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**Official Report  
of Debates  
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**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Monday 7 July 2014**

**Lundi 7 juillet 2014**

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO

Monday 7 July 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 7 juillet 2014

*The House met at 1030.*

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

*Prayers.*

MEMBERS' ROLL

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I beg to inform the House that the Clerk has laid upon the table the roll of members elected at the general election 2014.

LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I also beg to inform the House that Mr. Wilson, member from the electoral district of Simcoe–Grey, is recognized as the leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** It's my pleasure this morning to introduce to the House my executive assistant from the great riding of Chatham–Kent–Essex, Mr. Larry Landry. Larry, welcome.

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** It's my pleasure today to welcome to the Legislature members of the Nature Conservancy of Canada: Ted Ecclestone, chair; Gary Goldberg, vice-chair; and James Duncan, vice-president. We welcome them to Queen's Park.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further introduction of guests? The Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and welcome back as Speaker.

I'm very pleased to introduce my big sister, Susan Houghton, and her husband, Roy—great supporters of mine. Susan and Roy, welcome. Please stand up.

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I would like to introduce Minister Mike Nixon, who is the Minister of Justice, Attorney General and Minister of Tourism and Culture for the government of Yukon. Welcome.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I'd like to introduce my beautiful daughter, Maggie.

**Hon. Michael Coteau:** I'd like to recognize two interns from my ministry who are here today who have been working very hard: Emma Cavatassi and Harrison Wong.

I also would like to recognize a young man who is in the east gallery. His name is C.J. Jayanathan. He's up there; nice to see you, C.J.

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I'm delighted to also recognize that there are some interns who are joining us here today from my ministry: Charles, A.J. and Jay are here with us.

I also want to acknowledge two additional folks who are in the west public gallery: Najva Amin and Andrea Ernesaks.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Please give a special welcome to the Hébert family, and welcome back our former page Jasper Hébert, who is here with the rest of the Hébert family to see the current page in their family do her job: his sister Emma.

**Mr. Han Dong:** I would like to introduce two very important people who are in the members' gallery: my parents, Huimin Dong and Ling Di Wang, and their friends from New Jersey in the United States, Leo Wang and Shu Wang. Welcome.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** I'd like to welcome members of the Nature Conservancy of Canada, as well as George Paisiovich. He's a familiar face here; he's the president of Stakeholder Relations. There will be a reception in room 230 from 11 till 2 this afternoon, and I'm sure all are welcome to attend.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ONTARIO BUDGET

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Mr. Speaker, may I begin by congratulating you on your re-election as Speaker in this chamber. Congratulations and best wishes. Also, Premier, congratulations to you and your government: an historic win, as you are the first female Premier in the province of Ontario, a fact that we are all proud of, and best wishes, but not too many best wishes.

My question is for the Premier. Premier, your throne speech promises another \$5.7 billion worth of new programs with money we don't have, racking up a record \$12.5-billion deficit. Irresponsible, unaccountable spending will never lead to balancing the budget and getting Ontario's economy growing again.

According to economist Jack Mintz, if interest rates which have been at 20-year low levels rise, the debt burden would become significantly heavier, and "if interest rates rise to [even] historical norms, each point increase in interest could add a minimum of \$3-billion in annual interest payments," which would severely cripple Ontario's ability to deliver services.

Premier, you claim you will eliminate the deficit in three years, yet you're promising to spend billions more

in new money—taxpayers' money. Will you commit today to complete openness and transparency as you implement your plan with billions in new spending?

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

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I, too, want to congratulate you on your re-election as Speaker, and I want to congratulate the member for Simcoe–Grey for his position as the Leader of the Opposition. Congratulations to all of the members of the House, and to all of the candidates who put their names on a ballot and ran, I want to say thank you for taking part in the democratic process. Thank you very much.

I want to answer the last part of the Leader of the Opposition's question first by saying that, yes, we intend to and we will operate in a very transparent manner. We will conduct business in a very open way. I think that as we reintroduce pieces of legislation, Mr. Speaker, particularly the accountability act, it will be obvious that that is the way we want to operate.

But I also want to say to both the Leader of the Opposition and the leader of the third party that it is our intention and it is our responsibility to operate in a collaborative way, so where there are possibilities of finding the best answer to questions of serious public policy in Ontario, we want to draw on ideas from all sides of the House. That is our responsibility as government, and we take it very seriously.

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

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Well, Premier, my colleagues and I here on the opposition side are concerned that this government spending spree will dig us into such a deep hole that someday we won't be able to afford the basic things we all care about, like health care and education. As you know, Moody's credit rating agency changed Ontario's debt rating outlook from stable to negative. A credit downgrade would increase our borrowing costs, taking money out of the front-line services we all depend on. Already, 40 nursing positions have been cut in North Bay, 90 nurses have been put out of work in Ottawa, and you fired 34 nurses in Windsor.

