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Thursday 1 May 2014

Jeudi 1^{er} mai 2014

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
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Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 1 May 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 1^{er} mai 2014

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

INFRASTRUCTURE FOR JOBS
AND PROSPERITY ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR L'INFRASTRUCTURE
AU SERVICE DE L'EMPLOI
ET DE LA PROSPÉRITÉ

Resuming the debate adjourned on March 27, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 141, An Act to enact the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2013 / Projet de loi 141, Loi édictant la Loi de 2013 sur l'infrastructure au service de l'emploi et de la prospérité.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): When this item of business was last debated, the member from Barrie had completed his speech and we were about to begin questions and comments. Without his presence today, we now look to further debate.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It's my pleasure to add a few words to Bill 141, the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act. Basically, this bill talks about the procurement of big infrastructure projects and says that we should have a plan in the future for big infrastructure projects, because we know that we've had some serious issues with some big infrastructure projects. But the bill, in itself, does not tell us exactly what the plan will be. The bill tells us that we should have a plan.

It also makes a little bit of a change regarding the use of architects in our province, and it also opens the door to looking at trades, but that's all it does. We don't know how things will change for trades, we don't know how things will change for architects, and we certainly don't know what the infrastructure plan for the next 10 years, five years or even next year is going to look like.

But one thing we know for sure is that this idea that P3 is the way to go forward for infrastructure is deeply embedded into this Liberal government's way of moving forward with infrastructure, and it becomes even more embedded once you look at what they're trying to do with Bill 141, the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act.

Well, let me talk to you, Speaker, about what P3 means from the ground up. What does that private-public partnership, which is a 3P, really mean when infrastructure in Ontario is built that way, rather than the regular way of doing things where the government would hire contractors, they would build the infrastructure, and the government would own it, maintain it and keep ownership of it?

They have changed the name. They now call it alternate procurement financing—APF; I've forgotten—

Hon. Teresa Piruzza: AFP.

M^{me} France Gélinas: —thank you—alternate financing and procurement, but it's the same thing. It's a P3, just under a different name. I call it P3; you can call it whatever you want; it's the same thing. It's private-public partnership. For some reason, there is this ideology that if you bring the private sector in, all things are going to be better, no delays will happen, things will be on time and on budget. Basically, what those deals do is that, because construction is an ongoing thing, because you cannot see into the future of sometimes a one-, two- or three-year project exactly how things will do, the government gives whoever builds a premium to assume the risk so that they're on time and on budget.

At the centre of it is: How much money do you pay for that premium for them to assume the risk? This is something pretty intangible. How much risk is there? Well, as you become better and better at framing infrastructure projects, you would think that the government—the Minister of Transportation is just going by; sorry, Minister of Infrastructure. You would figure that there is a capacity and knowledge within his ministry, and as you do more and more of those projects you become better and better, so that the risks diminish. But that's not how P3 alternate procurement and financing works. What happens is that the people of Ontario, the taxpayers, through the government, agree to pay a premium so that the construction company, and usually their consortium, assume the risk.

As I said, this is something pretty intangible. Everybody can tell you how much a two-by-four costs and how much a load of cement costs. Those, we can shop around. They have a fixed price. We know what influences the price of wood, nails, cement, steel and everything else. But risk? It's way out there in the grey decision-making zone, and frankly, it's a bit of a guessing game, with more lawyers involved than you could ever dream of. This is how we end up with P3s, where the taxpayer is on the hook for hundreds of millions of dollars for things of

no value, for a consortium to have assigned risk that may or may not materialize.

I happen to be on public accounts. Public accounts is the committee that looks at the work of the Auditor General. The Auditor General knows a thing or two about a balance sheet. He—now she—knows a thing or two about whether the taxpayers of Ontario are getting good value for the money that has been spent. I decided to bring with me this morning the Auditor General's annual report that he did on a P3 project, a specific one about the Brampton hospital that he did. But after he had done this, he decided that there had been so many millions of dollars wasted on the Brampton hospital because we had gone P3 rather than the regular way of building hospitals that he did a special section in his report that he called "Recommendations for Future P3 Infrastructure Development Projects." He did that years ago, but some of those have never been implemented, and some of those would need to be implemented.

We have a chance through this bill that is in front of us right now, Bill 141, the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, to take his good advice and to make things better so that as we continue to build infrastructure—we will continue to need new hospitals, new schools, new courthouses, new bridges and new highways. It will always be there, either new ones or major refurbishing of existing ones. Under "Decision to Adopt P3," he says, "There was no formal assessment of the costs and benefits of all available procurement alternatives." This is at the core of what is wrong with Bill 141. Bill 141 is married to this idea that we will take an alternate procurement and financing method, no matter what happens. But the Auditor General shows us—and he has shown us in so many instances—that, had we taken the time to compare it to other ways of financing, we would have gotten better value for our money.

0910

He goes on to the lesson learned. He says: "The costs and benefits of all feasible procurement alternatives should be evaluated. Consideration should be given to expanding the involvement and expertise of Infrastructure Ontario to all infrastructure projects."

What he's saying is that the people at Infrastructure Ontario have started to develop quite a bit of expertise in writing up those contracts, but they shouldn't be married to the idea that the only way to finance them is through P3 or alternate procurement and financing. The Auditor General is saying to look at some of the conventional models of financing and consider them all.

His second recommendation about the decision regarding P3s is, "In Ontario only a limited number of contractors have the capacity to undertake large institutional projects. The bundling of capital and operational support services might have further limited competition and reduced value for money."

He goes on to say: "Before a decision is made to enter into an AFP arrangement, a comprehensive market assessment should be carried out."

When you bundle too many things together, you are very limited as to how many people have the expertise to

carry out that work, to the point where we have so few bidding for those projects—they're all international conglomerates, but so few of them that, really, there is no competition between them. They already know that they are the only game in town so the government will have to deal with them.

There's still a lot that I could have said. Unfortunately, my time is up.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Grant Crack: The opposition has been extending the debate on Bill 141. This is a very important bill, and we've been debating it now for 11 hours. Over 50 members have spoken to this bill.

It's clear that the majority of the members in this House support this bill, so I'm asking that the members opposite stop delaying the bill. Let's get it through the second reading, get it passed and get it into committee so that we can continue what this government does best: Let's create jobs across the province.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. John O'Toole: The member from Nickel Belt always adds value when she comments on legislation, and for the member opposite, on the government side, to imply that what she says is not important and that you're only interested in the time—you should have thought of that a couple of years ago when you prorogued the House, which caused all of the legislation here to be piled up. It's a demonstration that under the Kathleen Wynne government, they cannot manage the agenda. That's clearly what has happened here.

It's the budget today. We know there's going to be an enormous deficit. We know there's going to be more reckless spending. Yet we're here talking about infrastructure, which is really future debt.

In the last couple of weeks, they've announced about \$6 billion in new spending. Where on earth, respectfully, are they going to get that money? They're going to get it from the hard-working taxpayers who have a job left in Ontario. In this budget, they're going to whack people with another \$2,500 tax—\$2,500 in taxes a year—to fund an unsustainable pension plan that they have. At least, this is my understanding; we'll certainly hear the details this afternoon.

Bill 141 is with respect to the infrastructure that creates jobs. Our leader, Tim Hudak, has a plan. It's the million-jobs plan. It works. The fundamental elements of creating an environment for investment and jobs are in that plan. He said repeatedly to the leader and, for that matter, to the Minister of Infrastructure, to adopt the plan. He's willing to sacrifice the hard work that he has put into that plan and allow Ontarians to have opportunities for a job and a prosperous future. But that's not the plan in Ontario. The plan in Ontario is to increase taxes and reduce services. That's kind of what I see.

Ultimately it comes down to trust: Who can you trust in the province of Ontario? I don't think the current government should be allowed to govern any longer.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Ms. Cindy Forster: I want to thank the member for Nickel Belt. It's the first time that I've had an opportunity to actually weigh in on this particular bill, Bill 141, that's before us today. I'm glad that she spent her 10 minutes talking about P3s, or the alternate financing proposal, because I can tell you that in my riding a new hospital was built in the last couple of years under a P3 model: the St. Catharines site of the Niagara Health System. That hospital ended up costing more than double what the taxpayer-funded hospital in Peterborough, just five short years earlier, cost. I think it was 60% more or—

Interjection.

Ms. Cindy Forster: —50% more. The problem with that is that it isn't good taxpayer value when you're going out and paying double what you could have spent for public services in this province. The Auditor General apparently said that a number of years ago. I don't know whether that was under the Liberal government, that that report came out. I'm assuming that it was. But the government hasn't paid attention to what the Auditor General actually told them, and they continue to go out and do projects under a P3 model. The issue in the AG report was the Brampton hospital, but now here we are again. I think in the budget leaks that we've seen there are some big infrastructure dollars. I'm hoping that the Liberal government or the government of the day, whoever that is, actually pays heed to the Auditor General's report.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Phil McNeely: Just in response to the Conservative member, minority governments expect co-operation on non-contentious, good legislation. I think if we've listened to the debate, that's what we've had on this. This is an important bill to move forward. I'm calling on all the other parties to stop stalling, help us pass second reading and refer the bill to committee for further consideration.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Nickel Belt, you have two minutes for a response.

M^{me} France Gélinas: It was the first time that I had an opportunity to talk to Bill 141. I talked for 10 minutes, and I promise you I won't drag the debate; I will sit down after my two minutes are done. But P3s have had an impact on so many communities. I do the critic for health. We tried really, really hard, for each of those hospitals that were built under a P3, to get information. I could have brought it today: I filed an FOI request for the Ottawa general that was built under a P3. I got a stack of nothing but blacked-out paper. The only numbers left on those stacks of paper were the page numbers. It was impossible to find out anything else about that P3. Yet this is something that the Auditor General talks about: the need for those projects to be more transparent.

So I'm saying that we have a bill in front of us, Bill 141. Why don't we follow some of the recommendations

that the Auditor General has shown? When the Auditor General says things like, "\$95 million in risk transfer to the private sector was not realizable"—\$95 million was paid for the risk. We got no value for money for that \$95 million—and \$95 million is a lot of money. That would pay you all of the home care that people would need. That would open up 60 new community health centres in communities that need them. It would make a huge difference.

What I'm saying is, why don't we take the time to look at Bill 141 and take this opportunity to take some of the recommendations that come from the Auditor General and amend the bill so that we take advantage of his expertise?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? The member for Cambridge.

Interjections.

0920

Mr. Rob Leone: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thanks for the cheering gallery as well.

It's always a pleasure to speak up on behalf of my constituents in the city of Cambridge and the township of North Dumfries on this, what amounts to May 1. The most important thing we can celebrate today is our first responders on our very first First Responders Day.

I am very pleased to speak to Bill 141, which is An Act to enact the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2013. I am pleased to talk about this because, in the context of previous work I have done—I'm not absolutely sure that this will be my final time to speak in this session, should we be thrust into an election based on the budget today, but I do want to remind this Legislature that, not too long ago—two years ago, in fact—I tabled a motion that we debated, my first piece of private member's business, which was the first piece of private member's business in this 40th Parliament, that talked about exactly the kinds of things that we were looking for at that time.

I'm going to remind this Legislature about what that motion consisted of. It consisted of a plea to have the House—"In the opinion of this House, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario require" that the Premier "table, by March 1, 2012, a specific and detailed plan that outlines the current stage of the development process, the timelines for proceeding to any subsequent stage, the deadlines for project completion, and how the government plans to pay for the construction and operation of all the hospital expansion projects promised before and during the 2011 Ontario general election."

Mr. Speaker, we debated that motion in this Legislature. It was the united force of the opposition, both the Progressive Conservative and the NDP caucuses, that voted in favour of this motion. This motion passed this Legislature, and I think, for the very first time—we passed it in 2011—for the very first time, we are now looking at a bill, which was introduced on November 26, 2013, that may, in fact, get us a little bit closer to what we were asking for at that time.

Because I know the government members in this Legislature today are going to say that we are discussing

this bill ad nauseam, I want to state that I will take any and every opportunity to speak up for infrastructure projects that are of concern to my constituents. I will always stand up for my constituents, particularly when we've waited so long for infrastructure projects to come to my constituency. It's my obligation as the representative for Cambridge and North Dumfries township to bring that voice to Queen's Park and to make sure this government understands that we've waited a long time for our hospital expansion project to proceed.

This was the first vote we've ever had on hospital expansions in this Legislature. It was the PCs and the NDP that voted in favour of that motion, and the Liberal caucus that voted against it. I want to make that very clear, because if we are thrown into an election—I know a lot of people are going to say a lot of different things, but I want to put it on the record for people in this Legislature and for my constituents back home that I will always support our infrastructure projects that emerge in our community. That is my number one objective: to bring their voice here to Queen's Park.

There are a number of things this bill does that I think deserve some consideration. We do need, as I stated way back in 2011, a long-term infrastructure plan. It's not just enough to put this plan on the table. We have to have the means of understanding that, when we say something is going to happen within 10 years, we have to provide the means to actually achieve that: What the plan is, what are the timelines, how we're actually going to pay for the infrastructure projects that were promised.

Every election, we see these infrastructure projects dangled in front of constituents like they're candies to be given away. I think what we would do well to do—we could serve our constituents far better if we based decisions on infrastructure on evidence rather than politics, made sure that we're doing this in a manner that is consistent with the best advice, and not talking about these things in terms of who may or may not win elections. I think we would do a whole lot better if we were doing that.

This bill presents long-term planning, it presents guiding principles, it presents ideas about project prioritization, it talks about promoting design and excellence in public works, and I do understand that currently there has been some debate about some safety concerns. I know that my colleagues from the New Democrats have raised this with respect to highways being constructed in the Windsor area.

I think what's important, also, is the skills training and apprenticeship part of this piece of legislation. I think we have been on record consistently in this Legislature as standing up for our skilled trades and to provide opportunities for them.

So there are a lot of things that I would say have merit in this piece of legislation, things that I have long supported and would like to see further debated. But I will take the opportunity at every given chance to stand up for my constituents and to stand up for what I have been doing in this Legislature time and time again.

I do want to take some time to talk a bit about some of the things that have been important to understand. We need infrastructure investments, and the prioritization of those investments has to be done. I think everyone in this Legislature acknowledges that there is a need to have those kinds of ideas put forward. I think everybody understands that we have to have a plan in place for financing those projects, and debates—something the member from Nickel Belt has raised already—in terms of those financing arrangements ought to be debated and considered. I think the government should publish, at a minimum, a 10-year plan setting out the anticipated infrastructure needs with a strategy to meet those needs. I think those are the kinds of things that we would look for and would like to discuss at further length.

As this may be the last time I'm speaking in this Legislature before an election, I do want to say two things, because, these two members—

Interjection.

Mr. Rob Leone: I will be back, by the way, after this election—just to make sure that everyone is clear on that.

But I know we have two members of our caucus who will not be, as they are retiring, and they are both in the Legislature to talk about that. I want to say to the member for Newmarket–Aurora and to the member for Durham, I appreciate the mentorship that you have provided. They have, obviously, been mentors to first-time MPPs in our caucus.

I think the member for Newmarket–Aurora has written the book on how the opposition should act when it comes to different things, particularly his pursuit of Ornge.

Applause.

Mr. Rob Leone: I think that deserves a bit of applause for the member from Newmarket–Aurora.

I do want to pay tribute as well to the member for Durham, who I think is probably the most well-read MPP in this Legislature. He will speak on any bill at any time, on a moment's notice, because he has actually read every piece of legislation that's come forward. He has actually debated every piece of legislation that's come forward, and he might also have provided and produced one or two petitions on about every piece of legislation that has come to this Legislature.

I want to say that it is this idea of mentoring the younger MPPs on how to perform in their roles that I appreciate as a first-time MPP, and hope to continue in my pursuit for the truth in Ontario and for better public policy and better public administration.

So I want to congratulate the member for Durham on his excellent public service.

Mr. Speaker, I do have to say—as this is a moment where we can celebrate the public service of both of these gentlemen—that, in addition to doing incredible work in this Legislature, in our committees and in their performance in their own constituencies, these are just two fine, classy gentlemen. I would suggest to anybody that if you have a chance to meet them on an off-the-record basis, they are equally as wise and equally as trusted friends. I will certainly miss their presence here in this Legislature.

When I do come back, and when members of this Legislature do come back in the future, their work will be remembered. I want to thank them and congratulate them for their public service.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Who says we're going away?

Mr. Rob Leone: The member for Windsor–Tecumseh asks, “Who says we're going away?” I don't know if we're going away, but I do want to make sure that, if this is, indeed, the last bill we get to debate, I had that on record. I wanted to pay tribute to my colleagues.

That is basically what I wanted to say today. I look forward to further debate on this matter.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Percy Hatfield: It is indeed an honour to stand and represent Windsor–Tecumseh in this Legislature. My friend from Cambridge said it all when he said that the number one objective for him was to bring his voice, the voice of his constituents, to the Legislature.

0930

I just heard the member from Durham talk about the flurry of announcements in the last week or so. I think he said that \$6 billion had been announced on infrastructure. This bill is a 10-year plan that lays out the government's intentions. I don't know; it's coincidental to think that these announcements were made just coincidental in the possible timing of a possible provincial election. Either the projects that have been announced were part of the plan all along—and if that's the case, it was old news and why polish them up and trot them out again and make announcements?—or they were new ideas, which calls into question, I believe, the integrity of the bill itself. Because if you're going to have a 10-year plan, why would you trot out an extra \$6 billion coincidental with the possibility of a provincial election? So we've got some problems with it.

I know the member from Nickel Belt talked earlier about her concerns with P3s, and we've seen those examples on the Herb Gray Parkway, where it hasn't worked because the government has negotiated away any ability for the Ministry of Transportation, the experts in this province, when they see a safety issue, to jump in and resolve it because they've turned it over to Infrastructure Ontario.

Having said that, I just want to quickly echo the member from Cambridge's comments on the member for Newmarket–Aurora and the member from Durham—two fine gentlemen, two fine friends. I'll certainly miss them after the election, whenever that is called.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Further debate? The Minister of Consumer Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Thank you, Speaker, and good morning.

This is an important bill before us, the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act. I think I've talked in the Legislature before about how extremely important this is to my riding of Pickering–Scarborough East, and particularly on the Pickering side in Durham, where the development of the Seaton lands is essentially going to

double the size of Pickering. It's going to be very fast-growing.

But I've talked about this before, and so have many other people: Over 50 members have either spoken to this bill or participated in the debate, and that debate has been going on for 11 hours. It's clear that most members of the House are going to support this. So is there really any benefit to have further debate? Probably not. I'm not hearing new information. I'm encouraging everyone to move this along, help us pass second reading and get this to committee for further consideration.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mr. Toby Barrett: Certainly, I think we all echo the comments of the member from Cambridge with respect to the member from Newmarket–Aurora and the member from Cambridge. And I was—

Interjection: Durham.

