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**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 11 June 2013

Mardi 11 juin 2013

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

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Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 11 June 2013

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 11 juin 2013

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent that the orders for second and third reading of the following private bills shall be called consecutively, and the questions and the motions for second and third reading of the bills put immediately without debate—the private bills are Bill Pr5, Bill Pr8, Bill Pr10, Bill Pr11, Bill Pr12, Bill Pr13, Bill Pr14 and Bill Pr17—and that Ms. Jaczek may move the motions for second and third reading of Bill Pr8 on behalf of Mr. McNeely and that Ms. Jaczek may move the motions for second and third reading of Bill Pr13 on behalf of Mr. Crack.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to do the private bills. Do we agree? Agreed.

TERRA PAVING INC. ACT, 2013

Mr. Shurman moved second reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr5, An Act to revive Terra Paving Inc.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those in favour of the motion? Agreed? Agreed.

Second reading agreed to.

TERRA PAVING INC. ACT, 2013

Mr. Shurman moved third reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr5, An Act to revive Terra Paving Inc.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those in favour of the motion? Agreed? Agreed.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

BEECHWOOD CEMETERY
COMPANY ACT, 2013

Ms. Jaczek, on behalf of Mr. McNeely, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr8, An Act respecting The Beechwood Cemetery Company.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those in favour of the motion? Agreed? Agreed.

Second reading agreed to.

BEECHWOOD CEMETERY
COMPANY ACT, 2013

Ms. Jaczek, on behalf of Mr. McNeely, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr8, An Act respecting The Beechwood Cemetery Company.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those agreed? Agreed? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

MARSH & CO. HOSPITALITY
REALTY INC. ACT, 2013

Ms. Jaczek moved second reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr10, An Act to revive Marsh & Co. Hospitality Realty Inc.

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

Second reading agreed to.

MARSH & CO. HOSPITALITY
REALTY INC. ACT, 2013

Ms. Jaczek moved third reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr10, An Act to revive Marsh & Co. Hospitality Realty Inc.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

ROYAL CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC
ACT, 2013

Mrs. Cansfield moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr11, An Act respecting The Royal Conservatory of Music.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

ROYAL CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC
ACT, 2013

Mrs. Cansfield moved third reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr11, An Act respecting The Royal Conservatory of Music.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

UNIVERSAL HEALTH CONSULTING
INC. ACT, 2013

Mr. O'Toole moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr12, An Act to revive Universal Health Consulting Inc.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

UNIVERSAL HEALTH CONSULTING
INC. ACT, 2013

Mr. O'Toole moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr12, An Act to revive Universal Health Consulting Inc.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

CONGREGATION OF THE SISTERS
OF ST. JOSEPH IN CANADA ACT, 2013

Ms. Jaczek, on behalf of Mr. Crack, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr13, An Act to amalgamate The Sisters of St. Joseph of Hamilton, The Sisters of St. Joseph of the Diocese of London, in Ontario, The Sisters of St. Joseph of the Diocese of Peterborough in Ontario and Sisters of St. Joseph for the Diocese of Pembroke in Canada.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

CONGREGATION OF THE SISTERS
OF ST. JOSEPH IN CANADA ACT, 2013

Ms. Jaczek, on behalf of Mr. Crack, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr13, An Act to amalgamate The Sisters of St. Joseph of Hamilton, The Sisters of St. Joseph of the Diocese of London, in Ontario, The Sisters of St. Joseph of the Diocese of Peterborough in Ontario and Sisters of St. Joseph for the Diocese of Pembroke in Canada.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

ASPEN DRYWALL INC. ACT, 2013

Mr. O'Toole moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr14, An Act to revive Aspen Drywall Inc.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

ASPEN DRYWALL INC. ACT, 2013

Mr. O'Toole moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr14, An Act to revive Aspen Drywall Inc.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

TRIPLE "D" HOLDINGS LTD. ACT, 2013

Mr. Colle moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr17, An Act to revive Triple "D" Holdings Ltd.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

0910

TRIPLE "D" HOLDINGS LTD. ACT, 2013

Mr. Colle moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr17, An Act to revive Triple "D" Holdings Ltd.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

STRONGER PROTECTION
FOR ONTARIO CONSUMERS ACT, 2013

LOI DE 2013 RENFORÇANT
LA PROTECTION

DU CONSOMMATEUR ONTARIEN

Resuming the debate adjourned on June 10, 2013, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

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

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

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I'm happy to have this opportunity to speak to Bill 55. What does this bill do, just as a reminder to the folks? Well, it does a couple of things. I think the majority of people probably think it's not a bad idea. As my older brother Tony would say, it's better than a kick in the teeth. In that regard, it's a good bill. Some of the highlights include: protection from unfair cellular phone billing charges and unclear contracts; an extension of the cooling-off period for door-to-door water heater sales from 10 days to 20 days—and it makes it illegal to install these water heaters during this period; and there are restrictions on debt collection agency practices. Further, the bill requires real estate agents to retain records of written purchase offers.

All of these things are, in my view and in the view of many, I presume, good, little, small efforts. Could this government do a little more with respect to how we protect consumers? I think so. There are millions of consumers across Canada, and in Ontario in particular, who could use, in my view, someone who lobbies on their behalf. They could use a strong consumer advocate. We don't have these people. Some would argue, no, there would be another office created and we would have to pay them well to do that job. But when you realize that there are millions of consumers who are scammed each and every day, each and every month, each and every year, someone needs to be there to help them, to protect them in some way. While some argue that we, the elected members, are there to do that job, I say no; we are not the ones to do that. To the extent that we can be helpful, it's a good thing, and to the extent that some people come to our office and we can offer a little service to help them out, it's a good thing. But we can't do that job on a full-time basis. That's why you need a full-time consumer advocate to fight for people and to fight for vulnerable people. We've got probably 5% of the population who are literate—maybe more; I shouldn't say 5%, because I suspect we have a higher number of people who are literate.

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: We have the best education system in the world. Don't you listen to the government, Rosie?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: But being able to read and write doesn't mean that you're able to follow the ins and outs of contracts. Even professors sometimes don't look at contracts, and sometimes even lawyers don't do that, I dare say. So while we have a literate population, this is true, many are not consumer literate; they don't read contracts. We know, for example, that the government has received a huge number of complaints as they relate to water heaters. The number that I have seen is 3,200 written complaints and inquiries about door-to-door water heater sales in 2012. I remember the day when we used to have Consumers' Gas. Boy, did it work well. I don't remember people complaining when we had a public Consumers' Gas that offered services to folks.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I'd ask the member to make his remarks through the Chair.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I remember in the old days we had very few complaints. When we opened it up to so

many in the private sector to get involved in this field, we had one scam after another. It's unbelievable.

Mr. Mike Colle: Deregulation.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: When we deregulated, we had a whole lot of people entering this field. The more players you had in this field, the more scams you had to deal with. Each month or each year, as soon as the government caught up with the scam, no sooner did they do that than they bumped up to another scam. We can barely catch up with these people.

Mr. Mike Colle: They made a lot of money.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: There's a whole lot of pecunia in the field, to be sure.

We have a whole lot of problems that consumers are dealing with, and nobody's there to protect them. That's why I am a strong advocate of a consumer advocate, because I think consumers are vulnerable and consumers need some protection.

While, for example, we put some protections in place with respect to door-to-door water heater rental sales, including doubling the existing cooling-off period from 10 days to 20 days and banning delivery and installation of water heaters during the new 20-day cooling-off period—while that is helpful, I suspect that if people don't bother looking at their contracts within a 10-day period, they're not going to do that within a 20-day period. So even though we offer a greater amount of time for people to be able to look at their contracts, the majority of people, I think, will not do that. Even though we offer a little extra protection for homeowners, I'm not sure we're actually going to be able to deal with the scamming that goes on.

What some have suggested, and I believe this to be a fair comment, is that each and every time governments introduce a bill they have to spend the money to do some public awareness campaigns. Often, we pass a bill that is somewhat progressive and makes it a little better for consumers, but it doesn't mean that people automatically know what's going on. It doesn't mean that people follow the debates in this Legislature. It does not mean that somebody will read an article in one of the major dailies in Toronto, or some of the local ones outside of Toronto. It doesn't mean they will hear it on a radio station. The majority of people are simply too busy to know what is going on in government. And while a law is passed that makes it a little better for consumers, unless governments make a real, serious effort to let people know what we have done by way of law that protects them a little better, they're still going to be in the dark.

Even though some of these measures are a little more protective of consumers and give them a little better hand to be able to deal with scams and the like, it still isn't enough. I know that others, including the government, will say, "Yes, we could do more." If we could do more, we should be doing more.

This is why I want this bill to be sent to committee. We want people to comment on each and every one of these measures that we see put forth here in this bill, including schedule 3, which

—requires real estate brokers acting on behalf of a buyer to present an offer by a potential buyer that is in

writing; salespersons and brokers would also be prohibited from suggesting or claiming that a written offer exists when one does not exist;

—prohibits real estate professionals from indicating they have an offer unless they have that offer in writing; and

—requires brokers acting for the seller to retain copies of written offers received.

All of these things, I think, are useful, including now the negotiation of a fee and/or the commission. I think that is an interesting thing to include, but we hope that is fairer than what we have currently. I, quite frankly, don't know.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Every other province does it.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Because every other province does it, that doesn't necessarily mean it's a good thing. We might be making reforms on the basis of what everybody else is doing, but are they better? Or are we improving what everybody else is doing? It's just that sometimes, for me, it's not a question of copying what other people do on the basis that if we copy them, it will be the right thing to do, but rather, are we improving legislation based on what others are doing and based on what we're learning? I think that's what we should be doing.

So we're obviously going to take that to hearings. We're going to hear from the experts, and hopefully we'll improve it. Hopefully, we will see governments accommodating amendments as a way of making it stronger, because little measures are good, but little measures can become bigger measures that protect consumers in a way that we can be proud of. While some of these consumer things are good, we can do a whole lot better, including making Tarion a much better institution that protects consumers. At the moment, I believe they protect developers. I would have a lot more to say if I had 20 minutes instead of 10. But if we want to protect homeowners and condo owners, it's important to make sure that Tarion, the private agency that is supposed to protect consumers, actually does that. The way to do that is to make sure we change the composition of Tarion to make sure consumers are on the board and not—I still have two seconds. Why are you standing up?

0920

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I was just coming over here.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: That's what I'm saying, Speaker. Thanks for your attention.

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

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Good morning and thank you, Speaker. Again, I'm happy to speak about Bill 55. I'm very proud to have introduced this bill. It is about consumer protection, and I'm very glad to hear that the member from Trinity–Spadina described it as useful, and he sounds very supportive of it going forward. Yes, when we get it to committee, we'll work on it.

But I just want to say, Speaker, we've spent 15 hours debating this bill. At the risk of repeating myself and not

reiterating, I think of all the good reasons why we need to support this bill, all the good reasons why we need to stand up for Ontario consumers.

I think it's important that we recognize that this isn't just responding to complaints and calls; this is about increasing consumer confidence in the marketplace. When consumers are confident, that is helpful to jobs and the economy. That's what we're trying to do: yes, respond to the complaints we have had, whether they're on door-to-door sales of water heaters, dealing with some not-appropriate practices in the debt settlement sector or dealing with some practices of concern in the real estate sector, as well as modernizing the fee structure for real estate agents and brokers—yes, responding to the issues, but also being proactive. It's part of a larger suite of consumer protection initiatives going on in this province.

The member opposite talked about other issues he has. There are lots of consumer issues. I have introduced other legislation as well to put under the umbrella of what we call ontarioconsumer.ca.

I couldn't agree more that we need to be responsive to what we need in the province. I believe this legislation is helpful. We have had positive feedback so far today, and I encourage everyone to help us move this forward and get it to committee. I think there's a tremendous amount of consensus. So why not get this one to committee now so we can get on with it?

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I did listen to the member from Trinity–Spadina. I know that he means well. I think that he—but he did speak rather passionately about the term “change,” that there needs to be changes. Well, it crossed my mind, on this last day of this portion of the sitting here at Queen's Park, that the change that should happen today is that the party that he's a member of should turn the tides on the McGuinty–Wynne government. The disgrace that has occurred here in this last session on the scandals, on Ornge, as well as the current one—

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Point of order?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Speaker, I believe we were debating Bill 55.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I might remind the member to tailor his remarks to be consistent with the bill.

Mr. John O'Toole: Thank you. It's clear you were a teacher at one time, because there's a bit of a lecture there.

In due respect, I am relating it back to the member's comments with respect to change. This afternoon, there's an opportunity to bring real change to Ontario and elect a government that will actually do something.

However, on the bill, it's mostly a feel-good bill. Minister MacCharles has worked hard on this, introducing the bill, which amends three statutes. She introduced it on April 18. It should go to committee to be improved, and I would be most interested in working on the part that's on

consumer protection with respect to the debt settlement issue. That's the area that I feel is the weakest and needs some strengthening and further plain-language legislation so that vulnerable consumers are being protected by clear disclosure requirements by the lender. I'm sure that will go to committee if it passes today.

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

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I spoke to this bill yesterday, and I'm glad to stand here today and speak to it again for the residents of London–Fanshawe—I'm always proud to represent my constituents.

The consumer bill is something that we certainly need; I heard the minister say that every other province has this legislation to protect consumers. So certainly it's long overdue. We have to make sure that we protect consumers. But the member from Trinity–Spadina had a wonderful thought: We don't just do it for the sake of doing it; we don't just follow the crowd. We have to make sure it's going to work for us and what we do is going to be improving the lives of the people of Ontario and the people of our ridings.

So I definitely agree that we should be supporting this bill. There are many situations—we read in the paper today that consumers, actually people in London, in this case, in Sunningdale, which is close to my riding, are building new homes, and unfortunately the contractor, the builder, the developer has closed his doors and they're stuck.

That kind of ties into how people feel when they enter into a contract and maybe don't understand all the ins and outs. You change your mind, and you're stuck with this water heater that you're going to be paying exorbitant amounts of money on for a time, well over what it's worth. So I like that 20-day cooling-off period once you sign a contract. At least there is some time there to consider what you've done and maybe get some advice from your family or friends about that.

I'm glad to see that this bill is going to be put forward. I understand that most of the Conservatives are going to support it, so that's good to see. I'd like to see that when it does get to committee we don't just, because other provinces have it—we need to make it the best we can here in Ontario, so that we make sure consumers are protected fully.

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

Hon. Linda Jeffrey: Good morning. I want to speak in favour of Bill 55, and I want to keep this short, because there have been about 15 hours of debate. Certainly the Minister of Consumer Services did a nice synopsis of what we've been working on, and I think it's time to finish second reading and send it to committee so we can hear from the public about what measures we can do to strengthen this piece of legislation. I'm encouraging of Bill 55, I want stronger protections for Ontarians and I think we should get it on to committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Trinity–Spadina has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I agree with the two ministers that we should send it out to committee, absolutely, and I agree with the minister on this file, who says this will help with consumer confidence. I think it does. While it helps, how do we make sure that we build stronger consumer confidence? These are the comments I was making.

The fact that other provinces are doing this is good, and we're catching up. I think we should learn from what other provinces have done as a way of making our bills even stronger. That should be our job: How do we make it stronger? Not that we are duplicating what other people are doing so that we are catching up, but as we catch up, how do we make it better? This is the point for me.

We are dealing with millions of people—vulnerable citizens, low-income people, people with disabilities, people who have literacy skills—and those are a whole lot of people in our society who desperately need governments to support them. The way we build confidence in the system is to make sure we inform them of what governments are doing, and governments rarely do that. We rarely do that. We pass a bill and then we hope for the best; we hope that people know what we're doing.

The fact of the matter is, people don't know what we're doing around here; they don't have a clue. So we should spend a couple of dollars to tell them how we are protecting them as consumers and the measures that are in place to help them out and what it is that they could do to make this bill a little better. The way they make this bill better is to have a strong consumer advocate in place. A strong consumer advocate would genuinely represent them. We do that as best we can, but nobody could replace someone whose job it is to be a consumer advocate. That's the little investment that I recommend we make to protect consumers in Ontario.

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

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to rise to speak to Bill 55 this morning. I'm a little disappointed that the Liberals didn't want to take a rotation, but we'll continue to speak to Bill 55, An Act to amend the Collection Agencies Act, the Consumer Protection Act, 2002 and the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act, 2002 and to make consequential amendments to other Acts. I know it's a long title here for this morning, but as was discussed earlier, it's seeking to increase the protection provided to certain consumers in Ontario.

0930

This bill is generally aimed in the right direction. Today's consumers face a bewildering array of daily choices. I think that we should make it a priority to do more consumer protection pieces of legislation that make it easier for consumers. That is our job as legislators on this provincial level—the legislation or laws that we touch upon—because I hear from my constituents in Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock quite often that these contracts are often intricate and complicated, forcing people to weigh uncertain benefits and costs.

As if making these calculations weren't enough, certain salespeople selling products have the opportunity to

take advantage of the situation to score the quick sale. Sometimes we see time-pressure tactics. Sometimes it's incomprehensible contracts and agreements. We've all experienced the persuasiveness of a salesman at your door offering an amazing deal that needs to be signed right away or lost forever.

Certainly, we speak of seniors, who are most often at risk, and I have a higher population of seniors in my area than the provincial average, so they need some more protection. It's hard because 95% of the people are so well intentioned and think other people out there are also, and can easily get tricked into difficult contracts that they can't get out of. There are obviously very, very sad stories out there.

I think, also, we suffer a lot sometimes from financial illiteracy, a lack of financial literacy, which is the ability to understand advertising and contracts so that consumers can make better choices about what they buy and avoid the many pitfalls and scams out there, of which this bill attempts to address but a handful. As I said, we're kind of in the right direction, but more needs to be done. It has been mentioned previously in this debate, but I want to reiterate that my colleague from Nepean–Carleton had made some very constructive policy suggestions on how to improve financial literacy in Ontario.

Given all these considerations, it's clear that consumer protection is a hugely important issue for us to address. We have not only to take steps but take steps in the right direction.

I know that consumer protection can take many forms. Just in the Durham region papers, we have in the last few days, "Bowmanville Green-Power Promoter Guilty of Defrauding Investors." Investors sank money into a Bowmanville-based green energy company, and they were bilked for more than \$600,000. There's consumer protection.

I could say a lot about the Green Energy Act and forcing industrial wind turbines on our area that we don't want. I know the Minister of Energy is just coming in and wants to hear that we do protest it—unwilling communities that don't want industrial wind turbines; certainly mine are that. But now we also have people selling almost door to door a shaky bill of goods about investing in green energy products.

The consumer protection, this just deals with a few; there's lots more areas out there that can be dealt with.

Returning to the substance of the bill, there are some things in it that are clearly positive for consumer protection, but the bill seems to follow a recurring pattern we've seen under this government: legislation heavy on feel-good rhetoric but light on truly effective content.

Debt settlement is in the bill; that's the first area that's covered. It's clear that the current framework for debt settlement services does not give consumers nearly enough protection. We have all seen or heard the advertisements for companies offering to consolidate all your debts into one easy payment. These are services that are intensely advertised across the province. It's easy to imagine hard-pressed Ontarians with the debt collector at

their door and looking at their most recent hydro bill turning to these services as their desperation mounts. A person turning to this service will almost certainly be under intense stress and pressure, so the need to protect them is correspondingly increased. Some of the measures in the bill are useful steps toward providing some protection for these consumers. Some companies offering debt settlement services charge high administrative fees and may not deliver on their promised services, while hidden contract clauses often reduce or eliminate the value of the original service offered. These upfront fees can force already-indebted people into even more debt; therefore one area of strength of Bill 55 is in banning the practice of debt settlers charging these upfront fees before services are provided and limiting the amount of fees charged overall.