Premier, will you do the honourable thing and tell Ontarians what further front-line services you're going to cut in order to meet your budget targets, or are you simply going to pass the buck on to future generations with the debt burden?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I fundamentally disagree with the premise of the question that the Leader of the Opposition has put forward. First of all, I think he knows full well that there are more than 20,000 new nurses in Ontario since we came into office in 2003, net new positions, so there are thousands of new nurses.

What we are doing, Mr. Speaker, is we are transforming the system. That is what is necessary. We have a plan to build Ontario up, and that's where the fundamental disagreement is. We know that the investments that are necessary right now will lead to that future economic growth. We know that the transformations and the investments in health care today will lead to the excellence in health care that we need today and tomorrow. Those in-

vestments in training and in skills, the investments in infrastructure, including hospitals and schools, roads and bridges and transit—those are the things that need to be done now in order to build the province up.

**1040**

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

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Premier, this crisis is yours. This was born out of your Liberal government's inability to make the tough decisions and get Ontario's finances under control. But for years you've sat on your hands and you've even continually made matters worse.

Again, Jack Mintz has said, "Ontario is sagging under the weight of monstrous public debt, uncompetitive energy prices and rising taxes."

You've ignored your financial mess for too long, and now Ontario families are left holding the bag for your poor management and refusal to get a grip on the province's finances.

Premier, just be honest. You've started with cuts to physiotherapy services for seniors and firing nurses. What other front-line services are you going to cut or what taxes are you going to increase?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure exactly whether the Leader of the Opposition is asking for more spending or less spending.

Here's the reality: We are providing more physiotherapy services. We are providing better home care services. We are transforming the health care system. But most importantly, we are making sure that we don't begin this next phase of Ontario's economic history by cutting 100,000 jobs, by cutting services.

What we are doing is we are investing in the services that we know people need, that affect their quality of life. We are investing in their talent and their skills and those of their children and grandchildren. We are investing in the roads and the bridges and the transit systems that they will need. I would hope that we will have the support of the opposition, because they know full well that in every community across Ontario, those services and those investments are necessary.

## HEALTH CARE

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** My question is to the Minister of Health. Congratulations, Minister, on your new appointment.

London hospital emergency room wait times are among the worst in the province. The provincial average for complex conditions wait times in an emergency room is 9.9 hours. However, at University Hospital the wait time in the emergency room for complex conditions is 19 hours. At the London Health Sciences Centre Victoria Hospital, the wait time for complex conditions is 12.6 hours. Minister, why are London's emergency room wait times so far above the provincial average?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I appreciate the question. Clearly, there is a problem at this hospital. We're working with the hospital to decrease the ER wait times.

But I'm proud that we measure wait times, which the previous government, in terms of many aspects of health care services, did not even measure. We not only measure them, but we've made considerable progress right across the province in reducing the wait times for ER, and reducing the wait times for important surgical procedures in the province. In fact, in 2008—five years ago—we launched a coordinated and very comprehensive strategy to do just what the member opposite is asking: to tackle our ER wait times, working with health care professionals right across the province to make sure that we continue to make progress. We are making progress.

With the particular institution referenced, there's clearly much, much more work that needs to be done.

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

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** Simply measuring the wait times doesn't do it; you actually have to do something about it.

In fact, this past winter, the emergency room wait times were so bad that the London hospitals told people to stay away from the emergency rooms unless it was absolutely necessary.

But there is an answer here: 30 kilometres down the road, the emergency room at St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital has some of the lowest wait times in the province. St. Thomas has some of the best patient management systems in Ontario, and they're very efficient at moving patients through the system. St. Thomas's CEO, Paul Collins, believes this system is transferable to all London hospitals.

Minister, will you commit to implementing the system used at St. Thomas Elgin hospital to all London-area hospital emergency rooms?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I'm sure even the member opposite will acknowledge that the situation in those two jurisdictions is different.

But I want to talk to her and mention that I'm proud that ER wait times across the province have gone down 12% in Ontario over the last five years. In fact, ER wait times for the sickest patients who show up in our ERs have gone down by 29.3%, while at the same time volumes for those sickest individuals have increased by 39%. So we've made tremendous progress there, to the point where nine out of every 10 patients who are treated in our ERs are treated within the target times—85% of complex patients within eight hours of arriving in our ERs, and 89% of uncomplicated patients are seen and treated within four hours.

We've made tremendous progress. Clearly there's more work to be done, including in individual hospitals; we are doing that work.

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

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** Mr. Speaker, London's head of emergency medicine, Dr. Gary Joubert, was quoted as saying, "We're not as terrible as the provincial numbers indicate." Really? Minister, that's a pretty low bar. "Not as terrible" doesn't give a lot of comfort to people who need emergency room services in London.

You've indicated that you realize there are two very different operating systems. The St. Thomas hospital has a great system. Will you commit today, Minister, to implementing the same system used at the St. Thomas hospital in all of the London hospitals? It clearly works. Why wouldn't you do it?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Again, Mr. Speaker, we look everywhere for good advice on how we can continue to reduce the ER wait times. I want to say as well, specific to London Health Sciences, that we have provided them with over \$1 million recently to help them reduce their ER wait times even further.

