of dogged determination by Marj and her team, the clinic is now open and serving the people of Sauble Beach and area.

She was a very determined and innovative volunteer. She influenced many people, members of council, and provincial and federal politicians with her charm, perogies and butter tarts. When Marj approached you and said, "Hey, sweetie, can you..." there was just no way to say no, Speaker.

As a result of her can-do, never-say-no attitude, she earned many nicknames for her extraordinary community work and fundraising initiatives, Mrs. Fundraiser, the Perogy Princess, and Energizer Bunny being the most popular ones.

Marjorie was a very worthy recipient of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2012, and it was my privilege to present her this medal, along with my federal colleague MP Larry Miller.

Marjorie is survived by her husband of 62 years, John, along with her children Carol Ann McMillan, Robert Lipka, Benjamin Lipka, Sharon Armstrong and Raymond Lipka, 15 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren.

I would like the House to join me in paying respect to Marjorie Lipka for her great dedication, hard work and generosity toward her community of Sauble Beach and area. Your legacy will live on, Marj.

### HIGHWAY 427 EXTENSION

**Mr. Steven Del Duca:** It's a pleasure for me to take a moment today to update this House on the progress that's being made with respect to a remarkable project in my community of Vaughan, and that's the extension of Highway 427. It's a project that is extremely important for the residents and businesses in my community, and I'm happy to report that it is successfully moving forward.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, on Thursday, May 16, Premier Kathleen Wynne, along with Ministers Glen Murray and

Linda Jeffrey, visited Vaughan to announce the formal approval of the extension of Highway 427.

This 6.6-kilometre extension will run north from Highway 7 to Major Mackenzie Drive, with six lanes proposed from Highway 7 to Rutherford Road and an additional four lanes proposed from Rutherford to Major Mackenzie Drive. In addition to the extension, new interchanges at Langstaff Road, Rutherford Road and Major Mackenzie Drive will also be included in this project, as well as three new transitway stations.

This extension has been an extremely important objective for my neighbours and my community in Vaughan. A project of this size will bring thousands of jobs to York region, and will ensure that we will be able to continue moving goods and commuters more efficiently across the greater Toronto area.

I have certainly already begun to receive very positive feedback from residents in my community on this exciting announcement, and I'm pleased to see that our government remains committed to ensuring the successful completion of this project.

I want to personally thank everyone who has helped to make the 427 extension possible in my community, and I look forward to more progress being made on this project and others in the near future.

#### AL STRIKE

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I rise today to pay tribute to a respected citizen, friend and mentor, Al Strike, who passed away on May 23 at the age of 85.

Al was highly respected as the senior member of the law firm that has borne his family name, Strike, for the last three generations.

Al, affectionately known as "the Silver Fox," also found time to serve the community as a leader and volunteer. For more than 50 winters, Al built an outdoor ice rink on his front lawn for the neighbourhood kids to enjoy and play hockey.

Al brought the same generosity, enthusiasm and leadership to many bigger projects, including the Skate 88 campaign for the new arena complex in Bowmanville, and the Splash campaign for the Bowmanville indoor pool and fitness centre. More recently, he was a leader in the Valleys 2000 trail and fish ladder project.

Al Strike was a 60-year Rotarian, a founding member of the Bowmanville business improvement area, a member of the board of governors of Durham College, and a key fundraiser for the UOIT—University of Ontario Institute of Technology—and Valleys 2000.

Al was a member of the Ontario Trillium Foundation grant review team. He was named Ontario senior citizen of the year in 2005. He received the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal, and was honoured with a Rotarian Paul Harris Fellowship and a lifetime achievement award from the Clarington Board of Trade.

My deepest condolences to Anna, Al's best friend and wife of 62 years; and also their three sons, Ron, Bob and Dan; and all of their family's children and grandchildren.

His life was well lived, and he will be sadly missed but happily remembered.

I thank Al and Anna's three sons for their remarks at the funeral service the other day about their father's life, with the themes of celebration, 33 years, and hero.

#### VISITORS

**Mr. Steven Del Duca:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Point of order from the member from Vaughan.

**Mr. Steven Del Duca:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure for me to stand here today and have an opportunity, on a point of order, to recognize that we have some very special guests sitting with us in the members' east gallery.

We are joined today by the consul general from Italy, Mr. Tullio Guma, and his lovely wife. We are also joined by Michael Tibollo, the president of the National Congress of Italian-Canadians-Toronto District, and several other very important and friendly guests who were here today for the Italian flag-raising ceremony that took place on the front lawn just a few minutes ago.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Buon giorno.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE AMENDMENT ACT (PRESUMPTIONS FOR FIREFIGHTERS), 2013

##### LOI DE 2013 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA SÉCURITÉ PROFESSIONNELLE ET L'ASSURANCE CONTRE LES ACCIDENTS DU TRAVAIL (PRÉSUMPTIONS POUR LES POMPIERS)

Mr. Del Duca moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 81, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to firefighters and certain related occupations / Projet de loi 81, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la sécurité professionnelle et l'assurance contre les accidents du travail en ce qui concerne les pompiers et certaines professions connexes.

**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. Steven Del Duca:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for a very, very short statement.

I'm very proud to stand in my place and introduce this legislation that will impact positively, I hope, a very important sector within our province. This particular bill seeks to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997, to add to the presumptions with respect to occupa-

tional disease that apply to firefighters and to fire investigators.

Section 15.1 of this act is amended to include six additional occupational diseases that are presumed to be occupational diseases if diagnosed on or after January 1, 1980.

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## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### INJURED WORKERS' DAY

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Speaker, I rise in the Legislature today to recognize June 1 as Injured Workers' Day in the province of Ontario. We will observe in remembrance workers who have been killed or injured on the job. We will reflect on the effects that workplace injuries and fatalities have on workers' families, friends and communities.

People are our greatest assets. They must be properly trained, and we must strengthen our efforts to protect workers and their families. It reminds us that we need to do whatever it takes to prevent workplace fatalities, injuries and illnesses, and support their families and loved ones. We are making progress in our quest to make workplaces safer, working together with everyone who shares this goal.

Workplace injuries have decreased significantly over the last number of years. On construction sites, businesses, hospitals and schools, health and safety advocates are making workplaces safer. Ontario is now one of the safest places to work in Canada. Since 2003, we have lowered the rate of workplace injuries in this province significantly. The number of injuries in Ontario has gone down 30% since 2006.

But, Speaker, we need to do more. As we all know, one workplace injury, one workplace fatality, is one too many. We know that in many cases, the incidents that lead to injury or death are preventable or avoidable.

To help prevent injuries or fatalities, we have taken a strong, proactive approach to workplace health and safety. We have doubled the number of enforcement officers to make sure employers follow the rules. We have brought enforcement and prevention together under one roof, helping to make sure that injuries do not happen in the first place. We are developing the first-ever province-wide occupational safety strategy—with input from labour, employers, injured workers and community groups—to establish clear priorities and rules that will guide our work in the years ahead. We have made the new "Health and Safety at Work—Prevention Starts Here" poster mandatory in all workplaces, helping to ensure that workers know and understand their rights and responsibilities and the responsibilities of the employers and supervisors.

But we are not stopping there, Speaker. Together as a society, all of us must work to build a strong safety

culture, a culture of prevention in our province's workplaces. Together, we can prevent workplace deaths and injuries. Families across this province all want their loved ones to come home safe and sound after a hard day's work. As the Minister of Labour, I am committed to ensuring this goal becomes a reality for everyone.

While our goal is an injury-free workplace, we are also concerned and working to help those who do become injured. Our government has worked hard to protect the most vulnerable, so when workers get injured, they must be treated fairly and compassionately.

Speaker, since 2007, every year, the government has ensured that injured workers' WSIB loss-of-earnings benefits have increased. In fact, for injured workers on partial disability benefits—these are people who have some earning capacity but are not able to fully return to work—there has been a total increase in benefits of more than 9.5% since 2007. By next year, this will reach 10%.

Speaker, we're taking steps to ensure strong and stable WSIB not only for today's injured workers but for future generations. A strong well-funded public workplace insurance for workers benefits all of us—injured workers, employers and the business community. A strong financial footing will also ensure that the WSIB remains an organization that treats those it is there to serve with fairness and compassion. This is not only what injured workers are owed; it is what they deserve.

Injured Workers' Day is a day for all of us to stand and tell injured workers that they will not be forgotten. It is also a day for all of us—businesses, workers and government—to reconfirm our determination to eliminate workplace injuries and fatalities. It is a day for all of us to promise each other that we will continue to do what we can and what we must so that there is no longer a need for an Injured Workers' Day.

### ITALIAN HERITAGE MONTH

**Hon. Mario Sergio:** I rise to acknowledge June as Ontario's third annual Italian Heritage Month. In 2010, this Legislature enacted the Italian Heritage Month Act, and I'm honoured to be here today to recognize the many significant contributions Italian Canadians have made to Ontario.

This June 2 marks the 67th anniversary of the country's birth as a republic.

With approximately 900,000 strong or more, Italian Canadians are one of Ontario's largest and longest-established immigrant communities.

In 1497, Giovanni Caboto landed on our eastern shores and became the second European to discover North America. We now have the John Cabot Trail on the east coast to commemorate his great discovery.

Beginning in the late 1800s, many Italians came to Canada looking to start a new life and began their careers in northern Ontario's mining and forestry industries. They were instrumental in building Ontario's railways and helped link many of our communities across the province. Their skills and remarkable work ethic are

renowned, and as cities grew, more immigrants came to Canada and gained valuable employment in the construction sector, building our homes, our public buildings and, in Toronto, our public transit system.

Italian Canadians continue to flourish in all sectors of our economy. Success has been seen from broadcasting to manufacturing, and from commercial ventures to politics.

Today Ontario, compared to every other province and territory in the country, has the largest population of Italian Canadians.

Italian Canadians have demonstrated that even when you fully participate in Canadian society, you can still maintain your ties to your culture and homeland. Italian Canadians continue to give back to their communities here in Ontario while remembering their roots. This province stands on these values and ideals. Ontario is built on the premise that cultural diversity strengthens our communities and our economy.

During the month of June, I encourage every Ontarian to enjoy the many events taking place in communities across the province celebrating the Italian culture. This is a time to reflect on the sacrifices made by earlier generations, while celebrating the achievements and contributions that Italian Canadians continue to make throughout our great province and across our country.

With that, allow me to welcome as well, as guests in our chamber today, our Consul General, Mr. Guma, and his lovely wife. We have the president of the Toronto district and Canadian congress as well, Mr. Michael Tibollo, his wife and members of the family; and another wonderful group from our community as well. They wanted to be here and join us in the celebration and the flag-raising ceremony. I thank you for your time.

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

#### INJURED WORKERS' DAY

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I rise today to mark the upcoming Injured Workers' Day on behalf of Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC caucus.

On June 1, 1983, over 3,000 injured workers, families and supporters came right here to Queen's Park to have their voices heard. Since 1983, injured workers and their allies have come together on June 1 to celebrate their achievements and to maintain pressure on governments.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of Injured Workers' Day. Since 1985, there has been a sharp decline in the number of worker injuries in Canada, and although we must celebrate progress, we must also acknowledge that there is still much more work to be done.

Each year, there are tens of thousands of workers who are injured or killed in Ontario. Many more incidents go unnoticed. It's more important to remember that these are people, not simply statistics. They're our parents, our sons, our daughters, extended family, friends, and even co-workers.

With this in mind, we confirm that the only acceptable number of worker injuries or fatalities in Ontario is zero. Until this goal is reached, many workers will gather at Queen's Park each year to challenge the status quo.

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It is our task as legislators to ensure that workers and employers are well-educated on safe working practices and that supports are there for the injured men and women who need them.

One of the most difficult tasks for many MPPs is hearing the stories of injured workers in their riding. To hear their personal struggle through the system and the pain that they have experienced is not easy.

Many of my colleagues in this Legislature come from professional backgrounds that put a great emphasis on workplace safety. In my past career in the private sector, I was responsible for human resource development and managed a great staff that oversaw the health and safety training of over 4,000 unionized workers.

It is important to remember that when we come together, we can accomplish great things. Together, we can overcome workplace injuries.

#### ITALIAN HERITAGE MONTH

**Mr. Rob Leone:** I'm pleased to rise in response to the minister responsible for seniors' statement on Italian Heritage Month and Italian Republic Day, I acknowledge, right after the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex, who I know has a very large Italian community in his part of Leamington. Certainly, there's lots of tomatoes there; that's how we know a lot of Italians are also nearby.

Mr. Speaker, Italy has a very rich history and culture. Anyone who has actually been to Italy would know how great the food, the art, the fashion and the passion for sport are. I have to say, particularly around the area of Vaughan, you have to like fast cars. These are the kinds of things that you'll note once you go to Italy.

The contributions that Italians have made to this world throughout its history have been significant. I remember when my grandfather passed away, the priest actually told us that he loved doing ceremonies for my family because he knew Italian Canadians to enjoy three very good things. Obviously, food and wine was one of them, but he loved what family meant to Italian Canadians. He also admired our devotion to the Roman Catholic faith. All of these are certainly part of what defines how so many people identify themselves. When they identify themselves as Italian Canadian, they share many of these great things.

Our province has been enriched by the numerous contributions Italian Canadians have made to this place, certainly since they first arrived here. I note with great interest that a lot of Italian Canadians arrived to Canada through Pier 21 in Halifax. They made that journey, like so many European new Canadians did, throughout the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. I appreciate that we finally commemorated that location in Halifax as a destination

and put in a museum of immigration to commemorate the voyage that so many people took to come to this great land, this great province and this great country.

On behalf of the PC caucus, I want to thank and congratulate and say “Tanti auguri” to all the Italian Canadians in the province of Ontario.

### INJURED WORKERS’ DAY

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I’m pleased to rise today on behalf of the Ontario New Democratic Party and our leader, Andrea Horwath, to acknowledge Injured Workers’ Day. I am afraid that it may be the only initiative that comes out of this House that actually provides any tangible point of reference for any action on behalf of this legislative body when it comes to addressing the issues that injured workers in the province of Ontario face. I would simply say to members, if you aren’t receiving the same volume of calls as they relate to the failures of our workplace safety and insurance system that I am in my riding, then you aren’t answering the phone. You aren’t picking it up; you are avoiding it.

It is massive. It dominates the volume of calls that we receive in our office. It’s indicative of a failure in that system, where there has been a focus on reducing the unfunded liability, which seems to dominate, again, the conversation when it comes to the system, at the expense of what the system used to be, which was a compensation system that acknowledged that when workers were hurt, injured or suffered from occupational disease, they got compensated. They were taken care of. We understood that it was important to take care of them and to ensure that they remained healthy and vibrant contributors to our society.

Now what has happened is that they’ve destroyed the system so terribly, workers aren’t even inclined to indicate that they’ve been injured; they don’t want to because of the stigma that’s attached to being an injured worker in this province and the hurdles and loopholes that you have to climb through to get any action from our compensation system.

I say, I beg, I plead to the members in here—and I appreciate the minister and his final statement: It’s a day that we promise each other to “continue to do what we can—and what we must”—what we must—do to provide a system that compensates, that doesn’t degrade, doesn’t demean injured workers; one that acknowledges that if we don’t take steps immediately, we risk trying to compete with areas that do not promote health and safety, like Bangladesh, where they don’t care. They didn’t care. It was the corporate agenda that dominated the industry that garment workers, mainly women, suffered from, due to greed and at the expense of health and safety legislation. We have the Arthurs report, which should be acted upon in its entirety. I could speak for hours; I wish I did have the opportunity to.

PTSDs, precarious work, migrant workers who aren’t afforded the same information and resources that we should be providing—we’ve got so much more work to

do, Mr. Speaker. I implore the minister to get on this file in a real, comprehensive way. He knows he has my full support if he endeavours to do that. Today is a day we remember and thank injured workers for their advocacy, but there’s so much more we can do.

### ITALIAN HERITAGE MONTH

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I was proud to be outside on the lawn celebrating the Italian Republic Day and witnessing the flag-raising ceremony. There were a lot of Italian Canadians out there and, indeed, many MPPs, including the Premier. That was a very good thing.

We have a lot of immigrants in this country, and Italians make up a big part of that immigration population. What I said outside, which I wanted to repeat inside, is that I believe that immigrants have made this country, and I believe that all immigrants are great Canadians, and they’ve made this province and this country strong.

While I have seen successive immigrants being attacked by those who settle, I believe that to be a profound mistake and profoundly wrong. We should end racism, wherever it is and whenever it happens; we should end discrimination, wherever it is and whenever it happens. We have seen that immigrants are good for this country, and I have been an active proponent of making sure that we end racism today—yesterday, if we could.

I congratulate the National Congress of Italian Canadians for organizing this event today and other events. They have a whole series of Italian Canadian celebratory events for Italian Heritage Month, and I hope that as many people as possible can take part in those celebrations.

Speaker, it was good to see you there as well, because while you said today is Italian Day, tomorrow will be another celebration of another immigrant group, and that is the way it should be, and that is who we are.

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

### PETITIONS

#### PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas we understand that the Liberal government wants to cut back physiotherapy services for seniors in the province of Ontario by August 1, 2013. We rely on these services. We are against the cutbacks.

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

“We want the current level of physiotherapy services to be maintained for the benefit of our health. Please reconsider this ill-advised decision. This issue will influence our vote in the next provincial election.”

It’s signed by a large number of people from my riding.

## SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas agencies that support individuals with a developmental disability and their families have for several years (beginning in 2010) faced a decline in provincial funding for programs that support people with developmental and other related disabilities; and

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“Whereas because this level of provincial funding is far less than the rate of inflation and operational costs, and does not account for providing services to a growing and aging number of individuals with complex needs, developmental service agencies are being forced into deficit; and

“Whereas today over 30% of developmental service agencies are in deficit; and

“Whereas lowered provincial funding has resulted in agencies being forced to cut programs and services that enable people with a developmental disability to participate in their community and enjoy the best quality of life possible; and

“Whereas in some cases services once focused on community inclusion and quality of life for individuals have been reduced to a ‘custodial’ care arrangement; and

“Whereas lower provincial funding means a poorer quality of life for people with a developmental disability and their families and increasingly difficult working conditions for the direct care staff who support them; and

“Whereas there are thousands of people waiting for residential supports, day program supports and other programs province-wide;

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

“(1) To eliminate the deficits of developmental service agencies and provide adequate new funding to restore services and programs that have in effect been cut;

“(2) To protect existing services and supports by providing an overall increase in funding for agencies that is at least equal to inflationary costs that include among other operational costs, utilities, food and compensation increases to ensure staff retention;

“(3) To fund pay equity obligations for a predominantly female workforce;

“(4) To provide adequate new funding to agencies to ensure that the growing number of families on wait-lists have access to accommodation supports and day supports and services.”

I couldn’t agree more. I’m going to sign my name and give it to Lamiha, and she’ll deliver it to the table.

## FAMILY SAFETY

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I’m privileged to present this petition to the Ontario Legislative Assembly on the same day that it was my privilege to honour retiring Executive Director Mark Creedon from Catholic Family Services of

Peel-Dufferin, who is now with us. The petition reads as follows:

“Whereas the Safer Families Program is a successful partnership of Catholic Family Services Peel-Dufferin, Family Services of Peel and the Peel Children’s Aid Society (CAS), receives year-to-year funding from the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, and is a critical component of social services to families within the Peel community; and

“Whereas the intervention model for Safer Families currently operates with no waiting lists, an important consideration for families experiencing domestic violence and child protection concerns, as they require immediate access to service; and

“Whereas the Safer Families Program is aligned with Ontario’s child poverty agenda, is committed to preventing violence against women, and contributes to community capacity building to support child welfare delivery; and

“Whereas currently, Safer Families serves 14% of all domestic violence cases referred to Peel Children’s Aid Society and has the ability to double the number of cases it handles;

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

“That the government of Ontario adjust its funding to supply ongoing core funding rather than year-to-year funding, and realign funding to double the percentage of cases referred by the Peel Children’s Aid Society and served by the Safer Families Program.”

Speaker, I couldn’t agree more with this petition. I’m pleased to sign it and to send it to the table with page Jeffrey.

## PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

**Mr. John O’Toole:** I have a petition from my riding of Durham, and it’s on physiotherapy services. It reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“To review and reverse the decision to eliminate OHIP physiotherapy services to seniors in retirement homes, our most vulnerable population and most at risk for falls; and continue with the provision of at least 100 treatments per year with a mechanism to access an additional 50 treatments, if medically necessary, with the current low-cost OHIP physiotherapy providers”—at \$12.50.

I’m pleased to sign and support this petition and present it to Andréa, one of the pages.

#### CHILDREN’S AID SOCIETIES

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the Ontario government has approved a new funding formula to provide funding to the children’s aid societies which are mandated by legislation to provide child protection services to Ontario’s most vulnerable;

“Whereas due to this new formula the Children’s Aid Society of Hamilton will be underfunded approximately \$4 million over the next three years with no changes to mandated child protection responsibilities;

“Whereas chronic underfunding to the Children’s Aid Society of Hamilton will result in dismantling of support services and a loss of staff thereby jeopardizing the ability of the children’s aid society to provide relevant services and protect Hamilton’s children;

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

“That the Ontario government look critically at the funding provided to the child welfare sector and restore funding to the Children’s Aid Society of Hamilton.”