Mr. Toby Barrett: Durham; I'm sorry. I was elected with these two characters 19 years ago, as were Julia Munro and Jerry Ouellette. We've seen them in action. Other people here have seen them more recently in action. Whatever they're doing in the future—the organizations and the involvement they have—the people around them will certainly benefit.

I want to make mention of the member for Cambridge. Up his way, we read in the media for years the problems with Highway 7 and getting a bridge built. I've got a similar problem south of there on Highway 6. We have need of a truck bypass in Hagersville. Tractor-trailers come through town; they can't turn at the intersections. I saw an accident on Monday, driving up—a serious accident. A tractor-trailer on the other side of Main Street pushed an SUV into a tree. A week or two before, a tractor-trailer hit a well-known businessman right in front of his Main Street business.

The noise, the vibration: I hope to talk about this a little further in my presentation. It's fairly simple. It's the need for a truck route to alleviate the noise downtown, to alleviate the vibration downtown. I spend time sitting on people's front porches on Main Street in the town of Hagersville in Haldimand county.

These are heavy-duty tractor-trailers. They carry steel coming up from US Steel. They carry scrap going back down to US Steel from the Hamilton area. I just use that as one example of why we have to continue discussing this particular piece of legislation.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure to stand up and talk about infrastructure in the province of Ontario, because in the grand scheme of things, and I use “scheme” very gently, it is a huge opportunity to create economic prosperity for the province. Listening closely to the member from Cambridge, I share in his philosophy that you need to have a plan. You need to stick to that plan, because municipalities count on that, but you also have to have a plan to pay for it, which is very interesting in the context of what is happening in the last two or three

weeks and the announcements on transit and infrastructure from the Minister of Transportation. Actually, almost every minister has made huge announcements around infrastructure. It's like they have money, right?

We did hear very clearly from the Auditor General that the \$95 million with the AFP and the P3—of course, they have the OPP here as well, these days. They're getting very popular around this place. But we did not get value for the money, for the risk transfer. That \$95 million was not realized throughout the one example that she gave.

So we have to have a piece of legislation and a strategy which actually benefits the people of this province and, in the meantime, provides the structural plan to create the infrastructure and then also the financing which guarantees it. We have seen some of the most political announcements on infrastructure from this government of late in this Legislature. We have a fictional version of two-way, all-day GO trains. We have a re-announcement and a re-announcement and a re-announcement to Highway 7. That shovel has been in that ground, and that ribbon has been cut and is getting frayed now. And now, of course, we have the Herb Gray Parkway, whose theme song, unfortunately, will be *A Bridge Over Troubled Waters*. So there is so much work to be done on this file. We need to make sure that this legislation works for the people of the province.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Cambridge, you have two minutes.

Mr. Rob Leone: I want to thank the Minister of Consumer Services and the members for Windsor–Tecumseh, Haldimand–Norfolk and Kitchener–Waterloo for their comments and questions. I do echo the concerns that the NDP have raised, as well as I have and members of our PC caucus over the last several weeks. This is a \$46-billion pre-election spree that the government has undertaken: \$29 billion for transit, \$11 billion for hospital infrastructure and \$6 billion in other spending equals about \$46 billion. It's the largest, I would say, seat-saver program we've ever seen. It is concerning when we have a purported plan no less than November 26, 2013, which is only a few short months ago, and now we have extra things that are just completely added.

It questions the sincerity of whether this plan, the plan that they are actually trying to enunciate in this legislation, is as sincere as they would like people to believe. I have serious questions and concerns about that sincerity. I would like to, obviously, support infrastructure projects, but I need to see where this money is coming from. I need to make sure that this government is not spending out of its means, because the future of this province depends on that. Our children's future depends on it.

I think that, as we discuss and debate and deliberate over this piece of legislation today and this morning, and certainly in the budget debates that we will have or may have in the near future, I would have to hope that we are being truthful with the facts about the state of our fiscal finances to provide for the services that people desire and the infrastructure projects that this province needs. That

is my great hope. It's what I asked for way back in 2011, and I continue to fight for those things today.

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

Mr. Michael Mantha: Good morning. It is certainly a pleasure to stand and provide some comments on behalf of the perspectives of people in Algoma–Manitoulin on Bill 141, An Act to enact the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act.

Just off the top, I would like to say good morning to a friend of mine in Mindemoya who I refer to as Mrs. "Grandma" Trepanier, and also, in Gore Bay, Rose Thompson, who are more than likely watching, on TV this morning, the debate that's going on, enjoying their morning cup of tea.

0940

In my last constituency week, I actually had the pleasure of meeting up with them again, and it is just amazing how in touch people are. Although they're not close by, they're really watching all of us here at Queen's Park in regard to what we do, what we say, how we conduct ourselves and the day-to-day activities that go on here.

Earlier, my colleague from Nickel Belt really articulated her point on the P3s, and the concerns that she raised are very much a huge sentiment that we have here. But when I look at this bill, I'm looking at it as far as building bridges. When I was first elected—I've always said that I'll give credit where credit is due, and where you have to criticize, I will criticize. I'm really happy that the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation is in the House this morning, because I just want to build that bridge with him because he did actually take the time to come to my constituency and sit down with some of the municipalities that had some infrastructure concerns.

We actually talked a lot about what the challenges are that they have there. One of the biggest challenges that we have in Algoma–Manitoulin is particularly the operating costs of a lot of our water treatment plants, the high costs, and the lack of capacity that we have within taxpayers to come up with the funds for those operating costs, and the huge challenges that these individuals face.

When you look at the principles of this bill, when you're looking at taking a long-term view and where the decision-makers are to take account of the needs of Ontarians, being mindful of the demographics and how the trends are going on in Ontario—that statement really resonates with people in my riding, particularly in the community of the North Shore, where Mayor Randi Condie and a lot of the community members that are there, like Joyce Robitaille, and individuals that are really hurting in those areas in order to find the funds that they need in order to maintain the level of service or to make sure that they have the dollars available at the end of the month, where decisions are being made, that impact their lives, out of southern Ontario.

You have to understand—and I don't know how this plan was reached back then. But where you have a small community—and I'm going to try and keep my comments towards the community of the North Shore.

The community was forced to go into an amalgamation, and one of their huge concerns was the operating services. It's a wide, very separated—the major points of this area are three in nature: You have the Serpent River area, you have the Algoma Mills area, and then you have the Pronto area. Some of them are, again, very concerned about their water treatment plants, but a decision was made at one point in time where the water treatment plant was downloaded on the municipality, and it was their responsibility to pay for it. It was downloaded on a group of 69 individuals. Now, lo and behold, the second part of this community, they were also told that they were going to have to invest not only in a new water treatment plant but also in a water and sewage plant. Those people who were in that area, who remain there today, are roughly about 29. How did we come up with the calculation that this was cost-effective for these two areas?

When we make these statements in regard to being mindful and making 10-year plans, what it means to communities across my riding is, "How is this going to affect us? What are we going to do? How are we going to be able to finance it? What are they telling us?"

Unfortunately, in a lot of these small communities, we don't have those engineers in our back pocket. We don't have those consultants. They're all here in southern Ontario. And you know what? It's a heck of a cost to get those individuals up to our area. We always rely on what their expertise is and what they have to say. Then, lo and behold, we sign in to large amounts of monies that we're going to have to pay for these projects that are in their communities. So these are huge, huge concerns.

We also made comments in regard to the concerns that we have in regard to the experts on this file, and the other stakeholders that we haven't taken into consideration or we haven't reached out to or we haven't maybe listened to the red flags that they've been raising with us.

For the record, I'd like to read in some of those concerns today, particularly from the building trades and a number of the construction groups that are out there. Project bundling can significantly reduce the ability of smaller local firms from participating in key Ontario infrastructure projects. Member companies have experienced significant problems on the bundling issue with things such as the holdbacks of payments on these large projects which also makes it difficult for small firms to manage cash flow; payments are withheld from subcontractors until the contractor gets paid; subcontractors don't have the same ability to wait for payment.

I've seen this time and time again where individuals, particularly in the north in my riding, in Wawa, where there was a subcontractor who was hired to do some work on a particular highway project but unfortunately the subcontractor wasn't being paid by the larger contractor, and it was creating financial hardship. What you have to understand is that these small contractors just don't have that amount of room to manoeuvre. Their payroll—they're basically going from month to month, from pay to pay. If you're telling them that you're going to withhold, whether it's \$100,000 or \$500,000, the im-

pact and magnitude that it means to those communities is huge—and also to those local contractors.

The other concern is about projects that are ongoing. Again, my colleague from Nickel Belt touched on the P3s. I think I don't want to waste anybody's time talking about that anymore.

Recently, IO has handled highway projects, namely the super projects of the Windsor-Essex parkway, Highway 407 and the Eglinton LRT. These projects are worth billions of dollars and generally attract major international builders to Ontario. The concern here is that several of these big international players, particularly those from Spain, are subsidized by their federal governments, allowing them to bid at lower prices than Ontario-based companies.

Now on that point, particularly as a critic for our party for northern development and mines, I had brought in a project where we should be looking at providing those resources and, if we have the infrastructure here in Ontario, to look at Ontario before we look outside. If we have the capacity and the skills and tradesmen that are here, and we have the people that are in the know to do this work, why wouldn't this bill contain anything in regard to having an Ontario content requirement? I would like to see that in Ontario.

If we're talking about building our infrastructure and talking about prosperity and Ontarians, why don't we see more of a flavour and a sense for Ontario, within the contents of this bill?

I do also want to bring up a point in regard to—again, sometimes you walk into the House expecting to say a few things but then you just get sidetracked by a discussion that you have with a colleague and with building bridges around this place. I definitely came here with the intent of building bridges. I'm happy that I've done that over the course of my stay here at Queen's Park, and I will continue doing that. I enjoy the discussions that I've had with my colleagues here to my right and also across the way.

I think, essentially, when we come here we want to get those results done and we want to bring some of those benefits back to individuals into our ridings. But in particular with this one, when you make these grand statements—I don't like using that term, but it is a motherhood statement that we see in the beginning of this policy. It sounds great and it means well, but there's really a lot of work that needs to be done on it. For communities, like in my area, where we've had the opportunity to have a discussion with some of my colleagues, it is really important to them that, going forward—they are very concerned in regard to how these 10-year projects or visions are going to impact them.

Before we go down the route of implementing these policies, we need to really look carefully at how this is going to affect them, not only through their policies and regulations, but how it's going to impact their lives financially.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Hon. Teresa Piruzza: I'm pleased to rise today in response to Bill 141 and to make some comments. We've had this discussion now for over 11 hours. We've had 55 members, so more than half of our members have spoken in this House with respect to this bill, and all seem to be in favour of this bill. We need to bring this forward to the next step, which is, of course, to committee.

0950

I know we've been hearing much about the Right Honourable Herb Gray parkway that is, of course, being built in my backyard in Windsor. As a result of that project, I've been speaking with a number of local employers who really have spoken to me about the importance of upgraded infrastructure across the province, and the importance of upgraded infrastructure with respect to economic development and the future prosperity of Ontario.

Ontario is a trade province and we need that upgraded infrastructure across all ways: across rail, across road, across any way that we can in order to ensure the prosperity of our province, and that's what we will continue to build on.

Speaking of the Right Honourable Herb Gray parkway, it's truly a transformative project, and I have to thank the Minister of Transportation and our government for moving forward with that project, because I know what it means to our community. It's transformative. It is going to add hundreds of acres to green space in our communities, kilometres of trails, really connect our neighbourhoods and really make a difference for our community. I'm pleased with that investment, that infrastructure project, and understand the importance of infrastructure to the development of jobs and the prosperity of our province.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments?

Mrs. Jane McKenna: All of us in this House recognize the importance of having solid, sustainable infrastructure. It is essential to any competitive 21st century economy, and it is especially critical in a province such as Ontario, which has so many diverse needs, challenges and assets.

From that point of view, government obviously needs to take the long view when it comes to infrastructure planning and investment. At least part of that mandate is already being carried out by the government's ministries.

Transparent information is also critical to this sort of undertaking, and I don't know how well that will mesh with Infrastructure Ontario, which is a bit of a black box by its very nature.

Bill 141 also proposes that four conditions be applied to Ontario's infrastructure: an inventory of the infrastructure, an evaluation of the infrastructure, the age of the infrastructure assets and the conditions of those assets. All of this is fine and good, but I would agree with my colleague from Newmarket–Aurora that a fifth element is needed; namely, a formalized and mandatory asset-management program. Without that tool, we can never accurately judge our most pressing priorities and where investments are best made.

Every infrastructure promise floated by this Liberal government is always made "subject to fiscal capacity." That makes sense. If there is no money, the work does not get done.

Maybe at some point, a member of the party opposite—preferably a cabinet minister—will lay out in black and white the government's plan to bring Ontario's runaway spending under control, and thereby eliminate the deficit. It is not a lot to ask, frankly.

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

Mr. John Vanthof: Timiskaming–Cochrane.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): No, it's just my throat—Timiskaming–Cochrane.

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to be able to stand in this House and speak on behalf of my constituents from Timiskaming–Cochrane, and to follow my colleague, the member from Algoma–Manitoulin. Something he always does, and that I try to emulate, is he always brings issues back to the people in his riding. That's the best way to explain things to people in this House, and also to demonstrate that you understand the issues in your riding.

Sometimes I get a bit upset when I hear: "We've had enough debate, because we've heard all the issues." I think the member from Algoma–Manitoulin made it very clear that he had issues that hadn't been brought up before in this House on this bill, and I think that's a good example of why debate is important in this House.

The bill we are discussing is Bill 141, the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act. Basically, the bill is about developing a 10-year plan for infrastructure—very important. One would wonder why there wasn't a 10-year plan before, or a 20-year plan. Actually, in northern Ontario, we've got the northern growth plan, where we spend a lot of time discussing this, and transportation was part of the northern growth plan.

Again, consultation is part of the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act; yet, when our passenger train was cancelled in northern Ontario, there was no consultation. In northern Ontario, we would be happy with any train. We don't need the promise of the high-speed bullet train. Our train already took the bullet. But again, there was no consultation, and when you see things like that, you kind of wonder, are these acts or are they really for real? When you hear all these potential election promises—and that's what they are—where are they in these 10-year plans?

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Questions and comments? The member from Mississauga–Cooksville.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Streetsville.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Streetsville; my apologies.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Thank you very much, Speaker. Cooksville is actually a long way away, and I'm sure my colleague from Mississauga East–Cooksville wouldn't appreciate my appropriating such an important part of eastern Mississauga.

You know, Speaker, there are so many things in this House that divide us, and very often properly divide us, because while we may have an aspiration for a strong and a prosperous Ontario, as parties, we often differ on how we wish to get there.

But there are many things that bring us together, and this is one of them. While it might be a simplification, it's probably okay to say that we all believe in apple pie, motherhood and infrastructure.

The debate on this bill is headed toward 12 hours. More than half of the Legislature has spoken to this bill or participated in the debate during questions and comments. I think nearly 60 of our members have done that, and it has been very clear that, as a Legislature, we intend to support this bill.

I would suggest it's now time to move past this bill, get it into committee, if we are all in support of it, and if it needs any refinement, let's have that refinement done in committee and let's get on to more substantive things in this Legislature. It's now time to call on our colleagues opposite, the Conservatives and the NDP, to put aside more debate on this bill and to get on to some things that make a difference in the province of Ontario.

For that reason, Speaker, I am hoping that members will send this bill to committee and get it enacted.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The member for Algoma–Manitoulin, you have two minutes.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I want to thank the comments that came from the Minister of Children and Youth Services, the member from Burlington, my colleague from Timiskaming–Cochrane, and also the member from Mississauga–Streetsville.

If we were to stand here and always rush through the discussions, we wouldn't get a good grasp of what the issues are across this province—for everyone. Yes, this is a good bill for us to push into committee in order to have those discussions. I think all of us agree that we need to bring those discussions to committee.

However, I want to express a really important point. This is the only opportunity that I have, for the people in Algoma–Manitoulin, to bring those points here, because we don't have the transportation that we need or that bullet train that we can get people from northern Ontario down to here. You know what, Mr. Speaker? It's a three-day expense when we are talking about having these individuals come down here and provide some type of testimony in front of the committee while they are sitting there. If you are telling me that we need to rush this through, then you are closing the voices of the people in Assiginack, Billings, North Shore and Killarney.

I was really happy that the minister actually took the time to come to my riding and listen to these individuals. We talked about a greater idea of how we can address this regionally, but we need to do it. We need to do it. They've heard the words; they have been told. They have met up numerous times. But this is the opportunity that we have, and those individuals deserve that action. They deserve to have a plan implemented to serve their needs, because it's costing them a lot of stresses and a lot of time as well.

The people up in Hornepayne: I'll always give them the opportunity to talk about the challenges that they have with their water service.

Also, there's another issue that we need where we're almost close, and it happens through discussions. It's because we've done it here. If you look at the people of Manitowadge, I've worked with the ministers across the way and some colleagues, and we're close to getting a Caramat Road issue resolved, and I'm hoping it's done. But we've got to have those discussions and there's got to be a plan, and we've got to see an action.

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

Hon. John Milloy: I am very happy to rise and speak to Bill 141, the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act. I think we all recognize, and we've certainly heard in the debate today and in previous debates that infrastructure is vitally important to families and communities and is really the backbone of our economy. To help ensure the province's infrastructure investments continue to align with demographic, economic and environmental changes and the long-term needs of Ontarians, our government has introduced this bill, which would, if passed, ensure current and future governments regularly prepare a long-term infrastructure plan and that plans are updated at least every five years.

The proposed legislation, if passed, would also strengthen prioritization, promote high-quality infrastructure design and support job creation, training opportunities and economic growth. Our government has made an unprecedented investment in public infrastructure, with more than \$85 billion invested in public infrastructure since 2003. These investments have created or supported more than 600,000 jobs. We've committed to invest more than \$35 billion in infrastructure over the next three years, including about \$13.5 billion in 2013-14. Bill 141, if passed, would complement our government's plan to continue to build modern infrastructure in order to grow the economy and create jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I think it's important to provide some context as to how we got here at this moment in time and debate. The bill was introduced last year in November 2013 and has seen significant debate in the House. According to my count, more than 58 members of the Legislature have either spoken to this bill or participated in the debate during questions and comments. The bill has been debated for almost 12 hours over the past six months.

Listening to the debate, it's been clear that the majority of this House is in support of this bill, yet the opposition parties are intent on continuing debate, and their only goal is to delay. The opposition has been putting up speaker after speaker. Surely, this signals that there is no true desire to have further meaningful debate on this bill. It is time that the bill pass second reading and be sent to committee, where the real work takes place. In committee, members of all parties will hear from all stakeholders who have an interest in this bill. In committee—

Mr. Toby Barrett: Point of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Point of order, the member for Haldimand–Norfolk.