I also see some positive aspects to the bill's treatment of advertising within the debt settlement industry. Honesty and transparency in advertising is a fundamental necessity to the efficient and fair operation of any market. I note with approval that this bill prohibits misleading sales practices and advertising in this industry.

A disappointing area of weakness for the legislation is that it does not ensure that the consumer will not be the target of collection agencies once a debt settlement contract is signed. I think that the bill could be improved by ensuring that a contract with a debt settler guarantees that the consumer will be left alone by collectors.

Speaking of consumer protection still, another possible area is, I noticed last week that parents in the Ridgewood Public School, which is in Coboconk in my area, actually pulled their children from their EQAO testing to protest the loss of extracurriculars. Where is the protection for parents and children who want to get an education? The parents said, "It shouldn't have come to this'.... teachers graduate from university knowing extracurriculars exist and are an 'expected' part of the job." Some parents are saying, "Well, maybe I'm going to pull my kids from school and home school them or change the school they're in." Where is the protection for parents and children in the school system? The bill doesn't address this, but I just wanted to highlight the fact that these parents took a principled stand for their children, and I applaud them for doing that.

Another area of the bill is the door-to-door water heater sales. I mentioned earlier the pressures put on consumers when salesmen come to their front door to sell them certain products. This bill deals with a specific instance of this practice in addressing water heater rentals. We've all heard the water heater rental stories. Again, there are some positive aspects to its contents. Mandatory disclosure, restrictions on certain advertising practices, and stiffer penalties for breaking the rules are probably good steps forward towards protection for consumers. The type of tactics sometimes employed by those renting water heaters door to door are often exactly the kind that exploit the most vulnerable people. Ontario water heater renters are all too often unaware of the details of the agreement they are signing, which violates

a fundamental principal of a fair market and poses real dangers to the consumer.

There are a couple of areas where the bill falls short in addressing this issue. Firstly, the legislation seems to focus on a mandatory cooling-off period as a means of protecting the consumer. The point of a cooling-off period is to allow the consumer to reflect on their decision and remove the pressure element from that calculation; however, the effectiveness of a cooling-off period is completely negated if the consumer doesn't understand their agreement to begin with. To reflect and cool off about your rental, you need to know exactly what you've agreed to in the first place. It is only once consumers experience a problem with their rental contract that they'll have any cause to question the value of their purchase. This will inevitably happen long after the 20-day cooling-off period proposed in this bill.

I think that I've mentioned before that, for consumer protection, there needs to be some type of template for general or normal contracts that exist out there. Certainly, there are complicated cases that will need their own contract, but I think you have to streamline contracts, whether it be for the cellphones or for the water heater-cooler. You have to have a standard contract that's easy for people to understand. We are obviously discussing a consumer protection bill because there's a need. We hear it in our constituencies, in our areas, from people. We need to do more consumer protection. There's lots of runaround that consumers do get, but most of them don't really realize that they do have a faulty contract, or if you get the 20-page contract or the five-page contract, it's just too hard for people to understand. The government has chosen to regulate these kinds of frustrating cancellation procedures in other industries, so I'm puzzled why they wouldn't do it in this case. Just a last point. I know that I will be able to do some more in the two-minute hit.

0940

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Most of this bill, I guess, is pretty supportive in regard to what the government is doing, but they're pretty small steps when it comes to consumer protection. I think that's the point that the honourable member was trying to make.

Take a look at the debt settlement services issue. What's now going to happen under this act is we're going to regulate them in some way, but the people who do the credit counselling, who essentially work for the big banks and the credit card companies and stuff, are not going to be regulated under this act. I think that's a bit of an anomaly in the bill, because what you end up with is, those who are trying to provide credit counselling in a way that allows people to settle their debt at 60 cents or 70 cents on the dollar are going to be regulated, but those people who do credit counselling who work for the banks, who normally settle it at 90 cents on the dollar, are not going to be regulated. I think that's something we can take a look at.

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The minister is indicating she's prepared to look at that when this bill gets to committee.

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, they're in it, but it's not as clear-cut as it's being made out. The point is, once we get into committee, that's one of the things that we'll be able to look at.

The stuff in regard to the hot water heaters, I think, is long overdue, as it is for a whole bunch of people who are knocking at our doors. How many of us had energy marketers come and knock at our constituents' doors, and as a result of legislation that was originally passed as a private member's bill—I think it was by us; it might have been somebody else, but I think it was one of our bills—the government adopted a bill that essentially dealt with part of that issue, and we've been able to undo some of the damage that was done by people who go knocking at the door: Somebody, unsuspecting, thinks they're getting a good deal, they sign on the dotted line, and they find out that in fact the cost of energy is going to be a lot higher.

I think this is a step in the right direction, but there's a lot more than can still be done.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The minister responsible for seniors.

Hon. Mario Sergio: I was listening to the positive comments made by the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock. I think by now everyone is fully aware of the content of the bill, what the bill intends to do. We've had over 12 hours of debate. I think it's time that we move the bill forward, and once it goes to committee, bring it back as a better bill. I would say at this stage, let's move on; let's get on with it. It's good for consumer protection, so let's do it.

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

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: I'm not sure getting to committee is a good idea in this Parliament. The committee seems to be a black hole. I don't know if they're even going to meet this summer. It's amazing that these things take place.

The member from Peterborough, or Lindsay—

Ms. Laurie Scott: Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: —Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock; it's out near Lindsay—has made good points about consumer protection and went so far as to suggest that consumer protection is even available in schools, when the people in her community withheld their children from testing in objection to the kerfuffles that were going on in the education system.

It's interesting as well that this government brings in a bill on consumer protection on the one hand, and on the other hand brings in an eco tax bill which is going to hide the taxes that consumers pay. How can a consumer be protected when the taxes that are being levied—by a third-party group; they're not even levied by the government—are being hidden in the price? The minister should look into that. It's happening in her government, and it's

terribly unfair to the consumers of this province. They won't know what they're paying, and yet this government doesn't seem to be concerned about it. It's bringing in this bill which will give a third party, with no responsibility to the people of Ontario—it's a third party that has no oversight, is not responsible to the people of Ontario.

Interjections.

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Well, you wait and see if they have oversight or not. The next time there's a crisis over there, it will be because of an arm's-length body that you appointed, such as this eco tax group. It's all the arm's-length bodies that get this government in trouble, because you fail to have any respectable oversight on everything.

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

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I'm glad to add a couple of comments to this debate. One of the things I urge the government to consider—and either way I'm hoping that we'll bring some amendments to the bill—is that when we are talking about water heaters, it can easily be expanded to deal with energy in general to address the door-to-door energy provider sales. That's an area that I think naturally flows along with the water heaters, so I'll ask the government to consider expanding this bill to include that as well. All too often, as my colleague from Timmins–James Bay indicated, people end up signing an agreement for a new energy provider, and it turns out that wasn't the best idea for them, that wasn't the best deal. They sometimes end up paying more for that. That might be an area to consider.

On the debt settlement services portion, I think often when we speak to constituents, what they're facing is a lot of pressure from collection agencies. That's where there are a lot of concerns. I think the concerns are less with the debt settlement services than with the collection agents and their aggressive tactics. I think while having some protection in place and some regulations in place to cover some of the bad practices within the debt settlement services—there are a lot of bad practices on the other end, on the collection side. So I urge the government to consider some amendments to this bill that would also expand protection for the consumers where it comes to those collection agents and perhaps toning down the language they use, the aggressive approaches, the intimidation. Many constituents have called and complained about the tactics used by those collection agents and the fact they feel they're overwhelmed by phone calls, letters and threats of litigation. I think that's another area where we should definitely expand the bill; then we can cover a broader area of consumer protection.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member has two minutes to respond.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I appreciate the comments from the member from Timmins–James Bay, the Minister of Consumer Services, the minister responsible for seniors, the member from Halton and the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton. We've had great discussion on this bill.

I know that I wasn't quite able to touch on the third aspect of the bill, which is real estate. I'm glad to see the

government move to loosen the restrictions placed on custom pricing of real estate services, allowing buyers and sellers to negotiate a balance of commission and fees. It gives both parties more choice and will likely lead to better outcomes for both. I do applaud certain aspects of the bill, and the minister—and she hasn't been a minister for that long—has brought these forward. So I applaud her for doing that.

As you can probably tell from what we have said, we would actually like to see the bill strengthened; so more consumer protection. Hopefully, when we get to committee—and I'm hoping there's some agreement with the House leaders that we can have committees meet over the summer, not just on this topic but on the topics we have moving forward. We do want to get some things finished, some reports completed—in my case, on general government—some gridlock studies done.

We hope that we can actually put some more meat into this bill for consumer protection. As I mentioned earlier, we don't do enough for consumer protection in the province of Ontario, and we as legislators need to do a better job of consumer protection. We applaud the minister for the initial steps of the three main areas I outlined this morning—and the feedback from other members in the Legislature—but there are a lot more consumers out there that need to be protected on various topics. I mentioned even education on industrial wind turbine salespeople. Maybe those suggestions can come forward before committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak this morning.

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

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: It's always a privilege and great honour to stand in the chamber to debate the concerns of not only the government but those here in opposition, the bills that are brought forward that are going to actually have an impact on the lives of everyday Ontarians and what's going to happen to them and how it's going to affect their pocketbooks, Madam Speaker. That's one of the strong points of our party: that we're already taxed enough. We appreciate the fact that this government has brought in so many taxes and has burdened the residents of this great province to an extent where they're over-taxed.

0950

Consumer protection is one thing. We're all in favour of consumer protection. It's good to have some guidelines as to where we can actually have some influence to protect those who don't read the fine print. You almost need a lawyer to enter any kind of agreement nowadays, whether it's your cellphone agreement and what you can and cannot do and how much money you have to pay, should you go over. It's endless.

I want to draw upon the attention of what the fine member for Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock has done, and that is, if you want to be accountable as a consumer and also accountable as a government, which I think is even more important, we do have to look at things like consumer protection and the Green Energy

Act and what the Green Energy Act has actually done for this province, which has been devastating, to say the least.

If we're looking at how much money Ontarians have to pay because they haven't been protected by this Liberal government under Premier Wynne and Premier McGuinty, then I have to say, where's the legislation that's being brought forward that's going to actually protect Ontarians from this Liberal government? I don't see it, Madam Speaker. I haven't seen it.

When I look at the bill here, Bill 55—because I make it a point that I actually read the bills. I sit there and I have to wonder. I'm a little perplexed sometimes. It says here:

“2(1) The definitions of ‘collection agency’ and ‘collector’ in subsection 1(1) of the act are repealed and the following substituted: ...

“(a) a person, other than a collector, who obtains or arranges for payment of money owing to another person or who holds oneself out to the public as providing such a service,

“(b) any such person who sells or offers to sell forms or letters represented to be a collection system or scheme, or

“(c) a person, other than a collector, who provides debt settlement services;...

“‘collector’ means an individual employed, appointed or authorized by a collection agency to collect debts for the agency, to deal with or trace debtors for the agency or to provide debt settlement services to debtors on behalf of the agency.”

This is relevant, obviously, when we're referring to debt and how much debt this Liberal government has incurred. So I would ask that this government actually bring forward a piece of legislation that is actually going to hold this government to account for the debt they have incurred. Who would that actually be, Madam Speaker? Who is going to call on this government and say, “Your debt is in arrears. You're not even making the minimum payments of interest on the debt you have incurred”? How can this government introduce legislation like Bill 55 here before us today when they themselves are the worst example of debtors and running up debt that this province has actually ever seen?

Historically, my great-great-grandfather was an MPP for York East back in 1894, and he stood here in this chamber—the debt incurred during his 10 years of service is almost insignificant, a fragment of what this government has done in the last decade, so I think it's pretty rich for a government that has actually incurred so much debt to bring in legislation that they claim is going to protect consumers, consumer debt, when they are the leaders in debt.

Also, “Subsection 1(1) of the act is amended by adding the following definitions:

“‘debt settlement services’ means offering or undertaking to act for a debtor in arrangements or negotiations with the debtor's creditors or receiving money from a debtor for distribution of the debtor's creditors, where the

services are provided in consideration of a fee, commission or other remuneration that is payable by the debtor;...

“‘debt settlement services agreement’ means an agreement under which a collection agency provides debt settlement services to a debtor.”

Well, Madam Speaker, I'm sure the government, because of all the debt they have accumulated, have negotiated with their creditors how much money they're going to actually have to pay back on the backs of our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren because this government hasn't had their fiscal house in order for the last decade.

Number 3 in the schedule: “Section 2 of the act is amended by adding the following subsection:

“(0.1) This act applies to a collection agency or collector that deals with a debtor if either the debtor or the applicable one of the collection agency or the collector is located in Ontario when the dealing takes place.”

Well, as mentioned earlier in the House several days ago, Madam Speaker, as you're well aware, when we pay interest on our provincial debt, that money leaves this province. It has a dramatic impact on the infrastructure, whether it's roads, bridges, education, health care, but that investment, that money, that interest that we pay on our debts, goes to foreign entities, foreign countries, where that money is actually being invested by them in health care, in education, into their infrastructure, roads and maintenance. So I'm a little perplexed again about this Bill 55.

It says here: “The act is amended by adding the following sections:

“2.1 In determining whether this act applies to an entity or transaction, a court or other tribunal shall consider the real substance of the entity or transaction and in so doing may disregard the outward form.”

What can I say about this? I'm a little perplexed—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Say no more.

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: Say no more—I'm almost at my wits' end with this government when it comes to introducing bills that have no real substance, and as mentioned earlier by the fine member of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock, this is heavy on feel good and little on actual substance.

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

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I want to build on a point that my colleague from Trinity–Spadina mentioned earlier, that one of the things that, on a principled basis, we do here in government is we provide protection for those who are vulnerable in our society, for those who are not in a position to protect themselves. In doing that, we recognize that there is sometimes an imbalance that exists in society, that there are certain entities, whether they're corporations, whether they're organizations, that have a knowledge base and a marketing strategy that some citizens in our society may not be able to fully understand the repercussions of. So when they make agreements or they sign on the dotted line that enters them into a contract, they don't know exactly what they're getting

into. There could be issues of literacy. There could be issues of numeracy. There could be issues of language barriers. So we acknowledge that one of our responsibilities is to provide support for those members of our society and to even the playing field somewhat.

1000

One very effective strategy to even that playing field to provide some advocacy for people in this society, in this community, would be to have a dedicated consumer advocate. Either we broaden the mandate of the Ombudsman to allow the Ombudsman's office to accept complaints surrounding consumer services or we have a dedicated consumer advocate who raises issues surrounding problems faced by consumers, inequities, unfair contracts, unfair practices. That would be a step forward in providing a very wholesome approach to protecting the rights of our citizens.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Oakville.

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's a pleasure to rise and to tell the House that I agree with the comments of the member from Northumberland—Quinte West when he said he didn't know what to say next. I'm pretty sure it's all been said, Speaker. At least two parties in this House think that 15 hours is enough and it's time to move this on to committee.

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

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'm pleased to rise today and provide comment on the member from Northumberland, who is a new member to this Legislature and is doing a fantastic job of representing his constituents. He read that piece of legislation, and I can't say that all members read every piece of legislation that is brought forward. So thank you for reading that, because he wants to do the best he can for consumer protection in the province of Ontario.

Mr. John Yakabuski: And his constituents.

Ms. Laurie Scott: Yes, and his constituents.

As I have said, and as he said also, the Liberals always speak a good talk—little action. A lot more needs to be done. This is why we continue to talk. We're bringing up ideas right here as we speak in the Legislature on debate about Bill 55. We all want to protect our constituents. As I said, again, a lot more needs to be done for consumer protection in the province of Ontario.

I also want to point out that he said that his great-great-grandfather—correct?—served in this Legislature from 1894 to 1904. So thank you, Rob Milligan, the member for Northumberland, for carrying on that fine family tradition of serving your constituents in the Legislature. A little different period of time, but I'm sure they were talking about trying to do the right things for the people of their constituencies also.

We do have other members in the Legislature, the member from Halton and the member from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, whose family members served in the Legislature also. I know the member from Parry Sound—Muskoka is not here, but he also has a legacy of

carrying on a family tradition of serving in this Ontario Legislature and representing the fine people in their constituencies.

I wanted just to say to the Liberal government that we're making good suggestions in our debate, so we'd like to strengthen the bill. That's the purpose of what the member from Northumberland was saying this morning.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Trinity—Spadina.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I congratulate the member from Northumberland—Quinte West in his remarks, and I congratulate you on the heritage you bring to this place. I'm just a little guy from southern Italy; I don't have those connections. But, you know, we do our best. We fight it out—

Mr. John Yakabuski: But I know your ancestors did something big in Italy.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: That's a good question. I'm not quite sure. Marchese is a noble name, but whether we come from nobility is a different question altogether. I don't know.

But I wanted to say that I agree with the member from Northumberland when he says that we could make the bill better. I agree with that; I think we can. I think that when we're talking about consumer protection, we can do a better job.

This is a modest bill that moves the agenda a long way to give consumers greater protection. How do we make it better? Well, when we send it to committee, if we're serious and we actually listen to what people have to say, we might be able to get a stronger bill. In a minority government, this is where all three parties can collaborate to make it stronger.

I'm actually a big believer in public education—I am—not because I was an ex-teacher and an ex-school trustee, but because the more we help the public to understand what their sometimes obligations are and responsibilities are, and also help them to understand what their legal rights are and how they're able to win it by applying the law—we can't do that unless we inform the public about what their rights and powers are.

The better way to do it is to bring in a consumer advocate who would provide the protection that they need, because the majority of Ontarians simply do not have the time to understand what their powers are and to defend themselves. The consumer advocate: That's the way to go.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Northumberland—Quinte West has two minutes to respond.

Mr. Rob E. Milligan: I just want to thank the fine member from Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock for her enlightened comments and her insight into this bill. I have to say that that riding has probably never been more represented than it is now with the fine member that they currently have. I want to thank her for her service and her duty that she has.

To the bill: There were some keen observations. I want to thank the member from Oakville, who actually said that I was at a loss for words, which is, for a politician, almost unheard of.

There's a lot that has to be done with Bill 55. When it does eventually get to committee, we do have some very good ideas, as the member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock pointed out. We are going to bring those ideas and initiatives forward, and hopefully, when it gets to committee, it will be addressed.

I also want to thank the member from Trinity–Spadina. As misguided as he is, sitting with the NDP, I'm sure he serves his party with distinction. He does bring up, now and again, some relative points. Especially with Bill 55, Madam Speaker, this is obviously an area again where we are for protecting the consumers, protecting individuals who actually aren't as enlightened, or need to be educated.

It's always one of those things. I'm neglectful myself when it comes to reading the fine print for a lot of things that we sign. You almost need an entourage of lawyers to actually enter agreements nowadays.

I want to thank the members for their fine comments.

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

Mrs. Jane McKenna: It is my pleasure to join the debate on Bill 55 today.

One of the key aspects of a healthy, vital and prosperous Ontario is robust consumer protection for the people of Ontario. Bill 55 was designed with this greater good in mind and aims to strengthen consumer confidence and make Ontario's marketplace more clear and fair.

As such, we welcome this bill and have been encouraged by the constructive debate that has taken place around it. Together, we can improve this legislation for the benefit of all the people of Ontario.