I couldn’t agree with this more. I will affix my name to it and send it to the Clerk with page Vanessa.

#### ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As I am in agreement, I affix my signature and give it to page Edgar.

#### EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES

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

“Whereas servers and bartenders in Ontario earn \$8.90 an hour, far less than the minimum wage; and

“Whereas tips are given to servers and bartenders for good service and to supplement the lower wages they receive; and

“Whereas Ontario law allows for owners and managers to pocket a portion of servers’ and bartenders’ ... tips or total sales; and

“Whereas thousands of servers across the province have asked for this practice to stop;

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

“Support the swift passage of Bill 49, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act with respect to tips and other gratuities and thereby end the practice of ‘tip-outs’ to management and owners.”

I am in agreement and will affix my signature thereto. The petition today is signed by many of the people who are here in the west gallery.

#### PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I too have a petition I wish to bring to the attention of the assembly this afternoon.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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“Whereas this change not only reduces the amount of money available, but also moves funds from the lowest-cost provider (OHIP physiotherapy providers—\$12.20 per treatment) to the highest-cost provider (CCAC—\$120 per treatment); and

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

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

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

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

My constituents talk about this as the “physiotherapy fiasco.” I have affixed my signature to it as well. Thank you very much, Jessica.

**HEALTH CARE**

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélina:** I have this petition from the people of Foleyet, which is in the northern part of my riding. I invite everybody to visit Foleyet. It’s not very often that we hear about them, but they’re important people. It goes as follows:

“Whereas the residents of Foleyet and catchment area, including all residents living in the various lake areas, such as Twin Lakes, Ivanhoe Lake, Boulder Lake, Groundhog Lake, Horwood Lake, White Pine, Sewell Lake, Old Mill, surrounding the town of Foleyet, no longer have weekly on-site physician visits to the Foleyet nursing station; and

“Whereas the nurse practitioner requires on-site physician backup for at least a few hours weekly and that videoconferencing and transportation for seniors only, are not options;

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

“That the Ministry of Health immediately resume the weekly on-site services of a physician, to ensure that safe and proper health care is given to the residents of Foleyet and surrounding area.”

Every single resident of Foleyet and the surrounding area has signed this petition. We now have the complete list of their names. I support them, and will affix my name and ask Andréa to bring this petition to the Clerk.

**AIR QUALITY**

**Mr. John O’Toole:** I have thousands of petitions here, presented on behalf of my constituents in the riding of Durham. It reads as follows:

“Whereas collecting and restoring” older vintage “vehicles honours Ontario’s automotive heritage while contributing to the economy through the purchase of goods and services, tourism, and support for special events; and

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

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

“Whereas car collectors typically use their vehicles only on an occasional basis, during four to five months of the year”—and certainly not when it’s raining;

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

I’m pleased to sign and support this and present it to page Jack, one of the pages here.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS’  
PUBLIC BUSINESS****PROTECTING EMPLOYEES’  
TIPS ACT, 2013****LOI DE 2013 SUR LA PROTECTION  
DU POURBOIRE DES EMPLOYÉS**

Mr. Prue moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 49, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 with respect to tips and other gratuities / *Projet de loi 49, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d’emploi en ce qui concerne les pourboires et autres gratifications.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** It is indeed an honour for me to stand again to move this bill. This is the third time around. The first time the bill was—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Third time’s the charm.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Third time’s the charm.

The first time the bill was heard, it received unanimous support of the House and was sent to committee but never went any further. The second time the bill was entered into the House, and three days before it was to be debated, the House was prorogued. I’m not one to give up so I am back here again today, and perhaps today the third time is a charm.

The first time the bill was introduced there was a great deal of controversy. There were people in this House and

elsewhere who did not want to see the bill go forward. In fact, the labour minister of the day initially did not support the bill until a number of servers came forward and indicated to her at that time that this was a bill that desperately needed to be passed. There was some change of position in the Liberal government at that point. In fact, then Premier Dalton McGuinty came forward to support it as well.

There was a group that represents restaurants and the hotel-motel association, and they lobbied fiercely against the bill at that point. There were some members of this House who were initially opposed or at least were very wary of the bill. There were also, I should state, some people who confused tip-outs to management with the ordinary and good practice of servers sharing their tips with other people with whom they work, i.e., dish-washers, busers, bartenders and others who are all responsible for a good time or a good atmosphere in a restaurant.

But I think today we understand that a great deal better. The former Premier is still onside. The Minister of Labour has indicated to me that he is onside and in fact will speak in favour of the bill today. Other members of the cabinet have indicated to me that they are in favour. In fact, opposition members have told me that they are in favour. Even the Ontario Restaurant Hotel and Motel Association is now grudgingly supportive. I'd like to read their newsletter to their members of a couple of weeks ago. It reads in part as follows:

"The ORHMA's president and CEO, Tony Elenis, joined by VP of government relations Leslie Smejkal met with Michael Prue this past week. They brought with them industry operators in a meeting that proved to be productive in defining each side's views on the proposed gratuity bill. The hospitality industry explained the several complexities of gratuity systems while MPP Prue stayed on course that employers should not take tips from servers. We are glad to state here that his intend for a proposed legislation is not as arduous as it appears."

They then outlined a few things that they were hoping to see, should there be amendments, and concluded, "Once again, Michael Prue's focus is aimed at owners who take tips from servers and not included in any of the above scenarios. The ORHMA has been pleased with the understanding we received from Michael Prue and will continue to communicate with Prue on this subject." So the greatest opponents the last time are no longer opposing the bill.

This is the shortest bill, I think, in the history of this Legislature. It is one sentence long. The sentence reads, "No employer shall take any portion of an employee's tips or gratuities." That's it. That's the whole bill. It's pretty simple—

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** It's too long.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** My colleague said that it's too long.

Today in Ontario it is against the law—and has been against the law, I think, probably for 100 years—for an employer to take any portion of an employee's wages as

a condition of their continuing employment, but tips are not covered. What this bill is intending to do is to make tips at the same level and under the same sanction as wages, so it will be against the law for an employer to ask at the end of the shift—at the end of the day of a hard-working person who worked all day and received tips—to take any portion of it.

**1400**

This will be a protection for employees who receive tips and gratuities. This is not limited to the restaurant industry but could be any person to whom a tip might regularly be given. It can include aestheticians. It can include hairdressers. It can include chamber people who work in hotels or car jockeys who bring cars around at casinos or hotels. It can include taxicab drivers. It can include literally anyone who might ordinarily get a tip.

Other provinces have already passed similar legislation since I first stood up. Prince Edward Island has passed a law. New Brunswick, Quebec and, most recently, Newfoundland and Labrador all include this protection for employees who might ordinarily receive a tip.

One might ask, why is this necessary? I will tell you, it's necessary because many employees live in fear. I have a letter which I'd like to read into the record—excuse me, an email which we received this morning. This is a person who was going to come to watch the debate, to do what any citizen is allowed to do in this entire province, was going to come here to watch the debate on this subject. That server wrote to me today, "It is with deep regret that I am withdrawing my name from the members' gallery list. A co-worker just called me and" heard the owner say "he was going to watch the live feed while in his office, and if any of us were in attendance, we would be fired."

"As is the case with many people trying to eke out a living from serving others ... I need this job, whether he gets to pocket thousands of my hard-earned tips every year, I have no choice."

This is the reality of what is out there, Mr. Speaker. What is happening today, and what people need to know, is that an employer can do many things. Employers in some restaurants keep all the tips; when you give a tip, the servers get none—not a penny of it. I can name you, but I won't, restaurants in this city where that happens every day.

In some places there's a tip-out jar. The employers are known to go and put their hands in the tip-out jar at the end of the night and take whatever they want. In some places, employers charge, and take out of the tips that are received, money for breakage, if anything is broken during the day, whether by the server or anyone else. They take money out for uniforms and require that the monies come out of the tips rather than out of the operating budget. They take money out of the tips for dine-and-dash, when a patron comes and eats and then leaves without paying. They take money out to pay for training which the employees are required to take and must pay for out of their own tip money.

But the most common of all, and I think probably the most egregious, is when employers take money out of

gross. They take a certain percentage of gross, and the average is 4% or 5%. What this means, on a 5% of gross, is that a server serves a meal for \$100 or a group of meals for \$100, and whether or not they get a tip, they are required to tip-out to management 5%, or \$5. So if somebody leaves no tip, they, in reality, have paid \$5 for the privilege of having served that meal. This is what happens in increasing numbers of restaurants in this province. When they give that money over, whether they got a tip or not, it is not required under tax law that the employer list that as money that he or she has earned. So, in fact, the employee is paying the employer, and the employer is not remitting any money at all to the government of Canada or the government of Ontario. It's free money. You have to wonder whether that's right.

A few other things I want to state within the last few minutes: People need to know that banquet halls do a practice which is called gratuity. If any of you have had sons or daughters marry and you go into the banquet hall or if you've gone to a function, at the bottom it says "gratuity," and it's usually 15% or 18%. That money you pay, but do you know that the employees, the people who actually serve the meals, don't get a single dime of that money, save and except in those places that are unionized? I have yet to find a single place in Ontario where the money is actually remitted to the servers. They get nothing. So that needs to end.

You have the problem in restaurants that have served meals but also have takeout, because employers will take 5% of gross on takeout meals. Now, you would have to know that most times when people come to a restaurant and take the meal away, they don't leave a tip. But the employee, who brings that meal to the front, is required to give 5% of gross, whatever that was, with the expectation that there will be no tip at all. You can wonder why some employees don't want to do it—because simply to take the meal in a plastic bag from the kitchen to the front counter costs them 5% of the wages they're going to make that day. That process needs to end.

I've already spoken a little bit about the taxes. In Quebec, their law says that every employee who receives tips is considered to get 8% of their tip actually delivered to them after they've shared with the other people who work with them. The Quebec government calculates it at 8%, and they pay tax on it. But not only do they pay tax on it, that goes against the wage that they actually make, so if they find themselves on employment insurance at some point, not only is the wage that they made calculated, but so is the tip money, so they have an opportunity to have made more money. If there's a pension available, it's more money that is pensionable as well. I think that's a good thing.

We need to do what is fair. We need to do what is fair for the employees and not allow owners to simply put that money in their pockets. It's not taxable and it's not fair that it's being taken from people who work so very hard.

I'd like to conclude, and I guess I don't have time to read all of it, with a woman who writes again saying that

her employer last week took \$52 from her tips. It was a horrible week. There wasn't enough staff. The money wasn't forthcoming because the service wasn't as good as she would have wanted it to be because there wasn't enough staff in the kitchen or at the bar, but in the end, the employer took \$52 out of her wage and sent her home, and there was nothing she could do because she so desperately needs the job.

I'm asking the members here to pass this bill. I'm especially asking the Minister of Labour, if this bill passes today and is sent to committee, to make sure it goes through committee. Make whatever amendment needs to be made, but make sure it goes through. Ontario should have the best labour laws. We should not be second to any. And if four other provinces can do it, so can we.

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

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Let me just say this right off the top: I am pleased to rise in support of this member's bill. I'm pleased that the member has reintroduced this bill, and I thank him for advocacy and his passion on a very important issue.

This is an issue of fairness. Any one of us, when going to a restaurant or going to a barber or getting a tour at a tourism site, when we leave a tip we 100% expect that that tip will go to the person who's providing the service. I don't think there's any doubt in anybody's mind that we expect that tip to be shared with the management. I think that's the essence of this bill that we so very much support: to ensure that hard-working men and women, be it servers or barbers or hair stylists, tour guides or house-keeping staff, when we leave a tip for them, receive that tip or that tip goes to the staff. That's the essence of fairness and it's what we need to make sure that we continue with, and change our Employment Standards Act to ensure that any violation of that practice does not take place.

I had the opportunity to meet with the member from Beaches–East York to talk about this bill and how this bill can be improved. My staff has met with him as well. We look forward to continue working with him so that we can find areas of improvement. I agree with you, Mr. Prue, that we need to make sure that this bill gets to the committee where those improvements can be made.

Fairness is key. That's why I'm really proud to be part of a government that has increased the minimum wage in our province by 50%, from \$6.85 to \$10.25. We now have one of the highest minimum wages in the country. Speaker, as you may know, as stated in the budget, we are in the process of now setting up an advisory panel around minimum wage so that we can do some extensive consultations across the province with workers and with businesses to better understand how we can improve the manner in which we set minimum wage as well. That's the right thing to do, as what we are trying to do in this bill.

**1410**

I have had the opportunity to also speak with many stakeholders over the last little over 100 days since I

became the Minister of Labour to learn better as to what the industry is like and where such unfair practices may be taking place or where there are some practices taking place that are very legitimate. I think those are the kinds of things that we need to look at.

I want to raise three specific points. I think the member from Beaches–East York raised those points and I think he recognized that that's where there is room for improvement. There are three things I think we need to focus on when this bill goes to committee, if this bill goes to committee and is passed today.

One is the practice around tip-pooling or tip-sharing in many restaurants. I've been having those conversations when I'm out in my community in Ottawa Centre or other parts of the province where I'm asking servers, "Do you have a practice of tip-pooling or tip-sharing, and if you have that practice, how is it administered?" That's an important practice where servers and the staff themselves will share tips so that other members of the staff like the busers or the kitchen staff or bartenders are able to share from those tips. We need to make sure that that practice continues. We need to make sure that the legislation is written as such that we don't prohibit that particular practice, because it is an issue of fairness. Many servers will tell you that they very obviously, proudly and gladly, share their tips with other staff. Of course, we've got to make sure that management is not the one receiving any portion of it, but if there is a situation in a particular establishment where management supervises that or somehow enables that process, that in law that is accounted for.

The other important issue that I think we need to also work on and make sure there is clarification on is instances where a lot of businesses—restaurants, for example—are family-owned and family-run. I think we all know those businesses—they exist in all our communities—where the owner is also the cook or is part of the serving staff. In those types of circumstances we need to make sure that we don't exclude them. If they are very much part and parcel of their business in the regular operation of their business, we need to make sure that they could be able to participate in the tip-pooling or tip-sharing as well, as long as they are regular servers or cooks.

I have, for example, Little Italy and Chinatown in my riding, and every single restaurant in both those communities is family-run and family-owned. I think that's a circumstance that we need to have a very keen eye on to make sure that we're not creating any rules that will undermine family-owned small businesses.

The third point, the last point that I will raise, is in relation to unionized workplaces, where you may have a collective bargaining agreement. I've had the opportunity to speak with union representatives in Ottawa, in my home community, and in Toronto, to better understand how a lot of these agreements are structured. They do, of course, have provisions around wages for servers and also the service charge or the gratuity charge that MPP Prue was speaking of and how that may be split. I think

we may need to look at some transition provisions as to existing contracts that are in place, and when they are renegotiated, ensuring that there is no taking of service charges or gratuity charges by the management. We need to have an element of transition there.

Those are the three things that in my conversations and discussions with stakeholders—from the point of view of workers, the servers, and the industry—have come to light to me and that I think we have an opportunity to work on. I think the member from Beaches–East York has shown his willingness or indication that he's open to improving those. Otherwise, like I said, I support this bill. I encourage other members to vote in favour of this bill so we can have a more fulsome discussion about it in the committee and have it in law.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member for Lennox, Addington, Frontenac, whatever.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington. Thank you, Speaker.

As the PC critic, I'm pleased to stand in support of the member for Beaches–East York's bill—Bill 49, I believe it is. I do hope that the assembly once again supports this bill, but this time, I hope it does get to committee and that we actually have those discussions and amendments to ensure that the intention of this bill is indeed going to be achieved at the end of the day.

I think both the member for Beaches–East York and the Minister of Labour have clearly articulated what some of the things are that we want to make sure don't happen with this bill—that we don't infringe unduly in those family-owned businesses, or the ability to share and pool and have tip-outs for other staff members in whatever business it may be, restaurants or others. So we are very supportive of it.

I want to look forward to this bill going to committee, having those discussions; and really, I do hope it doesn't fall into the abyss of private members' business, that so often happens in this House. I believe we have less than 4% of private members' bills that actually get passed by this House, actually make it to third reading and are proclaimed into law. With that, I do want to make sure that we protect those consensual agreements between staff for tip-outs and sharing.

One last thing I will say: It was disappointing to hear the member from Beaches–East York describe those terrible situations, egregious examples of people having their gratuities in essence stolen from them. My sons and daughter—many of them have been working in the restaurant industry for quite a while. Examples such as that I've never heard of in my area. I know many of my sons' and daughter's friends and they themselves have worked in the catering business as well, and although they're not unionized, they always got their share of the gratuity. It is disappointing to hear that those sorts of things happen here in Ontario, and we hope to put an end to it.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I'm very proud and pleased to speak to this bill that the MPP for Beaches–East York is

now bringing for the third time. From the tenor of the debate here, it seems like we're going to be three times lucky in terms of getting this bill passed, but as the member said, let's make sure it just doesn't pass this second reading stage, but that it actually goes to the point where it becomes law in Ontario.

The member for Beaches–East York has worked very hard on this particular bill. As he said, it's not a big, complicated bill; it's a very straightforward, one-line bill. That has not prevented him from making sure that he's been out in the community, out around the province, in fact, talking to people who do rely on tips as part of their wages.

And let's not forget, tips are part of their wages. People who are in the restaurant business particularly, who are servers in restaurants, don't get minimum wage; they get less than minimum wage in acknowledgment that their earnings will be topped up with tips. Of course, those earnings are expected to be claimed by the Canada Revenue Agency as part of their wage package.

Nonetheless, we know that folks are facing serious problems with employers who have these unfair practices in place that basically take away their tip money. So I'm really proud that the member from Beaches–East York has once again stayed diligent on this file and brought this bill back to the Legislature once again for second reading debate.

1420

I have spent 10 years in the restaurant industry. When I was a younger woman, I spent 10 years in a number of different restaurants, earning my way through university, frankly, and I was never in a situation where tip-outs were occurring within the places where I worked. However, I did have friends who were in that situation and were charged everything from breakage fees to uniforms, as the member for Beaches–East York suggests.

Certainly, where I worked, we did do pooling of our tips to help out the people who weren't directly receiving tips—busers and kitchen staff and things like that—but were helping us to earn them. I learned from other friends, during the time when I was working in that industry, of the practices some of the employers were following in terms of basically—the member from Addington and Lennox described it—stealing the earnings of the people who earned those tips.

New Democrats are proud that this bill has come from one of our members. We're proud to be able to speak in favour of it, of course, and in favour of Michael's work, and congratulate him on that.

It's interesting how this issue has turned. Michael's diligence has led to the turning of this issue in the minds of many. In fact, the former Minister of Labour, when Michael first brought the bill forward, basically said—

**Interjection:** Beaches–East York.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** —sorry, the member for Beaches–East York—basically said there was nothing they could do about it, because tips were not wages. Now we have a Minister of Labour saying something quite different, and that's really because of the diligent work of the member for Beaches–East York.

It's interesting that the former Premier also came out in support of this bill. I hope we'll see unanimous support of this bill today—I expect we will—and I want to thank all members for taking the time to actually think about this carefully and realize that in Ontario it's not fair to have people's tips taken from them when they have earned them, and that the laws in this province can be changed and can be improved to protect the rights of workers. We're very proud to be able to do that today.

So I urge everyone in this chamber to support this bill and, once again, thank the member for Beaches–East York for being so diligent. I'm sure that everyone who earns a living in a way that is augmented through tips will be very, very pleased to see that once again we are taking this issue seriously and are hopefully on the edge of actually making a big difference for those folks here in Ontario.

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

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** I also want to join in the support of this bill, and I particularly want to commend the member for Beaches–East York, because this has been a very solid commitment of his. He has worked very hard, pressing this point forward over and over again.

I want to also agree with the leader of the third party, who really is challenging this House to take this bill seriously and move it through. I think she's quite correct in doing that, and I'm hoping that all members will join in supporting this bill.

I think that probably all of us, at one point, if you didn't come from a family of extraordinary means, worked as a busboy or busgirl—I'm not sure if there's a busgirl.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Bus person.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Bus person. Thank you. Thanks very much.

I spent more time—it's not the worst job I've ever had in my life. The worst job I ever had in my life—I remember when our family business was lost in a recession, and it was a very hard time in our family. I was in the middle of college, and I had to work cleaning toilets in a public washroom at a shopping mall. I will tell you that when I finally got a waiting job after that, I was elated. At least I wasn't so smelly when I got on the bus going home. People would actually sit near me.

There are less glorious jobs, but it is a very tough job, and I think the member for Beaches–East York has pointed that out. This is a very hard job. It is a job done, in large numbers, by women particularly, and by people trying to get out of unemployment. It's often an entry-level job or a re-entry level job.

I'm glad the Minister of Labour made reference to the minimum wage and the importance of raising the minimum wage. I'm a big supporter of that. The greater value we put on people's labour, the more likely people are to work. The more you devalue people's labour, the less attractive it is.

These are often jobs that don't have pensions and all the range of benefits that quality, often unionized, jobs

get that give people of modest income some chance of security.

I do also want to say that this is a very tough industry to work in. Most restaurants fail. I've also had friends who came out of university who went out and started a restaurant. I want to be really clear, and I have no doubt the member for Beaches–East York would also share this view, which is that is a tough business to be in. Any of us in here who has run a small business, as I have—I started my business, re-launched it, in 2007 on the eve of the 2008 recession. I have an incredible sense of timing. We had 37 employees, and there were times when I and my two business partners would go for six months without a paycheque.