Mr. Toby Barrett: The reason I raise a point of order is, I'm the next speaker. I feel that my contribution to this debate will be meaningful. I have very, very important local issues to raise with respect—

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): I'm sorry, I don't think that's a point of order, because I did recognize the speaker in the traditional manner.

The government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Again, I'm speaking about the committee process for this bill. Members will obviously have an opportunity to move amendments to strengthen this bill. At the same time, this House, if this piece of legislation moves on to committee, can move on to debate substantive matters. There are a number of pieces of important legislation already introduced which the government would like to debate and move through the legislative process. We obviously can't devote the necessary time to these important matters if we're forced to continue debating this bill.

I remind members of pieces of legislation such as the Youth Smoking Prevention Act, Ontario Immigration Act, Fair Minimum Wage Act, Keeping Ontario's Roads Safe act, and I could go on. We would like to spend time, on this side of the House, debating these pieces of legislation, but we can't until Bill 141 is dealt with. As a result, I move that this question be now put.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Mr. Milloy has moved that the question be now put. There have been 27 speakers and over 11 and a half hours of debate. I feel there has been sufficient debate to allow the question to be put to the House.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

All those opposed to the motion, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members.

Interjection.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): This vote will be deferred until after question period.

Second reading vote deferred.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Orders of the day?

Hon. John Milloy: No further business.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): The government House leader has moved adjournment of the House. Shall the motion carry?

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon): Sorry, recess of the House—until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1004 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'm very pleased to welcome to the Legislature today James and Anette Walker and Ashley

Walker, who are the family of our page, Ethan Walker. Welcome to the Ontario Legislature.

Mr. Jonah Schein: I would like to welcome Dylan Fonner. He's a student from the Bliss Institute of Applied Politics in Akron, Ohio. It has been a pleasure having him here at Queen's Park, and I wish him well in his future law career.

Ms. Helena Jaczek: Please help me welcome, in the east members' gallery, two of my colleagues from the MBA program at York University: Diarmuid Salvadori and Dorene Weston.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: I'm happy to introduce a number of guests of our page: Mr. Scott Bowes; Katharine Bowes; Amber Bowes, her sister; and Ilah and Denis Dalke, the grandparents of Ashley Bowes. Welcome.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: On behalf of the New Democrat Party, and our leader, Andrea Horwath, I want to extend a welcome to all our first responders here today on First Responders Day.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Je veux dire bienvenue aux étudiants d'immersion française from Britannia Public School.

I'd like to welcome the Britannia Public School French immersion class.

Mr. John O'Toole: I would like to introduce, once again, Michael Patrick, who's a PC candidate in the riding of Durham—his wife, Deb, will be joining us later—and also Trent Angiers, a member of my legislative staff. Thank you for joining us.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'd like to welcome the students from St. Davids Public School, and their teachers and their parents. I hope they have a great day here at Queen's Park.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: It's my pleasure to welcome Ashan Fernando and Kyle Fitzgerald from the great riding of Pickering–Scarborough East to Queen's Park to be here for question period.

Mr. Rod Jackson: Today I'd like to welcome the parents of page captain Brendan Sheppard: mother, Sheila Atkinson; father, Andrew Sheppard; and his sister, Linnea Sheppard. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I would like to take a moment and acknowledge the MPP from York Centre: Monte Kwinter. My colleague, friend and parliamentary assistant will be entering his 30th year in public service tomorrow.

Monte, on behalf of all your colleagues in the House, I'd like to thank you for your years of service to the province, and wish you many more successful years.

Applause.

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

I realize that there are quite a few more introductions to do, so I've asked for the clock to be stopped. I'll still give everyone enough time to introduce all of their guests; I think this is an important part of the visitors being here.

Finally, just to let you know, I've called the Guinness people; he has got so many records that it's getting tiresome. I thought maybe I'd let him know that.

Thank you, Monte.

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Monte, from one Monte to another: Congratulations.

It is my pleasure today to introduce some visitors in the gallery. I'd like to introduce Nick Dicecco, a young constituent from my riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex who is very interested in politics, and my wife Kate's uncle, Peter Spadzinski, who's a former mayor of the municipality of McDougall in the district of Parry Sound. Welcome.

Hon. David Zimmer: I would like to introduce Max Hong, who is the father of today's page captain, Frank Hong, from Willowdale. Welcome to the Legislature.

Mr. Michael Harris: I'd like to welcome my mother, Margaret Harris, who is at Queen's Park for her first time today. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Reza Moridi: Today is Doctors' Day in Ontario. On this occasion, please join me in welcoming Dr. Ved Tandan, president of the Ontario Medical Association, and also his colleagues visiting the Ontario Legislature. Today they are having a reception at the committee room. I invite every member of this House to attend this reception at the committee room for lunch.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I would like to welcome Warden Todd Case from the county of Lambton, and Councillor John Phair, township of Enniskillen, who will join us later today for the budget.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I noticed my colleague and friend from 1990, Mr. Bob Frankford, is here, the member for a riding somewhere out in Scarborough.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): You're stepping on me again, but I'll do that. Thank you.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I was so happy to see him, Speaker.

Mr. Grant Crack: It's a great pleasure for me to introduce my brother Michael and my sister-in-law Lisa, who are in the gallery today. A warm welcome on your first time here at Queen's Park.

Mr. Bill Walker: I'd like to introduce Susan McMillan and Sandra Breedon, two of my staff from my constituent office. They've never been to Queen's Park, and they're coming here for budget day.

Mr. Phil McNeely: I'd like to introduce Margo Burgess and Steve Barrette from Ottawa. They're in the east members' gallery. They are the parents of my legislative intern, Emily, who is also in the House today. They have travelled from Ottawa for a visit. This is their first time to Queen's Park, so please welcome them here to Queen's Park.

Mr. Mike Colle: I'd like to welcome Garrie Wright here, the commissioner of Toronto EMS, who was instrumental in bringing automatic external defibrillators to the province of Ontario. Garrie Wright, welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Rural Affairs. Oh, I guess he's not standing to introduce. He was standing to leave.

The member from Newmarket–Aurora.

Mr. Frank Klees: I want to also, on behalf of Tim Hudak and our entire caucus, extend our warmest wel-

come to all of the first responders who are joining us today.

I want to specifically recognize someone very special, and that is Nicole Taylor, who is in the gallery here. Nicole is someone who is working with first responders through her team, United by Trauma. I'd like to just introduce the rest of that team: Sam Reid—if you will stand, Sam, please—James Ward and Wayne Dufour. These are folks who are doing outstanding work on PTSD and support of first responders.

For those of you who may not have recognized Sam Reid, he is with Glass Tiger and, in addition to that, is doing this wonderful work for first responders. Welcome.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Final call for introductions?

Just in case it's not known, Glass Tiger is a rock-and-roll group. Just thought I'd offer that.

Mr. Frank Klees: May I?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): May you? No. You already had a statement.

All right. As is the tradition with the Speaker, we would like to introduce, from Scarborough East in the 35th Parliament, in the west members' gallery, Mr. Bob Frankford. Welcome.

The government House leader on a point of order.

Hon. John Milloy: As members are aware, today is First Responders Day. I think you will find, Mr. Speaker, unanimous consent that, following deferred votes this morning, five minutes be allotted to each party to pay tribute to our first responders.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The unanimous consent request is for a tribute to first responders, each party receiving five minutes, after the deferred votes.

Do we agree? Agreed.

It is now time for question period.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO BUDGET

Mr. John Yakabuski: My question is for the Premier. Premier, for the past month, your party has been busy announcing plans to spend billions of dollars that we don't have. This will be the second year in a row that economic growth has been stagnant in our province and that your government's deficit will get larger instead of smaller.

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Premier, this is not the road to recovery. A government that spends within its means and puts the right economic conditions for growth in place gives confidence to business and investors alike. Every other province in Canada understands that. So far, six have balanced their books, including the federal government.

Tim Hudak and the PCs have a plan to get Ontario back on track. It's called our million-jobs plan. Premier, if you—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order. The member from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell will come to order.

Carry on, please.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Premier, if you don't have a plan of your own, will you at least adopt ours?

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Well, you've opened the door for me to make a comment now, instead of asking for quiet. The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke will come to order. My intention is to start right away.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Well, I will give you this: You have a slogan. That is true. There is a slogan on the other side of the House, Mr. Speaker. But what that slogan masks is that what the opposition, the Conservatives, would do is they would actually cut jobs. They would actually cut education. They would actually cut health care. They would not invest in infrastructure, and they would not partner with business in order to bring those jobs to Ontario.

So what we are going to do—and I look forward to the response when the budget is introduced this afternoon—is, we are going to build the province. Our plan believes in the opportunity in this province and believes in the possibility of more jobs coming to the province, because we've demonstrated that that can happen. We've demonstrated that making those investments actually is what we need in order to grow the economy.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Premier, when the finance minister comes in here this afternoon in his new shoes, I hope they're chest waders, because he's going to need them to get through that river of red ink that you are creating.

You are driving business out of our province with your anti-growth and pro-special-interest agenda. Increasing the cost of doing business is undermining our ability to compete and is crippling our recovery.

The PC Party has a different approach. We have developed a jobs plan that will give every business an incentive to grow and be successful, not just your chosen few that were already succeeding without your handouts. We are calling for lower corporate taxes, lower energy rates, reduced red tape, more trade with our neighbours and more skilled trades positions to meet the needs of Ontario. That's our plan. We won't ignore the problem and hope that it will go away.

Premier, you have no credible plan of your own. I ask you one more time: Will you adopt our plan?

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: A plan that is really the right to work for less, Mr. Speaker, is not where we are

going to go. We believe that having a highly skilled workforce is absolutely a foundation of our economic future.

What they would do is they would actually cut the knees out from under the education system. They would fire education workers. They would undermine the education system. We are not going to do that.

I wanted to take the member opposite up on another thing that he said. He talked about the federal government being able to balance their budget. Mr. Speaker, I hope that he pays very close attention this afternoon, because one of the reasons that our revenues are in trouble is because the federal government has treated Ontario differently than every other province in the country.

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

Mr. Jeff Yurek: Throw Zimmer out.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Elgin–Middlesex–London will come to order.

Final supplementary.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It's the blame game, and I know you're good at it.

Premier, I get that you won't take our plan. Would you agree to at least take a couple of sessions of credit counselling? It might be helpful.

Today, you have an opportunity to change direction, to finally start climbing out of the hole you've created instead of digging deeper. Our million-jobs plan will restore the confidence of business, investors and credit rating agencies. It's about time that Ontario move back to its rightful place: at the head of the pack, leading this Confederation, being the economic engine of Canada once again.

It's clear you have no plan and will only take us down the road to higher unemployment and deepening debt. Even Quebec Premier Couillard gets it. He understands that the only way to restore confidence in his province is to get their fiscal house in order.

Premier, we need to do that here. Will you change direction today, start moving Ontario out of the hole instead of going deeper and deeper?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: You know, I absolutely agree with the member opposite that we need to be leaders in Confederation. Ontario is a very, very important component of this great country of ours, which is why it would be terrific if the federal government treated Ontario in the same way that it treats every other province.

But having said that, we understand that being fiscally responsible is critical. We understand that making sure that we grow the economy and making sure that we work with business, partner with business—and I would ask the member opposite to ask OpenText and Chrysler what they think about their plan to back away from partnership

with business—we believe that working with business and being a partner with business, as we are a partner with labour, is the way to make sure that the investments in this province are made and jobs come to the province which lead to the future growth.

AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

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

Speaker, we took the time to introduce first responders. I now want to take the time to thank them for being here. We have invited them to celebrate first responders. It's really a celebration of our first responders.

I also want to thank the Premier, the leader of the official opposition, the leader of the third party and every member in this House for supporting Bill 15, which made this proclamation possible. Without the unanimous consent of this Legislature, this would not have happened. So it's great that we can come together.

Now comes the tough question for the Premier. Immediately following the tribute that we will give, we will be gathering in the front of the Legislature to take a commemorative photograph with all MPPs and our first responders. My question to the Premier is this: Will you join us for that picture?

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order, please. Please. I don't want to waste a warning on this one. Thank you.

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I would be happy to join you.

First of all, I just want to take a moment to tell the member opposite that no one knew what your question was going to be, and everyone was a little, "Where's he going?" But you had spoken to me earlier, and I appreciate that.

I want to acknowledge the first responders who are here and I want to thank them so much for what they do every single day. They walk into danger. They go out of their doors and they don't know what they are going to find, so thank you very, very much.

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I was in a fire hall yesterday making an announcement with my colleagues about adding six more cancers to the list of presumptive diseases. The reality is, it doesn't matter where good ideas come from. It doesn't matter because it was the right thing to do, and I just want to thank our firefighters and all of our first responders.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Frank Klees: Thank you, Premier. That was the best answer you've given in the 18 years that I've been here.

Speaking of first responders, the first responders in our air ambulance service have been under much discussion in this place over the last number of months and I wanted to pay a special tribute to them for the service they are performing in our province.

After two years of public hearings into the air ambulance scandal, the public accounts committee signed off yesterday on a summary report, after some 147 hours of testimony and 85 witnesses. We now look forward to seeing that report tabled. We believe it will be tabled on Monday, subject to what happens here.

Regardless of the timing of an election, will the Premier commit that that report will be tabled?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I'm looking to the government House leader because I don't want to say something that would be outside the bounds of the protocols, but from my perspective, it's important that we all see what's in that report and that we find a way to make sure that it is shared. I will make that commitment only with the caveat that we have to follow all of the rules, and at the first opportunity that we would get it tabled, absolutely.

I also wanted to just note that the Mississauga first responders who were injured in last week's fire and explosion deserve our particular thoughts and prayers today.

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

Mr. Frank Klees: Speaker, the reason that I asked that question to the Premier is that two years of very hard work—I want to commend my colleagues on that committee, of all parties. I believe that the work that committee has done has produced a report that will be very important, not only to the Ministry of Health, but to every other ministry in the government. We don't want to see that report in any way somehow not see the light of day.

So notwithstanding the timing of an election—we know that if an election is called and that report has not yet been tabled, typically, it would never see the light of day. It is possible for us to agree together, regardless of the timing, that that report will be made public.

Will the Premier, without any qualification, make that commitment to us today?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: This afternoon, the Minister of Finance is going to be presenting a budget, which I anticipate will enjoy the support of this Legislature, and our intention is to proceed both with debate around the budget and debate around legislation. And over the course of that, certainly, the report is in the hands of the committee. The Chair of the committee will have an opportunity to table his report in the House. I think I speak for all members that we look forward to seeing the report, and certainly the government will be responding to its contents.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: My question this morning is to the Premier. Good morning, Premier. It's a big day at Queen's Park.

On Tuesday, the Premier said that the minister's office's staff was first briefed on safety and durability regarding the girders on the Herb Gray Parkway on June 14, 2013. However, yesterday, the Premier, in speaking about the 12 meetings in which girders were on the agenda between December and June, 2013, said, "The fact is that those meetings took place.... There was not sufficient information during that time period" to make "definitive recommendations on safety."

Will the Premier tell us which statement is true? Were they talking about safety prior to June 14 or weren't they? Because, clearly, safety was an issue during discussions in those meetings.

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: We have been through this for many days. You have said things that are so inaccurate that they were nothing more than an attempt, I think, to smear reputations. I'm still waiting for an apology from the member opposite. I met with my deputy minister again this morning. I reviewed it with my deputy minister, who went back through her notes and she confirmed again that there was no discussion of safety issues, nor were any issues raised with her or me.

She also confirmed with me that, in early June, I approached her and I asked her to look into the matter, which she did promptly. She came back and said there could be concerns, we should look at it further, which was the result of the June 19 meeting which led to the independent review and the discovery in late August, as a result of that review and testing, that there was a problem. This is so crystal clear, and I wonder what the motives are when the—

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I too wonder what the motives are when I hear a response like that. There were 12 meetings held where the girders were discussed between December 14 and when the Premier said the minister's office staff was briefed on the safety of the girders.

Interjections.

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Yesterday, the Premier said there wasn't sufficient information to make definitive recommendations on safety. The Premier is saying two separate things: Either they were discussing the safety of the girders or they weren't. The evidence says they were.

When will the Premier put public safety and accountability ahead of her political interests and come clean about our government's mismanagement on the largest infrastructure project in the history of the province?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: We're back to NDP geography. I get asked where the questions are every time we're close to an election. This is nothing but an attack on myself, the member for Windsor West, and it's a thinly veiled political game. The deputy minister has told you, sir, you're wrong. The project manager, sir, has told you that you are inaccurate and wrong. Every engineer in

two ministries has told you, sir, you're wrong. What you are saying is not accurate. It is so inaccurate it is smearing my reputation, that of officials, and people in Windsor. You owe my deputy, you owe the people of Windsor an apology and I will have no truck with you until you stand up and apologize and be the honourable gentleman I think you are.

Interjections.

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

Final supplementary.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Methinks think the minister protests too much. The Premier has said there will be no costs passed on to the taxpayers. As we learned from the gas plant scandal, what this government says about costs can't be trusted. As time went by, the price tag went up. Will the Premier keep her promise on transparency and tell Ontarians the real cost and liabilities they're facing over the mismanagement of the Herb Gray Parkway?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: My deputy ministers, my officials, don't have the privilege to speak out. They are silent because they are public servants. The professionals who work on this are silent because they are that. The interim manager of the project says the problems are nothing one wouldn't expect with a large scale project. Connector bearings are being tested by an MTO-approved manufacturer. He has said 17 times, I think, on the public record that there is not an iota of safety concern. There haven't been any concerns that weren't properly remediated.

This isn't an attack on me. This is interesting, coming from the third party, smearing public servants and smearing the working people who build this project. He knows what he's saying is not true. One has to wonder why he keeps saying it. There is only one motive when you are at difference with the facts, and that is attacking people's reputations who can't criticize you. That's tabloid journalism, and I never thought they practised that at the CBC.

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TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Government correspondence shows that the Ministry of Transportation did not want the girders to be installed until safety concerns were addressed and Ontario standards were met. On the other hand, Infrastructure Ontario wanted to press ahead regardless, because they didn't want a one- or a two-month delay.

My question is to the Premier. Knowing what the Premier knows now about the girders, does the Premier have confidence in the way Infrastructure Ontario looked after the provincial interest?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Premier?

Interjections.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Oh, sorry.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The question is directed to the Premier.

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Again, I would ask the member to apologize, because what he just said—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Hold on, hold on. I'm hearing some things I don't like to hear, and it will stop.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I will try this one more time, Mr. Speaker: It would be nice, the next time you get one of those very generous briefings that my ministry staff have given you, and when you're sitting in that room, you might want to apologize to them, because your party is supposed to be concerned about working people; your party is supposed to respect the integrity of the public service. That is certainly not consistent with what you're saying.