When we talk about consumer protection, we're ultimately talking about protecting families and communities, because our society is not simply a collection of individuals living in isolation but a tapestry of interwoven relationships.

Citizenship itself is a kind of contract. A piece of legislation like Bill 55, that proposes to bolster consumer protections, is really a piece of legislation that has the capacity to improve society as a whole.

At the very least, the bill now before us should improve quality of life in some ways that are sure to be widely appreciated. Bill 55 looks to rein in aggressive door-to-door sales tactics, specifically with regard to the sale of water heaters, which have become an all-too-familiar source of grief for homeowners across the province. It proposes the sensible step of a cooling-off period, so that consumers can take a serious second look, if their initial gut check fails them.

1010

The bill also aims to protect consumers who become indebted against the misleading and excessive practices of debt settlement companies. Debt has become a more and more common part of our society, and in itself, it is not right or wrong. But when there is a lack of awareness and a lack of protection, hard-working people and vulnerable populations suffer. The nature of these services means that those who end up in that spot are low on

options and operate at a disadvantage from a bargaining standpoint. This is another example of the minister diagnosing a real and pressing problem and responding with what we hope is an antidote, something that will potentially help strengthen consumer protection.

Bill 55 would also enhance real estate bidding arrangements with more robust safeguards, and offer Ontario home sellers greater ability to negotiate flexible, low-cost arrangements. Real estate transactions are stressful enough without "gotcha" dealings, and both buyers and sellers deserve to know precisely what they pay brokers under any agreement, Speaker.

I commend the Minister of Consumer Services for taking steps to improve disclosure requirements and shift toward plain-language contracts, something that is of value not just to people who find themselves under a great deal of financial pressure, but also the elderly or those who have language barriers. It's important to be reminded that Ontario is a place of great diversity, and as a result, we must adjust the scope of legislation to do the greatest good for the most number of people.

The PC caucus is certainly supportive of consumer rights and clear language, which is why we will be supporting Bill 55 to get it into committee. Bill 55 will benefit from further review, and like any legislation we debate in this House, there are numerous ways this bill could be improved upon, and that discussion cannot simply begin and end with those of us in this chamber.

This is underlined by the fact that this bill is the product of an expanded consultation of sorts. Water heater complaints have spread like a rash across every corner of this province, and by themselves apparently inspired 3,200 complaints alone to the Ministry of Consumer Services in 2012. So it comes as no surprise that a large portion of this debate today has latched onto this aspect of the bill. Suspected shady water heater dealings, high-pressure door-to-door sales, aggressive retention tactics and negative-option billing practices were squarely in the spotlight through last year. Those practices were hammered by the Canadian Competition Bureau back in December.

A moving target, underhanded dealings will forever evolve, like a virus, to take advantage of gaps in legislation and lapses in awareness, and the marketplace is moving just as fast, so we as lawmakers have our work cut out for us. But it's unfortunate when something that should be a straightforward matter of quality services provided in a competitive, cost-effective manner becomes so laced with distrust and deception. It's a credit to the majority of business people who are straight dealers that this has not become an epidemic. Certainly, government oversight and enforcement is critical to making sure that honest dealings do not simply become a niche industry.

Government sets the tone, Speaker. On that note, I have to say it is difficult to argue that the Liberal government commands much in the way of principled high ground at this point. Six years ago, the Liberal government designed a piece of legislation that was intended to strengthen faith in the system through simple mechan-

isms of transparency and accountability. It appeared as part of a consumer protection omnibus bill that also addressed issues such as real estate fraud. The leader of that government was happy to take a bow and play up the inroads his party was making. But he ignored this legislation, which we have now learned has no teeth, no penalties, no real reason anyone should follow its rules. Like many government bills—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Sorry. The time has come when we must recess until 10:30.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mrs. Laura Albanese: I would like to introduce Julie Pontarollo, who is the mother of our page Jessica Pontarollo. Also, I would like to welcome to Queen's Park her grandmother Gemma Fiorini. Both Ms. Julie Pontarollo and Gemma Fiorini are in the public gallery this morning watching our proceedings. I want to welcome them again here in the Legislature. They are from the great riding of York South–Weston.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I want to welcome Suzanne Halpenny, who is the grandmother of our page Laura from the great riding of Ottawa Centre. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I wanted to introduce my interns, wearing my hat as Minister of Agriculture and Food, and they are here with me today: Gabrielle Schachter, Parker Mackay, Zahin Chowdhury and Matt Scoon. I want to welcome them to the Legislature.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I also want to welcome my intern at the Ministry of Labour, Roy Sengupta, who also lives in the great riding of Ottawa Centre. Roy, thank you for your hard work.

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Although they're not yet in the gallery, I wanted to give a warm welcome to the students of J.W. Walker school who have come all the way down from Fort Frances on a school bus. They come every year. I want to welcome them, and I hope they have a great visit in Toronto.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I would like to welcome, only because I've been goaded by my friend from northwestern Ontario, the people from Ministik school and Peetabeck Academy. From Ministik, they had to walk to the shore, they had to cross in a water taxi where there are no docks, get off in Moosonee, take a train, get down to Timmins and then get on a bus to get here. So all the way from Moose Factory and Fort Albany, welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would have been concerned if there was any walking on water.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I am delighted to introduce Ryan Lake and Kiara Sanclar from the law firm Falconer Charney. Welcome.

Hon. Jeff Leal: I just want to commend the Leader of the Opposition on his great insight in picking the Boston Bruins in the Stanley Cup final. Good choice, Mr. Hudak.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): In respect to my friend from Nepean–Carleton, I'm going to ask that that be the last time introductions are made in that manner.

Further introductions?

The member from Newmarket–Aurora on a point of order.

Mr. Frank Klees: Speaker, on June 5, the Standing Committee on Public Accounts sent a letter to the Honourable John Milloy, the government House leader, with a specific request to seek authorization to meet as a committee for the purpose of discussing the affairs of Ornge.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): If this is a discussion on committee work, I don't perceive that to be a point of order, but I ask you to put your point quickly, please.

Mr. Frank Klees: My point is simply this: that we have not yet had authorization to meet as a committee. It's very important that we do. I would ask at least that we get a response from the government House leader authorizing us to meet as a committee.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's actually not a point of order. It's a required motion. I'll leave it at that. Thank you.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further—one last point.

Mr. Frank Klees: In that case, Mr. Speaker, I would ask for unanimous consent of this House, authorizing the committee on public accounts to meet for the purpose of considering the issues related to the Ornge air ambulance.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Newmarket–Aurora has asked for unanimous consent for this meeting. I'm afraid I heard a no.

Minister of Children and Youth Services.

Hon. Teresa Piruzza: I do have an introduction of guests that I'd like to get back to—sorry about that—a couple of interns who are working in my ministry for the summer, for the Ministry of Children and Youth Services: Marie Brunetto and Abdullah Mushtaq, who are from Windsor. I just want to welcome them to the gallery for question period today.

SPECIAL REPORT, INFORMATION AND PRIVACY COMMISSIONER

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that I have laid upon the table a special investigation report by the Information and Privacy Commissioner entitled *Deleting Accountability: Record Management Practices of Political Staff*.

There being no further introductions, it is now time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: My question is to the Premier. Premier, I also want to send a message to the NDP that there

is a choice before them today, a choice between making the right decision or the wrong one, a choice between propping up a corrupt government that has been part of not only one, but two OPP investigations. We all know that Ontarians deserve better, so I say to the NDP: Stand with us. Vote against this budget. Bring change to the province of Ontario and no longer prop up a corrupt government.

A question to the Premier: Premier, when exactly did you find out that emails from the Premier's—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm actually hearing the interruptions from both sides while the leader was putting the question.

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: While the Leader of the—oh, sorry.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I indicated that your time was up.

Interjection: Your time is up, all right.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Therein lies the problem. I suspect we may be a little anxious today. You have to listen carefully. I will be following my normal procedures.

I will offer the member a short conclusion for his question.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Thank you, Speaker. The question was very direct. I would ask the Premier to tell us exactly when she found out the emails from the Premier's office and the Ministry of Energy had been destroyed. What was the exact date?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I have answered a number of questions on this, and I have made it clear that when I came into this office, there were questions around information retention, and I put a protocol in place that means that the rules were very clear. I've said clearly that the rules were in place. We put them in place. We did training. We made it clear that relevant documents would be retained.

But the Leader of the Opposition is very correct that there is a choice before the House today. That is a choice to not take action or to move on a budget that would allow 30,000 young people to benefit from investments in employment; 46,000 seniors getting more home care; 57,000 recipients of social assistance being able to keep \$200 that they earn—

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Respectfully to the Premier, I think the choice is clear: Do you want to prop up a corrupt government that is subject to not one but two OPP investigations and clean up this mess? I just hope that the colleagues in the New Democratic Party actually do the right thing and call for change to bring a cleanup to this incredible mess under the Liberal government.

1040

I ask the Premier—so I understand this: You're saying that you were aware that emails had been destroyed in the Premier's office and the Ministry of Energy. You just

said that you found this out when you became Premier, and you ordered a new system.

On February 28, you told us all the documents had been released, when in fact you knew that—who knows?—tens of thousands of emails had been permanently erased, that members of the Liberal Party had engaged in criminal behaviour.

If you knew this, why did you hide it? Why did you cover it up—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Question.

Mr. Tim Hudak: —part of the problem instead of solving the problem?

Interjections.

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

I'm going to ask the leader to withdraw.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Withdraw.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: This could be the last day of the Legislature, Mr. Speaker, and I have said this repeatedly—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Dufferin—Caledon, come to order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —that when I came into this office, I endeavoured to do everything in my power to get the information that was being asked for—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds—Grenville, come to order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —to get that information out.

I've also said publicly that there were many questions about the documents; there were questions about information; there were questions about all of the issues around the relocation of the gas plant.

Interjection.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: When I came into this office, I made it clear that we were going to get the information out, that we were going to offer to open up the mandate of the committee—

Interjection.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —that we were going to offer to put in place mechanisms to allow that information to get out, and that we were going to have protocols in my office and across government that would retain the relevant information, to make sure that information was available.

We've done all that, Mr. Speaker, and we will continue to behave in that manner.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Frankly, Premier, that kind of doublespeak doesn't pass the smell test. Ontarians—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That's not acceptable. Withdraw, please.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Withdraw.

Premier, you're obviously trying to dodge the first question. You said you were aware that emails had been

deleted. I thought you had said that there were problems with deleted emails, clearly, in the Premier's office and the Ministry of Energy, to cover up this gas plant scandal.

So you knew this happened. Otherwise, I guess you're saying a little birdie told you that there may be some deleted emails somewhere, and you ordered a new protocol. That just doesn't add up. Clearly, Premier, you knew this was there.

You stood up in the Legislature in February and said you had released all the documents, but you knew that you had not. You knew that emails had been deleted across the board. You knew that senior Liberals had walked away with documents.

The question is not what you say, it's what you do. Who got fired? Why didn't you call in the OPP? Why did you sit there and actually not tell the truth to Ontarians about the cover-up that is all over your very own hands?

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As I said, I have answered these questions many times.

I'm going to go back to the question—

Interjection.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —at the beginning of the Leader of the Opposition's time—

Interjection.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: —and that was about the choice that is confronting us today.

I really believe that the choice that is before this House is whether we move ahead, to invest in youth employment in this province; to invest in home care for our seniors, for our loved ones, our grandparents, our parents; to work with the auto insurance industry to reduce, on average, across the board, the auto insurance rates; to make sure that people who are trying to get into the workforce and are working—people with disabilities—are allowed to keep the money they earn to a much greater degree; and to make sure that the investments in infrastructure across the province, but particularly in our rural and northern municipalities—that those roads and bridges get tended to. That's the choice before us.

Interjections.

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

If you haven't noticed, I've already started identifying individual ridings. If it continues, you'll move towards a warning.

New question.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: Clearly, Premier, you knew that the emails had been deleted by senior Liberals. You chose to tell the public and members of the assembly that you'd

released all the documents, when you knew that they had been destroyed. You knew that they had engaged in criminal behaviour.

You want to talk about choices. You chose to look the other way. You chose for them to walk away with that data that is very pertinent to the debate before the Legislature.

I regret saying this, but quite frankly, Premier, we thought Dalton McGuinty was bad; you're more of the same. So when you say that you've accepted and agreed with the report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, if you say that you agree with her recommendations, is it fair to say that you agree that senior Liberals committed criminal activity?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Here's what I agree with: I agree that we are in a minority Parliament, Mr. Speaker, and when I came into this office, in my leadership I said that I was going to do everything in my power to work within this government to make sure that we could bring a budget forward and that we could act in the best interests of the people of Ontario. I've done that.

I want to say that it was very heartening to me that the leader of the third party was willing to work with us. She and I met, as I met with the Leader of the Opposition. But working with the leader of the third party, she brought forward suggestions, even to the point where she brought forward the idea of the Financial Accountability Officer. I want to say thank you for that, because that was a good idea and something that we can act on. I believe that is how minority Parliament works, I believe that's how government works, and I believe that minority Parliament or not, we should be—

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Well, you know, of course, Premier, you're going to thank the leader of the NDP. She's tied herself into a human pretzel just to prop up a corrupt government.

I know you're trying to avoid the essence of the question. You've said that you knew there were deleted emails; that's why you brought a protocol into place. You said you agree with the findings of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, but you won't say that they engaged in criminal activity, which seems to be the case. So I guess, then, I'll ask you this: Why is it the Ontario PC Party that had to call in the OPP? Why is it the Ontario PC Party that had to demand the release of that data, to go to those individual senior Liberals and bring that data back for public inspection? Why is it the Ontario PCs that have to hold everybody to account? Why aren't you doing your job as Premier?

You know what, Premier? You look the same as a tired, corrupt McGuinty Liberal government. It's time for change in the province of Ontario.

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm actually not trying to avoid the issue, because the issue that's being raised is a personal attack on me and on the leader of the third party, and, Mr. Speaker, that's fine. That is within his purview if that's what he chooses to do. I'm not trying to draw the leader of the third party in so close that she has to deny what she's done. But the reality is that I believe that the people of this province expect us to work together. I believe the people of this province expect the opposition to read the budget before they decide to vote against it. That would have been my expectation.

Interjections.

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

Final supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: You know, I think, Premier, with all due respect, Ontarians expect their government to actually obey the law, not break it. They expect them to bring information forward, not hide it.

Now, Premier, you've avoided two very direct and simple questions. You say that you heard there were issues around deleted emails, but you didn't tell us exactly when you found out about senior Liberals destroying emails related to the gas plant crisis. You also refused to answer the direct question as to whether you agree that this is actually criminal behaviour.

Premier, quite frankly, if you are not solving the problem, you are part of the problem. Isn't it time for change in the province of Ontario and a government that will clean up the incredible Liberal mess?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I actually have been working to solve the problem. That's why we opened up the mandate of the justice committee. That's why I appeared before committee. That's why I asked the Auditor General to look at the Oakville situation.

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that my job was, yes, to deal with those issues that had been raised, and I have been doing that, but my job was also to bring forward a budget, to work with the opposition to try to put in place the mechanisms that would mean there will be more jobs created in this province, that we will deal with the home care that's needed in this province, and that we will invest in infrastructure in the GTHA and in our rural communities beyond the GTHA. Those are the issues that affect people's lives every single day, and that's why we brought a budget forward.

1050

I looked across the floor to work with the opposition, to work with the third party. The opposition determined that they weren't going to read the budget. The third party determined they were going to read it and they were going to work with us, and that's how it should work.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I want to ask some questions to the Premier about government accountability. Does the

Premier think that it is acceptable that staff in her Liberal government—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Come to order.

The member from Prince Edward–Hastings, come to order.

Now that I have your attention, I will make it clear that if the banging continues—while you're quiet and listening. If the banging continues, I will give you warnings.

Leader of the third party.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Does the Premier think it's acceptable that staff in her Liberal government were deleting emails and destroying information that belonged to the public?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I have said repeatedly that I agree with the conclusions of the privacy commissioner, that there were practices that were going on that should not have and there need to be changes. My office is working with the privacy commissioner to ensure that we put in place the changes that need to be there.

I will say that we have already proactively taken some initiatives to put in place training, to make it clear across government what the rules are about retaining documents and retaining information. We will continue to work with the privacy commissioner.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Does the Premier think it is acceptable that her predecessor, the member for Ottawa South, may refuse to answer any questions about mass deletion of government documents when he occupied the Premier's office?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: As I have said, I believe there were actions taken that shouldn't have been. I agree with the recommendations of the privacy commissioner. I have also encouraged anyone who is called to the committee to attend.

I believe there wasn't enough done to ensure that staff understood what the rules were and that there needed to be a more stringent protocol put in place. That's what we did. That's why we put the training in place, and we'll continue to work with the privacy commissioner.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Does the Premier understand the fundamental fact that the people who sent us here expect us to work hard for them and that they want to see a government that's accountable to them and puts people first, not the governing party or its well-connected insiders?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I do understand that. That's why, since I've been in this office, I have taken the actions that I have. Whether it was about opening up the process around the relocation of the gas plants or whether it was about making sure that everyone understood what the rules are about document retention, I have taken those actions because I believe I am fully accountable to the people of Ontario. It's also why I have attempted to work with the opposition to bring forward a budget that speaks to the needs of the people of Ontario.

That's why we're going to be continuing to meet those needs as we work to get the budget passed today.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is for the Premier. We've worked hard this session to deliver real change, change that creates jobs, improves health care and makes life more affordable for the people who sent us here, change that will make this government and future governments accountable and transparent.

We've ensured that the government will pass legislation establishing a Financial Accountability Office this fall. Does the Premier understand that this measure is needed to stop scandals like the ones that occurred under their watch, like eHealth, like Ornge, like the gas plant scandal, from ever happening again?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Yes. I think even in this session I've already given the leader of the third party credit for bringing forward the idea of the Financial Accountability Office. It speaks to a value that I hold dear and that our government holds dear, that we should do everything we can to put those mechanisms in place that ensure that, as we go forward, we don't make the same mistakes, that we, collectively, don't make the same mistakes that may have been made in the past. That is part of the evolving nature of government, Mr. Speaker, so I credit the leader of the third party for working to find mechanisms that would ensure that kind of accountability. When she first raised the issue, I said that I thought it was a good idea, and we will be moving forward with that.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, unlike some others in this House, we are actually working hard to get some real results and some real accountability for the people who elected us. But time and time again, people see a Liberal government putting the interests of the well-connected insiders and their own party ahead of the people who elected them. Is the Premier ready to admit that this government has fallen short?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, you know, I will say that we have at every turn attempted to find ways to meet the needs of the people in the province, whether it's in reforms in education or in health care or the investments in infrastructure that are critical across the province. We have attempted to do everything in our power to meet the needs of the people and make sure that the services that they require are delivered. That's what our budget is about. The leader of the third party identified some areas that she had some input on, and we have been happy to be able to work with her.

But make no mistake, Mr. Speaker, whether it's youth employment or home care or infrastructure, those are issues that we were concerned about. Those are issues that we were going to act on. I appreciate that the leader of the third party has worked with us, I appreciate that we're going to bring the budget and, with luck, get it passed today, but we need to understand that that is work that we understood needed to be done.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: In tough times, people want government that's accountable and government that's working hard for them, and I have to say once again that we have worked very hard to deliver real results—

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm not asking for quiet so that you can throw your last barbs in, and I remind all members that you refer to people in this place according to their title or their riding.