So I don't want it to be lost on people that people in the restaurant business, especially when it's families—that the owners are often in very difficult circumstances. Because it's easy to peg owners as sometimes being a problem, but there are lots of people who own their own business who have no guaranteed income, who have nothing guaranteed, and if the customers aren't coming in the door, they will have to pay all of their bills and their rent and their employees first. So there's a lot of economic stress, which often creates the kinds of tensions between small business owners and their employees when there is a scarcity of income. I think all of us would want to be compassionately concerned about that.

I think lots has been said about the importance of the legislation and the clarity. I would like to give some comfort to my friends in the third party. The Minister of Labour—since we both came into our new cabinet jobs at the same time—picked this issue up right away. So there have been many months of work done by the minister already. It's not to take credit away from the member from Beaches–East York; I think it was the clarity with which you raised the issues. So there already is an active interest on the government side of this House to look at some of the complexities and details. Because of the leadership of the Minister of Labour and the leadership of the MPP for Beaches–East York, on parallel tracks, there really should be no reason why this bill can't be passed, because a lot of the preparatory work has already been done by the government. We have that.

I'm always on House duty when we have private members' bills because it's my favourite time in the Legislature. I think we should be doing this all the time. We're a bunch of very bright, caring people who come here to make a difference. The member for Beaches–East York's face is on the wall of one of the schools in a low-income neighbourhood where he grew up. I think my constituents are extra proud that—if I can use his name briefly—Michael Prue comes from Regent Park. We're darn proud of you today, Michael.

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

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Listening to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, I am empathetic toward the fact that for small business owners it's all about risk and reward; and they take on a lot of risk

sometimes. I know the intent of this particular bill is not to punish but to reward those who, in fact, provide the excellent customer service to patrons who visit. So again it is my pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill 49, Protecting Employees' Tips Act.

I applaud the member from Beaches–East York for introducing this bill for a third time. The bill seeks to outlaw owners and managers from taking a cut of employees' tips. This process is called tipping out. Specifically, this bill seeks to amend the Employment Standards Act by adding the following line: "An employer shall not take any portion of an employee's tips or other gratuities."

People leave tips to reward the individual who served them, and those who contributed to the overall experience. Using the example of a restaurant, one would leave a tip for friendly customer service or a well-prepared meal. People would be shocked to discover that the money doesn't always end up in the pockets of those who served them. I think everyone in this House would agree that such a practice is just wrong.

That said, there are some groups that have taken issue with the vagueness of the bill. Here is a quote from the Toronto Star: "The Canadian Restaurant and Food-services Association opposes the bill as too 'simplistic' for an industry where small restaurant owners often wear 'many hats in one day' catering to customers and denies that tip-outs are a widespread problem." Now, I don't think I'd go that far. I do feel that this is a real problem in the industry that should be looked at, but I would agree that this bill is very broad in scope. In committee, I would hope that we can make some amendments to the bill to clarify some of its ambiguity.

#### 1430

In many restaurants, employers pool tips and distribute them according to a set of rules agreed upon by employees. This is done to ensure fairness, as employees such as bartenders and chefs may not always be able to collect tips, but are still a valuable part of the customer service experience.

I have a daughter. Her name is Brooke. She is a singer-songwriter, but she works as a server in order to pay for her studio time. She has shared horror stories of having tips taken by restaurants. Additionally, she's even had to pay out of pocket for the old dine-and-dash customers. Her tips are affected by weather, as well. Slow times, fewer tips. Oh, but the owner still gets a percentage, even in busy times, because she works very, very hard to try to, in fact, make up for some of the poorer days when the weather has been lousy and there hasn't been the traffic flow.

Many restaurants pool tip money as a reserve fund to pay for those dine-and-dash losses. In those restaurants, no single employee is forced to pay the entirety of the bill; it spreads the damage across all employees, which benefits all involved. Would this bill outlaw such a practice? That's perhaps something that we will need to clarify in committee.

She relies on the money that she brings home from tips every shift. People in the hospitality industry live off

of their tips, and the practice of clawing back tips from employees is, again, just wrong.

In conclusion, I support this bill through second reading, but some changes will have to be made in committee before third reading. We want to ensure that we do not punish employers who act in good faith and enter arrangements with employees for the benefit of all, and that this bill specifically targets those who tip out to themselves for their own benefit.

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

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I support Bill 49. I think it is a clear bill, and it is, by and large, a very simple bill that's clear to most people. We believe that tip-outs to employers should be made illegal, and that's clear, but what we also believe is that servers should keep the tips that they earn and share them with the kitchen, the bar, hosting and busing staff, where appropriate. That's normally what happens, by and large.

Who is it that we are talking about? We're talking about young people—and, many times, older people—who work in the restaurant industry. Many of them are university students trying to make a little money to pay for the incredibly high tuition fees that they have to pay. Many of them are graduates—college students and university graduates—who are not finding work in their profession. This is an area where they look for work, and it isn't the \$8.90 per hour that makes them wealthy; it's the tips that bring them over the top to make a somewhat living-poor wage.

We talk about the fact that many of them who work in the restaurant industry are actors. I've met a lot of actors who work in that industry, because many of these actors are not gainfully employed. They need to be able to earn a good living, and the \$8.90 is a good start—it's not great—but the tips are what keep them afloat.

I understand the concerns the minister is raising, and he raised three. The first: We want to make sure that tip pooling continues to happen. I understand what he's saying, I agree with him, but in my view, the bill is quite clear. It says, "An employer shall not take any portion of an employee's tips..." which suggests to me that the others can and should be sharing it, but the employer can't, so his first worry, in my mind, is taken care of.

The second worry is that, where the owner is a cook, he wants to make sure that they share in the tips. I have no problem with that. If the owner is cooking, that's part of what we talk about in terms of servers sharing the tips with the kitchen. If the owner is in the kitchen, in my mind, they should be sharing that tip. If the minister wants to make that clear in the bill, I suppose that's something we can easily take care of.

The third one is the transition provision. I understand that. I suppose the industry needs to know in advance that this is coming. They might need some time, and that's not a big problem. I think we could live with that.

The weakness of the parliamentary system, I have to say, is that there are so many times when members introduce bills that are so eminently reasonable and they fail

each and every time. I say to myself, why does that have to happen? Why is it that we cannot change the parliamentary system to make it possible for bills where there is little conflict among the three parties—to move them along and pass them? If they are good bills, why is it that we have to kill them by process or by whatever political manoeuvring happens in this place? I think it's wrong. It doesn't matter which party does it. It's wrong when whatever party is involved in that practice, and I hope that ends. That's something, hopefully, we might have a discussion about.

Bill 49 is a good bill. I hope it doesn't die. I know it will pass today, but I hope it goes through committee quickly and we pass it quickly.

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

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** It's a pleasure to rise to speak to the member from Beaches–East York on his third attempt on this bill.

My daughter Marion works as a waiter in one of the local MacDonald stores, a grocer. She works very hard. For years, she has been going through university. She graduated just two weeks ago with her master's, a reason why I'm a little concerned about the regulation on the other side that would prevent her from getting a job in the next few months. She has worked hard, and she has relied on the tips for the time that she has been in university. I know from first-hand experience and listening to her—maybe not in her case it would be needed, but I can see that anywhere where the tips are taken away from the employees would certainly be a real loss.

A large portion of servers in Ontario fall into a lower minimum-wage category because of expected tips and gratuities. While for us, as customers, tips are often seen as a bonus, for the servers they form part and parcel of their salaries.

The Canada Revenue Agency has the right to assume the amount of tips and tax you accordingly, leaving the onus on the taxpayer to prove that the figures aren't right.

I believe that this state of affairs makes it very important for us to reiterate that every hard-working Ontarian is entitled to receive the fruits of their labour.

We must consider, however, that every employment arrangement is different.

A bill that prevents tipping out is supposed to address circumstances that hurt the employee—rather than a general ban.

Sometimes tips are pooled and distributed to non-service staff. This allows the cooks, the kitchen staff, the receptionists, busing staff and other key staff who are key to the enjoyment of one's meal out to be rewarded, and is an important source of income for them as well.

In other cases, a portion of the tips is used as an insurance fund against unforeseen circumstances such as dine-and-dash, and a blanket ban would affect them in that way as well.

What we must prevent is tipping out for the benefit of the employer alone. But the bill in its present form is vague, and it's very questionable if it will be able to

attain its intended results. For the benefit of all Ontarians, we must resolve these issues by giving the bill some greater depth, and I look forward to doing that at the committee level. We support the spirit of the bill and definitely look forward to the committee stage, where we hope concerns will be addressed to allow the hard work of the front-line workers to be rewarded.

In my final few seconds, I'd like to mention one of my constituents, a hard-working mother. In addition to her part-time job, she works at Dimitri's, one of our fine restaurants in Summerstown. Sherry Davis is a pleasure to work with and an example of what we see, generally, as people who work in restaurants. They're hard-working, generally run off their feet, but they always have time to come back to make sure you're looked after. Sherry volunteers whenever she has any free time. I was really quite surprised to see her working as much as she does at the local establishment.

**1440**

A bill like this looks after people like Sherry, who are hard-working and need our help. It makes sure they're treated right. It was a long time in coming. I understand it's the third time this bill has come forth, so I'm hoping it sees its way through. There are many people who will benefit from this bill—and not to cloud the issue; I trust that this is a small problem. In most cases, employers are very responsible, and this bill would not be necessary, but there's no question that there are always times when issues come about and there needs to be some general legislation that looks after the people who work so hard.

We support this bill. Again, I congratulate the member on his third time and hope that the third time, the goal will be achieved. Thank you, Speaker, and I look forward to seeing this in committee.

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

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I'm pleased to rise just briefly to add some favourable comments and my support, of course, to the member from Beaches–East York's third attempt at this really commonsensical bill.

From the outset, I'd like to say that I don't think any of us in here ever imagined prior to the member's introduction of the bill that this was a prevalent issue when it came to the tip-out process, or that it was something that actually affected so many servers and so many in the service industry. It has been my practice, as of learning about this bill, to actually ask servers whether they are forced to share or to give a portion of their tips to management. Lo and behold, Mr. Speaker, even as of Tuesday—I went out to a well-known establishment, one that is actually a chain restaurant here in Toronto, and found that the server actually was expected to share his portion of the tip. I couldn't believe that was right in front of me, right at the dinner table. But he also couldn't believe that there were steps being initiated at this Legislature to address that issue. He was quite thankful, as I am thankful and those who are here in support of the member's bill to actually address it once and for all are.

I am eternally hopeful, save any extenuating circumstances like prorogation or an election, that this bill will

see its way through the committee process with a measure of expediency that actually delivers the results that those in the industry are looking for, which is, ultimately, fairness. I don't think anyone who offers a tip to a server in good faith, based on the level of service that they've received, does so thinking that a portion of that tip would go to the boss, the manager, the owner. There's really no rationale there. The plates and the forks that we use are a given; the fact that you kept the lights on are a great thing—but I tip based on the level of service, and it's something that we could only imagine everyone else does.

I would also say that the timing has never been better for us to address this issue, because again, in terms of the prevalence of this being a problem, the more we see electronic transactions within the hospitality and restaurant industry, the more we're going to see this tipping-out process be a problem. When we used cash, servers were able to remove their portion of the tip and simply pay the bill. They don't ever get to handle that transaction any longer, and it makes it so that ultimately they're not in the process, and it makes them more vulnerable in terms of losing that percentage of the income.

For all of those wonderful reasons I've been articulating today, it is my hope that members of this assembly see the light and pass this bill through in a really quick way.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Beaches–East York, you have two minutes for a response.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I would like to thank all of those who spoke today: the Minister of Labour; the member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington; the leader of the third party; the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure; and the members from Chatham–Kent–Essex, Trinity–Spadina and Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry and Essex. They all had very nice things to say. I'm glad to see that there appears again to be unanimity, or near unanimity, in this House. The servers of Ontario thank you as well.

This is an issue that affects literally tens of thousands, maybe 100,000 people, people who go out there to work hard every day, people who don't make a lot of money and rely on tips in order to feed themselves, their families, put themselves through school, pay the rent and everything else. Many of them live in fear because it's very easy in many industries to get fired if you're not in a unionized job.

As I read into the record earlier, a woman was threatened simply because—excuse me, a woman informed the server of what the boss had said, and the servers in that establishment were afraid to come to even watch today, lest they be seen here. This is the kind of intimidation that workers live under and the constant threat or fear that they may lose their job. Even if they don't lose their job, there are other tricks. If you complain about this, you can get fired, as one of the people who was here today got fired. You can have your shifts changed so you're no longer on the lucrative shifts on Friday and Saturday

nights, if you work in the bar but you find yourselves there on Monday afternoon.

This is one of the things that servers are afraid of. They need a law that protects them, a ministry that is able to investigate when bad things happen. They need that their tips be included in their wages for the purposes of pensions and everything else. We need it as fairness, and we also, as a government, need to make sure that owners just don't pocket the money and don't pay any taxes on it, because that too is unfair.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. We'll take the vote on this bill at the end of private members' business.

#### POPE JOHN PAUL II DAY ACT, 2013

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

Ms. Damerla moved second reading of the following bill:

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

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** Today it's an honour to bring forward Bill 72, An Act to proclaim Pope John Paul II Day in Ontario on April 2 of each year. First, I'd like to begin by acknowledging my college on the other side, the member for Newmarket–Aurora, who introduced Bill 25, also titled Pope John Paul II Day Act, 2009, which passed second reading on February 19 of that year. I want to thank him for his work, acknowledge that I build on him, and I'm honoured to have this opportunity to continue what the member from Newmarket–Aurora started.

I also want to thank and welcome Teresa Berezowski, who's here in the members' gallery, president of the Canadian-Polish Congress, as well as Matthew Samulewski, who's representing Polish Canadian youth.

Speaker, earlier this month, about two weeks ago to be more precise, I attended a memorial in my riding of Mississauga East–Cooksville for the victims of the Katyn massacre. The ceremony included a photo exhibit of the dead and a video that showcased the re-enactment of the massacre, a massacre in which over 20,000 Polish men and women—officers, landowners, lawyers, priests; people just like you and me—were killed at the hands of the Soviet secret police in 1940 for the crime of being Polish. They were killed under orders from Soviet leadership, including the highest level, Joseph Stalin himself. Watching the exhibits, it was hard not to ask how this could have happened? But happen it did, and as we all know too well, incidents like these have happened over and over again.

Katyn is but one example of the endless list of atrocities that human history is littered with. In fact, if we were to summarize the history of mankind, I believe it

would be the eternal conflict between man's astonishing capacity for evil and man's astonishing capacity for good. In this conflict, evil often wins, not because it's stronger or not because evil outnumbers the good; instead, evil often prevails because good people look the other way.

**1450**

But every once in a while, a good man or woman comes along and refuses to look the other way when faced with evil, when faced with wrong.

One such man was Pope John Paul II, a Pope who not only stood up to evil but inspired millions of people all over the world to do the same. One could argue that it was easy for a Pope with the full power of his office to have stood up to the totalitarian regimes of eastern Europe, but the fact is that long before Pope John Paul II stood up to tyranny, Karol Wojtyła, the man, was standing up for what was right. John Paul II was the Pope that he became because of what he had learned and lived through as Karol Wojtyła, the man.

Born in 1920 as Karol Józef Wojtyła in Poland, he lost his mother when he was eight years old, his brother when he was 12, and his father when he was 21. And so there he was, all of 21 years old and all alone in this world.

A poem that he wrote as a 19-year-old lamenting his mother's death poignantly expresses the loneliness and suffering of the future Pope:

Over this, your white grave  
the flowers of life in white—  
so many years without you—  
how many have passed out of sight?

Young and alone, in a terrifying world, in a Poland occupied by Nazis, a Poland where unspeakable horror was being unleashed all around, Karol, already devout, sought further refuge from the suffering all around him in God.

It is alleged that Joseph Stalin once dismissively asked, "How many divisions does the Pope have?" In 1945, as the Soviet army rolled into Poland, the 25-year-old Karol was still at a seminary, but in time he would become the Pope who would have just the answer to Stalin's question.

As a young priest and later as he climbed up the church hierarchy, Karol lived and breathed the daily struggle that life in Communist Poland was, as he fought valiantly to keep the faith of his people alive, to keep his church alive against the might of the totalitarian state. He knew first-hand what it was like to live in a nation state where fear was a constant companion.

But it was these very experiences—the personal loneliness that comes from losing all those you love so early in life, living through the horror of the war years in Poland, and then living under a totalitarian Communist regime that was no friend of the church—that helped forge the Pope that he became: a steely Pope, one with enough steel to bring down the Communist regimes across Europe.

It was on October 16, 1978, that Karol Wojtyła made history by becoming the first Pope of Polish descent—and the first non-Italian since the 15th century. His first message to his fellow Polish people after becoming Pope was, “Be not afraid.” Stalin was dead by this time, but with this one phrase, John Paul II was well on his way to ending the totalitarian Communist regimes of Europe without a single military division.

The full assault on the grip of the totalitarian regimes of Poland came a year later when, in June 1979, Pope John Paul II travelled to Poland for the first time as Pope. It is said that the Communist brass had predicted that just a few old ladies would come out to meet this Pope. It turned out, as we all know, that millions upon millions came out—a trip where he inspired an entire nation to fear no more. He renewed amongst the Polish people their pride and their faith, and sparked the Solidarity movement. After that, there was no looking back in the fight against Communism.

When the Communist totalitarian states of Europe, starting with the events in Poland, finally fell in 1989, this remarkable man had definitively answered Stalin’s question by proving that military divisions are no match for faith and the ability to inspire people to fight for their freedom and dignity.

One of the most charismatic and popular Popes, as the leader of the Roman Catholic Church, the Pope served as the spiritual guide to over a billion Catholics. As a political leader, he was the catalyst to end Communist rule in his native Poland and eventually all of Europe. He won the hearts of millions around the world, people of all ages and all faiths; a Pope who did not wait for people to come to him but one who went out to meet the people. The most travelled Pope ever, he also became the first Pope ever to come to Canada, making three trips in all, including one to the Northwest Territories.

A remarkable man with many legacies—a Pope who brought a generation of young people to the Catholic faith, a Pope who sought personal redemption and reached out to the Jewish and Muslim faiths, and a Pope who brought down Communism. It would be fitting if this act could come into effect in 2014, as that will mark the 25th anniversary of the fall of Communism in eastern Europe, as well as the 25th anniversary of a democratic Poland, the country that gave the world this great man.

On a personal note, I want to say that I’m neither Catholic nor Polish, yet I’m bringing forward this bill, and there are two reasons. One is that my riding of Mississauga East–Cooksville, a very multicultural riding, has a very large Catholic population, and I believe that it is my duty to bring forward a bill that is meaningful to my constituents. But there is another reason. The truth is that the true mark of greatness in a man is his universal appeal, a charisma that allows each of us to see a little bit of ourselves reflected.

John Paul II’s role in bringing down Communism has a particular resonance for me and millions of Indians who were either born during the Cold War era or came of age during that time. That is because I grew up in an India

that during the Cold War years was firmly under the Soviet influence. It was an India without the totalitarianism of the Communist bloc but with all of the excesses of socialism that came with being part of the Russian sphere, an excess that punitively stunted the economic growth of a nation, condemned millions to needless poverty, enriched a select few and, most of all, killed that most precious of human qualities: ingenuity and entrepreneurship. It is no accident that the economic liberalization of India started in earnest in 1991, the same year that the USSR was dissolved. The winds of change that swept through the USSR blew open the door to a steady but slow path to prosperity for India.

So there you have it, Speaker: a man with universal appeal, a Pope and a man who was one of the giants of the 20th century. It would be fitting, given his many legacies in this House, if this House would support the proclamation of April 2 as Pope John Paul II Day in Ontario. And finally, the true meaning of this day, I believe, would be if on every April 2, we can recommit that when we are tapped on the shoulder to confront evil—and believe me, each of us will be—we will have the courage to confront it.

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

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** Thank you to the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville for bringing forward Bill 72, An Act to proclaim Pope John Paul II Day, a bill I am very proud to support.

Pope John Paul II was a Pope with very personal global reach who managed to connect with people around the world in very specific and life-changing ways. He visited Ontario twice, once in 1984 and in 2002, and both were historic occasions.

As the first Polish Pope ever and the first non-Italian Pope in four and a half centuries, it was probably a given that Pope John Paul II would be an unconventional figure, but few could have predicted how he would have come to be an almost otherworldly icon, even to those who considered themselves above that kind of thinking. He navigated a world of black and white political beliefs, but he also helped to usher in a new world, from his committed support of anti-Communist forces in his homeland of Poland and eastern Europe, through the awakening of courage and freedom that began 25 years ago in central and eastern Europe.

**1500**

Pope John Paul II shaped world events even as he was shaped by them. As a young man growing up in Holocaust-era Poland, he saw first-hand humankind’s capacity for inhumanity. As Pope, he would work to repair the damaged relationships between Catholics and Jews, and to speak out against anti-Semitism. His willingness to offer unvarnished apology again and again was famous, and it was matched by a profound and moving capacity for forgiveness.