You do not understand the difference between a compliance issue, as much as assistant deputy ministers and officials have explained this to you, and it has been in your own local paper—you continue to contradict them, like you're some sort of expert. You're not, sir, an expert. You are out of your depth and you are saying things that aren't accurate and you're saying things that are hurting people's reputations who cannot answer you—

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

Mr. Percy Hatfield: In a subsequent email, to which I've just referenced, a senior vice-president at Infrastructure Ontario suggests comments made by Fausto Natarelli—a man, by the way, whom I've known for many years, a public servant, a man of great integrity whom I have great respect for. The guy from Infrastructure Ontario says that comments made by Mr. Natarelli are not productive, to which Natarelli says back to the VP at Infrastructure Ontario and responds with: "Not engaging us fully so that we can effectively discharge our role in regard to provincial standards ... is not productive."

Speaker, why on earth did the Premier ever sign a contract that negotiated away the ministry's ability to take immediate action to resolve any issue of public safety and warranty guarantees over the life expectancy for the construction materials on the Herb Gray Parkway?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I don't like to talk about individual members of the public service. We have a long tradition of not doing that. But I will tell you, I know the gentleman in question. If you were doing your homework and you talked to him—ask him what his relationship with the minister was and ask him what happened in that meeting on June 19. Ask him, because, Mr. Speaker, the statement the member from Windsor–Tecumseh made just confirmed to me that he actually is saying things, that if he's talked to him, he knows even more that that's not true.

Mr. Speaker, I find this offensive. I wish he would apologize. He continues to say things and quote people, that if he's actually talking to them, he knows that on June 19—because that gentleman was in the room and he can tell you everything, sir. I am most profoundly disappointed that you don't actually come here with the accurate information that you should have.

This project is—

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Oh, sorry. Final supplementary; you're right. It's the final supplementary.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: The correspondence I referenced was on February 14, a long time before June 19, Minister.

Speaker, since this contract was signed on the Herb Gray Parkway, this government has authorized billions of dollars in other projects. The private contracts for these are modelled after the same contract Premier Wynne authorized on the troubled Herb Gray Parkway.

If the Premier refuses to answer questions on the mismanagement of the Herb Gray Parkway, how can we trust her, or how can the people in this province trust her, to lead the province's transit and infrastructure file?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, this is a great project and a great opportunity for the people of Windsor. The memos that front-line staff made, I have read every one of. Every single one, I have read, but I read them after I was advised there was a problem. The gentleman will tell you that, and the gentleman will tell you he has pretty great things to say about this minister, quite frankly, sir, and you know that.

My deputy does not—

Interjections.

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: The reason I know that, Mr. Speaker, is because Mr. Natarelli was appointed by me and the deputy to oversee the project from that point of June 19 on. That's why I know, because he and I worked very closely on this project all last summer. I believe you know that, because he was the first person to come in in interim oversight, and it was his work that helped us do that. He will tell you that the first time he talked to me about that was on June 19—first time. He will tell you that. That is why I know this project is safe—

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

TENDERING PROCESS

Mr. Michael Harris: My question is to the Premier. Premier, last year you chose to vote against the Fair and Open Tendering Act, which would have stopped the region of Waterloo from becoming locked into a construction monopoly. At the time, you excused your inaction by saying the region could apply to the labour board to become a non-construction employer. But I told you a year ago that that application process was broken.

Well, guess what? The labour board rejected the region's application recently because—wait for it—it fixed a toilet handle at an addiction centre and installed a sign at a bus terminal.

Premier, will you actually show some leadership today, admit you were wrong and agree to fix the Labour Relations Act so that we can guarantee open tendering for public employers?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I appreciate the question. I do understand that the Ontario Labour Relations Board has made a few preliminary decisions in this regard, dealing with the Carpenters' Union and the regional municipality of Waterloo. We received the most recent decision, and the ministry is in the process of reviewing it right now.

But, Speaker, as you know, the OLRB is an independent, quasi-judicial tribunal. There are outstanding issues with respect to this matter that are currently before the board. It would be inappropriate for me to comment on the specifics of this case, but it's important to note that if a municipality is unsatisfied with a ruling of the OLRB, with the board's decision, they are able to reapply for classification as a non-construction employer at any time.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Michael Harris: Again to the Premier: Premier, if you fail to take action on this file—

Interjection: She's not even listening.

Mr. Michael Harris: —thousands of tradespeople will be barred from working on publicly funded infrastructure in Waterloo region.

Premier, I hope you're listening to this, because it will be an election issue in our region and across the province, so you should at least respect my taxpayers in the community and listen to this question.

I don't know about you, but I know I can speak for those of us on our side of the House when I say that closed tendering is unfair, unjust and flat-out wrong. The vast majority of Ontarians believe that every qualified company and worker should have the right to bid and work on public infrastructure. That's why open tendering has the support of unionized contractors, open shop companies, and municipalities from across the province.

So, Premier, listen—

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I'm listening.

Mr. Michael Harris: No, you're not. I will ask you again: Will you show some courage, admit you are wrong and agree to fix the Labour Relations Act so that we can guarantee open tendering for public employers?

Interjections.

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

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I do thank the member for the supplementary. Once again, I will note that if a municipality is unsatisfied with a board's decision at any time, they have the right to reapply. Others have done that in the past. Non-construction employer classification was granted, for example, to the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board and the Independent Electricity System Operator.

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But what I really want to concentrate on in my answer is: How did these rules get in place? Where did they come from? Who brought these rules into place? The rulings that are being made by the OLRB in this case are based on rules that were brought in by the official opposition and refined further by the official opposition. So if they made a mistake on the rules, Speaker, I can understand them being upset about this. But it's their rules. They made the rules. That's what's being voted on today.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Premier. Premier, court documents allege that Liberal cabinet ministers had their homes cleaned for free as part of an elaborate government kickback scheme for government cleaning contracts.

Premier, which Liberal cabinet ministers had their homes cleaned for free as part of this kickback scheme?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I know that the government House leader will want to speak to this from his ministry's perspective, but the member needs to know that our government took the allegations around this issue very seriously in 2010—that there were irregularities. As soon as the OPS discovered that there were irregular financial transactions, they initiated an internal audit. The information gathered from the audit was shared with the OPP, and an investigation was launched.

On December 20, 2010, the OPP laid charges against three government employees and an employee of a facility management company. The process was shared with the public in an open OPP news release on December 20, 2010. So this was a police investigation that was dealt with and was drawn to a legal conclusion.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, you're right. It is another OPP investigation, in which documents say that in fact what happened was, as part of the scheme, Liberal cabinet ministers had their houses cleaned for free.

So I'm going to ask you the question yet again. Premier, which of your ministers or former ministers had their houses cleaned for free?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Minister of Government Services.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I have great respect—
Interjections.

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

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, as members are aware, I have great respect for the House leader of the NDP, but this is really out of character for him. This is really beneath him.

We're talking about a situation that was the topic of media stories in 2010. There is absolutely nothing new here. The individuals who undertook wrongdoing were charged.

Let me read a quote from the OPP that was in the paper this morning. OPP Sergeant Carolle Dionne said

the following: “All of the names on the list were reviewed.... There was no wrongdoing, no fraud, no (criminal) breach.”

Four individuals were charged. Anyone else who was somehow implicated or linked to this has been totally cleared. There is nothing new here and, quite frankly, this is beneath the honourable member.

JOB CREATION

Mr. Grant Crack: My question is to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment.

Speaker, a number of weeks ago, I had the privilege and honour of having the minister come and visit the riding. We visited Ivaco, which is a major employer in L'Orignal, Ontario, and we announced an investment where we're going to help to retain and create 458 jobs.

We then visited Alexandria Moulding in my hometown. We toured that facility, and we're helping them, as well, to retain and create 353 jobs.

Further to that, we also made announcements about Montebello Packaging, where we're going to retain and create 86 jobs; and Skotidakis goat farm, a Greek yogurt maker, which is growing right across the province and North America—we're helping to create and retain 110 jobs.

Minister, I know that last week you joined the Premier and Mr. Milloy to announce a multi-billion-dollar investment in other communities such as Kitchener and Waterloo, so I'm just asking if you could update us with the details of those announcements.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: The member is correct. Last week, I had the pleasure of joining the Premier and my colleague from Kitchener Centre to announce an unprecedented investment by OpenText, one of the world's largest and most successful technology companies, operating in 33 countries around the globe.

This is a significant partnership for the province. OpenText will be investing up to \$2 billion in its Ontario operations, making our province its R&D hub globally for cloud computing technology, the future of the Internet. This is great news. This partnership will create up to 1,200 new jobs, doubling the company's Ontario workforce, and these jobs will be high-paying ICT jobs.

This investment is also going to pay great dividends to the province. Our \$120-million investment will directly benefit the province, with over \$200 million in tax revenues alone. And most importantly, this partnership will help to guarantee the success of this sector for years to come and keep Ontario at the forefront of the world's most exciting innovations.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you, Minister, for that great news. The tech and manufacturing sectors in my riding and across the province will continue to benefit from our government's commitment to this sector, because we're making smart strategic partnerships with industry. This announcement demonstrates our plans to create jobs and grow the economy.

Speaker, this government has many positive and successful measures we've taken to create good-paying jobs across this province, but the party opposite has come out with name-calling and harming the relationships we have with our industry partners. I find it appalling that the leader of the official opposition actually calls our investments in our businesses and industries “corporate welfare.”

As a matter of fact, the PC candidate in my riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell said it was a shame that we gave \$1 million, or partnered with \$1 million, to St-Albert's cheese, when we all know that St-Albert's went through some very difficult times over the last year.

Speaker, through you back to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment: Can the minister elaborate on how we're keeping Ontario competitive in this sector?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, one of the key priorities for our government is creating good-paying jobs for today and tomorrow. We've seen this with the landmark \$4-billion Cisco announcement last December. It's the province's talented workforce, our research infrastructure and competitive business climate that are attracting these top companies that are choosing to invest here as a result.

It's refreshing to know that some members from the party opposite are getting it, or at least former members. To quote the former member from Thornhill, Peter Shurman, when he was asked why the government partnered with OpenText, he said it's necessary because “[We're] in a competitive race. That's why.” The former PC finance critic went on to say that “there are things that even Conservatives have to do... If we're going to get a \$2-billion investment from a company that operates in 33 jurisdictions, that \$120 million will alleviate any concerns ... of other jurisdictions coming to the fore—it's a good thing.”

PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

Mr. John O'Toole: My question is to the Minister of Health. Minister, yesterday, Mr. and Mrs. McEwen were here at Queen's Park. My constituent Jim McEwen suffered a stroke in 2010, at the age of 55. He spent a few weeks in hospital in rehab, and on discharge, he asked the question, “What's next?” He was told, “You're done.”

Jim McEwen and his family have been paying, with their own money, thousands of dollars over the past four years to partake in post-stroke physiotherapy.

Minister, you denied Mr. McEwen and other Ontario citizens OHIP-funded physiotherapy because of their age. This is simply wrong.

Minister, in your Ontario today, post-stroke patients over 19 and under 65 are not entitled to OHIP-funded physiotherapy. This is shameful. Minister, will you address this discriminatory policy and provide OHIP-funded physiotherapy for all qualified post-stroke patients?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: This is a spend` question, and we know very well that the party opposite wants to cut spending.

Speaker, we do have services that are available to senior citizens, to people 65 and over, including drug benefits, for example. I'm wondering if the member opposite wants to extend drug coverage to everyone as well, which I think would be a great idea but would cost some money.

When it comes to physiotherapy services, we do cover people 19 and up—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke, second time.

Hon. Deborah Matthews:—we do cover people 65 and over, and we do cover people who have had a hospitalization. We are expanding access to physiotherapy right across the province, including in the member opposite's own community. We're expanding access to home-based physiotherapy, to clinic-based physiotherapy. This is absolutely a move in the right direction, providing better care for patients and better value for our money.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

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Mr. John O'Toole: Minister, my question is really a matter of fairness, and I wish you would put it in that context.

I've petitioned you and written you over the past four years on this issue. This is about justice. Mr. McEwen was here yesterday with his wife, Lorraine. They're asking you for help to allow Mr. McEwen to receive OHIP-funded physiotherapy so he can return to work as a professional engineer and a productive member of society.

Minister, will you address this unfairness issue and extend OHIP-funded physiotherapy to all qualified post-stroke patients, not based on discrimination of age—over 19 and under 65? Will you do this today? It's about fairness.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I am delighted to know that the PC caucus now supports the expansion of health care services.

Everything you talk about is about cutting services, and when we took the move to expand services to people through reforms in physiotherapy, the members opposite opposed our expansion of physiotherapy. They opposed the expansion of exercise programs and falls prevention programs for the people of this province.

We are making investments to keep people healthier and out of hospital, and I'm delighted to know you're now with us on that.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Premier. The cost of electrifying the GO line from Kitchener-Waterloo to Toronto is pegged at \$900 million, and the cost of two-way, all-day GO services is estimated at nearly \$5 billion. But your minister claims that he can deliver a 200-kilometre train route with bullet trains at 320 kilometres an hour at the bargain-basement price of \$500 million—the same cost as a 36-kilometre BRT route from Scarborough to Durham.

After years of turmoil in transit, transportation and infrastructure, people in this province deserve honest numbers. Does the Premier think this is a credible promise?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know that the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure is going to want to speak to the details of the plan, but I want to just say to the member opposite that I think this is a very exciting plan. I think it is necessary, and I know that the member opposite has been at announcements and events in her community where she has heard from people, particularly in the high-tech community, who very much want that connectivity between the Kitchener-Waterloo region and the GTHA. That is exactly what they are looking for.

I hope that the question—which at least is a question about investment in the future and in transit—indicates that the party opposite will take a very close look at the budget when we bring it in, because those investments in transit and in transportation infrastructure are core to our plan for economic growth in the province. I look forward to their support.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: Yes, Madam Premier, it is the best plan in the galaxy, because what Liberals will promise, what we know they'll promise—they'll promise anything and everything to get elected. In order to save a few Liberal seats in the GTA, you promised to cancel gas plants. You said it would cost nothing, but we know the truth now.

Now they're worried about seats in southwestern Ontario. They're making a promise for a bullet train that, to quote the minister, will cost \$500 million "after revenues over the next 10 ... years." The proposed HS2 high-speed train in the United Kingdom will run half the number of trains, but it will cost \$29 billion. That's a difference of 5,800%.

Is the Premier saying to Ontarians that they are getting a deal that's nearly 6,000% better than the one in the United Kingdom?

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I greatly appreciate what I think is a very honest question from the member, and I'm happy to answer the question.

There are two projects here. There is the regional express rail project, which is the two-way, all-day GO service being run by Metrolinx, which will run to Guelph and to Kitchener. Those are electrified trains running every 15 minutes. Much of that expenditure has already been absorbed. I think we own 80% of the track, and Metrolinx is now working on that. That's part of the Metrolinx program.

The study—and they're not my numbers. I'm not an expert at this; they're not my numbers. The numbers are—

Interjections.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: If you want the answer, then listen. I'll give you the answer right now. She has a right to an answer.

The estimates from FCP from Britain, who designed that—world-leading experts, First Class Partnerships—is that it is a project that will cost \$2 billion to \$3 billion to upgrade to London and to add that track and net of revenues—

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

FIREFIGHTERS

Mr. Steven Del Duca: I am particularly happy to rise on this First Responders Day to ask this particular question to the Minister of Labour. Yesterday, I had the pleasure of attending an announcement with the Premier, the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services at which we announced that we would be extending protections for firefighters across Ontario.

Speaker, as you may know, last May, I brought forward Bill 81, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Amendment Act (Presumptions for Firefighters), which called for the government to add six additional cancers to the existing eight that are presumed to be work-related by the WSIB. This is an issue that's very important to the members of my local firefighters' association in Vaughan. It's something that I've worked on closely with current president Jason McInnis and former president Mike Doyle.

Speaker, through you to the minister, can you please speak further to this new regulation?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I'd be very, very happy to, but first, let me thank all the first responders that have joined us at Queen's Park today and all across this great province. I'd particularly like to thank the member from Vaughan, not only for this question in the House but for his excellent advocacy on this issue over the past months. We know that every day firefighters risk their lives to protect us and our communities. We've got to protect them in return.

We're building on the eight cancers that we already presume, and we're making it even easier for full-time, part-time and volunteer firefighters and fire investigators to qualify for benefits. Our new regulation applies retroactively to January 1, 1960. It's immediately going to add breast cancer, multiple myeloma and testicular cancer to the list, with an additional three to be phased in: prostate cancer in 2015, lung cancer in 2016 and skin cancer in 2017. This is the right thing to do. I was so proud to be a part of that yesterday.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Steven Del Duca: I thank the minister for his response and for being there yesterday with all of the folks who were at the announcement. There are approximately 450 fire departments in the province of Ontario, made up of about 11,000 full-time firefighters, 19,000 volunteer firefighters and 200 part-time firefighters. I am very, very thrilled to be a member of a government that is working hard to protect these vital members of our communities.

This expanded list of presumptive illnesses will make a huge difference in the lives of firefighters across Ontario, lifting the burden of proof from their backs when they need it most.

Speaker, through you to the minister, can you please tell us a bit more about the regulation and what our government is doing to further protect firefighters in Ontario?

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: Thanks again for the question to my colleague. This regulation recognizes the years of service of firefighters. It makes Ontario one of the leading jurisdictions in all of Canada.

You know, it lit up the Twitterverse last night. While we were standing by these courageous men and women, the PC candidate in Eglinton–Lawrence was tweeting that firefighters in this province are a special interest group that can be bought. While the PCs were busy denigrating heroic firefighters across social media last night, let's hear what the firefighters themselves had to say. Mark McKinnon, president of the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association, applauded our move and said it's going to "allow firefighters and their families to focus on getting better instead of struggling to get WSIB benefits for an illness that could have been contracted years earlier."

John Sobey, vice-president of the Ottawa Firefighter Association: "These things take time but good things come to those who wait and we're most happy for families of the fallen firefighters."

On this side of the House, we respect the lifesaving work of Ontario's firefighters.

Interjections.

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

New question.

WIND TURBINES

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is to the Minister of the Environment. Since a transformer was installed in 2006 to service industrial wind turbines in my community, residents have been trying to get numerous issues resolved, including noise and health concerns. Residents and the municipality have been regularly reporting these issues to the MOE Spills Action Centre. Do you agree that one of your responsibilities as the Minister of the Environment is to resolve issues related to environmental concerns, including monitoring emissions from transformer stations through the spills reporting centre?

1130

Hon. James J. Bradley: Our ministry, of course, works very hard to resolve all issues which are of an environmental nature, including issues right across the province of Ontario. They may relate to air quality; they may relate to noise; they may relate to water quality. I know that ministry officials work very hard to resolve these matters. There are times when people are going to be in disagreement with whatever results are achieved at that, and I certainly respect the fact that some people are not going to agree with conclusions that are reached.