Part of our plan, of course, is to transition out those individuals who can be better cared for outside of hospital, because one of the challenges with our ER wait times is that there may not be beds for those individuals who have complex problems to go into immediately.

As we move people out of hospitals, we can move people from our ERs into that; that will open up ER time. We're working closely, obviously, with London Health Sciences. We see that more progress needs to be made. We'll work hard until we're proud of the results, and the people in that jurisdiction of London will be proud of the results too.

#### ONTARIO PUBLIC SERVICE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, on behalf of New Democrats, I want to begin by congratulating you on your election, the Premier on her election and the forming of government, all the MPPs on their election to this place, as well as those candidates who ran in this campaign; it was an exciting campaign. I wanted to extend my congratulations.

My question, of course, is to the Premier. The Premier spent the recent election campaign denouncing Conservative plans to fire 100,000 public sector workers. Can she explain why Don Drummond says that that's exactly what her plan will do?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I want to especially congratulate the new members, the new NDP members, on their run and for being here in the House.

I have to say I'm somewhat concerned about the rhetoric that I'm hearing from the leader of the NDP. It sounds like she is looking for an excuse for why she didn't support our budget. She knows perfectly well that the investments we put forward in our budget are necessary to the people of Ontario. She knows that investing in people's talent and skills and investing in infrastructure, including transit and roads and bridges—she knows that that's necessary, and she knows that an Ontario retirement pension plan is what is needed in the absence of the federal government stepping up to enhance the CPP.

I hope that she will support those initiatives that we are putting forward. She knows full well that the people of Ontario need them and support them.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I would actually hope that the Premier would respond to my question, so I'm going to put it again.

When the Conservatives introduced a plan to fire 100,000 people, the Premier called that plan “disastrous.” Does the Premier think the message voters sent is that they don’t want the Conservatives to fire 100,000 people, but it’s okay for the Liberals to fire 100,000 people?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Again, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the leader of the third party is looking for some reason, anywhere she can find it, to justify why she didn’t support our budget.

She talks about comments made by Mr. Drummond. She knows perfectly well that that is not what he said. She knows perfectly well that our plan is not premised on firing 100,000 people. That was the Conservatives’ plan.

It’s interesting, because the NDP leader based her plan on the same fiscal targets that we had put out, except that she said she’d find \$600 million more. So in fact she knows full well that it is not our intention to fire people. She knows full well that our plan is premised on building people up, building up the province, including the infrastructure and the talent and skills of the people of this province.

*Interjections.*

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

Final supplementary.

1050

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** You know, the government seems intent on reintroducing their Trojan Horse budget despite the fact that people have rejected austerity and mass—

*Interjections.*

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Economists are telling people to brace for the worst because there are major gaps in the government’s fiscal plan that have not been explained. Will the Premier come clean with Ontarians and tell them to brace for the worst?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We have been very upfront with the people of Ontario. We have said that there are challenges confronting us. There is no doubt about that. We have said that there are constraints that we have to keep in place. We have said that there is no new money for collective agreements as we go into negotiations. We have said quite clearly that the kinds of changes that we have been making in the health care system—the changes in the delivery of service, putting more services in the community—need to continue.

But for the leader of the third party to stand up now, when she based her plan on exactly the same fiscal foundation as we did, and to distance herself from that is ridiculous. The fact is, we know that there are challenges ahead, but we also know that we must make the investments that are necessary in order to build this province up and to help this economy grow. That’s what people expect.

#### ONTARIO BUDGET

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is also to the Premier. Last week, Moody’s changed their outlook on

Ontario’s credit rating to negative after the government said it would reintroduce the same budget. Does the Premier accept that anyone who has taken a look at the numbers behind the Liberal plan sees that there is a major gap?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We laid out a path to balancing our budget. What we ran on, what we said that we were going to do and what we are doing is reintroducing a plan that will keep us on target to balance the budget and eliminate the deficit by 2017-18. And we will make the investments now that we know are necessary in order for the province to thrive.

And with all due respect to the leader of the third party, I would have expected that she would understand by now that people want those investments and that people believe that those investments are necessary. They know, because they live in their communities, that their kids need those supports, that their communities and their businesses need those supports. I would have thought she would have heard that.

*Interjections.*

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

Supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Does the Premier at least accept that in the wake of the downgrade, the negative outlook from Moody’s, the Liberal plan suffers from a serious credibility gap?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** We have been crystal clear that in order to eliminate the deficit by 2017-18, there will be difficult decisions. I’ve been clear and the Minister of Finance has been clear that, for example, there is no new money for collective agreements. We know that those rounds of collective bargaining will be challenging, but we’ve been crystal clear about that. Everyone went into this with their eyes wide open. We know that there will have to be changes in the way we deliver services. Some of those changes are already under way, particularly in the health care system.

But that does not negate the fact that there need to be investments in this province. That does not negate the fact that kids need full-day kindergarten, that seniors need services in health care, that more home care is necessary, that we must have personal support workers who are paid adequately and that people with developmental services need support. Those are the things that we know need investment right now.