The leader of the third party.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: But time and time again, what they've seen is a government trying to avoid accountability, and putting themselves first, whether it is six-figure golden handshakes to public sector CEOs, the destruction of documents—

Interjection.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: —or collaborating with the Conservative caucus to shut down gas plant hearings this summer. Is the Premier ready to admit that this government has fallen short?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I want to just say that the hoots and howls that are coming from the opposition are coming from a party that did not read the budget before they determined that they were going to vote against it. They did not engage in a discussion about youth employment, they did not engage in a discussion about infrastructure investment, and they did not engage in a discussion about home care. We just have to take that into account.

I will say to the leader of the third party that we have made it our business, since we came into this office—since I came into this office, we have made it our business to work to address the issues that were before us, including the issues of accountability on decisions that were made vis-à-vis the relocation of the gas plants.

I will continue to work with my party, to work with my government, to make sure that we do everything in our power to be open to the people of the province, to put in place the accountability measures that are necessary, but we're also going to work to make sure that the services that people need are the services that are delivered to them.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is to the Premier. Premier, there's not a single Ontarian who takes pleasure in watching your government flail around in total disarray. Under your leadership, you are now embroiled in not just one but two OPP investigations, one in particular

into the gas plant scandal, one which the NDP leader, Andrea Horwath, has said is the worst scandal in Ontario's history.

1100

Let's recount what happened. You bought an election with taxpayer dollars. Senior staff destroyed the evidence. They refused to call in—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Your question is direct, so I'm going to ask the member to withdraw.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Withdraw? The government bought an election, they destroyed the evidence, they refused to bring in the OPP—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You said it again. Withdraw, please.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Withdraw.

In any event, they refused to call in the OPP. We had to do that for them. Now they refuse to hold key architects accountable.

Will you fire Brad Duguid, Mr. McLennan and the member from Ottawa South?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Interjections.

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

Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I think all members of the House realize that this is a serious matter that we're dealing with, a serious matter that's in front of the justice committee. But I think it's time that people over there started to deal with facts.

Let me talk about the members who stood up over the last several days and spoke about some mysterious USB keys. I quote from an article in QP Briefing: "No evidence of theft in Cavoukian report: IPC spokesman."

Let me quote: "'It doesn't say in the report anything about files downloaded onto USB keys,' Cavoukian spokesman Trell Huether said. 'She doesn't believe that happened, and if she did she would have put it in the report.'"

Where is the apology from members over there? This is a serious matter, and it's time we started dealing with facts.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: This question was actually to the Premier, because it deals with people in her caucus and former staff in her employ who are currently still being paid for with taxpayer dollars. We asked specifically if she would fire out of her caucus and tell the former Premier, the member from Ottawa South, to resign his seat.

She has been ruthless enough in this entire period to sell out the people of this province on what she knew and when she knew it on the gas plant scandal. They have circumvented the law by destroying documents. She has also used a personal Gmail account to evade the laws within access to information. They refused to call in the OPP; we did it for them. Now she's letting the member from Ottawa South thumb his nose at the constituents who sent him to this place.

Is there any legal or moral barrier that this Premier will not cross in order to cling to power and save the skins of every member over there?

Interjections.

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

Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: You don't get away with it that easy. Mr. Speaker, the member from Nipissing, the member from Cambridge and other members have been standing in this House and talking about USB keys. They've been going out in front of the House in scrums and talking about it. Here we have a spokesperson for the Information and Privacy Commissioner saying that they do not exist; they are not in the report because they didn't exist.

We are talking about people's reputations. We are talking about a serious matter. I demand an apology from her.

Interjections.

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

New question.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

M^{me} France Gélinas: Ma question est pour la première ministre. This government's refusal to bring forward an executive wage freeze is yet again putting Ontario on the hook for a ludicrous payout. The CEO of eHealth has given his notice, and he will be paid over \$400,000 because he's leaving his job six months early.

New Democrats have asked this government to take concrete steps to prevent this kind of golden handshake. My question is simple: Does the Premier think that Ontarians should be on the hook for yet another executive payout?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Health and Long-Term Care.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I know I'll have time in the supplementary to discuss the compensation issue, but I do want to take this opportunity to thank Greg Reed for the leadership at eHealth. Under Greg Reed's leadership, we have come a long, long way, and we are seeing the results of his work.

Speaker, eHealth has become more transparent. It has become more accountable. We have now a long-term strategy for electronic health records. We've made real progress in implementing electronic health record systems right across the province. Today, two out of three Ontarians have an electronic medical record. More than 9,000 physicians are using EMRs to enhance patient care, improve health outcomes, improve patient safety.

The Ontario Laboratories Information System, OLIS, is storing more than one billion lab results for 9.5 million Ontarians. Neurotrauma patients now have access to 24/7—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): If this is a test of my resolve, I shall show you. The member from Northumberland–Quinte West is warned.

Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: I can't believe that the minister would stand there and defend executive compensation. I asked a question about \$400,000 for leaving six months early, and she goes on praising him, as in, "Should we give him a raise, make that \$400,000 instead \$800,000?" What is this?

Ontarians are sick and tired of the scandal coming out of the Ministry of Health under this government. We've seen eHealth. We've seen Ornge. We've seen diluted chemo drugs. We've seen seniors in long-term care with no oversight—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Prince Edward–Hastings.

M^{me} France Gélinas: —yet we're seeing another round of scandal at the same agency, eHealth, that was supposed to be fixed years ago.

New Democrats have long called for concrete action, like a wage freeze and Ombudsman oversight of our health care system, but the government keeps refusing. How many more scandals will it take before things start to change and executive compensations come under scrutiny?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Just to be clear, the member is wrong when she says that he's getting this because he is leaving six months early. That simply is not accurate. It's part of his compensation package.

But there is a larger issue here, and it's an issue that this government is addressing. As part of our 2013 budget, which I hope is going to pass this afternoon, we announced that there will be an advisory panel that will be put in place.

We need to review executive compensation right across the broader public sector. I think this is an issue that we simply must address. We must assure, as much as possible—

Interjection.

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: —that money is going to the front lines to serve patients and to serve the people of Ontario. So we are going to be attacking this issue, and I look forward to that—

Interjection.

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: —across the health sector and well beyond.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): New question? The member for Niagara Falls.

Mr. Kim Craiton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know it's a long ways down here.

I'm pleased to ask a question directly to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Minister, we know that life can be difficult for children with developmental, physical and communication disabilities. It can also be difficult for the families involved.

In my riding of Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake and Fort Erie, I have met personally, and I hear from, the families who are dealing with these kinds of challenges. I must tell you, Minister, I'm always impressed with the parents' unrelenting commitment to their children. I will tell you, Minister, that these meetings, whether at my office or in their homes with the families, reinforce the need for important services that they need to receive from our government.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please inform this House and the people of Ontario what our government is doing to help families in this kind of a situation?

Hon. Teresa Piruzza: Thank you to the member from Niagara Falls for this question and for the work that he does in his community, and the many conversations that we have had with respect to meetings that he's had in his riding.

My ministry provides a number of supports for children and families across the province through the children's treatment centres. In Windsor, we have the John McGivney centre, who I've met with and have toured. I know they do fantastic jobs for all children and youth dealing with disabilities. These centres provide rehabilitation services to children and youth with physical and developmental disabilities as well as chronic illness and communication disorders. This year, across the province, these treatment centres served over 64,000 children and youth.

Going forward, we will be making new targeted investments across the province with the goal of enhancing our services. We remain committed, of course, to providing the best services and programs for all our children and youth.

1110

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Kim Craiton: Minister, I'm pleased to hear that children's treatment centres, like the one in our area, the Niagara Peninsula Children's Centre, are helping to bridge the gap between Ontario families and accessible services.

However, Minister, I have to tell you I have a concern about the availability and the access to services for Ontario children with special needs. Issues such as wait times for services can place huge stress on families, and these families tirelessly navigate the system in order to receive the best rehabilitation and care for their children. As well, I know that in rural and remote areas there are increased issues around accessibility.

In the minister's answer, she mentioned targeted investments. Can the minister please provide this House an update to where these investments are placed?

Hon. Teresa Piruzza: Thank you for the follow-up on that. We recognize there's always work to be done, and we all hear the same concerns. We remain committed to move forward on this.

I'm pleased to say that as part of this year's budget, my ministry announced an additional \$5-million investment to improve the services at these centres. This investment will not only reduce wait times in the province but also establish a new pilot program to get children better prepared for school. As well, this investment aims to better improve services in northern Ontario. It includes an expansion of the family-centred children's rehabilitation information system to five centres in the north. Last week, I had an opportunity to meet with a number of the directors from different treatment centres, and they're quite pleased with this investment and very happy to see it.

I'm proud that these new investments in this year's budget will help young people with special needs and their families across the province.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is to the Attorney General. Minister, you're a lawyer. Can you tell us what happens to lawyers who destroy evidence while an investigation is taking place?

Hon. John Gerretsen: To the government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Again, I answer with a very simple question. For the last few days, we have been hearing from members of that party—and in particular the member from Nipissing, the member from Cambridge, other members, both in speeches and out here—talking about USB keys that were taken. Let me read what Madam Cavoukian's spokesperson has to say about the report that they keep citing: "It doesn't say in the report anything about files downloaded on to USB keys," Cavoukian spokesman Trell Huether said."

Interjection.

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

Carry on.

Hon. John Milloy: I'm sorry if I hit a nerve there, Mr. Speaker.

"She doesn't believe that happened and if she did, she would have put it in the report."

So I ask my honourable friend—we all recognize this is a serious matter. It is being looked into by the justice committee. Why will she not stand and apologize in her place and allow the committee—

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

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Let me make it easy for you: You get disbarred. As the Attorney General, you have a unique position as the legal adviser in cabinet. In your ministry's own website, it outlines that you "shall see that the administration of public affairs is in accordance with the law."

Minister, the law's been broken. The OPP have been called in. You have clearly failed—

Interjections.

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

Ms. Sylvia Jones:—in your duty to ensure your government has acted in accordance with the law.

Interjections.

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

The Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities probably didn't hear me say "stop" because he continued to talk.

Interjection.

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

Please finish.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: So I ask you, Attorney General, have you advised the Premier that justice must be done, that those who broke the law and knowingly destroyed evidence must be fired?

Hon. John Milloy: This is a serious matter. This is a very, very serious matter. The justice committee is looking into it. I understand they'll be hearing from witnesses this afternoon.

But it is time to deal with the facts. For the last few days, we've heard about these mythical USB keys, and here we have a statement from Madam Cavoukian saying she did not believe they existed.

The member from Nipissing yesterday told the Toronto Sun there were no emails from the Premier's office. The fact of the matter is, over 30,000 emails and documents from the Premier's office have been produced to the committee.

Mr. Speaker, it's time to start dealing with the facts. This is a serious matter. Let's let the committee do its work. In the interim, I think it's time for some apologies from that crowd across there.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment. Minister, the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund was meant to create jobs in my region. The unemployment rate is nearing double digits in London and Windsor. The people of southwestern Ontario don't need a slush fund to benefit one political party. To make sure the money flowed to communities that really needed it and not just to connected friends, we, the NDP, amended Bill 13 to create an independent board to make decisions about the fund. Instead, the government played political games and didn't proclaim the independent board with royal assent.

When will the minister proclaim the entire bill, including the independent board, to guarantee southwestern Ontarians that their funds aren't being used to win by-elections?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question. The member knows well—my ministry provided her with a briefing on this exact issue last week, I believe, and they're going to be meeting with a member of her staff later this week to discuss moving forward. Our intention,

of course, is to implement a process which provides the accountability, the accountability that already exists.

Unfortunately, last April 1, this fund was closed for a period of seven months, largely because the official opposition had various shenanigans and refused, ultimately, to support the bill. I appreciate the fact that the NDP did. If we had proclaimed that particular aspect, it would have meant that both the southwestern and eastern Ontario funds would have been closed for up to an additional one year. We weren't prepared to do that. We felt it was important to continue with accountability but flow the funds to those important businesses.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Minister, we understand that the ministry has a list of more than 20 companies approved for Southwestern Ontario Development Fund investment, but the minister is sitting on this list, and no one knows who they are.

It seems the minister is waiting until the by-elections to make announcements when it works for Liberals and not when it works for the companies who have been waiting for these funds and who want to create jobs in communities like London and Windsor.

This bill passed the Legislature in the final days of the Kitchener–Waterloo by-election. Seven months later, people in southwestern Ontario are still waiting for leadership.

Is the minister going to use these announcements to play politics in southwestern Ontario, or will the minister provide the list of the projects that have ministerial approval right now, today?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: There have been 22 projects approved so far. Three of those have been announced, two of those in the member from the official opposition who is my critic on economic development as well—important projects, not in a Liberal riding, but two of the three in a Conservative riding. The third one, in fact, is in the riding of the Speaker of this Legislature.

These are important funds that I know the member opposite recognizes.

Those additional projects haven't been announced because we're in that delicate stage of agreement and writing and signing the contracts between the two parties, between the government and the business.

For example, we've invested \$60 million in the Eastern Ontario Development Fund, and we've leveraged an additional almost \$600 million, retained almost 15,000 jobs.

I know the member opposite wouldn't want those two funds to be closed for a period of 18 months.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH

Mr. Bill Mauro: My question is for the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. Minister, since its opening 45 years ago, the Experimental Lakes Area has garnered an international reputation for the research that takes place there. As we all know, it's largely free from the effects of industrial and human activity, allowing scientists to

conduct research on acid rain, water and ecosystem chemistry and helping us to better understand climate change and pollution.

Speaker, through you to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, can she please outline some of the benefits that the ELA brings to Ontario and why it's important that it continues to operate for the benefit of all Ontarians, especially those in northwestern Ontario?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: Thank you to the member for Thunder Bay–Atikokan for that question.

The Experimental Lakes Area is an incredibly important facility, and our government obviously sees the value in its continual operation. Over the past 45 years, the ELA has been able to provide a unique opportunity for scientists to conduct valuable research. The ELA has contributed to our understanding, through the long-term data collection of numerous hydrological, chemical and biological issues, and in keeping with its reputation as a world-renowned institution the ELA has collaborated with over 20 universities across Canada. The results and data collected from these experiments has made Ontario a leader in freshwater research.

1120

Our government's commitment to ensuring that these important experiments continue to be conducted will help us identify emerging threats to our environment and understand critical changes in ecological communities over time. I believe that that is something each and every Ontarian should be very proud of.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Bill Mauro: I want to thank the minister for her response and for underlining and restating the importance of the ELA to Ontario and to northwestern Ontario. But it really brings us to the point. Really, what that is is that there are still some significant concerns that are existing in terms of the long-term survival of the ELA.

I've got constituents who are asking me where the file is and what our government is doing to ensure the survival of the ELA. Just this week I received a letter from the Thunder Bay chapter of the Council of Canadians. I think other members in the Legislature received the same letter as well. They are expressing their reservations and concerns on this particular file.

Speaker, through you to the minister, could she outline for the House, for me and for my constituents what we're doing and what she is doing, in her capacity as the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, in her negotiations with the federal government to ensure the continued survival of the ELA?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I'm happy to advise that the federal government and the IISD have reached a memorandum of understanding to continue operations of the ELA for 2013. It's an important step forward towards ensuring sustained, longer-term solutions for the facility's operations.

I was particularly pleased that the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans has committed to the continuation of long-term data sets and to work with scientists to support their active ELA research this summer.

We acknowledge that a more permanent arrangement is necessary in order to protect this world-class research facility, and our government is continuing to work closely with Ottawa, the province of Manitoba and the IISD to achieve such an agreement.

In our 2013 budget tabled last month, our government reaffirmed its commitment to constructive dialogue with other provinces and the federal government, and the positive outcomes with respect to the ELA demonstrate that when you work together, good things can come to the province of Ontario.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Toby Barrett: My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. A month ago, I told you of a made-in-Ontario crisis after years of neglecting our developmentally disabled. A family from my riding, the Callaghans, visited Queen's Park that day. When their 20-year-old, severely disabled daughter, Anna, finishes her education this month there will be no supports. When I asked you if you would back the select committee on developmental disabilities to ensure that Anna, the Callaghans and other families across Ontario get the support they require, you said yes, as did the third party.

Minister, what happened? Where is that promised select committee?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Well, I was more than pleased to support the motion from the honourable member. I did that in good faith. I assumed that her motion was put in good faith. It was passed by members of the House.

That having been said, it's not my responsibility nor your responsibility, nor the member who made the original motion's, to define the terms of any special committee—the membership, when it will meet and everything else. That job is quite properly one that's lodged with the three House leaders.

I look forward, as I suspect every member of this House does, to a resolution.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Toby Barrett: Minister, the Callaghans don't have the summer to wait. They need that committee struck today. The resolution you and your colleagues approved had timelines attached. They won't be met if you continue to drag your feet.

A month ago you told us that you were "proud to say ... that I will be delighted to support the motion." You said, "anything we can do together" to respond more appropriately to the most vulnerable folk that are there and need our help is good.

We have unanimous support. We've worked with our House leader. Why do we hear that you and the third party are balking? What happened to the NDP? What does House leader Gilles Bisson have to say about this? Minister, will you strike the committee today?

Interjections.

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

Minister.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I surrender, and I confess. Mr. Speaker, I confess to having an abiding interest in moving forward in the context of serving those who have developmental challenges, and their families. That's why I stood in my place, as others did, and spoke, as I did, in support of the motion.

That having been said, you should take that issue up with your House leader and the other House leaders, to see if we can get this resolved.

ELEVATOR SAFETY

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My question is to the Minister of Government Services. Ontarians are increasingly worried about the threat to public safety due to the refusal of the National Elevator and Escalator Association to allow their qualified employees to work during contract negotiations.

According to the Toronto Star, replacement workers are being sent primarily to the financial district and not to priority buildings, such as hospitals and nursing homes. Office towers are reporting "business as usual" while seniors wait for urgent repairs in their care homes.

Why is this government allowing this employer to compromise public safety by directing employees to non-priority areas?

Hon. John Milloy: To the Minister of Consumer Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: First, let me say, as the Minister of Consumer Services, that my number one priority is public safety. Our regulations in Ontario set very, very stringent safety requirements for elevating devices in Ontario.

I do understand that the strike is an ongoing concern of many, especially for those people who have accessibility issues. I can certainly relate to that. It's important to note that repairs can continue during the labour disruption, but they have to be done by qualified personnel, being qualified under the Technical Standards and Safety Authority.

As many know, the Technical Standards and Safety Authority is responsible for regulating elevating devices. I was very pleased to see a news release from TSSA just yesterday about enhanced enforcement action, stepping up the pace of inspections, prioritizing inspections to target high-risk elevators, reviewing shut-down policies to ensure that unsafe elevators do not pose a risk to safety, and increased investigation of reports of unqualified or uncertified technicians working on elevators. So I'm very—

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

Just to let the member from Trinity–Spadina know, I got it.

Supplementary?

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My question is back to the Minister of Government Services. During this work stoppage, the legally required monthly safety checks of elevators across the province are not being carried out. The minister is standing idly by as every elevator in the

province lapses out of compliance with the government's own mandatory safety standards.

Will this government take immediate action to resume monthly safety checks and bring these elevators back into compliance?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I just want to share with the House again and reiterate that public safety is job one for me. I am not standing idly by at all. I'm monitoring the situation very closely, along with my colleague the Minister of Labour, who is actively watching this file. I understand the parties have been brought together numerous, numerous times, and I'm hopeful that we'll get a resolution.