We have these mechanisms in place for people to access the Ministry of the Environment in order that they may deal, as expeditiously as possible, with these issues within the legislation, within the regulations, within the policy precepts of the province of Ontario. Certainly our ministry strives to be very helpful to the people of this province, and I'm sure that they will continue to do so well into the future.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I'm glad the minister understands his responsibilities, but I don't understand why the Whitworth family has been told by your ministry that their concerns are irrelevant, and they don't care about their issues.

On one occasion, when the Whitworths asked how they could lodge a formal complaint, they were told, "The ministry has closed your file and will not be taking any action on your complaints, and that no other agency, department or ministry was taking any steps to address or assume responsibility."

Your government has turned their backs on the Whitworths. My question, Minister, is simple: Now that you've decreed that the Whitworths' file is closed, where do you expect this family to go to resolve their issues?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I recognize that there are going to be—I think, as I alluded to in my initial response—people who are going to be ultimately disagreeing with the conclusions that are reached by not only the Ministry of the Environment, but other ministries, particularly when the particular assertions have been made on many occasions, and responses have been given.

I recognize as well, that people are not always going to be happy with the response. They will get a response and they will continue to pursue issues, as is their right to pursue issues. However, there will come a time, from time to time, where the answer that the ministry has given is an answer that, unless there is new information which is provided, unless there's additional information that's provided, the ministry will ensure that it gives the appropriate answers. I know there are other mechanisms that are available, but I must say, we do reach a circumstance—and former environment ministers who sat on the other side of the House would fully understand that.

GO TRANSIT

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: My question is to the Minister of Transportation. Long-term construction projects kicked off this week on the Gardiner Expressway, resulting in lane restrictions until 2016. Families will see their commute times increase dramatically in the GTA, with no access to viable transit alternatives. We should be making Brampton into a transit hub, but the minister can't even deliver two-way, all-day GO service.

Why is the minister content to continue the Liberal record of delay, when Brampton needs transit relief now?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: First of all, I hope the member knows that the Gardiner is a municipal infrastructure run by the city, of which I think his party has a large

number of members, so I'm hoping he's in discussion with his municipal caucus friends at Toronto city hall. As someone who lives beside the Gardiner, I would appreciate—and I wish him well in those discussions, because I live a half a block from the Gardiner and the Lakeshore, which for some peculiar reason, in some act of brilliant transportation, were both closed at the same time, which has created some interesting discussions in my neighbourhood.

We have a \$50-billion investment in the Big Move. The Premier just announced an additional, unprecedented \$29-billion fund. We're extending the 427, the 407; we're making massive investments in rapid transit in Viva with York and with other regions.

I hope the party will support the budget later today, because this is a historic, unprecedented level. If the member does have those concerns, which I take him at his value, I hope you will be rising with us several times in the next few days.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: As my constituents and I can attest, construction on the Gardiner has increased commute times by almost an hour. People need a viable alternative. We hear lots of empty promises from the Liberals, but there's still really no funding for all-day, two-way GO service.

The government has delayed important transit improvements in Mississauga and Brampton for too long. Why won't the minister commit to timelines and start the funding for these projects that Brampton needs, rather than spending his time making flashy announcements that Ontarians simply cannot trust?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, we have a \$50-billion plan, which we are about \$17 billion into, and we're about five years into the 25 years. If you do the math, \$17 billion of a \$50-billion commitment at about year 5 means that we're way ahead of schedule.

We're now building more rapid-transit capital projects, including in your community, than ever before. It's unprecedented. These aren't announcements; these are results and actions that are going on right now across the province.

We would like to complete this project because right now, the last Premier who invested as much in rapid transit and transportation was George Drew, and he left office in 1969. We went through a 35-year drought where we never spent more than \$3 billion or \$4 billion. We spend more than that on highways alone. So we're back at 2% of GDP.

We think we share some views—we hope we do—with the NDP on the importance of infrastructure. I guess we'll find out, when the budget gets voted on, if that's true.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée, l'honorable Deb Matthews.

Speaker, with your permission, I would also like to welcome to Parliament my colleagues, fellow members of the Ontario Medical Association, who are here in force for the annual Doctors' Day.

Today is an ideal time for us to recognize the thousands of physicians across Ontario who screen, test, diagnose, examine, palpate, auscultate, prescribe, monitor, advise, console and heal us through hundreds of illnesses, through the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to.

It's been said that medicine is the most scientific art and the most artistic science. I know first-hand that Ontario physicians mobilize this wisdom every day. I know their dedication and commitment and energy and compassion.

My question is this: Minister, would you please share with this chamber some of your thoughts on how you value doctors—not merely the ones in caucus, but those across Ontario?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I certainly do value all doctors; including the three in our caucus, indeed, the three in this Legislature.

I welcome the OMA today. We are delighted to be celebrating Doctors' Day here. I want to say a big congratulations to Dr. Ved Tandan, the 133rd president of the OMA, and acknowledge the extraordinary work of Dr. Scott Wooder, who is the past president now of the OMA.

We have 26,000 doctors working in this province. They play a very central role, of course, in any attempt to reform our health care system. I'm pleased to say that Ontario's doctors have been great partners, and even more delighted that Dr. Tandan has made a priority of his presidency building stronger partnerships and building stronger bridges; so thank you for that, Doctor.

As we have worked to increase access to physicians across the province, doctors have been there with us. As we shifted our focus to patient-centred interdisciplinary care teams, doctors have been there with us. They've been there with us—

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you, Speaker.

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

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Minister, for your thoughts as well as your endorsement.

Speaker, as you will appreciate, doctors are committed to high-quality, timely and accessible patient care in communities across Ontario. Primary care physicians in particular are the gatekeepers and goaltenders of our health care system. Epidemics of cardiometabolic disease, type 2 diabetes, adult and childhood obesity, osteoarthritis, respiratory ailments like asthma and COPD, cancers—all these land on the desks of Ontario's family doctors. It is the family docs who must play the lead role in encouraging patients to live healthier lives, avoid disease triggers and monitor themselves.

Family docs are generally the first point of contact in the health care system when patients fall ill, yet I know there are many families in my own riding of Etobicoke—

North who are concerned about access to primary care. Would the minister please elaborate on her efforts at increasing equitable access to doctors in communities across Ontario?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The member is right: We've made great efforts to train and recruit more doctors in Ontario and ensure that their services are available in the communities that need them.

I'm delighted to say that we have nearly 4,000 more doctors working in this province than we did just a decade ago. Our family health teams are providing care to over three million people.

We've created the HealthForceOntario's northern and rural recruitment and retention fund so there are more physicians attracted to small and northern communities, where they are often most needed.

In 2009, we launched Health Care Connect. It has helped a quarter of a million people who do not have a family doctor to find one.

There is more to do. I do want to say thank you to the doctors for supporting us as we have focused on wellness and prevention. As we have proposed legislation like the skin cancer protection act, the Youth Smoking Prevention Act and the Making Healthier Choices Act, Ontario doctors have been right there with us, supporting.

INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM FUNDING

Mr. Ted Arnott: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. Will the Premier explain to the House why the government cancelled the Connecting Link Program, an historic partnership so vitally important to our municipalities like the township of Centre Wellington and the town of Halton Hills, without adequate notice or consultation?

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: We actually have just done the MIII in the small, rural and northern programs, which is \$100 million. The Premier just announced an unprecedented fund of over \$14 billion for rural and northern Ontario.

My estimate: In any years when we've been in government, we have been spending \$5 to \$10 more than you did per person in rural Ontario, and we are working now and have had consultants to integrate all of those highways.

The other thing is, as you know, you downloaded 42% of the highways in eastern Ontario and took all of the provincial highways, and downloaded health and social service, just in case there was any chance that any municipal leader could find five cents for it.

We are uploading health and social services, and we are putting more money into rural roads and highways. So I'm hoping that that statement from my honourable friend—that you'll be supporting the budget, and you'll see that as some redemption for your government's record, which I'm sure—from your lips to God's ears—will give us both a place in heaven.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Speaker, nobody believes the minister anymore.

To the Premier: By cancelling this historic partnership, the Premier is asking rural Ontario to pay the price for Liberal mistakes. West Perth needs to reconstruct the Blanchard Bridge at a cost of about \$1.7 million. Wellington North needs over \$1 million to repair the Rick Hopkins Bridge. These are provincial bridges on provincial highways, carrying provincial traffic.

Speaker, I'll ask the Premier to use her math skills. How many times could this government have fixed our bridges if it hadn't blown over a billion dollars on cancelled gas plants?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: These new funding initiatives are several-fold what the party in power started, when Premier Wynne was Minister of Transportation, through ROMA and through the Ontario Good Roads Association. We started these new programs; they were written in partnership; and we very carefully listened to rural leaders across Ontario. As a matter of fact, the government has been so principled that over 86% of all the funds in these programs go to opposition ridings.

So I don't understand. I would hope that the person opposite—if the member from Perth–Wellington is so concerned about this, he might want to apologize to those rural leaders for all the downloading of health and social services and when you took all the provincial highways and dumped them on municipalities.

We are uploading and we have a fully funded program, and in the budget, you will see the continuing growth of that commitment. I hope that means that the member from Perth–Wellington has mended his ways and that his party will join us in supporting the budget.

DEFERRED VOTES

INFRASTRUCTURE FOR JOBS AND PROSPERITY ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR L'INFRASTRUCTURE AU SERVICE DE L'EMPLOI ET DE LA PROSPÉRITÉ

Deferred vote on the motion that the question now be put on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 141, An Act to enact the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2013 / Projet de loi 141, Loi édictant la Loi de 2013 sur l'infrastructure au service de l'emploi et de la prospérité.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a deferred vote on the motion by Mr. Milloy, and that the question be now put on the motion for second reading of Bill 141, An Act to enact the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2013.

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

The division bells rang from 1144 to 1149.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): All members take their seats, please.

We have a deferred vote on the motion. Mr. Milloy has moved that the question be now put. All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Milloy, John
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Forster, Cindy	Moridi, Reza
Balkissoon, Bas	Fraser, John	Murray, Glen R.
Bartolucci, Rick	Gerretsen, John	Naqvi, Yasir
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Gélinas, France	Natyshak, Taras
Bisson, Gilles	Gravelle, Michael	Oraziotti, David
Bradley, James J.	Hoskins, Eric	Piruzza, Teresa
Campbell, Sarah	Hunter, Mitzie	Qaadri, Shafiq
Cansfield, Donna H.	Jaczek, Helena	Sandals, Liz
Chan, Michael	Kwinter, Monte	Sattler, Peggy
Chiarelli, Bob	Leal, Jeff	Schein, Jonah
Colle, Mike	MacCharles, Tracy	Sergio, Mario
Coteau, Michael	Mangat, Amrit	Tabuns, Peter
Crack, Grant	Mantha, Michael	Takhar, Harinder S.
Delaney, Bob	Marchese, Rosario	Taylor, Monique
Dhillon, Vic	Matthews, Deborah	Vanthof, John
Dickson, Joe	Mauro, Bill	Wong, Soo
DiNovo, Cheri	McMeekin, Ted	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Duguid, Brad	McNeely, Phil	Zimmer, David
Fife, Catherine	Meilleur, Madeleine	

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

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Klees, Frank	O'Toole, John
Bailey, Robert	Leone, Rob	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Barrett, Toby	MacLaren, Jack	Pettapiece, Randy
Clark, Steve	MacLeod, Lisa	Scott, Laurie
Fedeli, Victor	Martow, Gila	Smith, Todd
Hardeman, Ernie	McDonell, Jim	Thompson, Lisa M.
Harris, Michael	McKenna, Jane	Walker, Bill
Hillier, Randy	McNaughton, Monte	Wilson, Jim
Holyday, Douglas C.	Miller, Norm	Yakabuski, John
Jackson, Rod	Munro, Julia	Yurek, Jeff
Jones, Sylvia	Nicholls, Rick	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 59; the nays are 32.

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

Motion agreed to.

INFRASTRUCTURE FOR JOBS AND PROSPERITY ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR L'INFRASTRUCTURE AU SERVICE DE L'EMPLOI ET DE LA PROSPÉRITÉ

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

Bill 141, An Act to enact the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2013 / Projet de loi 141, Loi édictant la Loi de 2013 sur l'infrastructure au service de l'emploi et de la prospérité.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On December 5, 2013, Mr. Murray moved second reading of Bill 141. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, say “aye.”
 All those opposed, say “nay.”
 In my opinion, the ayes have it.
Second reading agreed to.

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

Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I would ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills, Mr. Speaker.

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

EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): At this time, we are fulfilling a unanimous consent to give tribute to our first responders.

The member from Newmarket–Aurora.

Mr. Frank Klees: Speaker, I'm honoured to rise on behalf of Tim Hudak, the leader of the official opposition, and my colleagues in the PC caucus. I know that I'll be joined by my colleagues here unanimously.

I had the privilege of bringing this bill forward, and, as members know, it was a complex process. What is, however, very encouraging is that ultimately this bill was passed because, unanimously, we as members agreed that it was the right thing to do.

It's appropriate that we would take a day when we would recognize the contribution that first responders make to our communities. There will be a memorial this weekend, and we will remember first responders who died in the course of fulfilling their duties.

I have participated, as many members have, over the last number of years. I now will have served—on June 9, if we get there—for 19 years. I know there are some members who are pleased to know that I'm moving on.

Interjection.

Mr. Frank Klees: Thank you, Minister of Health.

Over that time, I have had the honour to participate in those memorials. But what is important to me, and I believe all of us, is that we not only remember first responders who have died in carrying out their responsibilities, but that we remember them while they are with us and carrying out those responsibilities, that we celebrate what you do and we're appreciative of what you do. That's what this bill does.

The purpose of the legislation is so that we would raise awareness within our communities, starting here, as we're doing now, as members of the Legislature, to give honour and respect and celebrate. The objective was that throughout this province, that whether at municipal level, or whether in our schools and auditoriums, throughout our communities, that we would come together—people would come together—pause, take this day and say, “Thank you. We appreciate what you do for us. We appreciate the safety and security that we enjoy in our communities.” That doesn't just happen by accident.

Speaker, we often take for granted these important services and the dedication, not only of the first responders,

but of their families as well. It's not an easy task to put yourself in harm's way day in and day out for the protection of people within our communities, so we're here celebrating that contribution.

One of the initiatives that I undertook to try to spread that news was to initiate an essay contest in our schools. I contacted both school boards in Newmarket and Aurora and York region and asked to have students participate and write an essay to say what first responders mean to them and to our communities.

I'd like to read into the record one of those essays that was received, because I believe that this really goes to the heart of what we are trying to achieve with this day. It's entitled “Heroes,” by Tattiana Pancho in grade 11 at Sacred Heart Catholic High School:

“In 2009, I had a brain aneurysm which” led “to a stroke. I had a bleed in the right side of my brain. I was left-side-paralyzed and had to learn how to walk and talk all over again.

“I was with my father when I felt a weakness in my knees. My hero, my father, a Toronto police officer, went into emergency mode. His action saved my life. He called 911 and the emergency medical services unit came out.

“My heroes, the ambulance attendants, were quick and thorough. They got me to the hospital, by which time I was in a coma.

“My heroes, the emergency staff, doctors, nurses and administrative team worked diligently to ensure my safety. The doctors requested air transport to the SickKids; organizing this would take three to six hours.

“My dad, Superman to me, called his unit. His unit command called York Regional Police and they came to his rescue, my rescue.” They “blocked traffic and got me to SickKids with moments to spare. I was then rushed into surgery.

“My heroes, the doctors and nurses at the Hospital for Sick Children.

“My heroes, the police officers who keep us safe; firefighters, who are not only there if there is a fire but are called out to motor vehicle accidents to assist with the jaws of life or simply to get your pet out of a tree; the EMS team who works against time to get patients to the hospital; the administrative staff in hospital, the first contact in a hospital visit; the doctors and nurses who fight the odds constantly to ensure survival.

“I am here to tell my story because of the amazing work of first responders.

“First responders—911 operators, police, fire, ambulance ... my heroes.”

I want to thank Tattiana Pancho for her essay and her insight.

In closing, I want to give very special recognition to someone who was very instrumental in me bringing this bill forward, and that is Vali Stone, who is with us. I would ask her to stand.

1200

Vali Stone is the author of a book entitled 911: True Tales of Courage and Compassion. Vali came to my office and gave me that book, and it recounts the stories of first responders whom Vali asked to share the most

memorable times that they've had in carrying out their duties. I commend that book to all members. In fact, when I first introduced this bill, I made that book available to all members here. I believe it's something that everyone in this province should read.

Again, in closing, Speaker, I just want to express our sincere appreciation for the work that our first responders do. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts. Our province and our communities are what they are because of the work that you do.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Next tribute, please.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, it is my great privilege to rise in this House today on behalf of our Premier, my colleagues in the government caucus and the people of Ontario to recognize and express our gratitude to our first responders.

First responders provide emergency services in times of crisis. Every day, our first responders put their lives on the line to protect us, our friends, neighbours and loved ones. They are there when we need them most and look after us in our time of need. We are always confident that Ontario's first responders are ready at a moment's notice to protect our homes, businesses and communities.

To recognize their ongoing commitment to community safety, the Ontario Legislature proclaimed May 1 of each year as First Responders Day. I especially want to thank the member from Newmarket–Aurora for championing this very important initiative.

First responders include police officers, firefighters, military personnel, paramedics, medical evacuation pilots, dispatchers, nurses, doctors and emergency managers. They also include the many volunteers and professionals who dedicate their careers to the service of others.

Emergency service providers are important members of our communities. They are also our neighbours, friends and relatives. Speaker, I'm very proud to note that my late grandfather, Ghulam Abbas Naqvi, was a police officer.

Our first responders help people in times of crisis, but we also want to recognize their volunteer work, which helps strengthen our communities. From charity events to toy drives, community car washes and coaching little league, our first responders are a positive example for our youth and for everyone in our communities.

I was pleased to join Premier Wynne, Minister Kevin Flynn and MPP Steven Del Duca yesterday to announce that our government is improving supports for firefighters across Ontario. We're increasing cancer coverage to make it easier for firefighters with cancer associated with their work to qualify for workplace insurance benefits. It's the right thing to do to help protect those who protect us.

We know that Ontario families and communities are safer thanks to the dedication of our first responders, who are there to help us when we need them most. They make a difference every day in communities across our great province. They help us feel safe and protect us during emergency situations.

I also want to recognize the sacrifice of their families, their partners, their mothers, fathers and their children.

Thank you for sharing your loved ones with us and putting them in the line of harm.

Speaker, we also want to take the opportunity to pay our respects to those who lost their lives in the line of duty. Working with firefighters and police, we created an annual tribute to honour those who have died in the line of duty. This weekend, the Ontario Police Memorial Foundation will hold its annual ceremony of remembrance at Queen's Park here in Toronto. The names of fallen officers are inscribed on the wall of honour. Let's all take a moment to reflect on their courage and dedication.

Heroes are defined by the way they live their lives, serving their communities and protecting those in harm's way. To the families of those who have given their lives to protect others, we owe you an eternal debt and we keep the memory of your loved ones in our hearts and minds so that they may never be forgotten. Ontarians are privileged to be protected by our first responders. We are grateful for their dedication, their public service and their commitment to duty and service.