*Interjections.*

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, when is the Premier of this province going to level with Ontarians about the cuts, the layoffs and the asset sales they can expect to see from this government’s Trojan Horse budget?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Well, Mr. Speaker, anyone who has read the budget knows that we referenced every one of those issues and how we will take them on. For example, on assets, what we have said is that we believe those assets that are in the hands of government,

which belong to the people of Ontario, should work for the people of Ontario to the very, very optimal degree—which is why we've asked Ed Clark to take on the challenge of making sure those assets work.

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I hear heckling from the opposition. Had there been a process in place when the 407 was being considered, had we had that asset work for us, I'll bet it would not have been sold and we wouldn't have lost those billions of dollars.

We're taking a rational approach. We're going to make sure that the assets that are owned by the people of Ontario work for the people of Ontario, and we are going to make the investments in services that we know people need. I hope that the third party will join us in support of those.

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

*Interjections.*

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

The member from Leeds–Grenville.

#### AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Congratulations on your re-election. My question, through you, is to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Minister, congratulations on your re-election and your appointment to cabinet.

In just a little over a week, the Kemptville College Renewal Task Force will convene a public meeting to discuss potential partnerships to provide and ensure core agriculture education programs continue to be offered in eastern Ontario. What the ag community wants from you is your assurance that you and your government will work with any partner with a plan to deliver those programs that comes out of that public meeting.

Will you give that assurance to us today?

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I want to thank the member from Leeds–Grenville for the question this morning. There is no question in my mind that both Kemptville and Alfred play significant roles in the agricultural community in eastern Ontario. In fact, Mr. Speaker, in my riding of Peterborough, I have a number of alumni, particularly from the Kemptville college. They've been calling me consistently over the last little while. We're looking at ways to foster partnerships in both those communities, at Kemptville and Alfred, because we know their importance.

We do know that the Honourable Lyle Vanclief will be doing an extensive review of Kemptville, and Marc Godbout will be doing an extensive community review of Alfred.

I look forward to working with the member from Leeds–Grenville and my colleague from Glengarry–Prescott–Russell as we move forward with a plausible plan both for Kemptville and for Alfred.

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

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Minister, this is a very simple answer. It's a yes or no answer.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Well, there is.

Several partners, including the municipality of North Grenville, have stepped up to be part of the solution. Others are going to be revealed at that public meeting next week. Can you assure us that your facilitator will implement our community's plan with any potential partner that comes out in that meeting? Are you committed to Kemptville? Are you going to force your vision of Kemptville on that facilitator or are you going to allow him to listen to the community and work with the task force?

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** I want to thank the member for the supplementary. We'll be working very carefully with all the potential partners in those areas. We have appointed two very distinguished Canadians to help us with the review: the Honourable Lyle Vanclief, who was a very, very distinguished Minister of Agriculture for Prime Minister Chrétien, and Marc Godbout, who has extensive agricultural credentials in eastern Ontario.

**1100**

One of the things that I learned in almost 30 years in public life serving the great folks of Peterborough is that you need to listen very carefully. Over the next number of weeks and months, I'll be listening very carefully to the people in the Kemptville area and the people in the Alfred area to come up with the right solution, a sustainable solution for those wonderful agricultural institutions in eastern Ontario.

#### ONTARIO ECONOMY

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** This question is to the Premier. In addition to Moody's, Standard and Poor's also has a negative outlook for Ontario's credit rating. As you know, our credit rating is important because it can impact our ability to invest in education and health care, key ideas in the activist centre.

With two agencies shifting to a negative outlook, the risk of a downgrade is growing, and it shouldn't be ignored. What is the government doing to restore confidence in the province's public finances?

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

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I appreciate the question. Congratulations to the member for being the critic for finance. I certainly offer an opportunity to meet with you, so I can go over some of the issues as they may pertain to the portfolio.

We recognize that it's important to continue to invest in the things that make us competitive in the long term, recognizing that we will control spending. In fact, we are the lowest-cost government in Canada because of the measures that we've taken. We are the leanest government. We are the only government to have actually cut spending year over year. We've adopted over 80% of Don Drummond's recommendations, and we're continuing to find savings in the system by appointing a new

President of the Treasury Board, whose mandate it is to provide for those negotiations going forward and to find even greater savings in the system. That is how we're going to get to our path to balance, but an important part of that balance is ensuring that we grow our economy and invest in those initiatives that will enable us to grow our revenue by growing the economy.

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

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I appreciate the invitation to meet with the Minister of Finance, and also the minister of the Treasury Board. I look forward to working with you as well, but there are some realities that we're going to have to face together at a time when ratings agencies have Ontario on a negative outlook.

"A shot across the bow": That's how they've described this fiscal situation in the province of Ontario. The government's plan is still moving ahead. It will worsen our fiscal situation by opening new tax loopholes for corporations and exempting them from paying HST on entertaining clients and buying luxury cars. This is not a priority for the people of the province of Ontario.

At a time when Ontario is under fiscal pressure, why is the government intent on opening up new tax loopholes for corporations? This does not make sense.