Having said that, though, safety continues, and the TSSA is mandated to ensure that safety is job one. These inspections are increasing. As I said, they announced just yesterday they're increasing the pace of inspections, targeting high-risk elevators. They're also conducting an audit of elevators to ensure all work is done in strict compliance with safety regulations.

This is a very important issue for us. I'm monitoring the situation very, very closely. The important thing is, this is a very regulated industry, and only qualified repairs will continue.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Ms. Soo Wong: My question is for the Minister of Research and Innovation. Our government has consistently supported and invested in Ontario's health care. Our budget will invest over \$3.5 billion in capital grants for hospitals. We will continue to support our small and rural hospitals, and our government will maintain Ontario's leadership in health care. To accomplish this, we will continue to invest in innovation and research in life sciences and technology.

1130

In my riding of Scarborough–Agincourt, I know of many young people, like George, June, Maggie, Jake, Raymond, Nadia, Anna and Rachel, who are currently studying life sciences at McMaster University or the University of Toronto. These young people are aware that our government can create the right environment to enable the health and technology sectors to make medical breakthroughs.

Through you, Speaker, to the Minister of Research and Innovation, what is the government doing to support innovation as it relates to health care?

Hon. Reza Moridi: I want to thank the member from Scarborough–Agincourt for the question. She is a strong advocate for the quality of health care services in our province.

Mr. Speaker, our government recognizes that innovation will help our province stay at the forefront of life sciences. Our track record in this area is strong: We have invested \$100 million in the Ontario Brain Institute to help conduct research into brain diseases; we have invested \$357 million to support the Ontario Institute for Cancer Research, a world leader in this area; and we have

committed approximately \$1.2 billion to support research through the Ontario Research Fund.

I am pleased to say our investments are supporting a better health care system and a higher quality of life for the people of Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Soo Wong: It's great to hear that our government is taking concrete action to push the boundaries of innovation and ensure the best health care possible.

Through our government's investments, Ontario is thriving in the research and innovation community and has accomplished tremendous advances in health care and medical technology. These advances will help improve the standard of care and the quality of life for Ontarians.

Our government also recognizes that an increase in investment in research and innovation will lead to an increase in economic opportunities and growth. Mr. Speaker, through you to the Minister of Research and Innovation, how will our government's investments in health facilitate broader economic growth and foster strong health care for future generations?

Hon. Reza Moridi: Again, I want to thank the member for that question. Here in Ontario, our health care sector has fueled economic growth. In fact, Ontario now has the largest life sciences community in Canada. Ontario is home for more than half of the country's life sciences economic activities.

Since 2003, our government has invested \$1.2 billion in the life sciences sector. These investments have helped to support over 2,100 projects in the province. We owe these economic successes to the great minds of Ontario's scientists, who are the leaders in the world in their fields, and also to the meaningful investments that our government has made in research and innovation in this province.

ONTARIO NORTHLAND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Mr. Victor Fedeli: My question is for the Premier. Over a year ago, your government announced the fire sale of Ontario Northland. This Liberal document shows that it—

Interjections.

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

Put the question, please.

Mr. Victor Fedeli: This Liberal document shows the decision was made despite confidential advice to cabinet recommending that they wait for "further due diligence and analysis of fiscal and policy implications."

This new document shows exactly what those implications are, Speaker. Instead of saving the government \$265 million, which is in the budget, the sale will actually cost \$790 million.

Premier, you already know you're not going through with this sale. That would create your next billion-dollar scandal. So I'm asking you today, will you please stand

up before we break for the summer and tell the people of northern Ontario that the sale is off and let these people get on with their lives?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: The member opposite does bring up an issue of confidential information that was released to him, his party and the committee during the request of the justice committee. We've made it clear that some of this confidential information is out there. The valuations of the ONTC and the work that's being done for the public good and the public benefit are at risk because of some of the very issues he is now bringing forward. I would argue to all members: Be extremely cautious about confidential material that is being released.

Notwithstanding that, let me be clear: The treasury board, the finance committee, the ministries involved are doing their utmost to ensure that we provide proper valuation of the ONTC, that we recognize some of the challenges before us with regard to some of the employment and issues before the collective agreements and the notions out there.

We haven't made final decisions. What we are saying, though, is we're reviewing and assessing the impacts.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Victor Fedeli: So you got caught. These numbers expose your next billion-dollar scandal.

Let's review: Your announcement was made, and then the trouble in the north started. One of the largest companies in the north deferred a \$10-million expansion while waiting to determine if there's still a rail line. Unemployment rose in North Bay to 11.6% last month. This uncertainty is killing the marketplace, and it's tearing families apart, Speaker.

I'm going to give you the benefit of the doubt, Premier. You were told it's going to save \$265 million. I don't think you had any idea that it really was going to cost \$790 million. I believe that, Premier. It's a billion-dollar spread, but you learned of that gap when you became Premier.

So be the Premier today. Bring relief to northern families right now and tell them the sale is off.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Minister of Natural Resources.

Hon. David Oraziotti: To the member opposite: Quite frankly, I don't think the member opposite had any idea of what this was going to cost either, and quite frankly, that's why we have not committed to doing this. I was with the Minister of Northern Development and Mines at the FONOM conference, and he quite clearly indicated that—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. Sit down. Come to order, please, member from Nipissing.

Hon. David Oraziotti: Thank you, Speaker. The member opposite, quite frankly—here's what the member opposite was quoted as saying: "I can't tell you what you want to hear ... I can't say I'm opposed to privatization." The member opposite supported privatizing the ONTC without any idea of what would this would cost.

Our government has not made a commitment to do that. We want a transportation strategy that works for northerners, and that's exactly what we're going to deliver, Speaker.

PAN AM GAMES

Mr. Rosario Marchese: My question is to the Premier. When Ontario won the right to host the 2015 Pan Am Games four years ago, the people of Brampton were led to believe they would take part, and they built a brand new field hockey pitch. But last year, organizers of the games suddenly shut out Brampton and are now spending \$5.3 million in taxpayer money to cover the University of Toronto back campus with artificial turf, ruining one of the few remaining open green spaces in downtown Toronto.

Why are organizers building a field in Toronto, where there is fierce community opposition, instead of using the existing field in Brampton, where there is support?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I do appreciate the opportunity to recognize the tremendous work that 2015 and the Pan Am committee are doing. You should know that a number of the venues that have been negotiated over the last little while have been under budget. This is going to provide a lot of opportunity for the surrounding communities in the greater Golden Horseshoe to provide a number of venues and sporting initiatives.

But the member talks about the options and availability that was made to the city of Brampton, who themselves declined to proceed on some of the very initiatives that we brought forward. That's a decision by council. But notwithstanding that, we do have venues. We have a great opportunity to promote Ontario in 2015. I congratulate them for what they're doing.

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

Mr. Paul Miller: Speaker, actually the council does support it. The city of Brampton has put considerable resources into building the Cassie Campbell Community Centre field hockey pitch. Brampton now has the finest international-standard field hockey pitch in the greater Toronto area. This summer, they will host the Pan Am and Olympic qualifying international competition. If they can host the qualifying rounds, why can't they handle the games themselves?

The Brampton pitch is ready for international competition this summer. With the increased GO service heading their way, why is this government allowing TO2015 to waste taxpayers' money building another pitch in the Toronto core?

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, the pitch that the member opposite speaks of is what was indicated. It's what we were trying to make happen. There were a number of revisions and amendments that were necessary in terms of the structure of that pitch. We brought it forward to the city of Brampton. They declined to proceed in that format, and that's their call. I appreciate that every com-

munity and every municipality wants to host some of these games, because it's a great, tremendous economic boost. It's also about culture and a great tourism to the community.

So we will continue to do a number of initiatives in the Brampton and Mississauga area, and we'll certainly do everything we can to promote Peel. We're going to do what's necessary right across the greater Golden Horseshoe because these games are about showing the world what Ontario has to offer and enabling us to really promote this great province and also nurture some great athletes right here in Ontario so that they can succeed right across the world. With everyone's help, we'll do just that.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I know that all members will join me in saying thank you to the pages for staying for an extra two days, but this is their last day.

Applause.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You did a good job. Well done.

Mr. Rob Leone: I hope you paid them overtime.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Triple time.

CORRECTION OF RECORD

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

Interjection: Apologize.

Mr. Rob Leone: Certainly I'll apologize, but, Mr. Speaker, I would like to correct my record. Over the last couple of question periods, I referred to these USB keys. I should have referred to them, as the Information and Privacy Commissioner stated on page 24 of her report, Deleting Accountability, as "portable electronic devices." I guess this is a case of failed search terms, again, Mr. Speaker.

I apologize to the people of Ontario for dealing with this—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I find that that started out to be a point of order to correct the record and turned into something else. I'm disappointed that that took place.

The member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock on a point of order.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I think we'll have unanimous consent on the following. A letter was sent to the House leaders from the general government committee requesting that we meet over the summer to complete the review of the Aggregate Resources Act. So I ask for unanimous consent to allow the committee to meet over the summer to complete its important work on the Aggregate Resources Act since the Liberal and the NDP House leaders have refused so far, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock has asked for unani-

mous consent for the committee to meet over the summer. Do I have unanimous consent? I heard a no.

The member from Nepean–Carleton on a point of order.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: As a member of the Legislative Assembly committee, we have requested, via a letter through our Chair, Mr. Dunlop, to ask all the House leaders to permit us to meet at the discretion of the Chair during the months of July and August. I would like to seek unanimous consent so we're able to do our work.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member is seeking unanimous consent to meet. Do we have an agreement? I heard some noes.

There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1143 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I don't know the gentleman's name, but I had a nice conversation with a gentleman from the United States who is visiting his daughter in London. He took the time to come and watch our Legislature.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Our deepest sympathies.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's my pleasure to welcome Mr. Tom Schell from the Southwest Economic Alliance to Queen's Park today to talk about food.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I rise today, on the last day of this legislative session, to give the Premier one more opportunity to apologize to rural Ontario.

Premier, you need to apologize for telling municipalities who have declared themselves unwilling hosts of your industrial wind turbines that they are likely out of luck, given your government's May 30 announcement.

All municipalities want to do is stand up for their communities and constituents, but your government continues with a "we know best" attitude.

Premier, it's an insult to municipalities if you actually thought that they would buy into your announcement. Not only has your government lost the confidence of the municipalities and their constituents, but you've also lost the confidence of energy proponents.

The renewable energy industry is confused. They don't know what is next. They're confused with the approvals process, and they simply do not know where your government is heading.

The bottom line is, you know you passed your Green Energy Act too fast, without the proper consultation and without a proper business and fiscal plan. The PC caucus knows it, municipalities know it, ratepayers know it, and

proponents know it. In the end, ratepayers are stuck paying for your unaffordable green energy scheme that you know isn't working. It'll result in another 40% to 60% rate increase.

Premier, your ability to stick ratepayers with your costly energy scandals and schemes is appalling. Do the honourable thing: Apologize to unwilling host communities and take back your comments that they are likely out of luck and out of time.

STEEL INDUSTRY

Mr. Paul Miller: US Steel continues its heavy-handed treatment of hard-working unionized Steelworkers at its Hamilton Hilton Works and Nanticoke sites. It seems determined to drive workers to despair and ruin, while taking our raw materials to process in the United States.

Union-busting clearly is the American conglomerate's main objective, and this government has brought in absolutely no protection for these workers.

My colleague the NDP member from Essex tabled Bill 113 during the last session, in response to increasingly aggressive management bargaining tactics at Caterpillar, US Steel, Inco and other companies. The bill provides that where certain private sector collective agreements have expired and a strike or lockout has reached more than 180 days, either party may ask the Ontario Labour Relations Board to settle the provisions of a new collective agreement by binding arbitration. The board may only direct binding arbitration if the board determines that the party making the application is bargaining in good faith and that a new collective agreement is unlikely to be conducted within 30 days of continued bargaining. The bill provides that when the board notifies the parties of its direction to settle the provisions of a collective agreement, the employees shall end the strike or the employer shall end the lockout.

The bill makes sense, but still the Liberal group across the chamber has left Steelworkers without the most basic protection of their jobs, wages, their severance, or their ability to bargain a good collective agreement.

These Steelworkers need this government to step in and require that the bargaining process available through binding arbitration at the Ontario Labour Relations Board is enforced.

ONTARIO CRAFT BEER WEEK

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Next week, the Ontario Craft Brewers, consisting of 32 members, will be hosting their fourth annual Ontario Craft Beer Week, which will feature over 150 events in over 50 communities throughout the province from June 15 to 23. The week-long festival is designed to expose Ontarians to the wonders of craft beer through tasting events, brewery tours, cooking demonstrations, food pairings, beer dinners, music nights, brewery collaborations, exciting online contests and much more.

I would be remiss in not mentioning that one of the most distinguished members of the Ontario Craft

Brewers is King Brewery, located in my great riding of Oak Ridges–Markham. King Brewery has a tradition for excellence. It recently won a gold medal in the Kellerbier category and a bronze medal in the Bock—Traditional German Style category at the 2013 Canadian Brewing Awards.

King Brewery has also gained a global reputation for having high-quality and great-tasting craft beer. In 2012, it won three silver medals at the world beer championships for its Pilsner, Vienna lager and dark lager.

I know my colleagues feel similarly proud of their local products, so this summer I urge you all to explore some of the 200-plus different kinds of beers offered by Ontario craft breweries. But please be safe, drink responsibly and do not drink and drive.

EAST WELLINGTON FAMILY HEALTH TEAM

Mr. Ted Arnott: The East Wellington Family Health Team has been an outstanding health care success story in Wellington–Halton Hills, providing health services to residents in the Erin, Rockwood and Acton areas. I've been very pleased to work with this organization and their compassionate, professional staff, supporting them in any way I can.

Recently, I received word from the East Wellington Family Health Team that they're seeking to establish a laboratory service on site, as well as diagnostic imaging services. I want to offer my unqualified support for this idea.

Right now, our local residents in these underserved communities must travel up to 47 kilometres and wait many long hours for lab services. Our seniors and people with chronic conditions like diabetes deserve better. Granting a new specimen collection centre licence for the East Wellington Family Health Team would improve health service for the local and surrounding population, facilitate the recruitment and retention of physicians in our area, support our health professionals in implementing the ministry's preventive care initiatives, give patients an alternative to waiting at the local hospital emergency department and provide care for seniors closer to home.

I call upon the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to review the need for lab and diagnostic imaging services in the east Wellington area and provide the necessary approvals without delay.

SEXUAL ASSAULT

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'd like to take this opportunity to highlight a meeting I had last month with the Sexual Assault Support Centre of Waterloo Region. I toured their incredibly welcoming facility and saw the important work that they do to support victims of sexual assault. Sexual assault affects people of every age and cultural background and has devastating impacts on individuals, families and communities. It touches every aspect of our lives.

One in three women will experience some form of sexual assault in their lifetime. The economic cost of violence against women across Canada is in the billions of dollars. This includes the cost of health, criminal justice and social services, as well as lost productivity.

In 2011, the Ontario government introduced a Sexual Violence Action Plan that was supposed to increase financial support for Ontario's 41 under-resourced sexual assault centres. Unfortunately, the increase was less than 6% for only four years. This funding will expire on March 31, 2015. These centres are already stretched beyond capacity. Women seeking individual counselling in Waterloo region are facing a wait-list of almost seven months; it is worse in other communities.

Ontario needs to commit to investing in both support services for survivors of sexual violence and public education campaigns aimed at prevention. We can give survivors of sexual assault hope and a chance to heal. We can instill hope in Ontarians that sexual violence is not inevitable. Through public education, social change is possible and a better future exists for our daughters and our sons.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr. Bill Mauro: A couple of weeks ago in this chamber I had an opportunity to talk about the opening of the Leila Greco centre in my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan, a brand new facility—132 supportive housing units that will greatly help provide a great level of care to seniors in my riding and also relieve some of the ALC pressure from our hospital, Thunder Bay regional.

Just recently, as part of that, there is a seniors' centre of excellence and integrated services—a whole project. We just did the groundbreaking on the second phase of that one or two weeks ago—that's also in my riding of Thunder Bay–Atikokan—on the same piece of land. What that is: There's going to be a brand new long-term-care home for the seniors in Thunder Bay and northwestern Ontario. This home will accommodate 416 beds. As I said, it will be on the same property. We're going to have the supportive housing unit piece over here, and right beside it, just beginning construction, there's going to be a brand new long-term-care home representing 416 brand new beds.

1510

St. Joe's Care Group in our riding is an incredible partner. We're fortunate to have them in Thunder Bay–Atikokan. They will be the service provider for the seniors. They've got a tremendous long-term reputation of providing great care for seniors in Thunder Bay—and all across the north, I would say. They do great work. We're lucky to have them. We're thankful to have them as a partner.

The project is a \$100-million construction project in its complete scope, including the Leila Greco component, as well as long-term care: great for our seniors, great for quality health care and great for the construction building trades.

BOOKLORE

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm pleased to rise today and congratulate my favourite independent bookstore, BookLore, on being named the Canadian Bookseller of the Year at the 2013 Libris Awards, held last week in Toronto.

Nancy Frater, the owner of BookLore, is proud to feature local and Canadian writers by hosting many book launches and promoting authors who are from our own community. As an independent bookseller, Nancy understands the importance of providing opportunities for Canadian writers to find their audience.

As a businesswoman, Nancy is very generous with her time, mentoring other businesspeople, and is a leading contributor to the arts. Nancy is the founder of the Armchairs and Authors event at the annual Headwaters Arts Festival, an event that has helped book aficionados and authors celebrate Canadian works.

I'm pleased to see BookLore being recognized by the Canadian bookseller community. The Libris Awards highlight excellence in book retailing, superior customer service and innovation, marketing innovations, author promotion and community involvement. BookLore excels in all of these categories.

I extend my congratulations to Nancy and to the entire staff at BookLore. Thank you for being a wonderful promoter of our local writers and our business community.

LORI SYNES-TARABA

Mr. Kim Craiton: Today, I honour a constituent of mine, Lori Synes-Taraba of Niagara Falls, for her incredible strength and tenacity. Lori was recently awarded the 2013 Canadian Cancer Society's national Medal of Courage for caregiving and advocacy during the inaugural Impact Awards, which recognize an individual's exceptional commitment to fight against cancer and is the society's highest volunteer award.

Lori began volunteering after her son Brock was diagnosed and then survived an aggressive cancer at the tender age of 10 months. He's now 15.

Since 2004, Laurie has been involved in many aspects of the society and is passionate about the Canadian Cancer Society and helps in any way she can. For example, she participated in numerous initiatives, including several local committees and the Ontario Public Issues Team, and has been at Queen's Park for MPP education days. I'm sure many of the members remember meeting with her.

For the last several years, Lori has been assisting the national Public Issues Team on new policies, and was the voice of patients during a national caregiver media campaign last year.

Lori doesn't hesitate to share her son's story, hoping to encourage others to fund research and fight back. She continues to volunteer, and she works tirelessly for the eradication of the disease. Her courage continues to be an inspiration to all who meet her.

Mr. Speaker, as a cancer survivor, I tell you, Lori is a very special lady. She's an inspiration. I know she's watching. Lori, to you: I send you my love and my hugs and kisses.

Interjections.

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

WIND TURBINES

Ms. Laurie Scott: The proposal to erect two industrial wind turbines at Sumac Ridge in my riding of Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock has now gone through the public comment period and is awaiting the decision of the Minister of the Environment.