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

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's an honour and a privilege to stand in the company of such heroes here today. Certainly on behalf of Andrea Horwath and the entire New Democratic Party caucus, the most important words we can say to you today are: Thank you.

It was in that spirit that our leader, Andrea Horwath, first tabled a bill about presumed diagnosis for certain varieties of cancer, and we are delighted that the government has picked up on that and brought that to bear and brought it into reality. That's a very good thing. As the Premier herself said, "It doesn't matter where good ideas come from."

On February 27 we, in the NDP, tabled a bill for presumed diagnosis for post-traumatic stress disorder for those who rush into danger when we rush out. This is critical. In fact, it's law in Alberta and has been law in Alberta for over two years now. What they've discovered is that there's no increase in the number of claims or cases; it's just that those claims and cases are dealt with with dignity, the way our first responders should be dealt with—with dignity—even when they succumb to post-traumatic stress disorder, which happens and which also results in death, on occasion. They also found in Alberta that it doesn't cost any more for municipalities. These are facts based on evidence of actually working with the law for over two years now.

On that day, we had in this House the Ontario Provincial Police Association, the Ontario Professional Fire Fighters Association, the Police Association of Ontario, the Ontario Paramedic Association, Tema Center Memorial Trust, OPSEU, Unifor, CUPE and ATU, all in support of Bill 67. Most notably, though, I think, were the stories of the individuals who were suffering—Jeff Balch, firefighter; Bruce Kruger, Ontario provincial policeperson; David Whitley, paramedic—very brave individuals who came and told the stories of what it was to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, to try to get a claim through WSIB and often to fail in that pursuit.

We also heard from WSIB workers themselves who said they wished that they had the tools to process these claims in a dignified and honourable way, rather than look for every excuse not to process them. So that is what this bill does.

I believe that just like first responders would never say never to us, in terms of protecting our safety, we should never say never to them. I don't believe for a moment that this is a partisan issue. I have heard some negative rumblings from both the Liberals and the Progressive Conservatives, but I don't believe that. I don't believe that there's a person in this room who doesn't want what's best for our first responders.

So it is in that spirit that I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding Bill 67, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to post-traumatic stress disorder.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): If I could have your indulgence, please. I'm going to ask the member—and I stopped the clock—to provide the rest of her statement. If she's finished, that's fine. And then I will entertain that after, because we're in the middle of a unanimous consent to do the work that we're doing now. So, if you would like to complete your statement.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Absolutely. I just want to give credit where credit is due and say that it was the member from Newmarket–Aurora who made this suggestion. When the reading happened for Bill 67, it was his suggestion that it pass today, on May 1. But it was also the suggestion of hundreds of paramedics, firefighters and police officers who also sent us their wishes that this pass today, including the unions that I enumerated.

So, at this point, Mr. Speaker, I would like to conclude my statements and then move unanimous consent. Thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements. We are now finished that unanimous consent, and I will entertain the member from Parkdale–High Park on a point of order.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding Bill 67, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to post-traumatic stress disorder.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Ms. DiNovo is seeking unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding Bill 67, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to post-traumatic stress disorder. Do we agree?

I heard a no.

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

The House recessed from 1212 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's my pleasure to welcome students and teachers from First Nations School in my riding. Welcome to the Legislature.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr. Rob Leone: I'd like to take this opportunity to discuss an important issue right across the province of Ontario. I know that there are many schools that have, in the course of the last few years, closed right across the province of Ontario.

There is a process that is in need of review; it's called the ARC process that every school board goes through. I want to note that we on this side of the House have some concerns about the process and how it's unfolding in cities and communities right across the province, whether it's in Niagara Falls, Hamilton, Peterborough, or even in my own riding.

There is a school in my riding, St. Brigid school, that is a temporary school that was supposed to be built for about 15 years, and it was supposed to be replaced by a permanent school. I think residents in my community of Cambridge have asked what process has to actually be undertaken to replace that temporary school with a permanent structure.

I would ask that the members of this Legislature embark on a review process of the entire infrastructure plan in the Ministry of Education so that people are aware of how we can keep our schools open. In rural areas, particularly, where schools are closing because of declining enrollment, we should come up with a plan to keep those schools open to the greatest extent possible.

I urge all members in this Legislature to stand up and consider that proposal.

NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING

Miss Monique Taylor: On Monday evening, it was my honour to take part in Hamilton's National Day of Mourning ceremony. Each year, on April 28, we mourn the tragedy of workers killed on the job, and we vow to prevent them from happening in the future.

Every day, men and women leave their home for work as they have done many times before, but sometimes they don't return. We owe it to them, their families and all workers to make workplaces as safe as they possibly can be. We owe it to them to make sure that workers who are injured on the job are not assigned to a life of poverty.

Instead, the WSIB has released draft policies for consultation that, if implemented, will deny benefits to many workers with permanent injuries. The effect of these policy changes would be that workers' injuries will systematically be blamed on pre-existing conditions. Pre-existing conditions would include factors that are simply part of normal aging.

The simple fact is that if a worker is injured at work, they deserve to be compensated for that. Just because they are older and are, perhaps, more prone to disability, should not mean that they are less entitled. How can we possibly justify putting a lesser value on people as they age?

I call on this government to kill the WSIB's proposed changes, and take another look at the sensible proposals put forward by Harry Arthurs in the 2012 report.

MEADOWVALE THEATRE

Mr. Bob Delaney: This past weekend, the community of Meadowvale got together to celebrate 25 years of community theatre at our Meadowvale Theatre, which is celebrating its anniversary—it opened at the end of April—with a three-day celebration. It is an important milestone in our western Mississauga community.

The three-day event was hosted by Billy Talent—a name that some members in this Legislature will know—a now-famous punk rock band that originated right in Meadowvale and got its start at the Meadowvale Theatre.

The Mississauga Arts Council partnered together with Limelight to organize a young talent show for the entire western Mississauga community to enjoy.

The celebration featured performances by young artists, activities, and was followed by a barbecue for families to come and take part in. The master of ceremonies was ward 9 councillor Pat Saito, who was herself involved in the original work that brought the Meadowvale Theatre to fruition.

The theatre has grown in popularity by featuring, in part, Mississauga's cultural and social identity, and we brought in a lot of big names. The event also demonstrates that Mississauga is not only proud to bring in existing names but to develop its own artistic talent right in the heart of Meadowvale.

On behalf of the province, I'd like to thank all the volunteers for the countless hours they spent putting in to making the Meadowvale Theatre's 25th anniversary a great achievement.

MARY JEAN WRIGHT

Mr. Monte McNaughton: It is my honour to rise today to recognize the life of Dr. Mary Jean Wright, a constituent from my riding of Lambton–Kent–Middlesex who recently passed away.

Dr. Wright has a long-established professional career in the field of child psychology. After her graduate studies at the University of Toronto and war service in Britain, where she worked on developing care for evacuated children, she returned to her alma mater, the University of Western Ontario, where she became the first female in Canada to chair a major psychology department. She has also held many leadership roles in a number of organizations, including the Canadian Psychological Association, the Ontario Board of Examiners, Huron University College, and as a non-American fellow of the American Psychological Association.

She has been recognized with many awards, including honorary degrees from four Canadian universities, the Ontario Psychological Association's Award for Distinguished Contributions to Psychology, the Ontario Psychological Foundation's Year of the Child Award, the

Association for Early Childhood Education Children's Service Award, the CPA's Gold Medal and a Queen Elizabeth Jubilee Medal. Recently, Strathroy's newest public school is being named in her honour for her lifetime of contributions.

Many generations will continue to benefit from her philanthropic support of academic research, theological studies and cultural endeavours.

I would like to extend my sincerest condolences to the Wright family, and thank her for her dedication and contribution.

YOUTH SUICIDE

Ms. Sarah Campbell: Today, I want to raise a very serious and tragic issue facing many communities in my riding and across the north: youth suicides.

Mr. Speaker, it may appall you to learn that in some communities in this province, the youth suicide rate is 10 times the national average. One community in my riding with a total population of 420 people has seen seven youth suicides and 27 attempts in a 12-month period.

I want the members of the House to take a moment to reflect on that and apply that figure proportionately to the communities they know. There would be an uproar. No one would stand for it, yet in First Nation communities like Neskantaga, Webequie and Pikangikum, very little is done to address the causes of the despair that is felt in these communities.

For many Ontarians living in these communities, the despair is caused by deplorable living conditions, boil water advisories that have lasted for decades, lack of access to fresh food, overcrowded and mould-infested homes—and that makes the situation even more dire.

More needs to be done than fly-in, fly-out crisis intervention. Real changes need to be made to address these grossly substandard conditions, and we need to reach out to these communities just as we would to any other community in this province.

We need to act immediately to improve the conditions in these communities and protect the future of these talented young people and ensure that another life isn't lost.

EYE EXAMINATIONS

Mr. John Fraser: Mr. Speaker, we see the world through our eyes. In fact, 80% of learning comes directly through our vision. Good vision is a key determinant in a child's learning and development. It enables them to achieve their full potential and to succeed.

We know that routine eye examinations by either an optometrist or a physician are fully covered by OHIP for Ontarians under the age of 20. Despite this, approximately 86% of children do not get their vision tested before the age of six. One out of six children require vision correction, and 3% of children have a serious eye condition that requires treatment.

There are a number of initiatives, like the Eye See...Eye Learn program, the government's partnership with optometrists to raise awareness with families. As well, ophthalmologists and researchers are actively engaged in a number of studies and initiatives regarding effective and affordable vision screening for children.

As legislators, parents, grandparents, doctors and educators, this is an issue that should be a concern to us all. We all have a role to play.

1310

I would like to suggest that we, as MPPs, take the opportunity to communicate this important issue to families in our ridings. I have tabled a motion, number 71, to be debated here next Thursday, to encourage discussion and debate and to raise awareness on this important issue. I look forward to members' interest and participation.

ST. CHRISTOPHER'S COOPERATIVE PRESCHOOL

Mrs. Jane McKenna: This past Saturday morning, families in my riding gathered for a special breakfast at St. Christopher's Cooperative Preschool on Guelph Line. Students and parents, past and present, were there for pancakes and syrup, true, but the sweetest aspect of this occasion was the celebration of the non-profit preschool's golden anniversary year.

Opened in September 1964, the preschool was started by the young mothers of St. Christopher's Anglican Church, along with the parish's Reverend Clarence Mitchell and founding teacher Grace Freckleton.

Just two or three dozen children attended St. Christopher's during that first year. Things were simpler then, as they were outside of the preschool orbit, but St. Christopher's has evolved surely and steadily over the last half-century. The role of technology is the most obvious measure of change inside the classroom. One thing that hasn't changed, however, is the deep commitment of the dedicated staff and parents, whose efforts make this preschool's operations possible.

The community-minded caring is matched by the host church, which coordinates valued food security programs and an inclusive outreach ministry.

I am always happy to applaud those who give of themselves to the community, and I am delighted to wish St. Christopher's Cooperative Preschool a fantastic 50th anniversary.

ORGAN DONATION

Mr. Phil McNeely: I would like once again to highlight a wonderful local initiative in my community that will save lives.

On Saturday, April 26, the Gloucester North Lions Club ran an organ donor drive hosted by Place d'Orléans, a large mall in Orléans. This was the second year they partnered with the Trillium Gift of Life Network to give local Ottawa-Orléans residents an opportunity to sign up as organ and tissue donors.

On Saturday, the team in which I participated registered 31 donors, bringing the Lions' total to 288 registered donors, 96% of their goal of 300.

As we all know, April was organ donor month in Ontario. In the past year, we saw Ontario's organ donor list grow by 232,000 as citizens registered their consent to organ and tissue donation. This brings the total number of registered donors in the province to 2.9 million people, and I'm proud of the contribution of members of my community.

The local effort was led by Lion Pierrette Woods, who is also a tissue recipient. She told me that without her transplant, she would not be able to take in her favourite activity: watching her grandchildren play hockey.

Also present were John Proulx, Judy Proulx, Daniel Trottier, Harry Jackson, Guy Savard, Gail Marcogliese, Linda Robar, George Davies, Ann Bourassa, Ken McDonald, Judy McDonald, Linda Kzuniarz, Janet Kennedy and Barbara Savard.

I would like to thank all the volunteers from the Lions Club and Trillium Gift of Life Network, as well as Place d'Orléans, for hosting this life-saving initiative.

I encourage all those who have not yet registered to take the two minutes out of their day to give the gift of life at www.beadonar.ca.

KINETTE CLUB OF LONDON

Mr. Jeff Yurek: I'd like to take this time to thank the Kinette Club of London. For the last 14 years, they have hosted an essay contest for students in grades 5 and 6 in the London area. The topic of the contest this year was "Why I Am Proud to Be Canadian." The grade 5 school curriculum covers the different levels of government, and this fit well with the contest.

This year's grade 5 winner is from West Nissouri Public School. I would like to congratulate Ellen McDonald and would like to read some of her essay, as I have time.

"Proud to Be Canadian

"My name is Ellen McDonald and I am incredibly proud, and feel privileged, to live in the country we call Canada.

"Canadians have many amazing things, one of which is freedom. Our freedoms and rights have attracted people from across the world for plenty of reasons, such as peace. I am proud to say that Canada is an official member of the UN ... that aims to prevent war from breaking out. Others come for the equal rights, such as equality of men and women. In fact, Canada is known for its rich variety of cultures. Twenty per cent of all Canadians come from somewhere else. It makes me feel safe to know that boy or girl, black or white, or short or tall will be accepted. Kids have rights too! I have the right to go to school and to be treated fairly, just like everyone else. A very important freedom, in my opinion, is the freedom of speech. For example, if I said I don't really want Stephen Harper to be Prime Minister, I would not be whisked off to jail! As long as it's respectful, I can

speaking my mind (and that means speaking a lot!). I am proud to say that I can count on my rights and freedoms to help me feel safe and loved....

“In conclusion, it’s pretty clear I’m a proud Canadian, eh? I’ve told you about our freedoms, our climate, our inventors and our animals. We have clean air to breathe and a safe environment—what more could you ask for? You certainly couldn’t ask for a better country as Canada has that position filled. Au revoir!”

Congratulations, Ellen.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs on a point of order.

Hon. David Zimmer: It’s my pleasure to introduce Daiene Vernile, who is sitting here in the east lobby, who is the nominated candidate in the riding of Kitchener Centre and will soon, after the next election—whenever that is—be taking the seat of John Milloy.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: I beg leave to present the first report, 2014, from the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills and move the adoption of its recommendations.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Tabuns presents the committee report and moves the adoption of its recommendations.

Does the member wish to make a brief statement?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Simply, I move adjournment of the debate, Speaker.

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

Debate adjourned.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Mrs. Laura Albanese: 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 (Mr. Trevor Day): Mrs. Albanese from the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs presents the committee’s report as follows and moves its adoption:

The committee recommends that Bill 20, An Act respecting the City of Toronto and the Ontario Municipal Board, be not reported.

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

Report adopted.

PETITIONS

PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES

Mr. John O’Toole: I’m pleased to present a petition. Earlier today, I raised a question with the Minister of Health on this subject.

“Whereas current OHIP legislation and policies prevent Ontario post-stroke patients between the ages of 20 and 64 from receiving additional one-on-one OHIP-funded physiotherapy; and

“Whereas these post-stroke patients deserve to be rehabilitated to their greatest ability possible to maybe return to work and become provincial income taxpayers again and productive citizens;

“Whereas current OHIP policies prevent Ontarians under age 65 and over the age of 20 from receiving additional OHIP-funded physiotherapy and rehabilitation after their initial stroke treatment; and

“Whereas these OHIP policies are discriminatory in nature, forcing university/college students and other Ontarians to wait until age 65 to receive more OHIP-funded physiotherapy;

“Whereas the lack of post-stroke physiotherapy offered to Ontarians between the ages of 20 and 64 is forcing these people to prematurely cash in their RRSPs and/or sell their houses to raise funds” for their own treatment;

“Now therefore we, the undersigned, hereby respectfully petition the Ontario Legislature to introduce and pass amending legislation and new regulations to provide OHIP-funded post-stroke physiotherapy and treatment for all qualified post-stroke patients, thereby eliminating the discriminatory nature of current treatment practices.”

These petitions come from all over Ontario. I’m pleased to sign it, support it and present it to Gabriel.

OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

Miss Monique Taylor: I have this petition from Porcupine, Timmins and Orléans. So here it is.

“Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario Ombudsman, who is an officer of the Legislature, is not allowed to provide trusted, independent investigations of complaints against children’s aid societies; and

“Whereas Ontario is the only province in Canada not allowing their Ombudsman to investigate complaints against children’s aid societies; and

“Whereas people who feel they have been wronged by the actions of children’s aid societies are left feeling helpless with nowhere else to turn for help to correct systemic issues;

1320

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to grant the Ombudsman the power to investigate children’s aid societies.”

I couldn’t agree with this more. I’m going to give it to page David to bring to the Clerk.

ÉCOLE ÉLÉMENTAIRE CATHOLIQUE

ALAIN-FORTIN

M. Bob Delaney: J'ai une pétition adressée à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario :

« Attendu que la capacité de l'école élémentaire catholique Alain-Fortin est de 464 déterminée d'après la formule du ministère de l'Éducation;

« Attendu que l'effectif actuel de l'école élémentaire catholique Alain-Fortin sera de 692 élèves à l'automne 2014, excédant la prévision du Conseil des écoles catholiques du Centre-Est (CECCE) qui était prévue à 616 élèves pour la rentrée scolaire 2014;

« Attendu que, selon le taux de croissance et fréquentation des quatre dernières années, la prévision pour 2015-2016 est de 740 élèves;

« Attendu que la construction d'une nouvelle école pour désengorger l'école élémentaire catholique Alain-Fortin est la priorité principale du CECCE;

« Nous, soussignés, adressons à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario et le ministère de l'Éducation de l'Ontario la pétition suivante :

« Nous demandons que les fonds nécessaires à la construction d'une nouvelle école élémentaire catholique soient octroyés au Conseil des écoles catholiques du Centre-Est par le ministère de l'Éducation via les fonds en investissements d'immobilisations prioritaires pour le secteur d'Avalon à Orléans. »

Speaker, this petition is signed by a number of people from eastern Ottawa, and particularly the community of Orléans. I'm pleased to sign it, as well, and send it—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Merci beaucoup.

LYME DISEASE

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

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

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

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to request the Minister of Health to direct the Ontario public health system and OHIP to include all currently available and scientifically verified tests for

acute and chronic Lyme diagnosis, to do everything necessary to create public awareness of Lyme disease in Ontario, and to have internationally developed diagnostic and successful treatment protocols available to patients and physicians.”

I affix my signature in full support.