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I reject the premise of the question, because that is not the case.

What is important is for us to ensure that we find ways to grow the revenue by growing our economy. We're looking at all ways by which we can secure greater stability in our economy, and we do that by not taking extreme measures. We must also recognize that in order for us to balance the books, we must control our spending, but also invest in those things that will make us competitive.

You reference something that is not opening up any tax loopholes. They are existing, and they require support with the federal government. That is why we're taking steps to look at the underground economy and other efforts by which to grow our revenue—things that exist and that we can improve upon. We are taking measures, and we are looking at ways that Quebec has gone in terms of the underground economy. That will help us capture and grow revenue in that case, as well.

But, as also mentioned, we've just appointed Ed Clark to look at our assets, to maximize the opportunity to increase our dividends through those crown corporations, all of which will help, again, to balance our budget by 2017-18, for which we're on track.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. Our province has made strategic investments in innovation hubs which are helping today's entrepreneurs become tomorrow's global leaders. That type of investment is key, especially in supporting cluster development and regional economies.

We see this in Kitchener–Waterloo. We see it in the greater Ottawa area, Durham and the GTA, where we

have some of the world's cutting-edge innovation parks, including MaRS, right across the street from here.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister please provide the House with some information on how MaRS is creating good jobs for the province of Ontario?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I want to thank the member for Kitchener Centre for being the first new member in this new Legislature to ask a question in this Legislature. It's a good question.

It's important to understand that this government has recognized the need for Ontario to build on its strengths: our people and our partnerships. MaRS is focused on building Canada's next generation of technology companies and accelerating these firms to the status of global market leaders.

MaRS is globally recognized as one of North America's largest urban research parks. It is home to more than 115 tenants from across the innovation spectrum and is where about 2,500 people work every day. Over 1,400 start-up companies have been incubated or advised at MaRS since its inception. In 2013 alone, MaRS venture clients created more than 6,500 jobs. In total, Mr. Speaker, MaRS clients have generated more than \$3 billion in economic activity.

This government believes in supporting a dynamic and innovative business climate, and MaRS is a key part to doing that.

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

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** Thank you to the minister for his answer. There is no doubt about the importance of this kind of investment in our province in creating cluster development and helping to fortify our regional economies.

As the minister detailed in his answer, MaRS has definitely had a very positive effect on these regional economies and our economy as a whole.

However, in recent weeks we have read a number of stories about the future of MaRS phase 2. I understand that decisions about the future of the MaRS phase 2 building were not made during the writ process. Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, could the minister please provide us with an update on what, if any, decisions he has made about MaRS phase 2?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Again, Mr. Speaker, it's a very, very good and pertinent question. I think it's really important.

We all have a responsibility to do our due diligence to ensure the next steps of MaRS phase 2 are carried out with the utmost respect for transparency and taxpayers' dollars.

At this moment, let me be very clear: No decisions have been made. Before any decision is made, I'm making the commitment to solicit the best advice and expertise from industry on how to proceed.

The matter the member refers to does have significant complexity to it. I'm currently in the process of reviewing all options for MaRS phase 2. I can assure the member that I'm looking at the matter closely and will ensure that any decisions that are made will be done as transparently as possible.



The government's priority is creating jobs and building a strong, next-generation economy. Ontario is fast becoming a global leader in innovation, and MaRS plays a key role in getting us there.

This decision will be made in a way that best serves our innovation agenda, our economy and Ontario taxpayers.

### ASTHMA

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** My question is to the Premier. Last session, I worked very hard to try to get my private member's bill, Ryan's Law, passed through committee so it could be passed into law before the election. Unfortunately, Premier, this didn't occur.

I will be reintroducing Ryan's Law, which will protect the 20% of students with asthma. However, with a majority government, opposition bills tend to get shelved regardless of how vital they are. I hope this doesn't happen with Ryan's Law, Premier, because it would suggest that your government would be willing to sacrifice the safety of our children in order to deny a Tory MPP's bill.

Ryan's Law is important. It will protect children with asthma. It's that simple.

Premier, when I reintroduce Ryan's Law, will you commit to doing everything you can to ensure its quick passage?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I want to commend the member for putting forward this legislation. I think that private members' bills are extremely important. From my perspective, as I said earlier, it doesn't matter where good ideas come from. If we can find ways to help school kids who have asthma to be safer, then obviously we have to do that.

I assume the member opposite will reintroduce this piece of legislation, Ryan's Law, and the committee will need to look at it.

As I said, if we can find ways to make sure that school kids who have asthma are safer, then we have an obligation to do that.

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

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Premier, the best way to ensure this bill gets passed is to ensure that your House leader works to get my bill back to the forefront of committee.

During the election campaign, I heard another very discouraging story. This is from a young girl. She told me she suffered an asthma attack on the bus while travelling to school. However, due to current regulations and school board policies that do not allow children to carry their relief puffers, she had to sit through the bus ride during her asthma attack, wait until the bus got to the school, get off the bus and then find a teacher who was responsible for giving her her inhaler so that she could attain some relief.