In May 1981, while in Saint Peter’s Square during his weekly general audience, Pope John Paul II was shot by a would-be assassin. But more indelible than that memory

is Pope John Paul's forgiveness from his hospital bed of his would-be assassin, a man he visited in prison and whose release and pardon he later worked to secure.

We can only imagine the remarkable path this man travelled through his world, but what we do know with certainty is that he touched the world's people deeply. In a world divided by despair and poverty, he stood as a beacon of hope, and even as he spoke of a world beyond our own, he urged us to take action; to take responsibility for our thoughts and deeds, to seize the incredible potential of the present moment.

"The future," he reminds us, "starts today, not tomorrow."

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

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** It's an absolute pleasure, privilege and honour to rise today in the House to speak in favour of this bill. I remember when the bill was first tabled, back in 2009, by the member from Newmarket–Aurora, who is here as well, and then unfortunately was lost due to prorogation. Now that the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville has re-tabled it, we hopefully will have a chance to see this move its way through committee and finally be passed into law, in time for next year. That's all of our hope, and I believe we have pretty well unanimous consent on that motion.

Let's talk about His Holiness, and let's talk about his impact. I remember, back in 2002, World Youth Day in my riding of Parkdale–High Park, not because it's largely Polish or largely Roman Catholic, but because it was an unusual experience, first of all, to have a Pope come to Toronto, or to Canada at all. He was the very first Pope ever to come to Canada, and he came three times, starting in 1984.

When he spoke at World Youth Day, literally hundreds of thousands listened. When he came to our street, Roncesvalles—closed the street down, did a prayer and did a mass in our very community—it was truly an honour. There is a statue to the Pope right on Roncesvalles, and there is not a week that goes by when there are not flowers and bouquets, and candles lit in front of that statue.

Mr. Speaker, you've heard it elucidated by a number of people around this House, but here's why I think he was so profound in his impression upon all of us and upon the world: He was the very first Pope to reach out across faith boundaries to members of other faiths.

He actually met with His Holiness the Dalai Lama—I also have a number of Tibetans in my community. He met with him eight times, and he actually presided over a mass, praying along with the Tibetan people, because both faced similar adversaries in communist and totalitarian states. So he felt that connection very strongly.

He was the first Pope to set foot in a mosque. He went and worshipped, and he apologized for any breaches between those two faiths. He was the first Pope to set foot in a synagogue in Rome, and again offer some apologies for some of the anti-Semitism that had come from Christian quarters over the centuries. And yes, he

was the first Polish Pope—the first non-Italian Pope since the 1500s, and Polish—and he was the centre of resistance.

There's a great quote about the Pope that I love, and let me attribute it correctly. Actually, it doesn't have attribution; this is just off the CBC website. Some chroniclers described him as "one part James Bond and" three "parts John the Baptist." I like that. Why one part James Bond? Because—this is an attributed quote—Timothy Garton Ash, an Oxford University historian, said, "Without the Pope, no Solidarity. Without Solidarity, no Gorbachev. Without Gorbachev, no fall of communism." That shows the impact of this one man and his effect upon the world.

Having Polish relatives and having many Poles in my community—I'm talking about those who actually lived through that era in Poland; they can attest, and attest with great passion, with tears in their eyes, whether they're faith people, whether they're Roman Catholics, whether they partake in church in any way, shape or form, or not—but they remember his trip to Poland. They remember that this was a changing point, a lightning rod for resistance to that totalitarian regime in the USSR.

They remember the churches as centres of that resistance. As a United Church minister myself, I've long argued for the churches as centres of resistance, centres to fight against injustice. And that's what he did. That's what those churches became, not just in Poland, but throughout eastern Europe.

It has been talked about that the Communist regime of the day didn't really expect that many people to show up when he came to town. They didn't know the extent of religious feeling and passion that existed. Lo and behold, that was the catalyst to show them and to show the world just how much faith was alive despite years of Communist dictatorship in those countries. Despite years of Communist dictatorship, faith was alive, and boy, did it catch fire. It caught fire all across eastern Europe. Why? Because of that one man.

What else can we say about him? He spoke out against apartheid. In fact, let's look at the Pope in his own words. He said, condemning apartheid at the International Court of Justice in 1985, that "no system of apartheid or separate development will ever be acceptable as a model for the relations between peoples or races."

He was a pacifist. Here's what he said about war to diplomats—and this was not a popular stance, by the way—on January 13, 2003, as the Iraq war loomed: "No to war! War is not always inevitable. It is," he said, "always a defeat for humanity." Those are brave words. Those were not popular words at the time; and those were words that really resounded around the world in contradiction to governments of the day.

He also redefined the papacy, quite frankly, in a very new and different way. This is how he did it. He said this—again, I'm quoting him: "The Pope cannot remain a prisoner of the Vatican. I want to go to everybody ... from the nomads of the steppes to the monks and nuns in their convents ... I want to cross the threshold of every

home.” Again, a difference, a break with the past—a total break with the past in many ways.

Called “the people’s Pope,” he received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President George Bush in 2004, despite his opposition to the war, I might add.

Certainly, in every social justice stance that he took we can see the results. In every place he stood over and against power, speaking truth to power, he and his ideas won and power lost. That’s a significant statement to say about anyone. This was a man who used his pulpit and his position to change the world, quite literally.

So in my riding, we know him as the beloved one of the Polish people. But truly, when we think about Pope John Paul II, we think about someone who hopefully this bill—hopefully being passed this time—will truly herald as a beloved man of the people—all people of all faiths and all people everywhere around the world. He was the first Pope to do that.

**1510**

Certainly, for youth, I’ll say this, in the Catholic Church he was again a call to not only resistance to evil, but a call to impassioned engagement for social justice. World Youth Days and World Days of Prayer, which he also instituted, became worldwide phenomena for the entire Christian world. This galvanized youth in a new way. Youth that hadn’t stepped foot in church in a while became youth who were not only ready to step foot in church but ready to go out and carry the gospel to all the corners of the Earth. That, he did as well.

As a Christian myself, I herald him for that, and for the true meaning of the gospel, which is to go into all of the corners of the world and to make a difference, to actually do what Jesus said: to visit those in prison, which he did; to forgive those who harm you, which he did—you heard how even his potential assassin; to go where they are hungry and to feed them, which he did; and to go where there is comfort needed, which he did.

For all of these reasons—and, my goodness, when you elucidate them they are astounding. This is the reason we need to honour him.

Again I thank the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville. I thank the member from Newmarket–Aurora, who originally tabled the bill. I know it also is being heard federally at Parliament Hill. I think it has passed second reading there. So my hope is here: that we can come together, that we can move it through committee, that we can bring it back and that we can pass this before, certainly, another year moves in and moves out, and that we can make this man of the people a man for all people, with a day to commemorate just exactly that. Thank you very much.

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

**Hon. John Milloy:** It’s a pleasure for me to rise in support of my colleague’s bill that we’re debating this afternoon. I should say at the outset that there’s a great interest on this side of the Legislature and, I think, on all sides to speak on it, so I will speak rather briefly so I can allow other colleagues to stand up.

I do want to begin by congratulating my colleague from Mississauga East–Cooksville. I have to tell you, she’s not only a very hard-working member; she’s very, very proud of her community. She’s proud of the fact that it has a very large Polish community. She feels very privileged to represent that community. We welcome, I know, representatives from the Canadian Polish Congress who are with us.

I actually can identify with her in representing a large Polish community. Although I represent Kitchener Centre, which is known as the largest, I think, German community in the province, people may be surprised to know that when you look at the census data, the second-largest group there is the Polish community, and I’ve had many, many interactions with them.

I’m also a proud member of St. Anthony Daniel Catholic church; born and raised a practising Catholic. So in all that context I stand here today to echo the words of praise for Pope John Paul II, for the legacy that he has left us, for his vision and leadership. I congratulate other colleagues who have spoken so eloquently of all that he has done for this world, not just the Catholic community, but in terms of very, very turbulent times, particularly in eastern Europe and the leadership that he chose.

I remember, on a personal level, if you’ll allow me, his first visit to Canada. When he came to Ottawa, I was a young student and joining the thousands of people on the roadway to welcome this very, very exciting new Pope. I had the privilege in later years of actually working as an assistant, an aide, to then-Prime Minister Chrétien, to attend the World Youth Days mass as part of the Prime Minister’s entourage, and again to see the literally tens of thousands of people who had come out to honour this extraordinary individual.

On a personal note, I found out a number of years later that there was a young woman who was an emergency physician, who had been recruited to actually serve as the personal physician to the Pope in case something would ever happen. She was on stage. So I was in the audience. She was on stage. Neither of us knew we were there, but a number of years later we met and began to date and we eventually got married. So it gave us something to talk about early on in our relationship: about how the Pope had been someone to bring us together.

But back to the original point, Mr. Speaker, I think it’s very, very important that we have days to honour such outstanding individuals as this, as Pope John Paul II. I want to congratulate my colleague for taking this initiative for reflecting, I know, the pride that she has in her community, and I urge all members to support this very, very important bill.

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

**Mr. Jim McDonnell:** I’m proud to rise to speak to Bill 72 to commemorate the great work of John Paul II.

Pope John Paul II, throughout his long pontificate, embodied many values that we share as Canadians and we admire. He was the first non-Italian Pope in more than four centuries and dedicated his life to bringing

people of faith together across the world. In doing so, he visited 129 countries and covered more than a million miles on official business.

I remember the time around his election, and the great time of uncertainty. His predecessor, Pope John Paul I, had just been elected and only had served just a little over 30 days. I remember coming to work that day and hearing about it, and just a lot of confusion because there was still talk about the former Pope who had passed away—certainly not what we would normally expect.

A great hope had surrounded John Paul I's papacy, and the world was shocked on his passing. The Catholic world was then called again together to elect a new Pope, and he took the name to honour the previous Pope whose life was cut so short.

The message and legacy of Pope John Paul II inspire us to embody the highest moral values, such as love for thy neighbour, remaining steadfast and just in our beliefs and to embrace those who are different from us in fellowship.

We will never know and can only speculate just what impact he had on the dismantling of the Iron Curtain. But we know more than that he transcended religious boundaries to fight against the wrongs of our world: dictatorships, communism, poverty, war, and he made a huge difference in places that were previously off limits to a Pope.

He travelled; he knew no bounds. Where there was trouble, he was there. He talked to and he brought the heads of state together. He certainly instilled a large pride in the Catholic world.

His impact on history has been great, and the world benefited from the great work of this great man. But we know when we look back into Ontario today, and we see how his message offers excellent guidance for the years ahead—the province is more diverse than ever, and our economic development rests upon bringing the best and brightest from across the globe. We will find in Ontario not just opportunities, but a welcoming environment.

In my own riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, all communities and faiths have worked together for generations to build a better place that we call home. Today, we are welcoming a growing number of new Canadians who have chosen to make my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry their home.

Establishing a commemorative day in honour of Pope John Paul II will place his legacy and his message more firmly in the minds of Ontarians.

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

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** It's really a pleasure to rise in support of Bill 72, An Act to proclaim Pope John Paul II Day. I have supported this in the past when it was first presented.

Many people, or many members, have already expressed the charismatic personality that Pope John Paul II had and how he engaged in a dialogue with representatives of other world religions, convening them to the Vatican, convening them often even to the city of Assisi, the birthplace of St. Francis, and praying with them.

Yes, he was the most travelled Pope in history; he travelled tirelessly across the globe. He was the first non-Italian Pope. He was loved. He was loved not only by Polish people and by Italian people, but by people from all over the world.

He travelled to 129 countries, and many times he would address the crowd—the enormous crowds—in their own language, and this made him very open, and people thought he was very friendly.

He was a great proponent of human rights and world peace, as we know. I think it is fitting that we proclaim a day in Ontario that recognizes Pope John Paul II and his legacy of promoting dialogue, co-operation and understanding among different cultures. That's what our province is about as well.

**1520**

From a personal point of view, as a former broadcaster and journalist, I had the opportunity to follow the Pope's first visit to Toronto during his cross-Canada tour in 1984, and I remember this joyous, enormous crowd that came to greet him at Ontario Place.

Then, Ontario Place was again the meeting place for the celebrations of World Youth Day in 2002. We had 750,000 young people who came here to Toronto from all over the world. It was amazing to see how they were singing the praises of this aging religious leader and were following him. It was really moving to interview quite a number of them.

As a field producer and television anchor, I was in Rome in 1999, when Pope John Paul II declared the beatification of Padre Pio, a popular Franciscan brother and priest who was later proclaimed a saint.

As chance would have it, I was also in Rome that fateful day, April 2, 2005, when he died. I can say that when the news of his death was made public, there was a palpable feeling of mourning, of sadness, of loss in the Eternal City. Between April 2 and April 8, there were over three million pilgrims who came to pay homage to this spiritual leader.

On the day and at the time of his funeral, a surreal silence fell upon the capital of Italy. If anyone has ever been, they would know there's lots of traffic; it's a bustling city. Everything came to a standstill. The streets were deserted. Kids weren't even playing in the playgrounds. Everybody was really mourning the loss of a leader. I had the feeling that it was really a loss for the whole world.

That's why today it is my great privilege and honour to support this bill, together with my colleagues here. I think it's fitting that we honour the legacy of this great world spiritual leader.

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

**Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette:** *Remarks in Polish.*

Habemus Papam, which is, "We have a Pope."

In an ever-increasingly secular society, I thought it was important, to start, to give some history of the footsteps where John Paul II started or began and where the history of the Pope comes from. I'm going to quote the book of Matthew, the King James Version. Matthew

4:19 specifically states, “And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” For those of us who don’t realize it, each of the Popes carried a ring of a fisherman that had their papal name embedded in it. Every time a Pope passed on, the ring was destroyed. The reason for that, historically, was because it showed that no documents could be backdated after the passing of a Pope.

If you go on to Matthew 16:18, Christ says to Simon Peter, “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” That was the first Pope, Speaker, for those who don’t realize it, and it was those footsteps that John Paul II followed.

We’ve heard many aspects of his life. Some of the things I wasn’t sure I heard mentioned were the two doctorates he had, one in theology and the other in philosophy. As well, we heard about him visiting 129 countries. He was 58 years old when he began, and he spoke several languages. Yes, it was mentioned about praying with the Dalai Lama, and about being the first Pope in a synagogue as well as in a mosque, which was something new for a Pope. This was very typical of his manner and everything else that had taken place.

Also, when we go back to the foundations of the very first Pope, Simon Peter, the very first Pope, was said to have been crucified under the Emperor Nero Augustus Caesar. It is traditionally held that Peter was crucified upside down at his own request since he saw himself as unworthy to be crucified in the same way as Jesus Christ was.

There are many aspects of John Paul II that members have mentioned. I know that our caucus is wholeheartedly supporting and thanking the member, Mr. Klees, and the member opposite for bringing this once again. I believe you’ll find very good support throughout this chamber.

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

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** I think Pope John Paul II, in the hereafter in heaven, would take pride in the fact that this bill is presented for second reading by a Hindu member of the Ontario Legislature. It says something about our Ontario, as it does about the legacy of the Pope. I have to join in acknowledging my colleague from Newmarket–Aurora for his efforts on behalf of this bill in a previous Parliament.

Pope John Paul II was one of the most travelled Popes in history, visiting 129 countries during his pontificate. He beatified 1,340 people and canonized 483 saints—more than the combined total of his predecessors for the preceding five centuries.

One thing that’s not known about Pope John Paul, which is, as the Archbishop of Krakow, he had visited Toronto in the 1970s. There was then and remains today a Polish restaurant near the corner of Roncesvalles and Queen Street where the future Pope had dinner.

Pope John Paul was, of course, the first non-Italian Pope since Adrian VI in 1523 and was also the second longest-serving Pope.

I think it’s only fair, just and right, and it pays tribute to a great man who changed the world—left it a markedly better place—that we all come together in this Legislature to support this bill and proclaim Pope John Paul II Day.

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

**Mr. John O’Toole:** I want to commend the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville for bringing this issue forward in respect to the members of her community. She spoke very passionately and kindly about Pope John Paul. My colleague from Oshawa brought a completely different perspective to it, which was good, because a lot of us are repeating many of the same things.

I’d just start by saying that I think we all generally agree and admired Pope John Paul, and I’ll tell you why. I can recall back—I was trying to recall what date—in 1984 or 1985, when he came to Downsview at the airport. My two children were involved in the thing. As my generation tends to keep memorabilia stuff, they still have the little yellow hats and scarves they wore as part of the large choir to welcome the Pope to Downsview.

It’s important to put a bit of history around it too in the brief time. He was very well educated. He went to Jagiellonian University in 1938, where he showed an interest in theatre and poetry. The school was closed the next year by the Nazi troops from Germany who occupied Poland. Wanting to become a priest, John Paul began studying in a secret seminary run by the Archbishop of Krakow after World War II. He finished his religious studies at the Krakow seminary. He was ordained in 1946, became Bishop of Ombi in 1958 and became the Archbishop of Krakow in 1964. He was made a cardinal by Pope Paul VI in 1967. In 1978—and, as someone said, he was 58 years old—he became the first non-Italian Pope in many, many years.

He began to travel widely, as has been said by many. His reign was marked by his steadfast opposition to Communism, and he was often credited as one of the forces that contributed to the collapse in eastern Europe in 1990. John Paul died in 2005, as been said.

Other things that I found interesting: In 1942, he joined the UNIA, an underground organization made up of Catholic Poles that helped Jews find refuge from the Nazis, while studying for the priesthood at an underground seminary. He was a spiritual inspiration behind the withdrawal of Communist forces. At the very end—near the end—in 1989, he met with Mikhail Gorbachev and expressed his admiration for him.

**1530**

He was a very inclusive person, a very intelligent person, very interesting, articulate, and artistic to the extent of life. In that respect, I think all persons of all faiths or respect for humanity would have some time for him, along with other important dignitaries like Mahatma Gandhi and people who are from other generations of our life. I think it’s a good lesson for all of us once in a while.

This morning, the Ontario Prayer Breakfast was held at the Royal York. Famous hockey player Paul

Henderson was the speaker. It was inspirational because there were people from all backgrounds, all celebrating faith. Faith is important to every single person. O ye of little faith: If you have no faith, you have no hope.

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

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** I'm just delighted to rise in support of our colleague's bill to proclaim Pope John Paul II Day.

I'm going to concentrate on the Polishness of the Pope. Having a Polish father and so many relatives in Poland, I well remember that feeling of excitement and pride that finally it was a Polish Pope. My family is not particularly religious, but that sense of: "Finally we are recognized as a country, as a country that has produced such an amazingly talented and inspirational individual."

As our colleague has said, Pope John Paul II was born Karol Józef Wojtyła in Wadowice, Poland. He studied at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, one of the foremost European universities. It was there that he learned those 12 foreign languages, nine of which he used so often to communicate so well. If he wasn't speaking your language, perhaps all you needed to do was look at his smile: a beatific smile, one so full of love for humanity.

One of the stories I liked about him so much was, when he was at that seminary in Stalinist Poland, it was against protocol for priests to travel with groups of students. So what his students would do when they would go hiking and bicycling—he was, as I think we all know, a very athletic young man—they would call him "wujek," which means "uncle"—in other words, to somewhat camouflage the fact that he was a priest.

As has been said, the Solidarity movement in Poland was simply inspired by him. The quote that our colleague gave about "Do not be afraid": When he used that phrase in Poland, he actually said, the full quote is: "Do not be afraid. Let your spirit descend and change the image of the land ... this land." The Polish people felt that he was speaking so directly to them, and gave them the courage to demand freedom and human rights in Poland.

I will end by asking all members in this House to support this bill in honour of our Pope, blessed John Paul II.

*Remarks in Polish.*

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

The member from Mississauga East–Cooksville, you have two minutes to respond.

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It has been such a joy to listen to all of the people. I'd like to thank the member from Burlington, the members from Parkdale–High Park, Kitchener–Waterloo, Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, York South–Weston, Oshawa, Mississauga–Streetsville, Durham and Oak Ridges–Markham who took the time to speak to this bill today.

Speaker, you know, usually when there's a debate, there's a back and forth and it tends to be a little bit argumentative. What a pleasure it was today to hear all sides speak out in favour of this bill. What I learned—I

thought I'd done a lot of research going into this to write my speech and everything, but I learned so much just listening to everybody else speak—the anecdotes, the facts; the one million—was it kilometres or miles? I forget—that he's supposed to have travelled. Just little tidbits, but mostly the passion that this House has to make this a reality in Ontario.

So all I can hope is that we can do this by 2014, because I think that will be really symbolic, because it's going to mark something tangible: a quarter-century of the fall of Communism, the restoration of democracy in Poland, something that this man had a direct hand in and that will go down in history.

Earlier today, I was speaking to the member from Leeds–Grenville, and he said something that I agree with: He said that 500 years from now, we'll still be speaking about this Pope, and he is right, because he belongs in that league of men who are immortal.

I really hope that at the end of today, we will walk out of here with a consensus to continue with this bill and enact this into legislation, and that on April 2, 2014, for the first time, we will have Pope John Paul II Day here in Ontario.

#### VISITORS

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. I'm just rising on a point of order, if I could have the House's indulgence to briefly introduce a couple of special guests that I have here.

I have Kuljinder Singh Sidhu and Dinesh Sood, the producer and the lead actor of the Punjabi movie of the year for 2013, the third-highest-grossing Punjabi movie of all time. The movie focuses on human rights issues. It's called *Sadda Haq*. They're here in the House.