The community has been fighting this for four years through public rallies, open houses, letter writing and postings to the EBR. The municipality of the city of Kawartha Lakes has made its opposition abundantly clear. No one could possibly have missed the point that this is not a willing host community. However, the government has said that it will only use the “willing host” criteria for future applications. Mr. Speaker, if ignoring the concerns of the community weren't enough, the Sumac Ridge turbine proposal would be built on the Oak Ridges moraine.

The Minister of the Environment seems to believe that only he knows what is best for Ontario's environment, yet he turned a blind eye in 2009 with the passage of Bill 150, which amended the Green Energy Act to permit industrial wind turbines to be erected on the Niagara Escarpment. Is the environment minister's normally zealous piety going to be again muted by approving the building of industrial wind turbines on one of the Ontario's most environmentally sensitive areas? Is blind loyalty to his government ideological agenda really more important than protecting the environment?

I would ask the Minister of the Environment to stand up for the people on the Oak Ridges moraine and the area and turn down the Sumac Ridge application before it is too late.

SPECIAL REPORT, OMBUDSMAN

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table a report from the Ombudsman of Ontario respecting his investigation into the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services' response to allegations of excessive use of force against inmates.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs and move its adoption.

The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum): Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

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

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

Report adopted.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated June 5, 2013, this bill is ordered for third reading.

PROSPEROUS AND FAIR ONTARIO ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2013

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

Mr. Sousa moved third reading of the following bill:

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

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, the 2013 Ontario budget lays out our plan for a prosperous and fair Ontario. It's about making smart, strategic investments to strengthen our economy, help create jobs and take action to eliminate the deficit by 2017-18.

Mr. Speaker, we looked at and we took a collaborative approach to building this plan. We held 12 jobs round tables with private sector, labour, education and training partners, and we hosted pre-budget consultations with over 1,000 organizations and reached out to over 600,000 households in communities across Ontario, because we believe that everyone, and every region and community, has a stake in Ontario's economic framework for jobs and growth. I urge all members of the House to support our plan for a balanced approach to help all people in Ontario succeed.

Ontario's economy is growing and creating jobs, despite a challenging global environment. In fact, in May the province gained more than 50,000 jobs. That included an increase in youth employment of more than 20,000 jobs.

We know that Ontario's economic fundamentals are strong, and Ontario remains an attractive place in which to live, work and invest. But we know there's still work to do. Since last year's budget, expectations for global economic growth have weakened, and global uncertainty persists, especially in Europe. So we're working with key partners to lay out a six-part economic plan to help Ontario's economy seize new opportunities for growth and job creation.

Of course, eliminating the deficit is crucial to this plan. Balancing the books is essential to building greater

confidence in the investment community and capital markets. Our efforts as a government are best focused on creating a favourable economic environment, because when businesses and entrepreneurs take risks and make investments, Ontario's economy grows and creates jobs. That's why our budget includes a six-point economic plan for jobs and growth. Our plan focuses on:

(1) Supporting a competitive business climate. We believe that—working together—businesses, labour and government can drive change and move to a more outward-looking and innovative economy.

1520

(2) Investing in modern infrastructure: We would provide more than \$35 billion for infrastructure investments over the next three years.

(3) Investing in a highly skilled workforce: We would build on our previous achievements and create a youth job strategy to invest \$295 million over two years to promote employment opportunities—

Mr. John O'Toole: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Yes?

Mr. John O'Toole: Yes, through you, Madam Speaker: Standing order 79, when we had a programming motion here, says that: "Bills reported from the Committee of the Whole House shall stand ordered for third reading. Bills reported from standing or select committees shall be ordered for third reading unless the minister or parliamentary assistant directs that they be referred to the Committee of the Whole House."

This is section (b), which is the important part: "When a bill has been amended in any committee it shall be reprinted as the Clerk of the House directs, amendments being indicated, and shall not be further proceeded with until it has been reprinted and marked."

I'm asking for clarification—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. I'll provide you with a clarification. Very clearly at the beginning, it says, "That, notwithstanding any standing order." Thank you.

Please continue.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Well, Madam Speaker, I think what's before us is even more important than tactics like that.

We would need, and we want to continue in our focused plan. We were talking about a skilled workforce. We would build on our previous achievements and create a youth job strategy to invest \$295 million over two years to promote employment opportunities, entrepreneurship and innovation for our youth.

(4) Promoting entrepreneurship and innovation: We would build on our efforts to support a climate in which more Ontario businesses could transform ideas into innovative goods and services for global markets.

(5) Going global: We would work with businesses to promote Ontario's many export industry strengths. We have a number of multicultural communities. We have emerging markets in the world. We need to tap into that opportunity. That's why we're looking at over 60 trade missions abroad.

(6) Supporting vibrant and strong communities. We would continue to work with municipalities and local industries to help them take advantage of emerging opportunities for jobs and growth.

Madam Speaker, this is about promoting opportunities. It's not more government. It's about encouraging more businesses to stimulate their economic growth for them to continue to make those investments and create those jobs in the private sector. Over 450,000 net new jobs have been created thus far since the recession. That is our plan for jobs and growth.

Now I'd like to talk briefly about our plan to increase prosperity and build a more fair society. Ontario's economic performance and social fabric become even stronger when everyone has the opportunity to succeed and at their full potential.

A fair society is one where everyone has access to high-quality public services and where all children and youth have access to a good education. A fair society means ensuring the cost of public services does not lead to an unsustainable financial burden for future generations. It means addressing poverty. It means transforming social assistance to increase opportunities for everyone to participate in the workforce. It means working with First Nation communities and with other aboriginal groups to ensure their needs are properly understood and addressed. It means supporting Ontario's most vulnerable so that they can be more fully involved and participate in their communities. It means supporting options for people to save for retirement so that they can retire with peace of mind.

Madam Speaker, I'd now like to talk about Ontario's path to balance. We are committed to eliminating the deficit by 2017-18 in a way that is both fiscally responsible and fair. We have already been able to demonstrate significant progress. The deficit for 2012-13, the fiscal year just ended, is now estimated to be \$9.8 billion; that is a \$5-billion improvement compared with the 2012 budget forecast. This marks the fourth year in a row that we have reported a deficit lower than forecast, making us the only government in Canada to achieve this level of success. We are currently one of only two governments in Canada that is on track to beat our fiscal targets for 2012-13.

Our plan for eliminating the deficit is to manage spending effectively. Growth in program spending is projected to be less than 1% in 2012-13 for the second consecutive year. The majority of ministries, including health and education, contained growth in spending and managed well below their 2012-13 budgets. Ontario currently has the lowest program spending per capita among all Canadian provinces and governments.

We know that achieving our spending targets will require some difficult choices. Across-the-board cuts would hurt public services and undermine programs that are providing high-quality services to the public, such as health care and education. Instead, we would continue a careful review of spending to determine which programs should be enhanced or reduced. We would continue to

consult with the public after this budget, because engaging the people of Ontario on the future of their public services requires an ongoing dialogue.

The 2013 budget is our plan to create a prosperous and fair Ontario. As we move forward through a sensitive economic recovery, we propose taking a balanced approach. Our approach would allow us to make smart investments in Ontario's long-term prosperity while balancing the budget. Our approach would help protect public services, including schools and hospitals, and our approach would help Ontario seize opportunities to create jobs here at home.

This is Ontario's budget, developed by input of many Ontarians; over 600,000 were involved. This is all about creating jobs and helping people in their everyday lives.

Madam Speaker, once again, I urge all members of this House to support our plan to strengthen the economy and build a prosperous and fair Ontario for all. We all have a duty and responsibility in this House. This budget is an economic plan and a framework that speaks to the needs and the requirements of our people and the public.

All of us have a responsibility to stand together in this minority government to work together for the benefit of the people of Ontario, not as a result of partisan issues. These are not election-cycle-politics decisions; these are decisions that affect our long-term prosperity and future generations of this province. I encourage everyone to support the budget.

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

Mr. Peter Shurman: I would like to start with the customary, "I am pleased to participate in this debate," but what I will say is that we've come to the end of a long—and, I might say, tedious and misunderstood—process. I will also call it a disappointing process for me, but much more importantly, a very disappointing process for the province of Ontario.

I want to make something absolutely clear from the outset: Ontario Progressive Conservatives are against this government and we are voting against this government. It was never about a budget; it was about a government and an approach to budgets and budgeting generally.

This is the 10th budget of this government. We have never seen promises made and promises kept, and there was never a reason why we should have believed it of them this time, and we have not been surprised. That is where we were when our leader, Tim Hudak, announced that we would not be supporting this bill. Nothing has changed.

The New Democratic Party said that they believed in collaboration, that we should believe in collaboration. The NDP got it wrong, and the history of the last several months has proven that. The Liberals have created the largest debt and annual deficits in our province's history throughout their 10 years in power, and now their accomplices, the NDP, have vacated their own self-proclaimed moral high ground and thrown away the moral compass of their own design to join the Liberals down in the muck. That is precisely why people, when

you talk to them, say, "All politicians are the same." It just ain't so.

1530

Ontario's debt has doubled from \$139 billion in 2003 to \$273 billion in 2013. This debt is set to triple. Debt-per-person has gone up by \$9,000 to \$21,000 for every man, woman and child. Every once in a while, you say to yourself, "Look around and ask yourself, 'Who cares?'" Not the Liberals. Not the NDP. Well, everyone else should care. Why should they care? Because we are talking, as the finance minister was, about stability within a province, a province that has been devoid of stability for a number of years now, a province that under this regime, propped up by the NDP, will not see the implementation of anything stable because, notwithstanding his protestations, this finance minister and this government cannot bring the budget into balance in the time frame they have set for themselves or anything remotely resembling that. They're caught up in a web of their own making.

We have witnessed, over the course of most of the past year, a government hamstrung by yet another scandal of its own making. I'm talking about the power plant fiasco—the illegal email cover-up. How did this begin?

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I'd ask members, if they have conversations, to take them out of the chamber.

Continue.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Thank you, Speaker. This began, I want to remind everybody, with a legitimate request in the estimates committee for information that the people of Ontario own, by a legitimate party and legitimate representatives of it asking for it. That's all it was. We've had every kind of can and brick and boulder stuck in front of the bus every step of the way, and we still do. We will adjourn today; we'll come back in the fall, and this is not going away. It follows on what?—eHealth and Ornge and eco fees and God knows what else. This is a government that has lost the moral authority to govern, and it's a government that's being propped up by a party that wants to tell you it represents the moral compass of Ontario when there is anything but the truth in that statement.

Until now, I always thought the NDP had stood firmly on its principles. There was a standing joke that I heard probably the first week I ever spent in this Legislature. NDP and Progressive Conservatives members share the same anteroom—lobby—outside this chamber, and they used to say to us, "Well, we don't agree on very much, but we do agree on this: Our party and your party have principles, which makes us different and in common from the Liberals." That's what they used to say. That's gone.

This is a party—the one I represent—that has presented a plan, a legitimate plan for how Ontario can be put back on the right footing. We've taken great pains to do it over the course of the past year and a half—presented

12 white papers. Do they represent the sum total of everything we want to do or think should be done? Of course not; that's not the nature of white papers. But they represent a lot of things that could be done, and from them, in true consultative fashion, our party has come to conclusions that we will take into the next election and that will be a plan for Ontario to put it right.

So now what we've got is an NDP that hides under the guise of collaboration in order to what they say will advance Ontario. The only thing this budget, supported by the NDP, is going to do is hurt Ontario. The NDP has become somewhat drunk on being the power broker, and the loss for that proclivity will be dear.

It was shocking to me—shocking—that the third party voted in favour of second reading of this budget on the very same day that the privacy commissioner released her report on the fact that this government committed an illegal act as it intentionally withheld and destroyed information and then covered it up. That's the day they voted for second reading on this. This is arguably the biggest scandal yet in the history of the province of Ontario, in terms of the size and scope of dollars wasted—the dollars spent—notwithstanding eHealth and Ornge. The third party complains in this House every single day in this House about a scandal-plagued government and how it's driving Ontario into the ground. This is the ultimate pot calling the kettle black. That can now be said, because the NDP is the enabler. The party that wants to end unemployment assists in the proliferation of unemployment. "Let's help young people," they say. "Let's get \$195 million to engineer a youth employment program." Instead, this government gives them \$295 million. My attitude is: a great idea taken in singularity.

A budget is not about singularity. We have 500,000-plus people in Ontario—not necessarily youth; all kinds of people—and every one of them deserves the opportunity to work. Why single that out? Why? Because that's on the agenda of the NDP and, hey, if you're Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals, "Let's just give it to them."

Now here they are, propping up the Liberals to put their own selfish ends first. That's what the NDP has become: selfish. They say it's about collaboration—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Order. I asked you to take conversations outside the chamber.

Continue.

Mr. Peter Shurman: They say it's about collaboration. They say it's a desire of the citizens and it reflects their wish not to go to the polls. What utter nonsense. If you know anything about Ontarians, Ontarians will tell you that they hate to go to the polls on actual scheduled election days. Ontarians don't like to vote. Don't take my word for it; look at the voter turnout. It's about 50%—less, in some ridings. So it's not about whether we want to go out and vote or whether Ontarians like to go out and vote; it's about the legitimization of a government that needs to become legitimate, because, Speaker, right now, it's not.

The NDP's laundry list of demands will cost an additional \$1 billion annually in new spending initiatives. Where will this price for peace come from? That's money that is not going to expand health care; it's not going to build subways; it's not going to create jobs.

Build subways indeed: I might say a few words on that. Liberals say it'll take revenue tools. Even the NDP is against that. Revenue tools? Why don't we call it what it is? Taxes. The Liberals and the NDP are both fully accountable for the financial disaster and kicking the can down the road for future generations. I said it, Speaker, and I'll say it again: \$21,000 on the back of every single Ontarian, including the babies being born in hospitals around Ontario today. The NDP's hands are now directly tied to the downward spiral of this province's economy. Let them know it and let every Ontarian know it.

The deficit, 2010: \$14 billion; 2011: \$13 billion; 2012: a contrived deficit of \$9.8 billion, and I can say why it was contrived. Take the amount of money you saved in dealing with teachers, take accounting movements by using reserve funds, and you can make it look like anything. What's the proof point: 2013, this budget we're discussing today, an increased deficit of \$11.7 billion. The finance minister has the audacity to stand here and say that he's going to give us a balanced budget by fiscal 2017-18.

Between 2010 and 2012, revenue increased by \$7 billion, despite the deficit decreasing by only \$4.2 billion. Isn't that amazing? The Minister of Finance touts that the deficit has improved by \$5 billion. As I said, it isn't so. It's just fun with figures. He neglects to say that there are largely one-time savings, and those include \$1.5 billion from reducing liabilities associated with public sector sick day banking. Speaking of sick day banking, how about the new arrangements with teachers? How do you think that's working out? I understand that there's an awful lot of absenteeism on Monday and Friday. Put two and two together: I say that to Ontarians. All of the major ministries will see government spending increase over the next two years: health, education, post-secondary, social services, justice. The cost breakdown of the NDP demands: Take one thing alone, a 15% auto insurance cut. Fifteen per cent auto insurance—

Interjections.

1540

Mr. Peter Shurman: Listen to them applaud. How is it going to be achieved? By instructing FSCO to order the insurance industry to reduce costs by 15%. Hey, I would love to have my insurance reduced by 15%.

Do you know what happens with an insurance company or any other company that can't make a profit anymore? It stops selling what it ordinarily sells. So watch what happens in the insurance industry in the province of Ontario.

The big question still remains: How will they balance the budget on time and on schedule?

Let's talk about the Financial Accountability Office. This something that the NDP is touting.

Interjection.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Go ahead, applaud that one. Why don't I read into the record a couple of paragraphs from Christina Blizzard's column of today? She says:

"I'm not buying any of it.

"I'm not buying former Premier Dalton McGuinty's argument that he didn't know his staff had deleted all their emails.

"I'm not buying Andrea Horwath's fake outrage over the emails—only to watch her prop up this scandal-plagued government.

"The NDP leader was in defensive mode Monday, saying her party got a 'Financial Accountability Office' out of their support for the budget bill.

"Well, isn't that nice?

"If we had politicians with integrity, with a shred of honesty, we wouldn't need to send good money after bad by paying for someone to come in and keep them accountable.

"Who gave Horwath control of the budget anyway?

"She's a co-conspirator, along with Premier Kathleen Wynne, in putting forward a budget that will add \$40 billion to the debt over the next two years.

"That's unacceptable."

Look, a Financial Accountability Office? Speaker, I'm the Financial Accountability Office.

Interjection: Hear, hear.

Mr. Peter Shurman: My friend from Oxford is the Financial Accountability Office. My friend from Leeds–Grenville is the Financial Accountability Office. That's why there is an opposition. That's why there's a third party. They haven't got it straight.

How is the Financial Accountability Office going to stop people from receiving chemo drugs that are at half strength? How is the Financial Accountability Office going to stop a government from going out and spending—who knows?—a billion dollars to cancel the construction of power plants for political ends? A Financial Accountability Office can look at it forensically after the fact. It's political action that comes from the other side that keeps people in check. That's how it works.

You want to cut auto insurance by 15%? I'll tell you how: Cut fraud by \$1.5 billion. The auto insurance clause within the budget itself really comes down to what lawyers would describe as best efforts. That's what it is: best efforts. We all know, because although not all of us are lawyers, we have enough to do with legalese in this place to know, that "best efforts" means, "Hey, we'll try, but if we don't get there, sorry about that." I have news for you: They're not going to get there. The fraud in this system is what costs us that extra \$1.5 billion.

Since the beginning of the almost 10 years of Liberal tenure, revenue has increased by \$42 billion. That means that they're taxing every Ontarian more. You didn't know? And you're getting less. You didn't know? How is your electricity bill doing? But spending has increased by over \$48 billion. Increasing our deficit next year: This is not a sign to investors to come to Ontario.

When we talk about balanced budgets, what we're really talking about is sending a signal. A balanced

budget says to an investor, "It's okay to spend your money. This is a good place to be." A balanced budget says to a business person or to a board, "It's time to unlock the vault. You've got billions in the bank. Let's put it in the ground and build a new plant." "It's time for companies to expand their workforces and hire some of those 500,000 out-of-work people."

Over 50% of all Ontario government program spending right now goes to public sector labour costs. One of Premier Wynne's first moves? Wynne immediately increased spending when she took office by expanding the size of government and creating new ministries. A wage freeze? Not in the Liberal ranks.

Have you heard, Speaker, of the new elite? This is basically how Maclean's magazine, in a recent article, described the broader public sector: the new elite, people who have a remnant of the past, a defined benefit compensation plan, a defined benefit pension plan that lets you retire sometime in your fifties with somewhere between 60% and 75% of your salary. Who is paying for that? Every single Ontarian, and I include in that the 70% who have no pension benefit whatsoever. They're going to work till the day they die.

Interjection: That's us.

Mr. Peter Shurman: That's us. Public sector compensation at this point now exceeds that of the private sector by 14%. The 27% number that I've quoted in this Legislature before is the overall advantage when you factor in pensions and health and overall benefits. The new public sector elite is getting national media coverage from Maclean's magazine. The sunshine list increased by 11% in 2011, and another 11% in 2012; 8,823 people in 2012 made it on to that list anew. And what's Premier Wynne's solution? She wanted to raise the \$100,000 threshold for the sunshine list to \$150,000 so there wouldn't be so many people on it.