1110

That story should frighten you. Had the attack been more severe, the outcome could have been far more tragic, just like poor Ryan in Straffordville. That's why

Ryan's Law is so important. Among other things, it permits children to carry their relief inhalers at all times, provided they have permission from their health care providers.

Premier, we can't wait on this. When Ryan's Law passes second reading, will you make it a priority to help get it through committee?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** As I said, it's very important to me that where there are situations where we can put in place a structure, put in place a law, put in place a regulation that is going to keep kids safer, then obviously we need to do that. As this piece of legislation goes through, and when it goes to committee, Mr. Speaker, then the committee needs to deal with it, certainly to try to make sure that we put the right regulations in place.

One of the things, though, that I would need to just say to the member opposite is, first of all, there are a lot of pieces of legislation that are introduced and a lot of them have huge merit, Mr. Speaker. But the other thing is, we need to sort out what's school board policy and what's provincial law, where are the interactions between those things. I think it's very important, as a piece of legislation like this goes through, that we examine that and make sure it's not something that's happening at the local level as opposed to the provincial level. That's the problem.

### PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** To the Premier: At the end of 2014, the Premier's Advisory Council on Government Assets, headed by TD CEO Ed Clark, will present recommendations to this government regarding the whole or partial privatization of the LCBO, Hydro One and OPG. These recommendations in turn will be fed into the 2015 budget process. The government factors in revenues from all significant initiatives of this sort into its long-term fiscal framework.

Will the government tell this House how much is slotted into the fiscal framework from the full or partial sale of these core public assets?

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

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** I appreciate the question. It allows us now to talk about the relevance of reviewing the assets owned by government. Mr. Speaker, the shareholders of these assets are the people of Ontario, the taxpayer. They have a right for us to ensure that we maximize its potential, either by way of increasing the dividends by which those crown corporations can produce and/or looking at ways that we can invest our monies in appropriate manners to even greater returns by putting it through the Trillium Trust, which is part of the budget.

But, Mr. Speaker, we are guided by the principles that are core principles, which include our policy objectives to maximize its value by representing the good value that it represents to Ontarians, and it's also about ensuring that they work in the best interests of the public so that we do not have a repeat of the sale of the 407. We must

ensure that we take rigorous measures to protect these assets and the annuity by which they provide dividends. We must have—

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

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** It sure doesn't sound to me like they're ruling out privatization. The real fact of the matter is that after missing its 2014 deficit projection by \$2.4 billion, this government has projected that its \$12.5-billion deficit will magically disappear in the next three years. This includes a near-miraculous \$5.3-billion reduction in 2016-17 alone.

This is unprecedented, and no serious student of Ontario's budget believes that this kind of reduction will take place without a significant sale of core assets. How much has this government slotted into its long-term fiscal framework from the sale of LCBO, OPG and Hydro One assets?

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** Mr. Speaker, it's incumbent upon the government to review the functions of these crown corporations and the assets which we hold. It doesn't mean we're selling anything. What it means is that we're maximizing the potential of these crown corporations for the benefit of the shareholders, which are the people of Ontario and the taxpayer.

The expert council will evaluate what it is that we own. Our priority is to continue to invest in infrastructure and in transit, which will maximize the potential of being competitive in the long run. These are the principles that guide us. It's also about ensuring that the monies that are invested by government are invested wisely for the benefit of the people of Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, this is not something new. The United Kingdom and Australia have adopted some of these very measures to their great benefit. What we must do is ensure that we invest in those assets that provide the maximum return for the taxpayer and also maximize our revenue and our value assets of those—nothing at this point is being considered to be sold, although we made it clear in the budget that we're not going to be passive investors on stocks—

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

**Hon. Charles Sousa:** —nor should we be—

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

#### PENSION PLANS

**Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On my first time rising in this chamber, I'd like to say what an honour and a privilege it is to be here representing the people of Halton, and congratulations on your re-election.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the Associate Minister of Finance, it is the desire of our government that Ontario be the best place in the world to grow old. In the past, Ontarians and Canadians have been well served by the Canada Pension Plan. However, middle-class Canadians know that the current CPP is not adequate for their

retirement. Provincial and federal government officials and pension experts agree that Canadians, especially the middle class, need more support in their retirement years. After a lifetime of work and contributing to the economy, retired Ontarians deserve better than to face plunging standards of living.

Can the minister responsible for the new Ontario Retirement Pension Plan please explain how the ORPP will help Ontarians become more secure in their retirement?

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

**Hon. Mitzie Hunter:** Thank you, Speaker, and congratulations on your re-election. Thank you to the member from Halton for her question today.

As announced in our government's May 1 budget, we are committed to building retirement security with a made-in-Ontario pension plan that puts secure retirement on the horizon for every worker. The ORPP will mirror the CPP, enhancing benefits for middle-income earners while keeping contributions low.

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

Analysis shows that a CPP enhancement will have economic benefits by growing the economy and creating jobs. Higher disposable income for future retirees means less reliance on social programs funded by taxpayers. However, the federal government has refused to accept the consensus amongst the provinces and analysis by experts to work on enhancing the CPP.