Please join me in welcoming them, as well as Bali Kaur, who hosts the most popular radio show in the South Asian community, from Vancouver.

A good friend of mine, Amarjeet Singh, as well as Mandeep Kaur, Harbaljeet Singh and Ina Samridhi, are also with us.

Please join me in welcoming them all.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. We'll take the vote at the end of private members' business.

#### REGULATED HEALTH PROFESSIONS AMENDMENT ACT (SPOUSAL EXCEPTION), 2013

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

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

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** It's a great pleasure for me to rise today to begin second reading debate on Bill 70, An Act to amend the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991.

I do want to thank many people who have worked hard to shape this bill. Earlier today, I introduced a number of members from the Ontario Dental Association, who were really the champions, with members of provincial Parliament—and I'll get into some details on my own personal involvement.

In the galleries today, we have representatives from the Royal College of Dental Surgeons. We also have folks from the Association of Ontario Midwives. In the west members' gallery, we have: Bob Haig, the CEO of the Ontario Chiropractic Association; Claudia Mariano, the past president of the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario; and Theresa Agnew, the executive director of the Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario.

I want to thank all of those folks and their associations for all of the guidance and excellent advice that they have provided as we shaped Bill 70. I'm confident that there is some support for the bill today.

The bill also represents a commitment that our leader of the official opposition, Tim Hudak, made to Dr. Harry Hoediono, who was the then president of the ODA, in June 2011. In a letter to the good doctor, our leader, Mr. Hudak, committed that he would work with the ODA to make the necessary changes to the RHPA, which prohibits a dentist from treating his or her spouse because it would automatically be considered sexual abuse. He addressed their conference in November 2010 and again reiterated that support.

Before I get into the history of how Bill 70 came into being, I want to talk about what the legislation does. First, I think it's absolutely essential to stress that it does not undermine the zero-tolerance policy on sexual abuse in the relationship between any health professional and their patient. Throughout the process, I was adamant that any bill I would introduce with my name on it would in no way put any patient at risk or weaken the zero-tolerance policy. There must be zero tolerance for sexual conduct, behaviour or remarks to enter into the relationship between a patient and their health care provider. Any violation of this most fundamental tenet of the duty of care and the trust a patient places in the hands of a dentist, doctor, physiotherapist or any of the other health care professions should be dealt with in the strongest possible way. As I said, that will continue to be the case, should Bill 70 receive royal assent.

**1540**

But there's a feeling by many colleges governed by the RHPA that a member's spouse should be exempted from that zero-tolerance provision. Indeed, the Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council, or HPRAC, stated it very clearly in its June 2012 recommendations on the spousal exemption to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. They wrote, "The ethical principles of

power imbalance, transference, trust and consent underpin the sexual abuse provisions in the RHPA and were introduced with the intent to eradicate sexual abuse of patients by health professionals. The provisions defined sexual abuse and prescribed a rigorous penalty." However, the report added, "It was not the intent of the legislation to be misused maliciously or be the mechanism to deter certain professions from the treatment of their spouse."

I agree with HPRAC. There is room to responsibly allow for a professional college to determine if its membership feels its appropriate to allow one spouse to treat another. That's the fundamental principle in Bill 70: It's up to those individual colleges to make a regulation to adopt the spousal exemption.

One of the issues we've considered very carefully in crafting this bill is the definition of "spouse." After much input, we've determined the following to be the most appropriate:

"(a) a person who is the member's spouse as defined in section 1 of the Family Law Act, or

"(b) a person who has lived with the member in a conjugal relationship outside of marriage continuously for a period not less than three years."

Let's get back to how we got here. I have to admit that when our party leader, Mr. Hudak, wrote a couple years ago, I really had no idea about this issue. It wasn't until a couple of months later, on the eve of the 2011 election, when I had one of my teeth fixed, Speaker, and I certainly got an earful from my dentist—a great dentist, I should add—Dr. Doug Harvey in Brockville. Let's just say, Speaker, that Doug Harvey recognized a good opportunity, with his MPP in the chair, to do a bit of effective lobbying. He had a bit of a captive audience in front of him.

**Ms. Soo Wong:** He couldn't talk.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I couldn't talk. That's right, as the member for Scarborough—Agincourt realized; one of the few times I couldn't talk.

The ODA representatives here today would be very proud of Dr. Doug Harvey, I'm sure. Also, we have a great president of our local dental association in Leeds—Grenville, Dr. Kim Hansen. And it would be remiss of me not to mention a good friend, Dr. John Arnott, who has been certainly involved in the political scene in Brockville and Leeds—Grenville for many years. You have some great representatives in my riding.

I certainly agreed with Dr. Harvey, Speaker, that it was ridiculous that a dentist was considered to have committed sexual assault if he fixed his wife's fillings, and no one that I mentioned that to disagreed. It just seemed like one of those crazy regulations government comes up with that may be well intentioned but simply don't work in the real world. That's particularly true, I think, in rural or northern Ontario, where there may not be that viable option for a person to receive timely treatment other than turning to his or her spouse.

So I was pleased in April 2012 to introduce Bill 68 as my first attempt to amend the Regulated Health Profes-

sions Act by creating a spousal exemption. Like many bills introduced that year, Bill 68 never reached the stage that we're at today because, as you know, the House prorogued and we had a bit of a holiday for four months.

That's the connection I wanted to make between the fact that we prorogued and the original version of my bill. When the bill died, I took the opportunity to listen to the comments that the health minister made to me at the reception that we held with ODA the day that I introduced Bill 68. I remember her comments very clearly. She called my approach with Bill 68 a simplistic approach to the problem. Frankly, I thought a simplistic approach was better than the one that the ministry had taken to date. They had essentially promised ODA that the bill would come forward, and hadn't really committed to doing anything.

I accepted her criticism, I took it to heart and I used the fact that we prorogued Parliament to listen to what HPRAC had said, to engage with a number of the health professionals and to bring back a bill. When the House returned, I introduced Bill 40 in March, which contained a fundamental change from the earlier version and, I felt, took into consideration HPRAC's recommendations.

Since then, I have to say that I have had a lengthy engagement with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care on this new Bill 70. I know it's quite remarkable to have that level of co-operation between the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and an opposition MPP. In fact, I'm told that in some cases it's unprecedented. So I would like to publicly thank the ministry staff for their co-operation and their work that led to the changes that are enclosed in Bill 70 today. I think it's quite a journey, quite a learning process from that first time that I sat in the dentist chair to understand what the problem is. We have a bill here in front of us that I'm confident in telling members of the House will make an important public policy change without putting patients at risk.

It's important to note there are a number of stakeholders, some that I've mentioned, who have endorsed the bill. I also wanted to mention a stakeholder conference call that we had after Bill 70 was tabled, where Thomas Corcoran, the chair of the Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council, indicated that he was supportive of the bill. Even the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, which has written to me to express its concerns about the spousal exemption, stated the following: "Nonetheless, we recognize that your proposed Bill 70 is a significant improvement over the previously proposed Bill 68, as well as the HPRAC recommendation." A further quote: "Principally, the proposed Bill 70 is drafted as an opt-in provision. Bill 70 would only apply to those colleges that opt to enact the spousal exemption, pursuant to the minister's approval."

Again, I think that's the key that we're talking about today. I would really hope—and I know that I've had some members of the government side express some support. I'll let the New Democrats speak for themselves, but I think we've got an opportunity, like some of the other bills that were presented today, where I hope we'll

have the general support of members in the House so that we can send this bill forward. I'm hoping that in this minority Parliament this is the type of bill that we can get to committee and ultimately get passed.

I do want to mention before I close that I felt very good—our House leader, Jim Wilson, the member for Simcoe–Grey, had mentioned to me that he had a press conference this morning and mentioned to the media a number of bills that he hoped would be passed, bills from our caucus. He mentioned my colleague the member for Oxford and his Hawkins Gignac bill on carbon monoxide detectors that he hoped would be passed; and he also mentioned Bill 70. So I want to thank Mr. Wilson for his confidence in this bill.

I also want to thank members of my caucus, because I know that they've been very supportive as we've gone through the three versions of this particular bill, quite different versions from where we started to where we are today. Again, I want to thank the ministry and I want to thank the members opposite for having that relationship. It's very unique to have the government lawyers and my legislative counsel lawyer working together on this bill.

My bill, as I said, leaves it up to the individual colleges to make that decision. We know there are many health professionals, including the dozens of dentists I think all members of this House have heard from, who believe it's appropriate that they should have the right to treat their spouse. This bill is giving them that opportunity, and I am hopeful that we'll take the next step in this process this afternoon by passing Bill 70 and moving it forward to committee.

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

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I want to start by answering the question that the member has asked: Would the New Democrats be supporting this bill? Absolutely. We will be voting in favour of this bill and sending it for second reading. You can rest assured on this one; we want it to go to second reading. But we also want second reading to come with an opportunity for people to be heard.

**1550**

We have heard bits and pieces of a letter that the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario has written. I will read the letter into the record, because it sort of explains why people need to be heard on that issue.

When people think about dentists—we've all been there—the thing that stays in our mind is we're stuck there with our mouth open at the mercy of this person who hopefully will help us without hurting us, which happens 99% of the time. It always happens with my dentist; I can guarantee you she is very good and I love her. I, like many other MPPs, have been visited by a number of dentists. I thank them for the great work that they do.

*Interjection.*

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Okay, well, I like mine. She's a very nice lady.

They do fantastic work. We are sort of lucky in Ontario that we don't really have an underserved area. I

serve an area in northeastern Ontario that is made up of 33 small communities. We often have problems of access to health care. With dental, when there's a problem of access, it's not really because we don't have a dentist. It's more because we don't have a means to gain access to the dentist because people don't have the money to pay, which is a completely different issue than when we talk about problems of access to physician services, which simply are not available in parts of my riding. Dentists are available, it's just people can't gain access to them because they don't have the money to pay.

But coming back to Bill 70, which we will be supporting, I will read into the record the full letter, and then explain a little bit more why I did that. It's dated May 28, 2013. It is addressed to Mr. Clark, MPP, and it says:

"Re: Bill 70, Regulated Health Professions Amendment Act (Spousal Exception), 2013.

"We write in response to the recent introduction of Bill 70, Regulated Health Professions Amendment Act (Spousal Exception), 2013 in the Ontario Legislature. While the College of Physicians and Surgeons is of the view that the current Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 (RHAP) legislation is not in need of any amendment on this issue, we appreciate your effort to consider the college's concern with your initial bill.

"In August of 2012, the college responded to the concerning HPRAC recommendation in a letter to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, setting out our strong objection to the Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council's (HPRAC) recommendation that the treatment of spouses by health care professionals should be expressly exempted in the sexual abuse provisions of the RHPA. The college strongly believes that a spousal exemption would fundamentally undermine the zero tolerance provisions on sexual abuse contained in the RHPA, which is a critical mechanism for public protection."

A little editorial: The college is there to protect the public.

"These provisions have long been upheld by the current and previous Ontario governments, going back to the early 1990s, as based upon the source Task Force on Sexual Abuse of Patients initiated by this college.

"As previously submitted to the minister, the college believes that any exemption is dangerous to the zero tolerance scheme because the exemption will be a clear move away from the previous clear provision that a patient cannot consent to sexual relations with his or her health care provider. A recognition that a patient can consent to sexual relations with their health care provider will foster an opportunity for those having sexual relations with their patients to attempt to advance the defense of consent in countless other scenarios. As previously indicated, we can reasonably foresee arguments being advanced by members accused of sexual abuse, that any complainant is as capable as a spouse to consent to sexual relations within a treating relationship. This would be a fertile ground for litigation. This litiga-

tion can be expected to include more charter challenges, engaging resources not only of the college but also of the government and other interested parties.

"The college does not support any change to the mandatory revocation provisions. Nonetheless, we recognize that your proposed Bill 70 is a significant improvement over the previously proposed Bill 68, as well as the HPRAC recommendation. Principally, the proposed Bill 70 is drafted as an 'opt-in' provision. Bill 70 would only apply to those colleges that opt to enact the spousal exemption, pursuant to the minister's approval.

"As noted in the college's letter to the minister last year, we are aware that some health professional groups have advanced arguments in favour of a spousal exemption because they feel it would be convenient and appropriate to treat their spouse; this is not the case for physicians. The college is in the best position to comment on the power imbalance in the physician/patient relationship, and not on relationships between other health professionals and their patients.

"Notwithstanding the college recognition of Bill 70's progress, we would like to take this opportunity to highlight a couple of issues with the current drafting of Bill 70.

"Specifically:

"(i) With respect to the definition of 'spouse,' as provided in the proposed amendment to section 1(6) of schedule 2 ... to the RHPA, it has historically proven difficult to define the term 'spouse.' One need only look to courts throughout Ontario where the Family Law Act definition of 'spouse' is applied to find examples of the extensive litigation that flows over the issue of whether a person is a spouse and when the relationship began and ended.

"Although it is recognized that the proposed definition is an improvement over the earlier bill, due to detailed fact finding process required to evaluate whether a spousal or conjugal relationship is present ... any definition of 'spouse' will result in extensive litigation before discipline panels, who will be required to focus upon whether a spousal relationship was present and/or whether the relationship had sufficient characteristics to be characterized as a 'conjugal relationship.'

"The complex deliberations required will create enormous delays and sidetrack proceedings. This is not in the public interest. As stated by the Court of Appeal for Ontario ...

"(ii) The proposed subsection 1(5)(b) of schedule 2 ... to the RHPA, sets out that in order for a member to take advantage of the sexual abuse exemption the member cannot be engaged in the practice of the profession at the time the conduct, behaviour or remark occurs. With respect to this, the college believes that this provision will be very difficult to interpret and enforce, and will result in discipline panels being bogged down in a determination of the exact point when the 'practice of the profession' began and ended in a specific instance and when the 'conduct, behaviour or remarks of a sexual nature' began. It is easy to foresee a situation wherein the

two points of contact will bleed together. Indeed, the challenge of drawing a fine line between 'practice of the profession' and 'conduct, behaviour or remarks of a sexual nature' highlights one aspect of the problematic nature of a spouse providing treatment to his or her spouse.

"The college is appreciative of your efforts to consider our concerns with your initial bill. We are grateful to have had the opportunity to meet with you to discuss our concerns.

"Given the critical significance of the problem of sexual abuse by health care professionals and the dangerous potential this bill has to dilute current protection of patients from such abuse, it is imperative that the bill not pass without committee consideration. Special interest groups including victim groups must be provided an opportunity to provide feedback on Bill 70.

"Thank you for the time and consideration you have shown to our concerns.

"Sincerely"—it's signed by the president, Eric Stanton, and the registrar, Rocco Gerace.

It was copied to me, which is why I read it. I have similar letters that came from the College of Nurses of Ontario and from the Ontario Coalition of Rape Crisis Centres etc.

So, do we support the bill? Absolutely. Those provisions were put in place in 1991. We are now in 2013. Things have changed. We have a number of professionals who have joined us today because they want to see changes. Those changes have been captured in the bill, a bill that is worth debating today, and certainly a bill that is worth opening up to committee.

Before I conclude, I want everybody to remember that when we go to the dentist, we go because we need dental care. But you have to remember that dentists also have open prescribing. They are one of only two professions, with physicians, that have this.

Remember when OxyContin came onto the market? People with an addiction to this drug quickly went through all the physicians who were barred from prescribing this, but a dentist can provide you with any medication that they want to prescribe. They have open prescribing. So you can see that if you are a person who is addicted to a type of medication, we often go to the dentist. Although we can have a tumour the size of a grapefruit in one of our organs, for some reason we don't have any pain, but if you have a toothache, well, it hurts, like a toothache, doesn't it?

**1600**

So the dentists have been given open prescribing so that they can give you things that will help you deal with your toothaches. But it also means that they prescribe narcotics. When you look at where abuse takes place, when you look at how you set the table for a health provider to abuse a woman—because most of the time they are women—it often goes not through drilling of cavities and all of this, it often goes through the prescription pad. Because a woman who is addicted to a narcotic will do anything to get the next fix. That means letting a tooth get infected and going to the dentist.

Doctor shopping, in my neck of the woods, is not heard of because it takes you five weeks to get an emergency visit with your physician, but you can visit your dentist the same day. You can visit five dentists the same day with an abscessed tooth and get five prescriptions for narcotics. When you come back the next week to the same dentist, if he is an abuser, he will know why you're there, and we don't know how it will end. Those people need to be heard.

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

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** I'm happy to rise in the House and support Bill 70, that has been brought forward by our colleague from Leeds–Grenville. I do want to commend him for the amount of work he has done on this bill, not only with the dental profession but also with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care—he alluded to this—in terms of carefully working out definitions and so on. That's the type of collegiality we like to see in this House.

As is known, Bill 70 proposes that the regulated health professions be allowed the capacity to treat their spouses, something that is currently prohibited. The legislation before the House today would give professional health colleges the ability to make the choice to allow their members to treat their spouses. This flexibility and choice afforded to the colleges with this proposed legislation is important: Our government believes in self-governing health professions, and we feel professional colleges are best placed to determine what is appropriate for their membership.

It is important to recognize that the proposed legislation still maintains the strict protections from sexual abuse by health professionals, including those professionals' spouses.

Under the Regulated Health Professions Act, it is the health professional colleges' responsibility to investigate complaints made by the public against their members, and we have full confidence in health professional colleges to conduct full and fair investigations.

So this bill is about choice and equity. It gives the regulated health care professions the choice to determine if it is the correct decision to allow spousal treatment and helps further ensure that all Ontarians have equal access to some of the best health care in the world. The public has a high level of trust placed in their regulated health professionals, which is of the utmost importance in the health professional-patient relationship and must be protected.

Our government is also committed to providing high-quality and accessible care to all Ontarians. In fact, a key commitment of our action plan for health care is to ensure Ontarians get the right care in the right place at the right time. This legislation would build on our government's current work and would continue to further help provide those in rural and northern Ontario with increased access to health care.

There are small and isolated rural communities where access to health professionals is more limited. By pro-

hibiting health professionals in these types of communities from treating their spouse, it becomes much more difficult for the spouse to receive treatment. The proposed legislation would enhance accessibility to health care services and enhance the choice Ontarians have in finding a health professional while maintaining strict protections against sexual abuse.

As it relates to, obviously, a zero tolerance of sexual abuse, we need to ensure that there is a uniform definition of spouse that would apply to all professions that choose to adopt this. It would ensure a high level of protection for Ontario patients against sexual abuse. Our government is committed to protecting Ontario patients and has clearly demonstrated that we have zero tolerance for sexual abuse.

Bill 70 aligns with how other jurisdictions handle the treatment of spouses by health professions. The proposed bill also clearly outlines the definition of spouse that aligns with the definition found in other pieces of legislation in Ontario. Having this definition in place removes the need for subjectivity in discipline hearings to determine the nature of a relationship and whether a spousal relationship did exist at the time of the misconduct.

I will conclude by saying that I urge all members to support this bill. It's always useful to have additional discussion at committee so that we can hear some of the concerns mentioned by my colleague from the NDP, but this is a very good step forward. I will certainly be supporting this bill.

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

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** I know I introduced them earlier on, when we came back into the House, but I see that Dr. Larry Pedlar, who is the co-chair of the Coalition to Restore Spousal Rights and Freedoms, and Dr. Vipin Maini are now here. They're my Burlington constituent doctors, and I just wanted to do a shout-out first about that.

I'm pleased to rise to speak to Bill 70, Regulated Health Professions Amendment Act (Spousal Exemption). I have had uniformly supportive and encouraging correspondence related to Bill 70 from dozens of dentists and health professionals in my riding of Burlington. They are quite aware of this contentious issue and are closely following the debate and progress of Bill 70.

I am happy to echo their support for the proposed legislation brought forward by my honourable colleague the member for Leeds–Grenville. I'd also like to say that he's a very passionate and compassionate person, and they're in great hands having him do this bill. He has brought forward legislation in earlier sessions, and my constituents in Burlington certainly appreciate the member from Leeds–Grenville's dedication to this cause.

This bill, if passed and enacted, would amend the 1991 Regulated Health Professions Act to allow regulated health professionals to treat their spouses if their councils make a regulation to allow members to do so.

There is no question that the harm to any patient sexually abused by a health professional is profound. It

shatters trust and can result in unimaginable trauma. Our health care providers must, of course, be held to an exceptional standard of legal and ethical propriety for the protection of patients.

Health care providers must shoulder these elevated expectations and respect these legal and ethical boundaries to ensure that encounters with patients are therapeutic. Dentists support a zero-tolerance policy as it relates to sexual abuse. Those colleges that make the regulations to allow spousal treatments will retain the same disciplinary powers to investigate instances of sexual abuse, whether they occur within the spousal relationship or with a patient outside of a spousal relationship.

Currently, if a member of a regulated health profession provides care to their spouse, it is classified as sexual abuse by default. Bill 70 aims to introduce a common sense change to the code by eliminating the default charge of sexual abuse within colleges that have a history of treating spouses.

Bill 70 will not loosen the zero-tolerance policy on sexual abuse. What it will do is benefit residents of rural and northern Ontario, where there may be only one health care provider in the region.

This bill has the support of dental health professionals, and it was developed in conjunction with Ministry of Health officials, who have been supportive of the changes made to this legislation.

I join the health professionals in my riding of Burlington in urging the unanimous support and swift passage of this legislation.