Let me read something else into the record before I defer to a colleague. This is from the National Post. Scott Stinson wrote an article entitled—this is also today—"Ontario Liberals Suddenly Find Cash for Unions." It says, "A week after the LCBO averted a Victoria Day-weekend strike by offering workers \$800-'signing bonuses'—the nakedly euphemistic term for a pay increase that is not, technically, a wage increase—another of Ontario's arm's-length agencies, Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corp., avoided a work stoppage at the Woodbine slots facility. OLG, too, made it happen by proposing a last-minute offer that included \$600 lump-sum payments in each of the first two years and a 1.95% wage increase in the third year."

Concluding: "So, the found money at the liquor monopoly led to found money at the gambling monopoly, and there can be little doubt that the unions representing all those other workers who agreed to two-year wage freezes in the last year of the McGuinty government watched all of this with interest."

That means we know what's coming, because we have a situation in the province of Ontario where there are 4,000 collective agreements, and as I said in this House,

when the teachers' settlements were announced about eight weeks ago, expect every one of those people to get in line and ask for their entitlements because they believe that they're entitled to their entitlements. The Premier herself said in this House on March 4, "We've been very clear that constraining public sector wages is part of what we are doing and will continue to do. That's why we're on target. The Drummond report said that if we didn't take those measures, if we didn't work to constrain costs, then we would not be able to balance the budget."

I have a piece of news: This quote is accurate, but the Liberals have taken absolutely no steps to advance this, and what we've talked about here demonstrates that they're taking steps that are quite the reverse.

Ontario is feeling the repercussions and the full cost of collapsing to unions for the past—I was going to say "nine and a half years," but Speaker, it's going to be 10 years in October. There is no transparency in these union arbitration deals. The budget doesn't give any more clarity on the full cost of these backroom negotiations. We're just in problems.

I'll give you a quick personal story on the LCBO deal. I went in last week because I, too, was afraid that, for the long weekend in May—I guess it's two weeks ago now—I'd better make sure that the Shurman family sipping wine was in stock, and so I bought a case of that particular wine at my local LCBO. On the way out, I said to the clerk, "Did you receive your signing bonus yet?" She said, "Oh, the signing bonus is not enough money. After all, they're going to take taxes off it and by the time I have it, it'll probably be \$300 or \$400." That's the grace that we get from people who have gotten wage increases from a government that said it was going to hold the line at zero.

In conclusion, let me go back to where I started. We are not voting against the budget; we're voting against a bill. But let it be clear: We are voting against a party—no, two parties that have taken Ontario down the wrong path in the face of a party that has a plan. We're voting against a government and its accomplice.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: It's my pleasure to rise and provide some comments for the New Democrats in today's debate on the programming motion or the final budget vote, whatever we want to call it. But before I actually get into my more formal remarks, I want to take a moment to stop and congratulate my fantastic team of NDP MPPs who have done such a great job over the last couple of weeks. We've got a very hard-working caucus team, and we are very, very proud of the work we've been able to do on behalf of Ontarians, because what we were able to do is achieve real results for the people of this province over the last several weeks.

1550

What does that look like? I think, first and foremost, that it looks like a Financial Accountability Office. If there's one thing that's become very apparent over the last number of months—and years, frankly—it's that this

province needs that tool, that ability to look at what the government is proposing and make sure that the figures and facts are actually true, as opposed to simply government spin and Enron accounting tricks. What we've decided to do through this process is make sure that, with this Financial Accountability Office, the people of this province today—well, maybe not today; in September, when the office is set up—will be able to have that financial accountability, have that ability to make sure that the government is actually on track with what they're telling the people about what their spending plans are. That's going to hold true, not only for the Liberals starting in September, but for every single government going forward.

I think that's a huge win for the people of Ontario, because it will prevent the kind of scandals we've seen from happening again. It will prevent things like the eHealth scandal. It will prevent things like the Ornge air ambulance scandal. It will help us to prevent problems with the dilution of chemotherapy drugs from happening. This office is something that is well deserved by the people of this province, because they told New Democrats during the process of consultation after the budget was tabled that they wanted to see their precious public money being invested in a proper way, in a way that actually made sure that the services they needed were going to be delivered, not that money was going to go to well-connected Liberal insiders, not that money was going to go to those folks who the government wanted it to go to in order to save their own seats—for example, private power companies in Oakville and Mississauga—but that their money is invested in the services they need. That Financial Accountability Office is going to help us to make sure that happens.

We think that's an important achievement. We think that's an important piece of the results we were able to get for Ontarians. Obviously the Conservatives have not been interested in getting results for Ontarians. They have not been interested in bringing a Financial Accountability Office to Ontario. They don't think it's their job to get results for people. New Democrats disagree. We think we do have to get results for people.

What else were we able to do? We were able to deliver concrete results for families. We heard loudly and clearly that there were a number of things that families were feeling very much that needed to be addressed, and so we took their advice. We recommended to the government a number of things that should be included in the budget, and, lo and behold, they were included in the budget, and we're very, very proud of that achievement.

So what are New Democrats delivering for Ontarians? We're delivering a youth jobs plan that's going to make sure that young people actually have a chance at their first job. Speaker, I've talked to so many parents over the last number of years who are very worried that their sons and daughters are still going to be in the basement watching TV when they're 25 years old, when they're 30 years old, because they can't get their foot in the door for a decent job.

It is a failure of us as a Parliament, as a Legislature, if we do not take seriously the future of our youth, and New Democrats take that very seriously. Apparently Conservatives do not, because they were not interested in getting results for young people in this province or for their parents. But New Democrats were, and we now have a youth jobs program that's going to help young people to ensure that they get that first chance in the workplace. We're very, very proud of that.

Speaker, you just heard from the Conservatives, who say that they much prefer to see auto insurance continue to increase, that they much prefer to see people struggle to pay their bills because that auto insurance bill, that premium, goes up year over year over year. They would rather see a system that's broken and that's frankly ripping off drivers in Ontario thrive because it's good for the insurance industry. It is not good for the people of this province, and New Democrats worked hard to get a 15% reduction in auto insurance rates. We delivered that to the people of Ontario, and we're proud of that.

Another thing people told us loudly and clearly is that they're very concerned about the home care system in this province. They have seen too many of their relatives, too many of the relatives of their friends and their neighbours languish in their homes without getting the kind of home care supports they need and deserve.

What New Democrats did is, we delivered on a better home care system for the people of Ontario so that their loved ones are going to get timely, expedient home care services because that's what they deserve. That's what New Democrats have been able to deliver for them in this budget process.

But apparently, Conservatives are not interested in getting real results on home care, just like they're not interested in getting real results in auto insurance, and they're not interested in getting any results when it comes to youth jobs.

The reality is, we were put here by the people of this province for a particular reason, which is to work on their behalf, to get things done for them. New Democrats took that responsibility seriously. We took it seriously last time around in the last budget, and we took it seriously this time around. I think Ontarians can see very clearly who it is that is prepared to take the tougher path, make the tougher decisions, roll up our sleeves, put our noses to the grindstone and get things done for Ontarians, and that's New Democrats because that's what we're here for.

It's interesting, Speaker, because there were some things that New Democrats wanted to see in this budget that we didn't see, and it was quite surprising for us. We told the government, "You don't have to cut hospitals to be able to pay for better home care. You can actually stop letting CEOs in hospitals have their salaries rise and rise and rise. Let's put a cap on those CEO salaries in hospitals and use those dollars to help boost our home care system."

Liberals preferred to cut hospitals, cut beds in hospitals and cut jobs in hospitals in order to pay for home

care. New Democrats think that's the wrong thing to do. They didn't take our advice when it came to putting caps on CEO salaries in hospitals. They didn't take our advice when it came to streamlining the administration of CCACs and LHINs and using those dollars to fund improvements in home care. They didn't take our advice when it came to bulk purchasing within the CCACs and LLHNs and using those savings to improve our home care system.

No, Speaker, the Liberals take the easy path and decide that they're just going to start cutting hospitals in order to pay for home care. They call that a transformation in health care. We call it a big mistake that's going to cause real problems for the people of Ontario's access to hospitals, and we're quite concerned about it.

Another thing that the government refused to do is implement our suggestions, our recommendations, around closing of corporate loopholes and also to make sure the new loopholes that they're about to open for corporations don't actually open in the next year or two. Again, Liberals talk the talk, but when it comes to making those hard decisions, the hard decisions that say everybody has to pay their fair share to make sure we have home care for seniors, to make sure that we have jobs for young people—that's what New Democrats believe. Liberals obviously do not because they continue to allow these corporate loopholes to exist and, in fact, are looking forward, I believe, to opening new corporate tax loopholes and beginning to reduce corporate taxes yet again and beginning to take away the fairness taxes that we were able to put in the last budget.

It's a formula that doesn't work, and I think this government needs to recognize that they need to rethink what their perspective is when it comes to who needs to pay the burden of these services that the people in this province deserve and expect. I would say that it needs to be a fairly shared burden, and that's one of the things that New Democrats firmly believe in and we're going to work towards as we go forward.

Look, Speaker, we are going to go forward. We are going to spend the next couple of weeks of this month, then there's going to be about a month of silence and then we're going to spend a couple of weeks in August making sure that the committee that is looking into the gas plant scandal is doing its work. We need to continue to look for answers at that committee.

Liberals decided they weren't going to have a public inquiry. They weren't going to take our advice and put a public inquiry in place. We think that was a big mistake. All it left us with, though, Speaker, in terms of a process to get the answers for Ontario, is the committee. I have to say, I am darned proud of the work that New Democrats have been doing on that committee. In fact, it was Peter Tabuns, the MPP for Toronto-Danforth—we all know this—who asked the Information and Privacy Commissioner to look into the issue of missing documents and missing emails, emails that we discovered later were destroyed by the chiefs of staff of the Minister of Energy and a chief of staff of the Premier, as well as his energy

adviser. If it wasn't for the hard work that was done in committee, people would not know how deep the cover-up goes. I believe there are still answers to be found. We still do not know how deep that rabbit hole goes, and we are going to continue to do our work to get the answers for people.

1600

Unfortunately, Liberals and Conservatives decided that, in the month of July, they'd rather work on their golf games than actually work on a committee to get the answer for Ontarians. Bottom line: New Democrats want to sit every single week of this summer so that we can get to the answers for Ontarians, because that's our job, and that's our responsibility. So it's unfortunate that the more important thing for these folks is their golf handicap, as my colleague from the riding of Essex has said a couple of times in this chamber.

We know what our job is. Our job is not only to deliver results for people like we did in the budget, and our job is not only to make sure that accountability measures are in place going forward so that the kinds of scandals that we've seen are not happening in Ontario in the future; it's also to make sure that the answers that people deserve are actually discovered, that we actually get to the bottom of what happened with those gas plants. That's why we are definitely of the opinion that that committee should be meeting more and not less and that the committee is more important than the greens.

You know what? It is our job to get results for people. It is our job to get results for families in this province, and we've actually respected that job. We've actually done the work that we needed to do to make sure that we got those results. You know what, Speaker? It wasn't always easy. It has not necessarily been an easy path. But as I said, we took our responsibility seriously, we rolled up our sleeves, and we did do the hard work that got those results. We're proud of that.

You know what? We had other results, too, and other victories. Just the other day, the Minister of Health was crowing about a new investment to get more inspectors in long-term care. She was basically re-announcing a commitment that the government made three years ago in terms of making sure long-term-care facilities are properly inspected. Well, it was my critic, the member for Nickel Belt, who actually put the government on the hot seat when it came to the fact that they were breaking their own legislation about inspections in long-term care. That's the kind of results that New Democrats get for Ontarians.

It's the same thing when we put the pressure on the government in terms of their game-playing—no pun—around whether or not they were going to be bonusing a casino in downtown Toronto. It was our pressure, the pressure from members like the member from Trinity-Spadina, the member from Parkdale-High Park and the member for Davenport, who put pressure on this government to come clean when it came to their casino plans. We are proud of what we were able to deliver for the people of the Toronto area who were very concerned

that a downtown casino was going to be something that they were going to have to face down. We made sure that the people had their issue dealt with here in the Legislature.

Another big thing that New Democrats have worked on where we got results for people is in the review of what happened with the watered-down chemotherapy drugs here in Ontario. Let's face it: It was the hard work of New Democrats at that committee as well that peeled through the information and is trying to get to the bottom of why this happened and how we can make sure it doesn't happen again. It's not because it's easy work to do, not because it doesn't take any time—it takes time, and it's hard work—but because we're committed to getting the answers for people and making sure that problems are solved so we don't have these kinds of issues occurring over and over again in this province. That's the kind of work New Democrats do.

The horse racing industry is another one. It's an issue that—this government, once again, made a very bad mistake when it came to the horse racing industry. We pushed and we pushed and we pushed. We've been fighting with those horse people for years now to get the government to reverse their decision. I'm pleased to hear there is some sense now of hope that the government is reversing in its tracks on that bad decision because of the pressure that the member for Essex and that the member for Hamilton East-Stoney Creek have been putting on this government to reverse that wrong-headed decision and save the horse racing industry here in Ontario.

Another big issue that we've been fighting for, on behalf of northern communities—the northeast anyway—is the ONTC. This is another decision that was a mistake that this government made. It's another decision that we are trying to have reversed. It's another decision that they blindly made, with complete disregard for northerners and their access to transportation corridors and transportation opportunities. The member for Timmins-James Bay, the member for Timiskaming-Cochrane and the member for Algoma-Manitoulin have been relentless in the pressure that they've been putting on this government, and I'm hearing now that there's a reversal on the way when it comes to the ONTC, possibly.

Speaker, we are proud of the work that we have been able to do on behalf of Ontarians. Is that work over? Absolutely not. I can tell you, for sure, that we would rather sit here with some bruises and some scars and some frustration because of the kind of rancour that we get from, particularly, the other opposition party—but we are proud, and we'll wear those scars with pride because we got them while we got results for the people of this province. That's what we're here for. That's what it's all about.

I'm going to end by just saying one of the things that's really obvious. When we got here in a minority parliament, we had a choice to make. We could either step to the side, sit on the sidelines, throw arrows, throw insults, hang from the chandeliers, scream until we turned blue in the face, and try to make such political hay that it helped us politically in terms of our partisan interests. We didn't

do that. The Progressive Conservative Party did that. They felt that that was their job. We felt that our job was something quite different. Our choice was the other choice. Our choice was the choice that said, "Our political partisan interests are not the priority. The priority is actually getting some results for the people of Ontario, respecting the decision they made in terms of a minority Parliament, and making sure that we can actually get some things happening to solve some problems and make life better for the people of this province." That's what we decided to do, and we're proud of the choice that we made. We said, "Yes, we can." They said, "No, we won't."

We are proud today to vote on a motion that is going to bring this session to an end, and it's going to bring it to an end with a number of victories—not for us, but victories for the people of this province.

You can sit on the sidelines and watch the parade go by, or you can actually jump in and be part of making this province better. We decided to do that. We decided that we were going to get results. The other party, the Conservatives, have nothing to show for the last session, except maybe hoarse voices and falling-out hair.

Speaker, I want to end by saying thank to you my New Democrat colleagues. And thank you to the people of Ontario for participating so vigorously in our consultation processes, both before the budget and once the budget had been tabled. It's because of your feedback and input that we were able to make some really great things happen for this province, and we appreciate that.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate? The Chair recognizes the member Elgin–Middlesex–London.

1610

Interjections.

Mr. Jeff Yurek:—shut me down, but I'll still be able to speak on behalf of our party. It's important that we understand the nature of the budget and bill and why it is not only a practical point, but also a moral imperative to not support this budget.

I want to begin by talking about the relationship between the government's finances and the economy. Ontario's economy is complex and multifaceted. Every Ontarian has an interest in ensuring our economy is strong and thrives. A strong economy employs more people, results in better wages and generates healthy levels of tax revenue to pay for our schools and hospitals.

These past five years have been challenging times in economic terms. While Ontario's economy is diverse and strong, the challenges of the past five years have exposed some significant weaknesses. I'm afraid to say that many of those weaknesses happen to be on the policy side of things.

Let me be clear: The government does not drive the economy. However, the government's success relies on the conditions the government creates. A government can either put in place policies that cultivate a healthy economy, or undermine it. Unfortunately, as the evidence suggests, this government has consistently made decisions that contributed to the latter.

For instance, we need only look at the government's record of fiscal mismanagement. When this government came to power, it had big plans. It promised everything to everybody and was determined to spend money to keep everyone happy. When times were economically good, this government went to the taxpayer to get more money to finance all its spending commitments.

Despite signing a pledge during the 2003 election to not raise taxes, Premier McGuinty went to the taxpayer with new taxes, like the health tax and eco fees. From 2004 to 2005, revenue increased 11%, according to Statistics Canada. Times were good, and this government felt there was an endless pot of money it had access to.

What did they spend the money on? Between 2004 and 2011, the average annual growth in total wages for the public sector was just under 5%. It's important to note that the average annual inflation rate at the same period was 1.94%, so wage growth far outpaced rises in the cost of living.

I understand the government's desire to spend more and more on public sector wages. Let us say it's a sense of political opportunism. They wanted to reward the groups and the organizations that helped them get elected. Unfortunately, this government rewarded them using billions of additional dollars taken from the taxpayer.

The problem with this tax-and-spend approach is that it represents a rise in structural spending, structural spending, of course, being the type of spending that is for the most part fixed, despite fluctuations in the economy. High levels of structural spending exposes a jurisdiction to excessively large deficits and a compromised financial position in the event of an economic downturn. At 55 cents of every dollar being spent on public sector compensation, I think we can all agree this is unsustainable.

Of course, in 2008, the markets crashed, plunging most of the developed world into a recession and exposing the irresponsibility of this government. Now, I don't blame this government for the recession, but I do admonish them for ignoring that recessions do occur and neglecting to prepare our province's finances accordingly.

I have mentioned a few times in the House the fable of the grasshopper and the ant. Everybody knows it. The grasshopper frolics all spring and fall while the ant prepares for the winter. Soon winter comes, and the grasshopper perishes. Just like the grasshopper, this government has failed to acknowledge that winter is coming and that recessions do occur. As a result, Ontario has faced record large deficits that have shaken the confidence of our finances.

When we look at the data from Statistics Canada, we get a more realistic picture of this government's financial management. StatsCan published the actual data at the end of each year. That is after all the cheques have been cashed and all the receipts have been accounted for.

What's interesting to note is that this government, despite claims otherwise, has never taken in more revenue than expenditures. Every year, after all the taxes

were collected and expenses were paid, there was a shortfall. Every time you have more expenses than income, you add to your debt.

Every year, this Liberal government has added to Ontario's debt. Over the entire course of their time in power, they have doubled Ontario's debt. It now stands at \$273 billion, or 37.5% of GDP.

Drummond has warned us that if spending is not significantly curbed, we would hit a total debt of \$411 billion, or 51% of GDP. Ontario's current debt-to-GDP stands at the same level Greece's did in the 1980s.

This government had the opportunity to set Ontario in a different direction, to define itself independent of the McGuinty legacy. However, they failed to do so, and it has now become the McGuinty-Wynne legacy. Spending has increased \$3.6 billion, with no credible plan to achieve balance. In fact, RBC economists have noted that the back end of the Wynne-McGuinty budget was "aspirational" in nature. This was just a fancy way of saying the government hopes it'll magically be able to balance the budget in the last two years of its five-year plan after it continues to increase spending and accumulate more debt.