We're standing up for the people of Ontario by continuing to do the right thing and leading the way towards a pension plan that gives the people of Ontario retirement—

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

*Interjections.*

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

Supplementary?

**Ms. Indira Naidoo-Harris:** Thank you to the Associate Minister of Finance for the answer. Again, to the Associate Minister of Finance, I am pleased to hear you are working on a plan that will help Ontarians retire with security. My constituents in Halton are concerned that, as Ontarians continue to live longer and less workplaces are offering workplace pension plans, they will not be able to save enough for their retirement.

In 2012, only 34% of Ontario's population belonged to a workplace pension plan. And my younger constituents, who are expected to have multiple employers, will be more likely to encounter a patchwork of workplace coverage that will make saving for retirement even more difficult.

Can the minister please explain how the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan will build on the CPP to enhance retirement benefits for Ontarians?

**Hon. Mitzie Hunter:** Thank you, again, to the industrious member from Halton.

The ORPP would be the first of its kind in Canada and would be introduced in 2017 to coincide with the

expected reductions in employment insurance premiums. If negotiations with the federal government on enhancing CPP were to be successful in the future, the ORPP would be integrated into the CPP.

The ORPP would require equal contributions to be shared between employers and employees, not exceeding 1.9% each. It would aim to provide a replacement rate of 15% of an individual's earnings up to a maximum annual earnings threshold of \$90,000.

**1120**

When combined with CPP, an individual with steady career earnings over 40 years of \$90,000 could replace about 30% of pre-retirement income and could receive annual benefits of about \$25,000, which roughly doubles retirement benefits under the CPP alone.

We are committed to providing retirement security to all Ontarians and moving ahead with the planning of the ORPP. This is just one step in that direction.

### COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRES

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** My question is to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Good luck on your appointment.

Minister, two weeks ago, I received a letter from our local community care access centre, stating that the organization will be limiting the number of new patients it accepts less than three months into their fiscal. Your government has talked a lot about investing in community-care-based service, yet 10 days after the election, our local CCAC is telling me they will be limiting the number of new patients in need of care.

Minister, do you support Central West CCAC's decision?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Of course I do. It's just unfortunate that the party opposite didn't support our budget, nor did the third party, because not only did we dramatically increase, by \$260 million, our support to community care, including our CCACs, in 2013, but we had laid out in the budget a further \$750 million in increased funding to community care, including our CCACs, by 2017. It was in the budget. Unfortunately, as a result of the two parties opposite not supporting that budget, we had to have an election to get us to this point.

We are committed to our CCACs. We have invested over the past number of years a significant increase in our CCACs to make sure that we're providing that quality care to individuals and their families when they need it, where they need it, and as close to home as possible.

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

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Minister, I understand that you're new, but this letter came out on June 23, which would be post-election, which would be after you announced that the same budget is coming through. So clearly the local CCAC is going to have the same problem.

I understand you have inherited a number of crises in the health portfolio, but there really is an opportunity to make a difference here. This is a matter of priorities. Last

week in the throne speech, we heard a lot of talk about building Ontario up. Well, I can tell you that in Dufferin-Caledon we don't believe in building Ontario up by clawing back access to health care service.

I will ask the minister again, will you do the right thing and direct the local CCAC to prioritize their decisions to ensure that all patients are provided with the health care service they need when they need it?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Unbelievable hypocrisy.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I'm going to ask the member to withdraw.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I withdraw.

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

Minister of Health?

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** Again, we are committed to our CCACs. In fact, the funding to our CCACs has increased by 99% since 2003. We have further investments that we're making in the budget. I think this speaks to the imperative of making sure that the budget which has been tabled is quickly debated and passed in the coming days so we can go ahead and continue to invest and increase our investments to this important aspect of the continuum of health care.

Mr. Speaker, we know that there is always more work to be done. I'm very proud of the work that's been done in the past number of years to make home care and funding for supportive services—in fact, in our budget, as individuals are aware, we're increasing the—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Dufferin-Caledon asked the question. Order, please.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** —wages of our personal support workers, a key provider of our support services and our home care; we're increasing that by 30% over the next few years.

There is more work to be done. We need to start by passing the budget.

### CHILD CARE

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Premier. Families across Ontario are struggling to find safe, affordable child care for their kids while this government is making the crisis even worse by cutting child care funding to 18 communities across our province. Child care centres like Coronation Park Day Nursery in Sarnia are on the chopping block. Over a hundred kids at that centre in Sarnia alone are at risk of losing access to child care.

Can the Premier explain to parents in Sarnia and across our province why her government is intent on shutting down child care centres that families rely upon?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Since 2003, child care funding in Ontario has increased from \$532.4 million to close to \$1 billion. That's a 90% increase. So in fact, quite contrary to what the leader of the third party is saying—that we are cutting funding to child care—we are actually increasing funding to child care.