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

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's a pleasure to join the debate on Bill 70 this afternoon. It appears we're having one of those afternoons where everybody, for the most part, is getting along well and seems to be agreeing. That's, I think, especially good for this one.

1610

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** That could change in a minute, I realize that.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Let's not ruin it.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** We still have the votes to go, but it appears that there's a sense of agreement on this one, and there's, I think, a willingness that this move forward.

When you think about dentistry, we all have a personal relationship, I think, with the people that we allow to perform dentistry on us. In my particular case, I've been seeing the same dentist for probably over 30 years now. His name is Dr. Paul Eisner. He's actually the team dentist for the Grey Cup champions, the Toronto Argos, as well. He's a wonderful man, and we've developed a friendship over the years. I've watched his practice grow from being basically a one-man office to quite a substantial office just on the border of Oakville and Mississauga.

I want to credit the member from Leeds–Grenville for bringing the bill to this point, where it's before the

House. It appears to be meeting with the approval of the House as well. To get it to this point, I think it's also coming forward with a recommendation from the Ministry of Health that this bill could indeed work.

What I particularly like about the approach that is being taken—and I've worked with the ODA in the past on this issue. At one point, it was thought that perhaps a co-sponsored bill may be appropriate in this regard. I was quite happy to see if I could be a part of that, if I could facilitate that. As it works out, I think the member from Leeds–Grenville has done yeomen's service in ensuring that when the bill finally made the floor of the House for debate, the bill had been through a process with some stakeholders and through a process with the Ministry of Health that allowed for some changes to the bill that alleviated some of the concerns that were present when the bill was first drafted and introduced.

If we look at the trust we place in those health professionals in our society in Ontario—I think we've all got chiropractors and naturopaths and family doctors and physiotherapists. These professions all have the ability to self-regulate through their colleges. I think they bring forward ideas that advance the medicine they practise but they also regulate the conduct of their members. I think that's just as important as any other service provided by the college in that when something is alleged to have happened that shouldn't have happened, it's the college, it's the members themselves that self-regulate and jump into action to ensure that the offending action is stopped and hopefully never repeated.

In this case, the way it was explained to me when it was first introduced to me as an issue is that if you have a normal dentist, a man or a woman, performing normal dentistry on a family member, on a spouse, and having normal sexual relations with that same person, then technically, that would be considered sexual abuse. That, I think anybody in this House would agree, is absurd. Those people who are perhaps afraid that this is opening the door to some sort of approval of sexual abuse—I think that those concerns should be allayed immediately. My understanding is that we've got zero tolerance for sexual abuse in all the regulated colleges, and that continues and only increases as time goes by.

So I believe that what we have before us allows each one of the professions to decide whether they would like to avail themselves of the changes that are envisioned under this bill. It's an opt-in. If you feel that this isn't right for your profession, if you feel that this is something that's not right for your college, certainly the membership of that college and the executive of that college are free to opt in or out.

It's not something that is being foisted upon the colleges. It's not something that one profession is foisting upon another profession. It's actually the one profession saying, "We think we can make this work for us. If you give us the option to use this, then we're going to be able to do something that we think works in the best interests of our patients and our families." I agree with that approach. I think that the work that's been done by the

member from Leeds–Grenville—I think he was very frank in his admission that he listened to some of the advice he was getting and agreed, at the end of the day, that perhaps there were some shortcomings that were present in the original draft and has changed those, and has been honest and open about it and has said that at the end of the day, he thinks that this has made it a better bill.

So I'm very pleased to stand here today and say that I will be supporting this bill. I think that most members of the House—in fact, every member who has spoken so far is saying that they will also support the bill. It will go through a committee process like any other bill typically goes through in this House. If there are any amendments that need to be made, if there are any improvements that need to be made, then certainly I think that the process is open to those amendments. Any stakeholders who think that they need to be heard from further could be accommodated at that time.

In closing, I'd like to thank the member from Leeds–Grenville for bringing forward this bill, the Regulated Health Professions Amendment Act (Spousal Exception), 2013. I think it's a sensible approach to solve an issue that a profession with a long and proud history in the province of Ontario has brought to the attention of the legislators in this province, so it doesn't surprise me that it's probably going to receive the approval today of all three parties. I think the redeeming value of the whole thing is really the introduction of the opt-in provision. I think what that does is that it really opens it up to the professions themselves. It puts the ball back in their court. If this is something that they think is right for them, I think that they've proven in the past that they're responsible enough and mature enough to avail themselves of it in a proper way; if they think it's not for them, then certainly they do not have to do it.

I'll be supporting the bill, and thank you to the member from Leeds–Grenville for introducing it today.

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

**Mr. John O'Toole:** It's a distinct pleasure to get up and support my colleague from Leeds–Grenville and commend him for the work that he has done on this to find consensus amongst the regulated health professions.

It's more or less a modernization effort. If I look at the small preamble section, I think it's very important to clarify what it says here: "The exception is only available to a member of a particular health profession if the member's college makes a regulation that adopts the exception."

So it really allows the regulated profession specifically, whether it's dentists or chiropractors or whomever, in their college, the regulating body, to create an exemption in regulation. They could even talk about the controlled act specifically to whichever their entitlements to provide a treatment to their spouse. I think it is modernization. I say that in the context of a very good constituent of mine, Jack Cottrell, who was the head of the Ontario Dental Association. Then he was the head of the Canadian Dental Association, and I think now he's

the head of the world dental association or at least the international, and I recognize Frank Bevilacqua from the ODA, as well as Bob Haig, the CEO of the chiropractors of Ontario. It's important to see that the midwife association is here as well.

I think this is really an opportunity for the professions to look at what acts can be executed or performed by the professional, and, again, they are the regulating body. They are also the disciplinary body, so I think it's good work moving forward. I think the discussion is educating the public on an issue that often isn't talked about. Thank you for the opportunity.

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

**Mr. Jim McDonnell:** I'm proud to rise to speak to the bill by the honourable member from Leeds–Grenville, who I know has put a lot of work into this bill previously and again as he got consensus throughout this House.

This bill addresses a textbook example of an unintended consequence. In urban areas, the effects of the schedule, as it currently is implemented, are not nearly as heavily felt as they are in rural areas because a physician's spouse has a greater choice of seeking a non-related health professional to get treatment in large urban centres. In rural, small urban and northern Ontario, the density of medical practitioners is in the order of magnitudes lower. In its present form, the act makes being married to a health practitioner a curse because you may not be able to get the treatment you need. This bill does not loosen the tolerance for sexual abuse by medical professionals, whom we hold in a great degree of trust and we expect to be models of integrity.

1620

To safeguard the independence of medical profession colleges, this bill enables the colleges to adopt a spousal exception rather than imposing it on them. These organizations are well qualified to make this important determination. It is simply an infusion of common sense where it is needed. We look forward to this bill receiving third reading as soon as possible—maybe even today.

Over the past 10 years, this province has seen mountains of regulations and red tape created that get in the way of entrepreneurs who are trying to start or expand a business. This regulation goes beyond the realm of common sense and affects the personal lives of spouses. This regulation has unintended consequences, and it is time to pass this bill.

In my family, my uncle, Dr. McLeod, back in the 1940s was helped out by the community through medical school. For decades before the days of OHIP, he provided medical care for many of the people in the community, often at no charge. He was our family doctor. He looked after his nieces and nephews, his brothers and sisters, his sons and daughters and his wife. He certainly was key in our medical health, as he could help us through the web of the complicated health services that we have today, and truly, in the latter days of my own father, was a big help. In his own case, my aunt, his wife—somebody was needed who had the knowledge and the experience and certainly shouldn't be discrimin-

ated against in providing that service. So I think it's a well-timed and well-deserved amendment to this bill.

I commend the member from Leeds–Grenville again for this bill.

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

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** It's my pleasure to rise and speak to Bill 70, the Regulated Health Professions Amendment Act (Spousal Exception). My colleague the MPP from Leeds–Grenville has worked with the Ministry of Health on this issue, and this bill reflects their recommendations. This bill seeks to allow health professionals to treat their spouses.

I'll use the example of dentists to explain this issue to the folks at home. Under current law, if a dentist treats their spouse, they are automatically guilty of sexual abuse. There is zero tolerance and no chance of any appeal. To say this is ridiculous is, of course, an understatement. Inferring that a dentist or even a dental hygienist who treats their wife, spouse or significant other is guilty of sexual abuse is absolutely disgraceful.

A Toronto Star article mentioned that Health Minister Matthews had asked the Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council to look into the matter and to make recommendations. That was back on April 18, 2011—over two years ago. This goes to show just how quickly this Liberal government takes action. With tongue in cheek, Speaker, getting results from this government is sometimes like pulling teeth, no pun intended at all.

This is a straightforward issue, and this bill is a quick and easy fix. My office has received a large number of emails from dentists throughout the Chatham–Kent–Essex riding who support this bill.

My good friend from Chatham and the current president of the ODA, Dr. Art Worth, and I have had several excellent discussions on this serious issue. He stated that dentists support zero tolerance for sexual abuse and that colleges that allow spousal treatment will still be able to discipline inappropriate conduct. It's worth noting that this bill does not loosen the zero tolerance policy on genuine cases of sexual abuse; it just simply allows the professional treatment of spouses.

Dr. Bruce Warwick, also from Chatham, shared the following comments:

“Imagine criminalizing a dentist for even looking at his/her spouse's teeth, let alone cleaning or repairing them. If caught, we stand to lose our licence for five years and face a criminal record (meaning no visits to the USA for five years) with absolutely no appeal process allowed. Almost every dentist in the province treats their spouse, or did so, until this legislation was passed. It's just ridiculous. You really have to marvel at the total lack of common sense that was employed in this decision.”

I really think that it's time that we use some common sense and listen to Dr. Worth's and Dr. Warwick's appeal. Let's get this simple logic changed, and let's get it achieved now.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Leeds–Grenville, you have two minutes for a response.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** I want to thank the member for Nickel Belt, the member for Oak Ridges–Markham, the members for Burlington, Oakville, Durham, Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry and Chatham–Kent–Essex for their comments.

I also want to mention to the member for Oakville that I do appreciate his offer to co-sponsor the bill. I know we had some discussions among the three parties about that possibility. I know that didn't happen for reasons that it's not really appropriate to even talk about. I think what we should be focusing on is the fact that there is co-operation for this bill at second reading.

It's great that the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, the member for Oak Ridges–Markham, did have a chance to speak. I know I spoke to the minister in the chamber earlier this week, and I want to also recognize her senior policy adviser who worked with my office, Brigid Buckingham, for her work as well. I think she did an excellent job liaising between our departments.

I also want to say that the member for Wellington–Halton Hills reminded me that there is someone from the ODA who isn't with us today, and that's Maggie Head, whom all members know from her time here working for Speaker Peters. I know her father has just recently passed away, so on behalf of our caucus and certainly all members, we want to express our condolences to Maggie and her family on their loss. I know she was a driving force, along with Frank and our dentists, in all of our ridings in making sure this came to the floor today.

I want to thank everyone for their support. I want to thank all of the professions that are here today for all their constructive criticism, suggestions, patience with three versions of this legislation, and I hope all members will support this bill.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

PROTECTING EMPLOYEES'  
TIPS ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 SUR LA PROTECTION  
DU POURBOIRE DES EMPLOYÉS

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** We will deal first with ballot item number 28, standing in the name of Mr. Prue.

Mr. Prue has moved second reading of Bill 49, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 with respect to tips and other gratuities.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Beaches–East York.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I would like to send this bill, please, to Legislative Assembly.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member has requested that the bill be referred to Legislative Assembly. Agreed? Agreed.

POPE JOHN PAUL II DAY ACT, 2013

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

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Ms. Damerla has moved second reading of Bill 72, An Act to proclaim Pope John Paul II Day.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Mississauga East–Cooksville.

**Ms. Dipika Damerla:** Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills, Speaker.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member has requested the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills. Agreed? Agreed.

REGULATED HEALTH  
PROFESSIONS AMENDMENT ACT  
(SPOUSAL EXCEPTION), 2013

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

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Mr. Clark moved second reading of Bill 70, An Act to amend the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member for Leeds–Grenville.

**Mr. Steve Clark:** In the spirit of co-operation: the Legislative Assembly committee.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** The member has requested that the bill be referred to the Legislative Assembly committee. Agreed? Agreed.

1630

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 30, 2013, on the amendment to the amendment to the motion to apply a timetable to certain business of the House.

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

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** It's always a privilege and an honour to rise in this House and represent the great riding

of Barrie, as well as to be the voice of Ontarians from all over the province. That is, after all, what we were all elected and sent here to do. We're elected and sent here to represent the interests of Ontarians, and to ensure that the province is put on the path to success.

I take that role very seriously. In fact, I consider it more than a job; it's a duty to stand in this House and have my constituents voices be heard. We all have the privilege of standing here, working towards improving the future of our province, representing the great people of this province, and I'm afraid to say that I'm not so sure that the Liberal and NDP coalition members in this Legislature share the same respect and duty we have to Ontario.

I'm not so sure because the programming motion that we're debating today is a motion which takes steps to limit our ability to represent those constituencies that we've sworn to represent. The government House leader has called it a simple procedural motion, which assigns timelines to certain bills for their passage in the House, but he neglects to focus on the fact that the timeline this government is pushing purposefully limits the ability of many members in this House to stand up and voice the opinions of their constituents, exactly what we were sent here to do.

This is not the first time a Liberal government has attempted to avoid accountability in this House. Who else could forget the former Premier's move to prorogue this very House? The former Premier shuttered the doors of this Legislative Assembly for 129 days. For over four months, we were locked out and stripped of our opportunity to fully fulfill our role as members of provincial Parliament. We were told to go home and leave dozens and dozens of bills on the table, just so the Liberal Party of Ontario could have a chance to regroup from scandal after scandal—scandals that they brought upon themselves, scandals that have cost the taxpayers of Ontario billions of dollars.

This government ran from its duty. They ran from their commitment to this province. They looked out for their own interests rather than the interests of Ontario, and now they're doing it again. The budget is one of the most important bills that comes before this House. It sets the spending policy of all facets of provincial government for the coming year. The budget, in other words, is the government's opportunity to get the province's financial house in order—and boy, do we need order.

You've heard the numbers before, but they bear repeating, because this government doesn't seem to get it. Our debt is up to \$273 billion and rising—\$1.8 million every hour we stand in here. We spend \$11 billion a year alone just paying down the interest. It's a mess. It's time to get Ontario's books in order.

By the way, Mr. Speaker, I got a news flash today: Standard and Poor's announced just this afternoon that it's cutting Ontario's outlook from "stable" to "negative," with a possible downgrade coming. This is something that we've heard in this House wasn't going to happen. Just this morning, the Premier stood in her place and told

this House that we were not in danger of a credit downgrade. Yet we hear today, "In our opinion, the rate of growth of Ontario's debt burden remains a concern, as it is already at the high end of the range for similarly rated domestic and international peers." That's a direct quote from Standard and Poor's.

You can talk all you want. The fact of the matter is that we're in a dangerous situation with our finances here in Ontario, and it's time to get it right—not put out window dressing—and actually address the issues at hand with bold action. This is the opportunity to start reducing Ontario's massive debt and deficit, debt and deficit that this Liberal government created in the first place.

With such an incredibly important bill before us, it's the duty of every person in here to make sure that the voices of their constituents are represented. Instead, the Premier has moved to limit debate without allowing the appropriate level of debate to proceed. These actions—proroguing Parliament, limiting debate on the most important bill this government puts forward and has to pass—reveal a worrying trend for me. The trend is that this government doesn't care about what Ontarians think. They care only about what's best for their party and for themselves, not what's best for the hard-working people of Ontario.

The people of Barrie elected me to represent them in this Legislature. By limiting debate and running from their responsibility, the McGuinty-Wynne-NDP coalition is deliberately marginalizing the voices of those who wish to be heard, in service of their own selfish interests. This is deeply troubling to me. It's an affront to the people of Ontario, and it's time for the government to stand up and finally do its job, to put Ontario first and stop running from its duty to Ontarians.

Liberal members across the aisle aren't the only members who have neglected their job. Unfortunately, the third party, the NDP to my left, has also adopted a troubling trend of running from what they're elected to do, which brings me to the second distressing development in this programming motion: the creation of the Financial Accountability Office. The idea of a Financial Accountability Office or FAO, as it's referred to, sounds nice and sounds responsible. It's good window dressing, right? Good politics, maybe. It even has the word "accountability" right in its title.

To be sure, nobody could argue against having more accountability in our system, and certainly not Progressive Conservatives. The trouble with this establishment of the FAO is that the mechanism for accountability is taken out of the hands of the members of this very Legislature. We sit here under this eagle, staring down at us to remind us, as the opposition, to watch the government, to make sure we hold them accountable, to do our job as the loyal opposition and make sure that our government does their job.

Our independent officers, from the Ombudsman to the Auditor General, undoubtedly do excellent work in helping to ensure that the government is not abusing its

power. But that fact does not mean we should start to allow all mechanisms of accountability to be located in offices outside of this chamber. Our parliamentary system is designed with a government and an opposition. The job of that opposition, like I said, is to hold the government to account for its practices and policies. Our party sits in this Legislature and does that every single day. It's another role we take very seriously. And yes, my friends over here on the left, that means sometimes making the difficult choice of saying no. It's easy to say yes all the time; you're very good at it, by the way.

But to take these important debates and move them into the office of an independent officer, as the member from Cambridge noted yesterday, is to diminish our own role here in the Legislature. Putting the Financial Accountability Officer in charge, and relying so closely on that officer's accounting and results, effectively diminishes our own role of holding this government to account.

The NDP's push to create an FAO speaks directly to the fact that they've forgotten—or maybe they're just ignoring; I don't know—their own role in holding the government to account. In pushing so hard for the creation of an FAO, the NDP is admitting they cannot do their jobs either. They don't know how to hold this government accountable for its actions, or they won't. Instead, they appoint someone else to do it for them—completely inappropriate.

The third party has tried to tell us that a Financial Accountability Officer is necessary, in light of the many scandals this government has undergone. A Financial Accountability Office will help us avoid the waste of billions of dollars in future, they say. Mr. Speaker, I would argue that maybe there would be less need for independent officers if the NDP wasn't worried about doing their jobs to the fullest extent in the first place. Maybe if the third party stopped selling their souls to prop up a clearly corrupt government, we wouldn't need an FAO to do that job for them.

Nobody would deny for one second that ensuring accountability and transparency from the government is of the utmost importance. However, I submit that the best people for that job are the legislators and members in this House today. I must ask my colleagues in the third party not to be afraid to do their job and start holding this government accountable for its excess. Stop running from your responsibility to the people of Ontario. Don't be afraid to say no from time to time.

Speaking of accountability, this programming motion is actually pretty ironic. This government has also included provisions to limit the future debate of this as yet unseen bill. We do not have the bill before this House outlining the role, procedures and authority of a Financial Accountability Officer, and yet this government is already moving to limit debate about it. In other words, they are limiting accountability and responsibility during the creation of an office that's supposed to stand for accountability and responsibility. Figure that one out, Mr. Speaker. If that's not irony in action, I don't know what is.

**1640**

The NDP is fond of saying that their leader has led the Premier and the Premier has followed. What they fail to mention afterwards is that the path they're leading this province down is one that has less accountability, less transparency, more spending and more debt that will get passed to future generations: my kids, the member from Cambridge's kids, the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound's kids, the member from Northumberland–Quinte West. We all have young children who are going to bear the burden of this government's failing to take action for creating the debt and deficit and fixing the problem they started in the first place.

The creation of an FAO is supposed to help increase transparency and curb spending. But by supporting it, the third party is clearly removing themselves from their own duty and responsibility to hold this government accountable. Don't be afraid of it. They've given up, and that's another troubling trend for people who are supposed to be here to represent their constituents in this Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, that's why the member from Simcoe–Grey speaks for our whole party when he seeks to amend the motion by including a provision that calls on this government to debate the current want of confidence motion standing on the order paper. That's because we no longer have confidence in this government, Mr. Speaker. That's because we believe the people of Ontario no longer have confidence in this government. We deserve the opportunity to make this voice heard in this chamber, and if you have confidence in yourselves, you'll stand up and let this vote happen. If you don't have confidence in it, you're going to run from it like you are.

We deserve an opportunity to have this voice heard in the chamber. A lot has been made about our commitment to vote against the budget before it was tabled. We made that commitment, Mr. Speaker, because we have had 10 years to watch this Liberal government operate, and their actions are very clear.

They've not shown an ability or commitment to reducing Ontario's debt and deficit—in fact, they've doubled it—so that our children will stop growing up with this tremendous debt hanging over them. We knew before the budget that Ontario's debt has doubled since the Liberals took power in 2003—it was \$139 billion; now it's \$273 billion. Several credit downgrades; one pending. We know that this government, the same one that Ontario has watched for 10 years, has ignored half of the recommendations of their own Liberal hand-picked, appointed economist, Don Drummond, who made recommendations to balance the books. We know that the deficit is on track to double by 2017-18, up to \$411 billion.

**Interjection:** Are you kidding?

**Mr. Rod Jackson:** I'm not kidding.

The Liberal government has been unable to make the changes necessary to balance the books. They seem like they are not willing to make the difficult choices that need to be made to get this province back on track, and

the rest of the world is looking at us, shaking their head and wondering, “What is the problem? Why are you not doing this?”