GASOLINE PRICES

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that was collected by Mrs. Sheila O’Neil. She is the office manager of the Centre of Hope, MS Society, Sudbury chapter. It reads as follows:

“Whereas northern Ontario motorists continue to be subject to wild fluctuations in the price of gasoline; and

“Whereas the province could eliminate opportunistic price gouging and deliver fair, stable and predictable fuel prices; and

“Whereas five provinces and many US states already have some sort of gas-price regulation; and

“Whereas jurisdictions with gas-price regulation have seen an end to wild price fluctuations, a shrinking of price discrepancies between urban and rural communities and lower annualized gas prices;

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario ... to mandate the Ontario Energy Board to monitor the price of gasoline across Ontario in order to reduce price volatility and unfair regional price differences while encouraging competition.”

I fully support this petition. I affix my name to it and ask Kaia to bring it to the Clerk.

CREDIT UNIONS

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

“Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario support our 1.3 million members across Ontario through loans to small businesses to start up, grow and create jobs, help families to buy homes and assist their communities with charitable investments and volunteering; and

“Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario want a level playing field so they can provide the same service to our members as other financial institutions and promote economic growth without relying on taxpayers’ resources;

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

“Support the strength and growth of credit unions to support the strength and growth of Ontario’s economy and create jobs in three ways:

—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

—show confidence in Ontario credit unions by increasing credit union-funded deposit insurance limits to a minimum of \$250,000;

—allow credit unions to diversify by allowing Ontario credit unions to own 100% of subsidiaries.”

Thank you. I agree with this and will be passing it off to page Zahra.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Sarah Campbell: I have a petition, which reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the northern, unmaintained portion of Groves Road, being in the north half of lot 20, concession 9, from reference point N86°36'30"W to reference point N89°51'40"W in Zealand township was not included in the original 1972 maps of the Zealand #3 local roads board that were published in the Ontario Gazette, nor does it lead to any residences or other interests, and it negatively impacts residents living alongside the eastern, legally recognized, portion of Groves Road;

“Whereas Zealand #3 local roads board (LRB) voted in favour of removing said northern section of Groves Road from their recognized LRB area at their 2012 annual meeting, before and during which they complied with all rules and procedures relating to the conduct of local roads board business and were told as much by then-present MTO senior municipal supervisor, Larry Wilcox; and

“Whereas the Thunder Bay regional office of the Ministry of Transportation has since refused to support this democratic and legitimate process, and has ordered the aforementioned northern section of road to remain part of the local roads board area;

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

“To call upon the Minister of Transportation to uphold the democratic will of Zealand #3 local roads board by directing MTO bureaucrats to stop interfering with the democratic and legitimate affairs of the Zealand #3 LRB and remove from the LRB area the northern portion of Groves Road which is described as running through the north half of lot 20, concession 9, of Zealand township, from reference point N86°36'30"W to reference point N89°51'40"W.”

I support this petition, will affix my signature and give it to Katie.

USE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

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

“Whereas virtually all Legislatures in Canada have fully embraced digital technologies;

“Whereas digital communications are now essential for members of Parliament to conduct their business, correspond with constituents, respond to stakeholders, stay in touch with staff, store data and information securely, keep ahead of the news cycle, and to remain current;

“Whereas progressive record-keeping relies on cloud technology, remote access, real-time updates, multiple-point data entry and broadband, wireless and satellite technologies;

“Whereas there is more to full exploitation of technology than having an email address;

“Whereas the Legislative Assembly of Ontario has been considering the value, utility and usage of digital devices within the legislative precinct and within the chamber of Parliament itself for several months;

“Whereas this consideration of digital empowerment of members continues to be unresolved, on hold, under consideration and the subject of repeated temporizing correspondence between decision-makers and interested parties;

“We, the undersigned, respectfully request all various decision-makers of the assembly and government to fully embrace digital technologies, empower members, acquire the optimal Android and Apple devices, maximize the many technology offerings, and orchestrate a much-needed modernization of the conduct of parliamentary business for the eventual benefit of the people of Ontario.

“In agreement whereof, we affix our signatures.”

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

CHARITABLE GAMING

Mr. John O'Toole: I'm pleased to present a petition on behalf of my riding of Durham. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the government of Ontario, through the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario, levies the Ontario provincial fee on the sale of break-open tickets by charitable and non-profit organizations in the province; and

“Whereas local hospital auxiliaries/associations across the province, who are members of the Hospital Auxiliaries Association of Ontario, use break-open tickets to raise funds to support local health care equipment needs in more than 100 communities across the province; and

“Whereas in September 2010, the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario announced a series of changes to the Ontario provincial fee which included a reduction of the fee for certain organizations and the complete elimination of the fee for other organizations, depending on where the break-open tickets are sold; and

“Whereas the September 2010 changes to the Ontario provincial fee unfairly treat certain charitable and non-profit organizations (local hospital auxiliaries) by not providing for the complete elimination of the fee which would otherwise be used by these organizations to increase their support for local health care equipment needs and other community needs;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to eliminate the Ontario provincial fee on break-open tickets for all charitable and non-profit organizations in Ontario and allow all organizations using this fundraising tool to invest more funds in local community projects, including local health care equipment needs, for the benefit of Ontarians.”

I'm pleased to sign and support this and present it to the page.

CREDIT UNIONS

Ms. Peggy Sattler: It's my honour, as MPP for London West, to present this petition on behalf of the people I represent. The petition reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario support our 1.3 million members across Ontario through loans to small businesses to start up, grow and create jobs, help families to buy homes and assist their communities with charitable investments and volunteering; and

"Whereas Credit Unions of Ontario want a level playing field so they can provide the same service to our members as other financial institutions and promote economic growth without relying on taxpayers' resources;

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

"Support the strength and growth of credit unions to support the strength and growth of Ontario's economy and create jobs in three ways:

"—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

"—show confidence in Ontario credit unions by increasing credit union-funded deposit insurance limits to a minimum of \$250,000;

"—allow credit unions to diversify by allowing Ontario credit unions to own 100% of subsidiaries."

I support this petition, affix my name and present it to page Meaghan to take to the table.

AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES

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

"Whereas the University of Guelph's Kemptville and Alfred campuses are two of Ontario's outstanding post-secondary agricultural schools; and

"Whereas these campuses have delivered specialized and high-quality programs to generations of students from agricultural communities across eastern Ontario and the future success of the region's agri-food industry depends on continuing this strong partnership; and

"Whereas regional campuses like those in Kemptville and Alfred ensure the agri-food industry has access to the knowledge, research and innovation that are critical for Ontario to remain competitive in this rapidly changing sector;

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

"That Premier Wynne in her dual capacity as Minister of Agriculture and Food act immediately to reverse the University of Guelph's short-sighted and unacceptable decision to close its Kemptville and Alfred campuses."

I agree with this and will pass it on to page Gabriel.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The time for petitions has ended. Pursuant to standing order 58(b), this House stands recessed until 4 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1333 to 1600.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

2014 ONTARIO BUDGET

BUDGET DE L'ONTARIO DE 2014

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by Ms. Wynne, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Sousa has moved, seconded by Ms. Wynne, that this House approves the budgetary policy of the government.

I am going to ask for the indulgence of the House while the pages deliver their copies. I also remind members to keep your hands to yourselves and let them deliver, because they're trying to set the record.

I thank the members for their co-operation.

The Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present the 2014 Ontario budget.

Before I begin, I want to thank my colleagues in the House ...

As well as the officials at the Ministry of Finance ...

And Ontarians themselves ...

For all they've done to help bring this budget forward ...

This is a budget for Ontarians ...

By Ontarians ...

For a strong Ontario ...

With more jobs ...

More opportunity ...

And a more secure future.

This is a budget, Mr. Speaker ... that looks not only at the days ahead ... but also the decade ahead ...

And it lays out a plan ... one firmly founded on the needs and desires and dreams of Ontarians ...

To continue to build our province over the next 10 years ...

Beginning today.

Mr. Speaker, like all members of this House, I got my start outside the Legislature.

My early years were in Kensington Market ...

I grew up in a small business environment ...

My dad was a local wholesaler ...

He had a knack for making a sale ... seeing an opportunity ... and seizing it.

To help provide our family ... with a more secure future.

He wasn't alone ...

There were other small business owners in the neighbourhood ... just like my dad ...

Each trying to make a living ...

To provide for their families.

While looking out for others.

I learned a lot from these Kings of Kensington ...

They were the leaders of the day.

They learned the art of business ... by living it ...

They were competitive ... but they were also compassionate.

I'd like to thank my dad, who's here with us today. Stand up, Dad, and take a bow.

Applause.

Hon. Charles Sousa: Those street smarts of yesterday have helped prepare me for today.

So, Mr. Speaker, our 2014 budget is about competitiveness and compassion.

Opportunity and security.

Investing today ... for a better tomorrow.

It is a plan that is balanced ...

Shaped by experienced hands ...

And a government ... that works to build a more prosperous Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, our government's plan is threefold.

We will create jobs and grow the economy by investing in our people.

We will build modern infrastructure.

We will support a dynamic and innovative business climate.

Delivering this plan will take discipline.

It will take vision.

And it will take all Ontarians, working together, led by a determined government.

So, Mr. Speaker ... we will do our part.

We will make the right investments.

We will invest in those areas ... and only those areas ... that strengthen our competitive advantage, create jobs and provide vital public services for our families.

Our government is making Ontario's schools and hospitals the best in the world.

And our collaborative and collective energy, talent and resources as a government will continue to be spent creating opportunity and jobs.

1610

As part of this plan, our government also recognizes the need for appropriate restraint.

And, Mr. Speaker, we will stick to our plan to balance the budget by 2017-18.

But we will not go down the road of deep, reckless cuts to programs and services.

Where expenses can be cut, we will cut them.

Where services can be provided more efficiently, we will do so.

But what we will not do is sacrifice important programs and services.

Mr. Speaker, that is not the Ontario way.

Nor has it been ... nor will it ever be ... our government's way.

Mr. Speaker, Ontarians share strong values.

We are competitive as well as compassionate.

Fair as well as responsible.

We believe—not just in building a tolerant society, but in something bigger: We believe in building a fair society.

A society that rewards effort with opportunity.

So when we look to government, we look for leadership that embodies those values.

And we reject leadership that does not.

Some believe they can deliver strong health care and education, by recklessly spending and increasing taxes that would undermine our economy.

Others think they can create a strong economy through deep, reckless cuts to health care and education.

Ontarians know that we need balance.

Only this government will keep health care and education strong while continuing to build a more vibrant economy.

Mr. Speaker, that is what leads to a stronger quality of life.

Mr. Speaker, the global recession is behind us.

But its effects remain with us.

Today, our economy is growing.

It's creating jobs ... and we want more ...

That is why it will take steady hands ...

And a balanced approach to ensure that there is more opportunity for every Ontarian.

This is not the time for radical or reckless ideas as brought forward by others.

Over the next four years, the economic rate of growth in Ontario will more than double.

Since the recessionary low in 2009, Ontario has created more than 450,000 net new jobs.

Last year alone, employment increased by 96,000 jobs.

And the unemployment rate has declined to 7.3%, well below the recessionary high of 9.4%.

Mr. Speaker, Ontario has outpaced the rest of the world in its recovery.

Global economic growth is set to improve in 2014, particularly in the United States.

Economists say that Ontario is well positioned for the next 10 years.

Our investments ... in skills and knowledge ... and in infrastructure ... and in business will support even higher growth.

And Mr. Speaker, the global economy is changing.

We have entered a new industrial age.

If we want to make Ontario a global powerhouse ...

It will take more than simplistic solutions and sound-bite economics as peddled by some.

A complex global economy demands that we adapt ... to seize new opportunities for Ontario families.

It means we need to continue growing ... to create new jobs for our workers.

It requires strong leadership ...

That brings all Ontarians ...

Of all regions ...

Of all walks of life ...

Of all families and backgrounds ... together.

It starts, Mr. Speaker, as it must ... with jobs.

In our new economy, there is fierce global competition for investments that create those jobs.

Ontario has built a reputation as a hub for global business.

It is ranked third in North America for foreign direct investment.

Our government has turned Ontario's business tax system into one of the most competitive in the world.

Since 2009, the marginal effective tax rate on new business investment has been cut in half.

This makes Ontario an even more attractive place to invest.

We are one of the most diversified economies in North America.

We will continue to support our key sectors ... including ...

Aerospace ...

Agri-food ...

Auto ...

Clean tech...

Financial services ...

Information and communications technology ...

Mining ...

And the entertainment and creative cluster.

For example, Mr. Speaker, the global aerospace sector is poised to grow significantly over the next 20 years ...

Our government is working to ensure that Ontario is ready to compete ...

We're supporting Centennial College as it partners with the private sector to train the next generation of aerospace workers.

This will ensure we have new and highly skilled graduates.

Mr. Speaker, we are also partnering with Communitech, a hub in the Waterloo region, that helps with the commercialization of innovative technologies.

This partnership will help create 7,000 new jobs in the high-tech sector.

Enhancing GO Transit in the region further supports thousands of good-paying jobs in the area.

Mr. Speaker, to help secure new investments, we are also creating a new \$2.5-billion Jobs and Prosperity Fund.

Firms around the world look to Ontario because of our advantages ...

Including a highly skilled labour force and world-class infrastructure.

This 10-year fund will help attract new strategic investments in growing sectors.

Mr. Speaker, this is a competitive world, and we are competing to win.

Last year we introduced the Youth Jobs Strategy. This is helping young people find jobs, start their own business and gain valuable skills. We know a job early in life helps put young adults on a strong career track.

In the gallery today we have Cosmo Hosten. Ever since he was a kid, he wanted to work in the auto sector. Through the Youth Employment Fund he was able to find a job as a service adviser at Canadian Tire. He calls his new job a career. Good luck to you, Cosmo.

Mr. Speaker, there are currently more than 11,000 success stories just like Cosmo across the province.

Mr. Speaker, we need to ensure that our businesses have the opportunity to grow.

When I started my small business, I would wake up at night thinking about how to build the company ...

How to pay the rent ... how to make payroll.

And I know a lot of small business owners feel that way.

That's why we are introducing steps to lower costs and make our businesses even more competitive. That includes a new five-point business energy savings plan to give small businesses the tools they need to conserve energy, manage costs and save money.

We will also help larger businesses to reduce their electricity costs on new projects.

These changes mean that Ontario's electricity prices will be more competitive with those of our neighbours.

And that will mean Ontario companies can create new jobs ...

Mr. Speaker, Ontario has outpaced its infrastructure for decades.

Governments of all political stripes failed to make the necessary investments to unclog our highways, to give commuters more public transit options, and to ensure that our just-in-time economy runs on time.

Mr. Speaker, for the past 30 years, I have commuted from my home in Mississauga to work ...

And like so many others ... on jammed highways and trains ...

I experience the congestion.

While we have made major investments to improve public transit, there is much more to do.

We've built wider highways ... dedicated commuter lanes ... and better bridges.

We've added more GO trains ... with more cars ... and a service guarantee.

Now we need to position our province for the future.

The time has come for a plan that will improve not only the lives of Ontarians today, but also the lives of our children and grandchildren tomorrow.

We need to do more than just plan for what's around the corner, but also for what's down the road.

We need to think in far-reaching ways that will make life better for years to come.

It's time we embrace a new chapter, a bold new future for Ontario.

One that is rational and informed.

Not one dictated by simplistic and short-term thinking.

Premier Kathleen Wynne has announced a bold new plan—Moving Ontario Forward. This plan would dedicate two new funds to fight congestion and invest in roads, bridges and transit totalling \$29 billion.

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The first would help address congestion in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area.

The second fund would invest in those critical projects across the rest of the province.

Mr. Speaker, we will take the politics out of planning.

Because whether you live in Caledon or Clarington ...

Windsor or Wawa ...

Or anyplace in between or beyond ...

It's time for a long-term public works plan ... that actually works for the public, all across the great province.

And only this government is committed to such a plan ...

Mr. Speaker, our investments will help our businesses get their goods to market faster.

It means they can grow their business and hire more people.

It will help Ontarians get to work, home and school more quickly and safely ...

And will be an immediate boost to jobs and economic growth.

And we will do this without raising income taxes on low- to middle-income earners, nor will we raise general corporate taxes, which would be extremely risky to our economy.

With interest rates at historic lows, our infrastructure in need, and the economy in need of a boost, this is the opportune time to make these investments.

Mr. Speaker, that is why we are investing over \$130 billion in infrastructure over the next 10 years.

Whether it's light rail transit in Ottawa ...

Or the expansion of Lakehead University in Thunder Bay ...

Or a new hospital in London ...

Or roads, bridges and other infrastructure projects throughout the province.

This means an even better quality of life for our families.

Mr. Speaker, there are some things we are doing now that we will no longer do.

Government does not need to be a passive investor or a landlord.

While it made sense at the time to invest in General Motors to protect an important industry and safeguard good jobs ...

Owning shares of this company is no longer necessary.

By selling Ontario's shares of GM, we can reinvest taxpayer money into the Trillium Trust that would be dedicated to new infrastructure projects.

We will also look at maximizing and unlocking value from our other assets, including real estate and crown corporations, such as OPG, Hydro One and the LCBO.

That doesn't necessarily mean we will sell them, Mr. Speaker.

Unlocking the full value of these assets will include improving efficiency and enhancing their performance.

We will sweat their income statements.

We owe it to all Ontarians to extract more value for them as taxpayers.

And we will do this using experts.

The council conducting the review will be led by retiring TD Bank president and CEO, Mr. Ed Clark.

By reinvesting these funds, we will create jobs and build a stronger future.

Mr. Speaker, like so many, I have elderly parents. Like two thirds of today's Ontarians, my parents did not

have workplace pensions. Fortunately, they were able to save to protect their future.

But many today are not saving adequately for retirement.

Unless we take action now, future generations of retirees will be left with a lower standard of living.

So to help Ontarians be more secure in their retirement, our government is introducing the first-of-its-kind mandatory provincial pension plan to build on the CPP.

We have a duty and must do more to ensure that everyday people have adequate savings in their retirement years.

After a lifetime of work and a lifetime of contributing to the economy, retirees deserve better to maintain their standard of living.

Middle-class Canadians know that the current CPP is not adequate for their retirement.

They can see the gap between what they have and what they need.

We cannot live on \$12,500 a year, which is the maximum afforded by CPP, let alone the \$6,800 they receive on average.

But the federal government refuses to acknowledge what Canadians—and its own experts—are telling them.

The federal government argues that now is not the right time for a CPP enhancement. The Hudak PCs agree.

Mr. Speaker, if not now, when? If not us, who? Obviously, not them.

The analysis done so far—including by Canada's Department of Finance—shows that a CPP enhancement will have economic benefits.

And a new report, prepared by the former Governor of the Bank of Canada, David Dodge, says that enhancing retirement savings now is the right thing to do.

Mr. Speaker, higher retirement savings would make more capital available to invest in our economy.

And as governments look to address the national infrastructure deficit ...