Premier Wynne failed to differentiate herself from McGuinty. She pushes the hard decisions down the road to balancing this budget. How else did she fail to differentiate herself? I think we can all remember the NDP coming forward with their laundry list of demands, demands that would cost the taxpayers \$1 billion. Did Wynne stand up to the NDP and tell them that the health of Ontario's economy depended on spending restraint? Did she tell the NDP that if Ontario doesn't get its fiscal house in order we'll continue to lose jobs and drive investment out of this province? Did she say that we simply cannot afford \$1 billion in additional spending? The answer is no.

Instead, Wynne did what McGuinty did whenever he faced a tough decision between doing what is right for the province and pandering to a group to keep his government afloat: She caved to every single one of the NDP's demands, and the NDP sold everything they believed in and stood for for \$1 billion. This approach to fiscal management is a proven failure.

In a survey by the CFIB, 68% of respondents indicated the debt and deficit was one of the most important issues affecting their business. The reason is simple: A government with a balanced budget has the capacity to create conditions that help these businesses expand. When they expand, they hire more people, which ultimately drives our economy. This translates into more tax revenue for the government to spend on hospitals and education. This is fundamental and a practical process. Yet this government has blatantly abandoned such an approach in favour of more spending. This budget fails to instill confidence in Ontario's finances. Therefore, it fails to encourage job creation and pushes investors out of this province. It continues to increase the \$20,000 of debt my daughter is now responsible for and every single child in this province.

For these reasons, I cannot and will not support this budget. The other reason I will not be supporting this budget is a little more straightforward. In fact, I feel there's a very basic moral obligation to oppose this bill. The fact of the matter is this Wynne-McGuinty government has broken the law. It's plain and simple and written in black and white by this province's well-respected independent privacy commissioner.

I, in good conscience, cannot support the agenda of a corrupt government. The actions of this Liberal government have wasted \$585 billion in taxpayer money all to save a couple of seats in Toronto—excuse me, \$585 million; it will be "billion" if we keep these guys in power. The Liberals then went on to great efforts to cover it up, and now we have a scandal that people are paralleling to the Watergate scandal. The Ontario people don't deserve this from the government.

Unfortunately, it would appear the NDP don't feel the same way. For all their talk about accountability, they refuse to hold the government accountable to the people they ultimately work for, the people of Ontario. I understand that the NDP do not agree with my assessment of spending or how a balanced budget strengthens our economy, and that's fine. But I think we have the same perspective when it comes to the law. They know the Liberals have broken the law and they should do the right thing and vote against this budget. If they support this budget, they are validating the illegal actions of the Liberals and, as far as I'm concerned, they are complicit.

I'll finish by making a plea to the NDP: Do the right thing. Hold this government to account and vote against the budget.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: I'm pleased to provide a few minutes of comments in addition to those already put on the record by my colleagues from Thornhill and from Elgin–Middlesex–London. I'm going to take a little bit of a different approach because I think I've put my comments on the record about this government's budgetary policy—I think during today's question period, my leader, the leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition, the member for Niagara West–Glanbrook, Tim Hudak, brought forward some excellent questions to the Premier and also some comments to the leader of the third party about how this session has really opened many Ontarians' eyes.

Quite frankly, we've got two OPP investigations. To me, it's unprecedented. For us not to be in a position to be able to continue the work in this Legislature, past a vote today, I think is criminal.

1620

However, I'm going to use my time to talk about the member for Simcoe–Grey, Mr. Wilson, our House leader in the official opposition.

There's been lots of talk about House leaders. When we discuss the business of the Legislature, the 105 members who are still here—we've got a couple of seats vacant—many people talk about how this has been referred to House leaders. This has been a decision that

rests in front of House leaders. I want to compliment my House leader. I think we were pretty clear in the meetings that Mr. Hudak and the Premier had—that we were miles apart in terms of budget policy for the province should come as no surprise. We took the four months that the House prorogued to deal with some policy. We put some very, very innovative policies forward, and the government just totally ignored those good ideas.

Again, I want to mention the member for Simcoe–Grey, Mr. Wilson, our House leader. Regardless of how we vote on this motion, he's tried and done an exceptional job of trying to move forward; as an experienced legislator—someone who's been here for a number of years—he's tried, with what little consensus we have, to make things work. He has brought forward to his counterparts—Mr. Milloy, the government House leader, and Mr. Bisson, the House leader of the New Democratic Party—a number of positions we would have supported, had we been able to have the NDP and Liberals support us. He made it very clear in some of his negotiations on Bill 14, the co-op housing act, that we were prepared to have that bill go through second reading and bring it back for third reading after it went to committee briefly.

As well, the Local Food Act: I think a number of our caucus members have expressed our desire to see that act move forward. Granted, the member for Oxford had some suggestions on what needed to be passed; the member for Nepean–Carleton as well on food literacy; the member for Sarnia–Lambton had some suggestions in terms of food banks and farmers—all very good ideas that needed co-operation from the other two parties to move forward and go to committee.

In terms of private members' bills, after the 2011 election, we actually had some co-operation—very quickly after the election, Mr. Colle's bill for Jewish Heritage Month and my bill for Major General Isaac Brock were passed lickety-split. All three parties agreed and they were passed. Then later on in that session, we had a programming motion that we never did get to pass, where the NDP had a private member's bill; Mr. Bailey, the member for Sarnia–Lambton, had his One Call bill passed, and then the House prorogued.

We showed that, regardless of how the budgetary policy of this government differs from ours, our House leader, Mr. Wilson, was able to make inroads with the government House leader and the House leader of the NDP—that didn't happen this time.

Mr. Hardeman has tabled his carbon monoxide bill five times—five times it's been in front of the government. The government has made changes. We've agreed with those changes. My bill, Bill 70, on spousal exemption has been put forward, passed by all parties at second reading. I've sat down with the government. We've made some changes that we both can agree with. Those bills will sit idle all summer, and it's a crime that we couldn't have moved those forward.

The government even finally told us some of the bills that they were interested in, and we were quite willing to let some of those go and move forward as part of all-party agreement. Ms. Albanese, the member for York

South–Weston; Mr. Craiton, the member for Niagara Falls—he's tabled his bill six times. I think there was some agreement by Mr. Wilson that we should move some of those forward. As well, Mr. Dhillon, Ms. Elliott and Mr. Prue—the members for Brampton West, Whitby–Oshawa and Beaches–East York—there was a human resource professional bill that I think we had some general consensus that we wanted to move that forward. Even though the government picked up the member for Nickel Belt's tanning bed bill and had made some announcements about the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek's sprinklers-in-nursing-homes bill—even though they had said they would take those on themselves, there was also some discussion regarding the member for Beaches–East York's tip-out bill and the member for Hamilton East–Stoney Creek's child entertainers bills. Again, those bills are not moving forward. They're not going to committee. I think that's a shame. Certainly Mr. Wilson, our House leader, was quite willing to move those forward, with some consensus.

Proclamation bills: I've sat in the Legislative Assembly committee. There's my binder for Legislative Assembly, talking about changes to the standing orders. It's a joke. Proclamation bills, as far as I'm concerned—and this is just my own opinion. I think all proclamations should go to the table. We should pick a percentage, either 50% or a supermajority of 66%. We should sign on; when we get that number, they should come up. We should have a 15-minute debate, vote on second and third reading, and be done with those proclamations. They shouldn't be sitting on the order paper habitually.

We were quite free and quite interested in talking about passing Ms. Damerla's Pope John Paul II Day—the member for Mississauga East–Cooksville. First Responders' Day, the member for Newmarket–Aurora, Mr. Klees: That's a bill that should have been passed. Sikh Heritage Month, Mr. Singh, the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton: That should have been passed. There are other bills. I've got a flag bill. Mr. Singh has got a meningitis awareness bill. The member for Scarborough–Agincourt, Ms. Wong, has a children and youth day. There should be no reason, in a minority Parliament, that we shouldn't be able to have those three House leaders sit down and decide on some very simple proclamations. We make ourselves look foolish because we can't seem to settle down on something as bloody easy as a proclamation.

Finally, Speaker, in a couple of minutes, I just want to again talk about the member for Simcoe–Grey, our House leader. He was quite prepared to have committees work. In the last session, we were able to have some consensus on committees meeting. We've got general government, where we're dealing with gridlock, where we're dealing with the ARA, and again there's no consensus to move those committees forward. Estimates: We had brought forward some ideas about sitting four or five days. SCOFEA: There was a Bill 74 that was passed; I think some members in the government had said that maybe we could have finance meeting. Again, social policy: While the LHIN review and the chemotherapy

bill are in front of that right now, I think we could have had consensus to move local food out of social policy and get it into a committee that could actually have hearings and go across the province.

I think it's sad that we can't have consensus on bills that we agree with in general terms—granted, there will be amendments—simple proclamations. I think it's absolutely ridiculous, and we look foolish as legislators that we can't agree in the last bit of the session.

Finally, the select committee on developmental services: I think it's criminal that we have to deal a select committee when all parties sat here on private members' day and agreed to it. Surely to goodness the three House leaders, especially the government House leader and the NDP—

Mr. Jim Wilson: I agreed to all of it.

Mr. Steve Clark: He agreed to every single thing, John; he did. He agreed. The budget decision was made. They decided nothing else was going to get passed. They decided no government bills were going to get passed, no private members' bills were going to be passed, no proclamations were going to be passed. You know what? Quite frankly, people in this province have—

Interjections.

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

Mr. Steve Clark: Mr. Wilson can look all Ontarians in the eye and tell them exactly what he proposed. Mr. Milloy will have to speak for himself and Mr. Bisson will have to speak for himself.

But I tell you, I think that we could have done Ontarians a service to rise above some of the rhetoric that's taking place at the municipal and federal levels. I think we could have done the right thing, co-operated and gotten some of these bills passed. I think it's disgraceful.

Interjections.

Mr. Steve Clark: Listen, this government is under two OPP investigations. You guys have got nothing to yap to me about.

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

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Order. Minister, come to order.

Pursuant to the order of the House dated Wednesday, June 5, 2013, I am now required to put the question.

Mr. Sousa has moved third reading of Bill 65, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various Acts. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1630 to 1635.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All those in favour of the motion will rise one at a time, please, and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura
Armstrong, Teresa J.
Balkissoon, Bas
Bartolucci, Rick
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Bisson, Gilles
Bradley, James J.
Broten, Laurel C.
Campbell, Sarah
Cansfield, Donna H.
Chan, Michael
Chiarelli, Bob
Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Crack, Grant
Craitor, Kim
Damerla, Djipika
Del Duca, Steven
Delaney, Bob
Dhillon, Vic
Dickson, Joe
DiNovo, Cheri

Duguid, Brad
Fife, Catherine
Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Forster, Cindy
Gerretsen, John
Gélinas, France
Horwath, Andrea
Hoskins, Eric
Jaczek, Helena
Jeffrey, Linda
Kwinter, Monte
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
Mangat, Amrit
Mantha, Michael
Marchese, Rosario
Matthews, Deborah
Mauro, Bill
McMeekin, Ted
McNeely, Phil
Meilleur, Madeleine
Miller, Paul

Milloy, John
Moridi, Reza
Murray, Glen R.
Naqvi, Yasir
Natyshak, Taras
Oraziotti, David
Piruzza, Teresa
Prue, Michael
Qaadri, Shafiq
Sandals, Liz
Schein, Jonah
Sergio, Mario
Singh, Jagmeet
Sousa, Charles
Tabuns, Peter
Taylor, Monique
Vanhof, John
Wong, Soo
Wynne, Kathleen O.
Zimmer, David

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

Nays

Arnott, Ted
Bailey, Robert
Barrett, Toby
Chudleigh, Ted
Clark, Steve
Dunlop, Garfield
Elliott, Christine
Fedeli, Victor
Hardeman, Ernie
Harris, Michael
Hillier, Randy
Hudak, Tim

Jackson, Rod
Jones, Sylvia
Klees, Frank
Leone, Rob
MacLaren, Jack
MacLeod, Lisa
McDonell, Jim
McKenna, Jane
McNaughton, Monte
Miller, Norm
Milligan, Rob E.
Munro, Julia

Nicholls, Rick
O'Toole, John
Ouellette, Jerry J.
Pettapiece, Randy
Scott, Laurie
Shurman, Peter
Smith, Todd
Thompson, Lisa M.
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Yakabuski, John
Yurek, Jeff

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 64; the nays are 36.

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

Third reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

VISITOR

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

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity.

In the members' gallery west today, we have a friend from Nova Scotia here, Jamie Baillie, who is the leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Nova Scotia, an old friend of mine. I appreciate him being here today.

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

I would like to offer to the members and to their families a safe and healthy summer.

This House stands adjourned until Monday, September 9, 2013, at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1640.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Dave Levac

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Tonia Grannum, Trevor Day, Anne Stokes

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough–Sud-Ouest	
Best, Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Del Duca, Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Attorney General / Procureur général
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment / Ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et de l'Emploi
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	Chair of Cabinet / Présidente du Conseil des ministres Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Rural Affairs / Ministre des Affaires rurales
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGuinty, Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Milligan, Rob E. (PC)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Millroy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement

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

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Vic Dhillon, Michael Harris
Rob Leone, Bill Mauro
Taras Natyshak, Taras Natyshak
Rick Nicholls, Michael Prue
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Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Sarah Campbell, Donna H. Cansfield
Mike Colle, Rosario Marchese
Laurie Scott, Todd Smith
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

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permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Joe Dickson
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Joe Dickson, Jim McDonell
Phil McNeely, Paul Miller
Randy Pettapiece, Monique Taylor
Lisa M. Thompson
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la justice**

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

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permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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

**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 Qaadri
Jagmeet Singh
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

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

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

Continued from back cover

Special report, Information and Privacy

Commissioner

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac).....2698

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

Access to information

Mr. Tim Hudak2698

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....2699

Access to information

Mr. Tim Hudak2700

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....2700

Access to information

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....2701

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....2701

Government accountability

Ms. Andrea Horwath.....2702

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne.....2702

Government accountability

Ms. Lisa MacLeod2702

Hon. John Milloy2703

Executive compensation

Mme France Gélinas2703

Hon. Deborah Matthews2703

Children's services

Mr. Kim Craitor2704

Hon. Teresa Piruzza2704

Access to information

Ms. Sylvia Jones2705

Hon. John Milloy2705

Economic development

Ms. Catherine Fife.....2705

Hon. Eric Hoskins.....2705

Environmental research

Mr. Bill Mauro2706

Hon. Laurel C. Broten.....2706

Services for the developmentally disabled

Mr. Toby Barrett2707

Hon. Ted McMeekin.....2707

Elevator safety

Mr. Taras Natyshak.....2707

Hon. Tracy MacCharles2707

Research and innovation

Ms. Soo Wong.....2708

Hon. Reza Moridi.....2708

Ontario Northland Transportation Commission

Mr. Victor Fedeli.....2708

Hon. Charles Sousa.....2709

Hon. David Oraziotti2709

Pan Am Games

Mr. Rosario Marchese2709

Hon. Charles Sousa2709

Mr. Paul Miller.....2709

Legislative pages

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)2710

Correction of record

Mr. Rob Leone2710

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS /
PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS**

Mr. Gilles Bisson2710

Ms. Catherine Fife.....2710

**MEMBERS' STATEMENTS /
DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS**

Renewable energy

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson2710

Steel industry

Mr. Paul Miller.....2711

Ontario Craft Beer Week

Ms. Helena Jaczek.....2711

East Wellington Family Health Team

Mr. Ted Arnott2711

Sexual assault

Ms. Catherine Fife.....2711

Long-term care

Mr. Bill Mauro2712

BookLore

Ms. Sylvia Jones.....2712

Lori Synes-Taraba

Mr. Kim Craitor2712

Wind turbines

Ms. Laurie Scott2713

Special report, Ombudsman

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac)2713

**REPORTS BY COMMITTEES /
RAPPORTS DES COMITÉS**

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic
Affairs**

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn2713

Report adopted2713

**Prosperous and Fair Ontario Act (Budget
Measures), 2013, Bill 65, Mr. Sousa / Loi de 2013
pour un Ontario prospère et équitable (mesures
budgétaires), projet de loi 65, M. Sousa**

Hon. Charles Sousa2713

Mr. Peter Shurman2715

Ms. Andrea Horwath	2718
Mr. Jeff Yurek	2721
Mr. Steve Clark.....	2722
Third reading agreed to.....	2724
Visitor	
Ms. Lisa MacLeod.....	2724

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Tuesday 11 June 2013 / Mardi 11 juin 2013

Order of business	
Hon. John Milloy	2687
Terra Paving Inc. Act, 2013, Bill Pr5, Mr. Shurman	
Second reading agreed to	2687
Terra Paving Inc. Act, 2013, Bill Pr5, Mr. Shurman	
Third reading agreed to	2687
Beechwood Cemetery Company Act, 2013, Bill Pr8, Mr. McNeely	
Second reading agreed to	2687
Beechwood Cemetery Company Act, 2013, Bill Pr8, Mr. McNeely	
Third reading agreed to	2687
Marsh & Co. Hospitality Realty Inc. Act, 2013, Bill Pr10, Ms. Jaczek	
Second reading agreed to	2687
Marsh & Co. Hospitality Realty Inc. Act, 2013, Bill Pr10, Ms. Jaczek	
Third reading agreed to	2687
Royal Conservatory of Music Act, 2013, Bill Pr11, Mrs. Cansfield	
Second reading agreed to	2687
Royal Conservatory of Music Act, 2013, Bill Pr11, Mrs. Cansfield	
Third reading agreed to	2688
Universal Health Consulting Inc. Act, 2013, Bill Pr12, Mr. O'Toole	
Second reading agreed to	2688
Universal Health Consulting Inc. Act, 2013, Bill Pr12, Mr. O'Toole	
Third reading agreed to	2688
Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada Act, 2013, Bill Pr13, Mr. Crack	
Second reading agreed to	2688
Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada Act, 2013, Bill Pr13, Mr. Crack	
Third reading agreed to	2688
Aspen Drywall Inc. Act, 2013, Bill Pr14, Mr. O'Toole	
Second reading agreed to	2688
Aspen Drywall Inc. Act, 2013, Bill Pr14, Mr. O'Toole	
Third reading agreed to	2688
Triple "D" Holdings Ltd. Act, 2013, Bill Pr17, Mr. Colle	
Second reading agreed to	2688

Triple "D" Holdings Ltd. Act, 2013, Bill Pr17, Mr. Colle	
Third reading agreed to	2688

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Stronger Protection for Ontario Consumers Act, 2013, Bill 55, Ms. MacCharles / Loi de 2013 renforçant la protection du consommateur ontarien, projet de loi 55, Mme MacCharles	
Mr. Rosario Marchese	2689
Hon. Tracy MacCharles	2690
Mr. John O'Toole	2690
Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong	2691
Hon. Linda Jeffrey	2691
Mr. Rosario Marchese	2691
Ms. Laurie Scott	2691
Mr. Gilles Bisson	2693
Hon. Mario Sergio	2693
Mr. Ted Chudleigh	2693
Mr. Jagmeet Singh	2694
Ms. Laurie Scott	2694
Mr. Rob E. Milligan	2694
Mr. Jagmeet Singh	2695
Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn	2696
Ms. Laurie Scott	2696
Mr. Rosario Marchese	2696
Mr. Rob E. Milligan	2696
Mrs. Jane McKenna	2697
Second reading debate deemed adjourned	2698

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Mrs. Laura Albanese	2698
Hon. Yasir Naqvi	2698
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	2698
Hon. Yasir Naqvi	2698
Ms. Sarah Campbell	2698
Mr. Gilles Bisson	2698
Hon. Deborah Matthews	2698
Hon. Teresa Piruzza	2698

Continued on inside back cover