We know that the government is spending \$11 billion a year just to service the debt alone. That’s \$11 billion just making interest payments on our debt. That’s an unbelievable amount of fiscal mismanagement—an unbelievable amount of mismanagement.

We’ve known about these problems for years, and yet this government has completely failed to take the steps to fix this situation. They’ve only allowed it to get worse. That’s 10 years of work to base our judgments off of. It’s been the same government for 10 years that has established a clear track record on economic and financial issues. Needless to say, Mr. Speaker, the track record has been incredibly poor.

That’s why we’ve lost confidence in this government, and that’s why we knew this budget could not fix the incredible number of mistakes and scandals this government has made. It’s important to remember those scandals, because they have, time and again, wasted billions of taxpayers’ dollars despite having dug Ontario’s fiscal hole deeper and deeper every year.

There’s a minimum \$900 million for the Liberal seat-saving gas plant scandal, a number that will surely rise once we have all the facts and figures released. There’s the billion-dollar eHealth scandal. Remember that one? There’s the Ornge scandal, in which the government watched as millions of dollars were misspent and misused by arm’s-length employees of this province.

The scandals are building. Instead of doing the hard work of cutting money from spending in their budget, Premier Wynne is looking to raise taxes in the name of transit—money that we don’t have confidence won’t be mishandled and wasted. How can you have the gall to go to the people of Ontario with your hand out saying, “Yeah, I know we screwed up; I know we cost you hundreds of millions of dollars—a few billion. And you know what? We made a mistake. We’re sorry about that, but we need a bit more.” Please. You know what? People aren’t going to respond well to that; I’ll tell you that right now. You don’t need to do any more studies or have any more conversations. I’ll tell you that the people of Barrie will not stand for it.

The Pan Am Games are quickly approaching. They’re approaching a huge waste as well. Let’s not forget about the \$456 million we’re wasting on a diesel air-rail link before electrifying it, and the hundreds of millions of dollars they’ve wasted on venue construction and overruns in costs and the lack of an actual, tangible budget. It’s 17 lines, the budget for the Pan Am Games, for a \$1.4-million budget—17 lines. My high school prom had a more detailed budget than the Pan Am Games does.

The tabling of the budget only proves us right; it’s a spending budget, not a book-balancing budget—spending increases by \$8.4 billion in this budget. That overspending will add up to \$42 billion to our debt in the future. That’s as much as \$1 billion committed to the NDP spend initiatives in order to buy their support. And

by the way, they don’t think that’s bad; they think it’s good—“Everybody’s got it. What the heck, let’s just have debt.”

Luckily for Ontarians, the PC Party has been paying attention. We’ve been taking our job seriously. It came as no surprise to us when the Liberals kept doing the same things they’ve been doing for years: tax and spend and waste. These are not the actions of a government that should continue to receive support from this Legislature. These aren’t the actions that should receive the support of the voting public. And I’ll tell you this, Mr. Speaker: They’re not the actions that the people of Barrie are going to support, not by a long shot. They expect better. They expect better from you, they expect better from all of us sitting in here, and they certainly don’t expect us to run from this debate like the government expects us to.

You no longer deserve the confidence of this Legislature. If the Liberal and NDP coalition had half as much interest in transparency and accountability as they say, they would call the want of confidence motion. They would call it forward to allow it to be debated in the House. I’m not sure why you’re afraid of it. Instead of stonewalling opposition, limiting debate and running from your job, you should face the music and allow a hearing of this confidence motion as soon as possible.

This McGuinty-Wynne, Liberal-NDP coalition government has not earned the confidence of this House. This Premier has not taken her platform or her ideas to the province for a general election. In fact, some of our riding associations had more people show up for candidate nominations than actually showed up at the Liberal convention to elect a new Premier.

Instead, she has continued in the footsteps of her predecessor—in her own words, building on the dynasty of Dalton McGuinty—and adopted the Liberal mantra of raising taxes and spending money that Ontarians can’t afford to keep spending. And they can’t. They don’t have any more.

And now the third party, the NDP, have endorsed it. They might stand in this House and pretend to question the government, call them corrupt and pretend that they’re still holding this government accountable—and “pretend” is the key word there—but they’re not. By supporting this budget, the NDP are explicitly endorsing and giving a thumbs-up to the path we’ve been led down, a path of rising debt and rising deficit. The NDP have given a green light to the path of unemployment in a struggling economy. They’re supporting a scandal-plagued, billions-in-wasted-dollars government. Tell me you’re not.

To cap it off, they’ve decided to absolve themselves of the responsibility of holding this government accountable by seeking the creation of an FAO, the Financial Accountability Office, instead of doing their own duty, taking more responsibility and standing up and holding this government accountable—exactly what they’ve been elected to do. Don’t be afraid of your responsibilities. Stand up for your people. Ontario deserves better.

Ontarians deserve a Premier who will deal with the issues the province faces today. They deserve a govern-

ment that speaks to them and listens to what they have to say. They deserve a government that will take this province on a better path, to a brighter economy and an increase in jobs and a set of balanced books. This Liberal government is not the government that Ontarians deserve.

This programming motion limits debate and pushes through legislation that requires a fair hearing in this Legislature and in the public. It's the creation of a Liberal-NDP backroom deal, and it's not good for Ontarians. It's not good for the people of Barrie. That's why myself and my party will not stand and endorse this deal. We will not vote for it. We cannot support this government. We can't support your coalition. I know it kills you to hear it, but it is what it is. We will not do it. We stand for Ontario. We stand for the people who elected us to stand here and debate this. We will not be ashamed to stand here and debate it, and we'll defend our right to debate it until the time runs out.

1650

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

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** I rise in support of the programming motion that's before us today.

Speaker, as you're well aware, the reason that we're here today having this debate is that, about a year and a half ago, the people of Ontario elected a minority Parliament. They didn't give the Liberals a majority; didn't give the Conservatives a majority; didn't give the NDP a majority. What the electorate said was that, "We, at this point, don't believe that any one party should run government on its own, and we leave it to the three of you to find a way forward to actually deliver the results, to actually get things done in the Legislature as we, the voters of this province, have to do in our everyday lives."

You can either try and work with what you've been given or you can just sit back and bellyache. Those are your choices. We decided to try and work with what we had been given. People expected it of us. We talked to our constituents. We talked to the public at large. And it's pretty clear to me, and I think to most people out there, that in this process, New Democrats have fought for issues that mattered to people in the province of Ontario—know that they're concerned about employment, about health care, about affordability. In this process, the budget process so far, we made a number of very public demands of the government. They weren't backroom demands; they weren't secret. We put them out in the public for everyone to read and for the government to respond to.

I deal with constituents on a regular basis—those who have gone through university, who have degrees, who cannot break into the workforce. Their mothers, their fathers, their grandparents come to see me to say, "What can you do to help my son or daughter break into the workforce?" We came forward with a presentation to the government, a demand in terms of this budget, to set up a youth employment program so that that door can be opened, so that people can get into the workforce, can

start to use the skills that they've developed through years at school and through a huge investment of time and money. That was critically important to the people of this province. It wasn't a question, in our minds, of a budget that we felt met all the needs of the people of Ontario. It was an opportunity, given the cards that were dealt us by the people of this province, the setup that they decided they were willing to live with, to try and get the best we could for the people of Ontario.

Speaker, I'm sure that you have, as I have, gone door to door in your riding talking to people. When I go door to door, and not just in elections but between elections, I get a chance to really get a sample of how people are feeling and what's really making life very hard for them. The need for quick, responsive home care comes up time and again. People cannot wait extended periods for home care. One of the things that we pressed hard on was ensuring that no one would have to wait more than five days. Now, clearly, if you're coming out of the hospital, it isn't a question of waiting five days. You have to have it right then. But there are many people who, you might say, are not in an acute situation but in a situation that, if attended to, will not become acute—sort of mid-care. Those people waiting months and months means that their health will deteriorate. Their ability to live on their own will decline. Their quality of life will be eroded. Frankly, that issue is one that came up time and again, not just at the door but also, when I go to seniors' buildings in my riding, when I have meetings with seniors, they say, "We like living in our units. We don't want to be in a nursing home. We don't want to have to move out, but we have to have some support. We have to have home care and we have to have it on a timely basis."

When I talk to France Gélinas from Nickel Belt about the difficulties that people in northern Ontario face, as difficult as it can be in Toronto, it's far worse in a situation where people wait many months to get home care, where the level of service is not what is enjoyed in the major urban centres but much tougher. That issue had to be addressed—still has to be addressed. This budget sets the foundation for dealing with it. It's our intention to hold this government accountable to see that in fact what is promised is delivered.

Affordability: I have to say that in my riding I probably have the highest percentage of people in the province who use transit on a daily basis, fewer people using cars. But I know that my parents on Hamilton Mountain—my mother, living on Hamilton Mountain, uses her car. I know that transit service there is not what it is at Broadview and Danforth. I know that people who live in small-town Ontario, who live in Brampton, not a small town but designed with the car in mind, are paying huge amounts in auto insurance to companies that have received billions of dollars in breaks from changes in regulations, and yet those auto insurance rates keep going up. We're talking here about profiteering. That has to be checked. There has to be fairness for the people across Ontario, who depend on a variety of modes of transportation. That is why we put that in our list of demands for this budget.

After a range of scandals alluded to by the earlier speaker—at Ornge, at eHealth and with the gas plants in Mississauga and Oakville—Ontarians want to see greater accountability, they want to see greater transparency, they want to see mechanisms in government that will help stop scandals before they start. We listened to the people of Ontario, we read the budget when it came out, and then, with that new information and with the developments in recent months, went back and talked to people again, which is why we came forward with a proposal for a Financial Accountability Office. We believe that a Financial Accountability Office would bring oversight and accountability that Ontarians want to see with regard to Ontario's books. It would be a new and independent office in the Legislature. It would bring the tools for MPPs to hold the government to a higher standard of accountability. It would give independent analysis to MPPs and committees on the state of the province's finances.

When the Oakville gas plant was first proposed, I opposed it in this Legislature, and I said at the time that this plant is unnecessary, that the government wasn't looking at what the trends were in power consumption, that in fact it was ignoring the realities in Ontario. I have to say that plant was cancelled not because of a clear-headed, clear-eyed look at the realities of energy and electricity need; it was cancelled for political reasons. But, in fact, subsequently the numbers bore out the argument that I had made in the first place, that New Democrats had made, that this government was building a plant that didn't need to be built.

This kind of office could help all of us subject expenditure plans to a scrutiny far beyond the ability of individual MPPs to do analysis. The Financial Accountability Office would provide forward-looking cost assessments so that our ability to stop scandals would be far greater than it is now.

**1700**

There's no doubt about it that Ontarians want to trust their government. They would like to know that we have the ability to get clarity on how budget proposals will be paid for, and clear about the results that would be delivered to families. The Financial Accountability Office, as a structure, could start to rebuild some of the trust people need to have in their government.

The Ombudsman, that position put in place many years ago, is a powerful position. The ability of the Ombudsman to go in and assess problems with service delivery is critical to the functioning of this democracy. When people see problems in different areas in the hospital sector, for instance, they understand the power of an Ombudsman to command attention and shine a bright light on problems.

We need—and I'm glad that it has been agreed to—have a Financial Accountability Office to also shine a light on the reality of financial commitments and the reality of impacts of those commitments, negative and positive.

The office would examine the government's annual budget and fiscal updates for accuracy and report back to

Ontarians. One of the things that I noticed over the last few years is a constant lowballing of estimates for deficits, so that the government could look good or better later when numbers came in and their estimates were shown to have been very conservative. We actually need the real numbers. We don't need spin. We don't need anything doctored. We don't need anything fancied up. What we need is clear analysis so that we, and the people we represent, can understand what's really going on.

Like the Information and Privacy Commissioner, the Financial Accountability Office would be able to release order of documents. Similar to the Ombudsman, the Financial Accountability Office would report directly to the Legislature. It would expand the power of individual MPPs and, frankly, make opposition parties far more able to challenge the government than they are now.

The office would examine cost projections for government programs, as well as monitoring spending and revenue in government departments, crown corporations and agencies. It could examine cost and outcomes of government legislation and private members' bills upon request.

Now I have to point out one example to you, Speaker. When this government brought in the HST, it promised something like 600,000 jobs would be created. Well, I haven't seen any evidence of that, and I don't think any credible financial analysis in advance would have shown that. The Financial Accountability Office would have given us, those who felt that this was a misdirection by the government, a far stronger analytical tool to take that proposal, take it apart and show what was real and what wasn't real.

Now people are familiar with the federal Parliament's budget office, and there are similarities to what we've proposed and there are differences. The federal parliamentary budget office is a member of the Library of Parliament. They're not an independent office, and that's a very significant difference.

The Financial Accountability Office would be independent, so they could conduct unbiased financial analysis. In fact, I'll go a step further and say that because they're accountable to the Legislature as a whole, they're in a far stronger position to assert the completion of their mandate, to assert the completion of the task they've been assigned.

While the parliamentary budget office can request the release of information from the government, it can't order the release of information. The Financial Accountability Office would be able to order the release of documents much like the Information and Privacy Commissioner. That is an extraordinarily important power. Even as we speak, the Information and Privacy Commissioner is following up on a complaint I've made about the destruction of electronic documents by senior Liberal political staff who are at the core of the gas plant scandal. The Information and Privacy Commissioner has the ability to reach in to fulfill, in this case, her mandate so that she can report back to the people of this province on what has happened and what has not. The Financial

Accountability Office would have similar powers, powers necessary for proper completion of the job.

For clarity's sake, this position is very different from that of the Ombudsman, because the Ombudsman's office responds to concerns about government services. It doesn't do financial projections. The Financial Accountability Office would respond to requests from MPPs, not from the general public, and it would cost in the range of \$2.5 million per year. This is less than the Auditor General, less than the Information and Privacy Commissioner, the Ombudsman or the Environmental Commissioner, but it would have approximately the same budget as the federal parliamentary budget office, which is about \$2.8 million.

That office was extraordinarily useful in terms of protecting Canadian interests. It was their analysis that uncovered the F-35 cost scandal, as well as doing a solid, unbiased assessment of the long-term viability of old age security. Now, in terms of the F-35, the federal budgetary office estimated the cost of that fighter in the range of \$29 billion, while the government of the day, the Conservative government of the day, was saying it was \$9 billion. It was only off by \$20 billion.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** It was a very good deal. In fact, that revelation was of great consequence to the politics of this country, and it was the federal budgetary office that presented the correct numbers and the government that was playing games with them, the Conservative government.

We need to have that kind of tool. The people of this province need to ensure that MPPs have that kind of tool so they can actually fulfill their task of holding government to account.

Some have said, "What's the difference between this office and that of the Auditor General?" The Auditor General reviews funds that have already been spent. It does not do forward analysis of projects that are being proposed. That's not to criticize the Auditor General; it's just to say that there are very different tasks here, very different tasks.

We face a lot of difficulties here in Ontario. We face a time when people are finding life very hard. The bulk of the population has seen its income stagnant or dropping over the last few decades. We see a huge squeeze on public services. We've seen a reallocation of wealth in this society, upwards, and that has caused a broad range of problems. This budget, in part, will address some of the problems that Ontarians are facing. They deserve more than this budget will give them, but at least there is an opportunity here to address accountability, to address pressing health care issues and to open the door to many young people who need to get the work experience that they have not been able to get.

I urge members of the House to pass this programming motion so that we can get on with the business of this province.

1710

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

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** It is my honour to join the debate here today regarding the programming motion. In this Legislature, members from communities across Ontario have an opportunity to discuss and to debate different things, but we're rarely debating something that has the power to challenge the democracy that we have and the essential role of MPPs to hold this government to account—and this government must be held to account.

In his first throne speech, our Premier's predecessor laid out the stakes of the day. He said that "Ontario faces a major problem, one that stands in the way of a better future for all of us.

"And it's urgent that we fix it." That major problem was a \$5-billion deficit. The Premier went on to say, "The state of the province's finances is simply not sustainable or affordable—not for Ontario families, and certainly not for their children and grandchildren." He promised that his government "will not paper over this problem with money it does not have."

We are now saddled with a deficit twice as large. Debt repayments cost us \$11 billion a year. This is just one cost of the status quo. Again, there is no sense that this government is prepared to make tough decisions or enter the frank conversations that will bring about the structural changes needed to renew government.

There is no sense that this government is equipped to reinvent Ontario's public services for the challenges of the 21st century. There is no sense that this government is prepared to make tough decisions about the structural change needed to renew government and prepare Ontarians' public service for the challenges.

Change is the only constant, the old saying reminds us. That's as wise as it is true, but in recent years, change has not always been for the better. Ontario's unemployment has surged above the national average for the last six years. Short-sighted policy choices have driven deficits to record levels and piled historic public debt on the backs of our children. Scandals have burned through money and eroded the public trust.

Since the fall of 2011, the Liberal government has come in for an impressive amount of criticism from every corner of the province and from many high-placed critics, like the Ombudsman on the government's secret G20 law, which paved the way for epic constitutional violations but was never followed by any government apology.

The Environmental Commissioner announced that he was astonished by the level of disregard and contempt being shown to the statutory requirements of the environment bill of rights. The Auditor General catalogued the smoke and mirrors of the government's green energy policy, the stupendous amount of mismanagement around the Ornge air ambulance agency and the ballooning costs of the power plant cancellations in Oakville and Mississauga.

The Information and Privacy Commissioner recently criticized the government's treatment of emails related to those cancellations after senior staffers testified before committee that they deleted all related emails, despite

their legal requirements to retain such documents for several years. Before that, she had choice words for Elections Ontario, which lost the personal data of 2.4 million voters on unencrypted USB sticks but, days later, went back to using encryption-free memory sticks.

The case against this government has been made repeatedly and in detail, inside and outside the House. Ontario deserves better, but the Liberal government has proven itself unable to deliver more than disappointment after disappointment. Ontario's debt is projected to climb by a staggering \$24 billion next year alone. The deficit is going to go up \$2 billion next year.

This is the track record that the NDP can apparently get behind. They have become enablers for this mismanagement. It is the duty of opposition to hold government to account, defend the public interest and insist that our government aim higher.

Ontarians expect their elected representatives to faithfully serve its interests above all else. I am honoured to be doing that work on my constituents' behalf, and I look forward to continuing the work in the Legislature. I believe that government must do more to create jobs and kick-start our economy, protecting the things that Ontarians value most, for this and future generations. That's why I and my colleagues work tirelessly to stop waste and hold government to task.

It is clear today, just as it was clear in the fall of 2011, that tinkering around the edges of problems will not answer this province's most significant challenges. It will not solve the urgent problems. It will certainly not get us back on the right track.

As the party opposite has often said, there is work to be done, but after failing the public trust on more than one occasion, this government has lost the moral authority to govern. The government pledges great things but shows little concern for the cost of their promises. This government, which is not really that much different than the one before, keeps piling on the spending without regard to sustainability or fiscal responsibility. We've learned that the Liberal government agreed to the most expensive options as an opening position in the power plant negotiations, agreed to closures without considering the full cost; and as a result of that blind roll of the dice, Ontario taxpayers and ratepayers are on the hook for \$600 million or more. The government claimed that the power generation for those two plants was not needed in the GTA, as it was once anticipated, but rather than kill them outright, they just relocated them at enormous expense.

The Premier and the highest-ranking officials of this government have admitted that these were political decisions, yet the members opposite pretend that this is not deception in these cancellations or the cover-ups around them, that it was just all a misunderstanding—just like Ornge, just like eHealth. The government is unable to demonstrate how these programs will be paid for here and now, unable to offer credible assurance that these programs are sustainable over the long term. It is one thing to fixate on an idea like a shiny bauble and quite

another to make the idea real, make it something concrete. The real legacy achievement is making certain that high-value programs are sustainable, funded and sensibly engineered, not just kept alive budget to budget by jacking IV lines into ministries here and ministries there.

There is a generational shift happening, and our challenge has never been greater. It will demand a fundamental shift for our institutions, but it will also require a real and meaningful shift in our attitudes. Ontario was once the country's economic engine. This province's families once had a chance at a better job and could take comfort in the knowledge that there would be shining, almost unlimited opportunities for their children. That's no longer the case. The Canadian economy has found its feet in some areas, is sprinting in others, and Ontario is out of breath. Ontario is having real trouble keeping up. We are still spending far more than we take in. The debt has doubled under this government and might have tripled by now if interest rates weren't abnormally frozen.

We're throwing away \$11 billion a year because of the massive debt that this government has chosen—questionable design or complete indifference—to load onto the backs of future generations. Spending has increased 80% since 2003. Revenues have not kept pace. Innovation has not kept pace. Job creation has not kept pace. Businesses are losing faith. Rating agencies are right there alongside them.

Taxpayers have, for most part, been left in the dust. They are still waiting for credible answers. They are still waiting for this government to articulate a sincere apology or take responsibility for its actions, without clever evasions and slippery words. They cling to the hope that somehow in this government we step up to accept responsibility for these series of appalling boondoggles, and they are still waiting for the government to shift out of maintenance mode.

#### 1720

We in Her Majesty's loyal opposition feel the public's frustrations, their sense of betrayal and lack of confidence in this government. So we are saying that the grace period has been exhausted. The benefit of the doubt has been exhausted. The second and third chances have been frittered away. We are saying, Speaker, that this government's time is up. Musical chairs is done.