This can be a useful source of funding that will help enhance productivity.

And ultimately, more jobs in the future ...

Furthermore, higher disposable income for retirees means less reliance on social programs.

So we must think long-term.

Inaction by the federal government on this important issue is unacceptable.

That's because the basic structure of the CPP has essentially not changed in 50 years, since 1966, when it was introduced.

For today's workers, the maximum annual benefit is not enough ... especially to the middle class.

So, Mr. Speaker, since the federal government won't lead, Ontario will lead by developing a made-in-Ontario solution.

Our plan would build on the strengths of the CPP ...

Our plan would enhance benefits for middle-income earners while keeping contribution rates low.

Our plan would provide a predictable stream of income in retirement while indexing benefits to inflation.

Our plan would require equal contributions shared between employers and employees at 1.9% each.

And our plan would aim for a replacement rate of 50% of an individual's earnings, up to \$90,000 ...

Mr. Speaker, when combined with the CPP, an individual with a 40-year career could replace up to 30% of his pre-retirement income ...

That means they could receive an annual lifetime benefit of \$25,000—roughly doubling the retirement benefit under the CPP.

The Ontario Retirement Pension Plan would be publicly administered at arm's length ...

It would have a strong governance model, with experts responsible for managing its investments.

Benefits would be earned as contributions are made to ensure that the system is fair, and younger generations would not be burdened with additional costs.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, those already participating in a comparable workplace pension plan would not be required to enrol ...

And we will reduce the burden on lower-income workers, similar to the CPP.

Our plan would be introduced in 2017 to coincide with the reductions in EI premiums as well, and contributions would be phased in over a period of two years.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to thank the Right Honourable Paul Martin for his insights as we developed this plan.

As well as the expertise provided to us by the technical advisory group on retirement income.

I am pleased to announce today that Mr. Michael Nobrega, a former CEO of OMERS, will chair our implementation committee. Michael, thank you.

And I hope, Mr. Speaker, that our plan to increase retirement income has the full support of all the members of this House.

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Ontario will continue to engage with other provinces and territories to join our plan.

And we will continue to encourage the federal government to do the right thing, and enhance CPP, which is still our preferred option.

In order to offer more voluntary options and promote savings, Mr. Speaker ...

We will also introduce legislation for pooled registered pension plans in the fall of 2014 that would harmonize with those being adopted across the country.

Mr. Speaker, the previous government failed to make investments in energy infrastructure, and we suffered brownouts.

Since then, we've made significant investments.

We have built 19 major new power plants, more transmission lines and new distribution systems while protecting and improving the environment.

These investments ensure that when the lights go on, they stay on.

Mr. Speaker, as a result, energy bills went up.

Now, because of our recent actions to reduce costs in the system, household bills will be \$520 less over the next five years.

As part of our plan to further help reduce bills, we will remove the debt retirement charge for households after December 31, 2015.

This will save typical families an additional \$70 per year.

And we will enhance current programs to further help those most in need.

Mr. Speaker, 60 years ago my parents came to this country for the opportunity that it brought.

They could start their own small business ... and provide a more secure future for their children.

But it went further than that.

Like many new Canadians, they were grateful and wanted to give back ... especially to others in need of support.

And I'm here today because I think it is the job of government to provide a steady hand holding the ladder to help people climb and achieve their full potential.

Beginning in July 2014, we are increasing the maximum annual Ontario Child Benefit to \$1,310, enhancing the incomes of half a million families.

As part of our plan to ensure that all Ontarians have the opportunity to succeed, and share in the benefits of a strong economy, we will also propose to index the Ontario Child Benefit to inflation.

Mr. Speaker, it is expected that the number of seniors in Ontario will double over the next two decades.

As part of this budget, we are making it easier for seniors to stay safe, active and engaged in their communities by doubling the new Seniors Community Grant Program.

This program helps seniors continue their learning in areas like technology and develop a stronger sense of social inclusion.

And Mr. Speaker, improved economic opportunities are essential to ensuring that aboriginal people can work and thrive.

In this budget, we are introducing a new Aboriginal Economic Development Fund, which will include an investment of \$25 million.

The fund will support aboriginal communities in the development of long-term economic strategies, and provide grants for aboriginal businesses and fund regional skills-training programs.

Mr. Speaker, we are also expanding low-income health benefits for children and increasing social assistance benefits.

And to help our youngest, we are expanding the Student Nutrition Program so that more children in school have access to a healthy, balanced breakfast to start their day.

Our government has also made changes to the tax system to help low- to moderate-income people with their expenses.

We have enhanced property and sales tax credits ...

And combined the payment of credits into the Ontario Trillium Benefit.

Mr. Speaker, our province has a progressive personal income tax structure where higher taxes apply as income increases.

To continue funding programs in a fair and balanced way, the province proposes that those with the greatest ability to pay contribute a little more.

In this budget, we're proposing further tax changes that would affect only the top 2% of Ontarians.

We propose that, beginning in January 2014, the taxable income threshold for the top tax rate be lowered to \$220,000, and a new rate be applied to individuals earning more than \$150,000.

That means 98% of tax filers in Ontario would see no change.

Monsieur le Président, ce budget contient des mesures qui aideraient tous les Ontariens à réussir. Il comprend également des initiatives pour souligner les Franco-Ontariens, avec la célébration du 400^e anniversaire de l'arrivée des francophones en Ontario.

And we will also be fair.

We have people working in developmental services ...

We now have more early childhood educators ...

And we've invested heavily in home care ...

Which has expanded the need for personal support workers in Ontario ...

The people doing these jobs are critically important.

In this budget, we're investing in them.

To ensure that those who care for our children, our elderly and our most vulnerable ... by properly supporting them. They deserve greater respect and reward for the important work they do, and we are going to provide that.

Mr. Speaker, this budget will also help people who want to become parents by expanding coverage of infertility services. This will help 4,000 more potential parents. Today in the gallery, Sandra David and her husband, Tony, are joining us. Because of prohibitive costs, their dream of parenthood was fading. Today we are helping make that dream a reality. Congratulations to them, and we wish you all the best.

Mr. Speaker, Ontario is keeping its fiscal house in order.

We have carefully managed costs and diversified our economy.

And yet actions by the federal government have put all of our shared progress at risk.

Since 2006, the federal government has taken more than 110 unilateral actions that have hurt people and businesses across Ontario.

In addition, each year, the share of federal revenue raised in Ontario is higher than the share of federal spending in Ontario.

This has created a huge \$11-billion gap between what Ontarians pay to the federal government versus what they receive in public services.

While this money could be used in Ontario to fund more hospitals, nurses or public transit, it is redistributed

to other regions of Canada to subsidize programs and services that Ontarians themselves may not enjoy.

Mr. Speaker, no province is a more staunch supporter of our Canadian federation than Ontario, but this support cannot be taken for granted.

Our economy needs a boost, and instead we have a federal government that is harming our recovery.

In 2014-15, our province will experience a year-over-year decline of \$641 million in major transfers.

Over the last four years, the federal government paid a total of \$2.2 billion to other provinces to specifically prevent their transfers from falling.

This year, when Ontario was the only province facing a decline, the federal government ended the practice of transfer protection payments.

Mr. Speaker, that's not all.

The federal government has unilaterally changed the growth rate of the Canada Health Transfer, beginning in 2017-18.

This hurtful measure will remove an estimated \$8 billion in support for health care in Ontario in the coming decade.

As per the federal Parliamentary Budget Officer, this transferring of fiscal burden creates a fiscally sustainable federal government but fiscally unsustainable provinces and territories.

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So, Mr. Speaker, we call on the federal government to ...

Treat Ontarians the same way it treats residents of other provinces and territories.

Stop the \$641-million decline in major transfers.

Stop the delay of important infrastructure funding.

Stop unilateral actions that hurt our public services.

And partner with us in important projects, including the development of the Ring of Fire.

This area contains more than \$50 billion worth of natural minerals for the production of stainless steel.

We plan to invest \$1 billion in this project, but need the federal government as an equal partner.

Mr. Speaker, I learned at home the value of a dollar.

Nothing in our family went to waste.

We didn't spend for the sake of spending.

We made choices ...

Just like a government must.

And, in fact, once again, we are projecting to beat our deficit target by over \$400 million.

The 2013-14 deficit is now projected to be lower, at \$11.3 billion.

Mr. Speaker, our government is on track to beat the deficit target for the fifth year in a row.

This means that over the last five years, Ontario's debt is \$24 billion lower than originally projected.

At the same time, we have continued to invest in key public services.

Mr. Speaker, we must continue to apply the same discipline and dedication moving forward.

Since 2010, the global economy has not been as robust as experts projected.

The federal funding cuts have hurt our province.

That means, if we don't take the measures outlined in our budget ...

Ontario's revenues would be \$3.5 billion less than projected just last year.

Mr. Speaker, we took action.

We cut expenses.

We made priority investments in growing the economy.

Thanks to prudent management of spending ...

And working together ...

With our public-sector partners ...

Ontario runs the leanest government in Canada.

We continue to have the lowest per-capita spending of any province ...

We are now moving forward with more than 80% of Don Drummond's recommendations on creating efficiencies in the public sector.

And we're surpassing expectations of savings in the system ... more than ever imagined. Even the opposition numbers don't even come close.

And we will continue to make those key investments.

As noted in the fall economic statement, the government will not jeopardize jobs and public services to meet short-term targets.

Given slower revenue growth and the federal government's cuts, the province will adjust short-term deficit targets while balancing by 2017-18.

This will allow the government to immediately strengthen the economy today and make the investments necessary to grow the economy for tomorrow.

Let me be clear: we will balance the budget by 2017-18.

We will invest where we must.

We will cut expenses where we can.

Mr. Speaker, the government rejects reckless cuts advocated by some ...

While at the same time rejecting risky ideas of others.

Instead, our government will continue to carefully review and control spending while transforming public services to improve efficiencies and outcomes.

We will continue to maintain our target of reducing Ontario's net debt-to-GDP ratio to its pre-recession level of 27%.

Mr. Speaker, we will identify new revenues where it makes sense.

For example, Ontario's small business deduction is intended to provide relief to small business ...

However, currently, all businesses, large or small, get this lower tax rate on their first \$500,000 of income.

To ensure fairness, just like other provinces and as recommended by Don Drummond, we propose to end this tax preference for the largest of corporations.

This would bring an additional \$50 million annually to be reinvested into transportation infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, we're also taking action to improve fairness and ensure that everyone pays their fair share.

The government is working on an action plan to address the underground economy.

This siphons much-needed tax dollars.

We want to level the playing field.

The plan will focus on increasing public awareness, coordinated enforcement and working with industry partners to encourage more businesses to operate accordingly.

Mr. Speaker, we are also working with the Canada Revenue Agency on enhancing compliance activities to address the underground economy.

As part of agreements signed just last year, including corporate tax avoidance, the CRA has been able to generate more than \$200 million in additional tax revenues for Ontario in 2013-14.

Mr. Speaker, Ontario's public servants are the most professional ...

And dedicated ...

And talented ... in the world.

Together we are rooting out waste, focusing on priorities and making sure that every dollar spent, counts.

But there is more to do, Mr. Speaker.

That is why we will continue to review expenses through a special treasury board subcommittee.

We are targeting savings of \$250 million for 2014-15 and \$500 million for each of the next two years.

This target will focus on maintaining and enhancing the delivery of public services while reducing costs.

And, Mr. Speaker, we're also proposing to further control compensation of senior executives in the broader public sector.

Proposed legislation would allow us to establish compensation frameworks, including the use of sector-specific hard caps.

We have also introduced legislation to continue the salary freeze of members of provincial Parliament.

This began in 2009 and we propose it not end until the budget is balanced.

We are continuing to manage compensation with our partners in the broader public sector to ensure that all costs are within Ontario's existing framework.

And, Mr. Speaker, we're continuing to make agencies more accountable to further ensure that costs are controlled across government.

Making every dollar count is a key component of our 10-year economic plan.

Mr. Speaker, Ontario's education system is the best in the English-speaking world.

Over the last 10 years, we've made vital investments that have laid a strong foundation.

Class sizes are smaller than they were just a decade ago ...

More kids are graduating ...

And new programs help ensure that our students are better prepared to enter the workforce once they graduate.

Mr. Speaker, full-day kindergarten will be available to all children this fall and is one of the most transformative changes to the province's school system in a generation.

Our renewed goals for education include achieving excellence, ensuring equity, promoting well-being and enhancing public confidence.

We will invest in new technology in the classroom and support improved student achievement ...

And within the next decade, we will have an even better education system that is the most modern in the world, and measures and promotes success from early years to adulthood.

Mr. Speaker, we are also committed to health care and a system that puts patients first and responds to their needs.

We are investing in health care services so more options are available to patients close to home, where they are most comfortable.

And we are investing billions more in major hospital expansions or redevelopment projects over the next 10 years.

This will support more than 40 projects currently under way or being planned.

Mr. Speaker, strong public services are vital to strong communities and a ... strong Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, the values that guide our government are the same as those shared by Ontarians.

We know that Ontario is stronger when we're all working together, as one Ontario.

We know that when we look out and help our neighbours—we lift one another up.

And we know that to build a better quality of life for ourselves and our children and our grandchildren, we must continually move ...

Look ahead ...

And plan—not just for the times we live in—but for the decades to come.

Mr. Speaker ... we know that this next decade is one filled with opportunities to be seized ...

We know that with the right leadership ...

The right plan ...

And the experience to deliver that plan ...

This decade could see us move confidently forward in the new global economy.

That's why we will continue to be mindful of how we spend each dollar.

That's why we will continue to focus on eliminating the deficit.

That's why we will make the necessary investments to grow our economy.

This is what Ontarians demand ...

Our government will deliver.

Mr. Speaker, our 10-year plan will create a stronger Ontario.

It will build opportunities.

And secure our future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I call on the opposition House leader, the member from Simcoe–Grey.

Mr. Jim Wilson: Mr. Speaker, I move adjournment of the debate.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Simcoe–Grey has moved adjournment of the debate. Agreed? Agreed.

Debate adjourned.

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

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the House to revert to introduction of bills.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That is so ordered.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

BUILDING OPPORTUNITY AND SECURING OUR FUTURE ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2014

LOI DE 2014 OUVRANT DES PERSPECTIVES ET ASSURANT NOTRE AVENIR (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Mr. Sousa moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 194, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various Acts / Projet de loi 194, Loi visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour, say “aye.”

All those opposed, say “nay.”

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1653 to 1658.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Will all members take their seats, please.

Mr. Sousa moves that leave be given to introduce a bill entitled An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various Acts and that it now be read for the first time.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time to be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Duguid, Brad	Meilleur, Madeleine
Balkisson, Bas	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Milloy, John
Bartolucci, Rick	Fraser, John	Moridi, Reza
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Gerretsen, John	Murray, Glen R.
Bradley, James J.	Gravelle, Michael	Naqvi, Yasir
Cansfield, Donna H.	Hoskins, Eric	Oraziotti, David
Chan, Michael	Hunter, Mitzie	Piruzza, Teresa
Chiarelli, Bob	Jaczek, Helena	Qaadri, Shafiq
Colle, Mike	Kwinter, Monte	Sandals, Liz
Coteau, Michael	Leal, Jeff	Sergio, Mario
Crack, Grant	MacCharles, Tracy	Sousa, Charles
Damerla, Dipika	Mangat, Amrit	Wong, Soo
Del Duca, Steven	Matthews, Deborah	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Delaney, Bob	Mauro, Bill	Zimmer, David
Dhillon, Vic	McMeekin, Ted	
Dickson, Joe	McNeely, Phil	

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

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Jackson, Rod	Munro, Julia
Bailey, Robert	Jones, Sylvia	Nicholls, Rick
Barrett, Toby	Klees, Frank	O'Toole, John
Chudleigh, Ted	Leone, Rob	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Clark, Steve	MacLaren, Jack	Pettapiece, Randy
Elliott, Christine	MacLeod, Lisa	Scott, Laurie
Fedeli, Victor	Martow, Gila	Smith, Todd
Hardeman, Ernie	McDonell, Jim	Thompson, Lisa M.
Harris, Michael	McKenna, Jane	Walker, Bill
Hillier, Randy	McNaughton, Monte	Wilson, Jim
Holyday, Douglas C.	Miller, Norm	Yakabuski, John
Hudak, Tim	Milligan, Rob E.	Yurek, Jeff

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):

The ayes are 46; the nays are 36.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Hon. Charles Sousa: Mr. Speaker, I have no statement at this time.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Before I recognize the government House leader, I know the members are interested. The budget delivery time was 25.2 seconds.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We never divulge. Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: I move adjournment of the House.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The government House leader has moved adjournment of the House. Do we agree? I heard a no.

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

This House stands adjourned until Monday, May 5 at 10:30 a.m.

The House adjourned at 1703.

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	
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
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 civiles et de l'Immigration
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
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	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les îles	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
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	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Holyday, Douglas C. (PC)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
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
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
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	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
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, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
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	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Milligan, Rob E. (PC)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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 Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
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 Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
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
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
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
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 Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales 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	Brampton–Springdale	

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

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Laura Albanese, Steve Clark
Mike Colle, Joe Dickson
Rob Leone, Amrit Mangat
Taras Natyshak, Jerry J. Ouellette
Michael Prue
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Soo Wong
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Victor Fedeli, Catherine Fife
Douglas C. Holyday, Mitzie Hunter
Monte McNaughton, Michael Prue
Soo Wong
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Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales

Chair / Président: Grant Crack
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Donna H. Cansfield
Sarah Campbell, Donna H. Cansfield
Grant Crack, Dipika Damerla
John Fraser, Michael Harris
Peggy Sattler, Laurie Scott
Jeff Yurek
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Rick Bartolucci
Laura Albanese, Rick Bartolucci
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Percy Hatfield
Mitzie Hunter, Jim McDonell
Randy Pettapiece, Monique Taylor
Lisa M. Thompson
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Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice

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

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

Chair / Président: Garfield Dunlop
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Vic Dhillon, Garfield Dunlop
Cindy Forster, Lisa MacLeod
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha
Todd Smith
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Chair / Président: Norm Miller
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Toby Barrett
Toby Barrett, Lorenzo Berardinetti
France Gélinas, Helena Jaczek
Phil McNeely, Norm Miller
John O'Toole, Jagmeet Singh
Soo Wong
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-présidente: Catherine Fife
Donna H. Cansfield, Dipika Damerla
Catherine Fife, John Fraser
Monte Kwinter, Jane McKenna
Rick Nicholls, Peter Tabuns
Bill Walker
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

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

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Ted Chudleigh
Bas Balkissoon, Ted Chudleigh
Mike Colle, Vic Dhillon
Cheri DiNovo, Ernie Hardeman
Rod Jackson, Helena Jaczek
Paul Miller
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

Select Committee on Developmental Services / Comité spécial des services aux personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle

Chair / Présidente: Laura Albanese
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott
Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon
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Soo Wong
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