There once was a time when the party opposite would say with a straight face that the old ways are no longer acceptable. It is not simply that we can do better; it is that we must do better: no more status quo, no more maintenance mode. The system is faltering where it is not simply broken. And it falls to us to rebuild government and the public sector for Ontario's next century.

If we succeed—and succeed we must—we stand to reclaim the glorious Ontario we all remember: a period of our history that seems so painfully close that you could touch it and that is also a world away from today's Ontario.

The province's economic conditions could be described as critical. We're looking at 600,000 men and

women unemployed across Ontario's small businesses, and factories closing across this great province. Hope is possible. A better world is within our grasp, but not under this government.

Yet roughly a week ago, the leader of the NDP confirmed her party's support for the Liberals' 2013 budget and, by extension, the Liberal government:

"When the Liberals presented their draft budget, we asked Ontarians what they thought," she told reporters. "Some said they wanted an election immediately; others said they didn't feel an election was necessary right now.

"But what most people agreed upon was that after the scandalous abuses seen at Ornge, at eHealth and the crass decision to spend over \$500 million cancelling private power deals in Mississauga and Oakville ... they wanted their government to be balanced, accountable and transparent."

The leader of the NDP has repeatedly tarred the Liberals as corrupt, but she has been able to look the other way as long as her spending wish list is fulfilled. One of the NDP leader's proposals, an independent Financial Accountability Office, seems to me a somewhat curious request. After all, the province already has an effective watchdog for government spending in the Auditor General. This motion would create a new office of this Parliament without a real debate by this House, and we know without a shadow of a doubt that free and frank debate is absolutely crucial to safeguarding the public interest. The motion before us does not guarantee that. It diminishes debate.

On top of this, to state the obvious, it is the privilege and duty of this side of the House to scrutinize government's numbers and demand answers. Instead, the leader of the NDP is prepared to outsource that work to add another layer of bureaucrats to do the job that the NDP should be doing: holding the government to account. Her choice is an unfortunate one. The Liberal government cannot shake its dependency on borrowed money. Every hour, the province spends \$1.8 million it does not have. Interest on Ontario's debt now eats up almost \$11 billion annually. You sometimes hear people complain about the cost of holding an election, and granted, \$90 million is no small sum. That said, it is a relatively small price to pay to restore faith in government and balance to the provincial finances.

The recently released 2013 budget offers no visible plan to return the province's books to balance. It increases spending and heaps on debt, and there's no real sense of hope for the roughly 600,000 men and women out of work. Instead, the two parties that co-authored it allowed political self-interest to cloud their judgment.

Speaker, it is clear today, just as it was clear four months ago, that tinkering around the edges of problems will not answer this province's most significant challenges. It will not solve the urgent problems. It will certainly not get us back on the right track. As the party opposite has often said, there is work to be done. The NDP may have forgotten, but let me remind them that in the past year we have pursued accountability as part of

our solemn responsibility as the official opposition to ensure that the public interest is upheld. The Legislature has a right to these documents, as the Speaker has agreed. We have been granted our power of oversight in order that we can hold the government of the day accountable to the people of Ontario.

Back in October 2012, the Premier's explanation for his lockout of the Legislature was a bold attempt to change the conversation, but it does not alter the facts surrounding the government's chosen course of action. Full disclosure of documents related to the power plant cancellation was the government's legal obligation—an obligation it has failed to credibly honour. In fact, we have since learned that various individuals actively destroyed correspondence when they deleted entire email accounts.

The contempt motion that we undertook with the principled support of the NDP was not an avoidance of doing the people's business, as the Premier once alleged. Quite the opposite: It was a bid to force government officials to comply with the rules of the Legislature so that we could conduct the people's business with peak effectiveness.

Even before the motion was debated, the government itself refused time and time again to reconstitute the standing committees to conduct the business of the Legislature. At the time of prorogation, more than 30 bills were frozen at committee—waiting for the government to strike committees to get on with the work of reviewing legislation, consulting with the public and moving bills forward.

I was disappointed and saddened over the fall and winter to have to plead the case that the people deserved to know what is done in their name, on their behalf, with their money—roughly \$600 million. These kinds of actions cannot and will not go unchallenged. They should not be rewarded or encouraged for short-term political gain. Ontarians expect and deserve better. That's a terrible way to develop policy. Ontario expects and deserves better.

Going back to the matter of trust, Speaker, the Liberals have told the members of this House and the people of Ontario that they had released all of the documents related to the closure of power plants in Oakville and Mississauga. Ontarians have now lost track of how many new shipments of documents have been reluctantly coughed up by the secretive party opposite. It might be a new government, but old habits apparently die hard.

Despite these assurances, despite these vows, despite all of the scandalous revelations in the weeks and months since, the government has still not disclosed key documents and the cost continues to balloon—\$600 million wasted and climbing, Speaker. Then, as now, the buck ultimately stops with the Ontario Liberal government.

With the throne speech, the ball was in Premier Wynne's court to demonstrate that this was, as has been claimed, a new government and not just a larger one. She alone was in a position to bring forward something, some evidence that the party opposite was capable of bringing

forward the fundamental change Ontario needs. But of course we got something more abstract.

In the end, the Premier found it easier and more comfortable to follow the path of tinkering and more spending that the NDP was urging her for, rather than a fundamental change for the province.

It's clear that the only way to end our jobs and debt crisis, to take us off the wrong track and change the direction of the province is to change the team that leads it. Ontario can scarcely afford another year of Liberal mismanagement and scandal.

The people of this province deserve the opportunity to have their say on whether this government can be trusted to govern.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Further debate? The member for Perth–Wellington.

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** Thank you, Speaker, for this opportunity to speak to this bill. First, I want to discuss a few issues that really matter to my constituents.

I have attended many events over the past week in my riding, and more and more they are asking me when we can pull the plug on this government, and I have to say that we can't do it ourselves. We have to have the support of the NDP, and we all know what happens there—they keep propping up this government. They know that this budget is a political document designed to keep the Liberals in power. It certainly is not an economic document. Next year alone, the Liberals and NDP want to hike spending by \$3.6 billion, and that's found on page 208 of the budget papers. This certainly reinforces the McGuinty-Wynne legacy of debt and lost opportunities.

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There is certainly no serious plan to grow the economy or create jobs. In the last 10 years, the Liberals have doubled our provincial debt, and interest on the debt is already the government's fastest-growing expense. We could call this budget the "up" budget: Up goes our debt, up goes our deficit, up goes our spending and up goes the support from the NDP when this government does that. On its merits, Speaker, this budget is terrible, and we in the official opposition would not be doing our job if we supported it.

It is the job of the official opposition to point out flaws in the government's program. This budget is not just flawed; it is a betrayal of our province's future. It is a betrayal of our young people. When this budget is passed, every man, woman and child in this province is going to be saddled with a \$20,000 debt. That's twice what it was when this government took power about 10 years ago. I must say it is certainly not the job—I must reiterate this, Speaker—of the opposition to prop up a tired, ineffective and dishonest government. That's a lesson the NDP hasn't learned.

I think back about 20, 25 years ago to a movie that came out, a very popular movie. The reason I thought about this movie is that I listened with interest to the member from Parkdale–High Park yesterday, and three times in her speech to the Legislature concerning this matter, she said, "With Andrea Horwath leading, and

Kathleen Wynne listening and following, here's what we do."

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Randy Pettapiece:** The movie I am reminded of—and I would take offence to that if I was the Speaker—is the one where you see two ladies in a car going over a cliff. It's called *Thelma and Louise*, and I'm sure we all remember that. But that's what this whole budget does. They're driving us to this cliff and we're going to go over this cliff. We're going to have more debt than we can handle, and they know it. But they didn't want to go to an election.

We have plans to reduce our spending and grow our economy. We have brought out a series of white papers that certainly prove that. It would be of interest to everyone that if we had an across-the-board public sector wage freeze, we could save about \$2 billion, and that would allow us time to reduce the size and the cost of government.

We are confronting a ticking time bomb of expensive government pensions. While eliminating programs we can't afford, we should be opening up contracts to competitive bidding, again saving billions of dollars for our constituents. We can also lower costs to businesses by reducing regulations and red tape. We can also return government to its proper role in energy by regulating and planning for a system where companies compete on the best price and most efficient technologies.

We just heard an announcement today concerning the Green Energy Act. Unfortunately, the government still isn't listening to what communities, especially in rural Ontario, are telling them. They're getting tired of being dictated to when it comes to siting these wind turbines. However, the government fell short of saying that they would allow communities to have the power to stop them if they didn't want them in their communities. They just said that we will have more consultation on the siting of these projects. That's certainly not what communities in my riding have asked for. However, this government, of course, isn't listening.

We have doubled our energy costs to Ontarians, and we're on course to double them again. This is driving industry out of this province, and the ordinary taxpayer is getting tired of increased costs.

And then we find out from the Premier that the costs of cancelling the gas plants are going on the energy bills of our taxpayers.

It's interesting. I was subbing in for the finance committee when the former finance minister, Mr. Duncan, was testifying, and I asked him where the money was coming from to pay for these cancelled gas plants. At that time, the figures were lower than what is certainly known now. He said they would come out of reserves. Well, we know that the reserves can't handle that now, so the Premier wants to put them on your hydro bills.

I think it's to a point where the taxpayers and businesses in Ontario are getting tired of all these extra costs and getting nothing for them. There is no benefit out of what's going on with this government.

I have dairy producers in my riding and some people with industries who are just getting so frustrated with the previous FIT program. They have invested all kinds of money in getting in with the FIT program, and they were led to believe that their projects were viable. But in recent weeks the government has just said, "No, we're not doing this anymore." Some of these constituents have invested millions and millions of dollars in these projects, and now they're sitting there, possibly not getting a return on their investments. They did their best to follow the process, and they deserve answers as to why their projects did not receive the attention they should have.

The College of Trades is certainly another thing that has caused quite a stir in my riding. In fact, tomorrow I'm going to a breakfast of contractors and interested people in St. Marys. There are supposed to be, I'm told, over 100 people at this breakfast meeting, all signing a petition to get rid of the College of Trades. Here's another added cost that this government feels that the contractors in my riding and across Ontario need to have. Petition after petition came in, thousands of signatures—"We don't need this type of thing"—and yet the government pressed on with this College of Trades. The justification of it wasn't explained well.

One of the justifications for the College of Trades is that it's for consumer protection and so that all the industries would be on a level playing field. Well, electricians already have an electrical code. They know they have to conform to the electrical code when they're wiring a house. They have an inspector who comes in, and if there's any problem, it has to be corrected. It's the same with plumbing and other trades. So why do we need a College of Trades to tell them the same thing—again, increasing bureaucracy, which this government seems to be in love with doing? Now they're going to have another inspector come out and look at what they're doing. It's more paperwork, of course—that's something that this government is also in love with—and another burden, another cost on tradespeople in this province. Tradespeople didn't ask for this thing and they certainly didn't want it, but it was forced on them.

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I have also received quite a bit of feedback from my constituents—I come from a rural riding about two hours southwest of here—on the proposed new taxes to pay for transit in Toronto. We all know there's an issue with transit in Toronto and it has to be addressed. However, what they're worried about is that they're going to be charged extra taxes to pay for a problem in Toronto when we have issues in rural Ontario concerning transit—roads and bridges—that we want addressed too, and they don't feel it's fair that they may be burdened with this extra tax or these extra costs of paying for something that is a GTA problem.

I want to echo the concerns presented by my colleague the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex on Tuesday. He said that for years this government has handed power to unions at the expense of students and parents in our education system. It's time to return the power to teach-

ers and principals in our schools and create opportunities for young teachers who put teaching first. This gets people involved in the teaching profession and gets them interested. However, we know that there are roadblocks to this, the way our education system is run at the present time.

There are many different issues that I could talk about, but there's a common theme here. My constituents do not trust the present government and they are unhappy with the direction that this province is taking.

There's a lack of trust because a political budget was designed to appease members of the third party and not to address the problems we face. There is a lack of trust because of the gas plant scandal. There is a lack of trust because of the government misrepresenting its own energy policies. There is a lack of trust because of the wind turbine issue in my riding of Perth–Wellington and there's a lack of trust because of scandals like eHealth and Ornge. There's a lack of trust because of the government's made-in-Toronto solutions for rural and small-town Ontario.

I listened with interest to my colleague from Chatham–Kent–Essex the other day when he was speaking to this matter, and I want to reiterate some of the things that he brought up. This budget will be increasing spending by \$3.6 billion a year. That's money we don't have. Again, we're going to borrow more money, increase our debt, increase our deficit and put this on the shoulders of future generations.

In 2003, the debt of Ontario was about \$125 billion. In just 10 years—10 years only—it's almost \$300 billion. This is ridiculous. You can't operate that way and expect to be successful. If we have an interest increase of 1%, that will mean about another \$500 million in interest payments, which, as I said before, currently is our third-highest expenditure, and, of course, putting a \$20,000 debt load on the backs of everyone in Ontario.

We introduced a number of bills that were voted against by members of the government and the NDP, and one was the Ability to Pay Act. Municipalities are getting tired of arbitrators' awards to some of our police officers and firefighters and the like. It's getting to the point where it's just not affordable. I don't want to see fewer firefighters; I don't want to see fewer police officers and emergency personnel. But if you can't pay them, what happens? They may have to be laid off, and I'd sure hate to see that done. But it could happen; it has happened before. And yet this government doesn't look at that. The arbitrators don't look at that. They just say, "You're going to pay it, and that's the end of the discussion."

In Stratford it cost them almost \$2 million for their arbitration award for their firefighters. I spoke to the firefighters about that. It took three or four years to get this settlement, and they understand that the length of time that this took to reach this settlement actually increased the problem that the city of Stratford had. If it had been brought up in small increments, it wouldn't have been so bad, but they got it all in one whack and it hurt the city of Stratford. That's money that could have

gone for infrastructure, roads, bridges and whatever else, but no, the arbitrator didn't see it that way, and all of a sudden the people of Stratford had a problem on their hands.

I guess where I wanted to go with this is that we can't continue on a course of continued spending without having some way or some plan of reducing spending and reducing our debt load. That's not here. It's not here, and the party opposite and the party sitting beside me here on my left, the NDP, the deals they made with this government, another billion dollars—another billion dollars. Come on. You cannot continue on this road. You have to look for opportunities to decrease spending and try to get your debts under control.

So far, this government has missed these opportunities. The only way that they seem to try to fix something is by throwing more money at it. Unfortunately, Speaker, we are in a position right now where, if things continue on this way, there's going to be outside forces saying to us, "You're not a good credit risk anymore," and we certainly don't want to see that happen.

We have offered what we think are solutions to these issues, but they're flatly rejected by this government. They will not listen to the solutions we have. I know our leader has had a couple of meetings with the Premier, and our finance critic had a couple meetings with the Premier—flat-out rejection. That's all there was to it.

So how can we support this budget? We can't. It doesn't do anything for Ontario and its prosperity. In fact, it's going to probably get worse, especially if we don't get our energy situation under control. It's just basic facts. It costs less to manufacture goods in another country, in another province than it does in Ontario. We have the highest energy rates in the country outside of Prince Edward Island. So, why would you come to Ontario on those facts? It makes it an easier decision to move elsewhere, and we've certainly seen that happen in the province.

Speaker, I will end my discussion here saying that, as I said before, my constituents didn't want an election a few months ago. They said, "Don't do that." More and more of them are coming and saying—especially after seeing what's been going on this past little while—"Pull the plug on these guys." We can't do that without the support of my friends on the left here, and we've seen where that's going. We need a new team leading this province. It certainly isn't over there, because leadership means spending more money all the time and that's something that this province can't handle. It's something this province doesn't deserve.

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

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** I normally say I'm pleased to rise and speak to this particular piece before us, but the circumstances of today make it, frankly, an unfortunate thing to rise today and speak to government motion 19, the programming motion. There are a number of reasons, as I hope I will have some time to explain, why I'm disappointed at having to do this. One of the reasons that I'll begin with is the issue around the establishment of a

Financial Accountability Office. In the short time I have, I want to concentrate on this, first of all, as a process and secondly as a government initiative.

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The question of the establishment of a Financial Accountability Office, according to government motion 19, is that it's to be introduced no later than September 11, 2013, and in the sentence previous to that, it is that the calendar will have us coming back September 9. In other words, this process will begin immediately upon return. Now, that wouldn't by itself be a problem, but then when you read further in the motion, we can see the timeline that has been spelled out for us. I'll just pick out those parts of the motion that refer to the timelines for the bill: "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...." I would just point out to viewers that obviously the government is able to call a bill when it decides to, but the notion is that after introducing it, two days later we're going to have second reading of the bill. Then it tells us that two hours of debate are going to be allotted for this, and after second reading, the committee is authorized to meet for two sessional days for the purpose of public hearings, and a third sessional day, then clause-by-clause. It sets out the specific times for this and makes it very clear that this whole piece of legislation is going to be done as part of a motion. Normally, something like this would be a stand-alone bill, but it certainly isn't being given that kind of consideration here.

It will also mean that the bill will be ordered for third reading, and the bill shall be immediately called and two hours allotted for the third reading. 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 so it will be deemed to have been done.

It just strikes me that this initiative by the government and the request of the NDP should have something more than the most cursory legal process for its adoption. It brings me to another part of this whole issue; I want to address the issue around accountability, because we're looking at putting something through that would have a tremendous amount of power. We'll have a look at that in a moment.

Several weeks ago, I spoke to Bill 11, the Ambulance Amendment Act, and I spoke about the need for accountability and the lack of ministerial accountability that has been demonstrated by the current Liberal government on many occasions. The Liberals' solution to their own problems is to create a hierarchy of red tape after a problem appears instead of watching what's taking place beforehand. They pass a bill or put in a policy and then walk away and forget about it, until it blows up in their faces. Then the taxpayers get to pay for it all.

Now the Liberals, at the urging of the NDP, want to create a Financial Accountability Office in order to "be a spending and revenue watchdog of the government and its agencies." The problem with the current Liberal government is not that there is a lack of commissions to

oversee the work of government. The last thing we need and the last thing Ontario taxpayers need are more independent commissions. What we do need in Ontario are government ministers to do their job by overseeing their ministries and agencies that report to their ministries.

I want to take a digression for a moment to go to an excerpt from the document that was provided to all new members at the time of the election in 2011. Here's what it says:

"Ministers have both individual and collective responsibility. Their individual responsibility is for the actions and policies of their respective ministries and departments. Ministers, and not ministry employees, are ultimately accountable to the Legislative Assembly for their ministries. Ministers are usually elected members of the assembly, and as such only they can respond to criticism from other members," especially through the question period process.

The point here is that it is the individual responsibility of ministers. What we're seeing is a pattern. When we look at eHealth, when we look at Ornge, when we look at the gas plants scandal, it's always the question of, "Well, we made a mistake. We'll do a better job and we'll create some kind of oversight that will alleviate us of further responsibility."

Supervision and independent commissioners: The Liberal solution to everything is supervision. What next? We will need a supervisor of supervision? We have several commissioners who report to the Legislature. The one that most would know immediately is, of course, the Auditor General, but we have a privacy commissioner, we have an Ombudsman, we have an Integrity Commissioner, we have an Environmental Commissioner.

It's interesting to look at the specifics of their responsibilities. I'm going to simply look at what are the verbs in their responsibilities. What are they actually supposed to be doing? Well, with the auditor, it begins with: conducts independent audits, reviews and special assignments; provides information, recommendations; promotes accountability and value for money; and he is required to review specified types of government advertising to determine whether they meet the standards required by the act.

What does the Privacy Commissioner do? Resolves access to information appeals and complaints when gov-

ernment or health care practitioners and organizations refuse to grant requests for access or correction; investigates complaints; conducts research; comments on proposed government legislation; educates the public.

The Ombudsman? He investigates. The Integrity Commissioner assists, reviews. The Environmental Commissioner provides information; is responsible; supports a resource centre.

In general, independent commissioners have a budget. They produce reports. They have annual reports. All they can do is offer advice at the end of the day, and the government can choose to take their advice or to not take their advice.

The Liberals have agreed to the NDP demands as they look at the creation of the Financial Accountability Office. According to the motion, the proposed Financial Accountability Office "shall include such employees as the" Financial Accountability Office "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...."

"Provide the Legislative Assembly ... with independent analysis of the state of the province's finances and trends in the provincial and national economies...."

"(a) undertake research into the province's finances and trends in the provincial and national economies...."

"(b) Undertake research...."

"(c) Undertake research."

What we are seeing, then, is, quite simply, all of these people have these responsibilities. None of them have a ministerial responsibility.

The point is that what we are seeing here is an opportunity to push off that responsibility and—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Are you arguing the auditor doesn't fill a good role?

**Mrs. Julia Munro:** No. The point—

*Interjections.*

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

*Debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Seeing the time on the clock, this House stands adjourned until Monday, June 3, at 10:30 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1800.*

**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	
<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b>	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	
<b>Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)</b>	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
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
<b>Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	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
<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	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
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)</b>	Peterborough	Minister of Rural Affairs / Ministre des Affaires rurales
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Miller, Paul (NDP)</b>	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	
<b>Millroy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)</b>	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
<b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	York–Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
<b>Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Oraziotti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
<b>Piruzza, Hon. / L'hon. Teresa (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)</b>	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
<b>Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	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	
<b>Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	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





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