But there are two things happening. One is that full-day kindergarten is being implemented across the prov-

ince so that every four- and five-year-old in Ontario in September will have access to a full-day kindergarten program. That means that there are changes within the child care system; there's no doubt about that. So we are working with the system. We are changing the funding formula. We recognize that as those four- and five-year-olds are in full-day kindergarten, there are changes that happen within the preschool child care system.

We will continue to invest. We will continue to work with the system as we change the funding formula, but our support for child care is steadfast and will remain so.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I think the Premier just admitted that she has created a crisis in the child care system. The Premier's Trojan Horse budget, in fact, does nothing to stop the child care cuts in 18 communities. When only one in five kids can access licensed child care in this province, no community can afford cuts to child care funding, no community should be forced to close the doors on their licensed child care centres in this province and no family should have to worry about losing their kid's spot in child care. But this government has decided that services will be cut, and child care happens to be the first to go.

Why won't the Premier do the right thing and commit today to stop the cuts in the child care centres in Sarnia and all 18 communities across this province? Why doesn't she just commit today to do the right thing by these families and these children in these 18 communities?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Mr. Speaker, there are nearly 90,000 new spaces in child care since 2003. There are tens of thousands of new child care spaces in Ontario. The fact is that we are going through a transition; there is no doubt about that. I would hope that the leader of the third party and her colleagues would be able to understand and work with their communities as we go through the transition.

Four- and five-year-olds are going to be in full-day kindergarten as of September. All four- and five-year-olds have access now to full-day kindergarten. What we need to do is to make sure that the child care system adjusts to that so that the preschool kids—the zero- to three-year-old kids—have the opportunity to be in the child care system and that we have before- and after-care for students. Those are changes. That means the system is going through a transformation. We have put mitigation funding in place. We will continue to work with the child care system. But to suggest that not having full-day kindergarten would be a good thing is not in the best interests of kids, and that's essentially what the leader of the third party is—

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Thank you.  
New question? The member from Burlington.

#### CYCLING POLICIES

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank my constituents in the riding of Burlington for their confidence.

My question is for the Minister of Transportation. My riding of Burlington is a beautiful place to ride a bike. From our waterfront to our trails to our on-road facilities, cycling makes an important contribution to a more healthy, active and connected Burlington. Indeed, cycling is not only good for my community; it enhances the health and well-being of my constituents. Cycling is good for economic development and tourism too, as witnessed by bicycle tourism initiatives like the greenbelt and our beautiful waterfront trail. That's why I'm proud to be a part of a government that is committed to supporting cycling and cyclists across Ontario.

Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister, can you please explain to this House what our government is doing to support and promote cycling and cyclists on every path, trail and roadway?

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I want to begin by thanking the newly elected member for Burlington for that outstanding question and welcoming her to Ontario's Legislature.

I also want to thank the member for her tireless support for such a great cause, the cause of cycling here in our province. Because of her advocacy and her passion for safe roads in our province, we have a vision for cycling in Ontario that all of us can be proud of.

I also want to quickly pay tribute to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, who played a leadership role in making sure that we brought this project forward.

In August 2013, our government introduced #CycleON, the most comprehensive cycling strategy that Ontario has ever seen. This strategy touches many parts of our government and will play a large role in building healthier and stronger communities: \$10 million over three years through a new cost-shared program that will help municipalities expand their local cycling networks, and in addition, \$15 million over three years will be dedicated to investments in cycling infrastructure.

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

**Ms. Eleanor McMahon:** Thank you to the minister for that answer. I agree with you that the benefits of cycling are limitless for our communities, our economies and our health. Cycling connects Ontarians to communities and to each other. That is why support for cities and municipalities is vital to the promotion of cycling.

Speaker, through you, I'd like the minister to elaborate on what we can expect for cycling as our government rolls out #CycleON, the Ontario cycling strategy, and on how communities across Ontario will benefit.

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** I thank the member again for that great supplementary. We are coming up on the one-year anniversary of our #CycleON strategy. Last August, we released our long-term 20-year vision, based on five strategic directions to encourage the growth of cycling and to improve safety for cyclists across the province.

#CycleON is to be implemented through ongoing multi-year action plans. The first action plan, which was introduced at the Ontario Bike Summit earlier this year, will focus on year-one commitments, but includes many

initiatives to be implemented with partners over years two to five. Developed with stakeholders, including AMO, CAA and Share The Road, suggestions from the chief coroner's 2012 review, and public comments, this plan will help Ontarians continue to move forward with a progressive, balanced and responsible cycling strategy.

Remember, Speaker, sharing the road and having a great time doing it is what cycling in Ontario is all about. Cycle on.

#### ELECTION ADVERTISING

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Speaker, before I begin, I just would like to congratulate you on your re-election as Speaker of the House.

My question is to the Premier. Premier, as the election began, Chief Electoral Officer Greg Essensa repeated his call for a limit on third party advertising. Mr. Essensa stated, "When I look across the country, we are the only jurisdiction that has no spending limit." He went on to say that the process is "completely non-transparent." We may never know just how much these groups spent.

Dalton McGuinty's 2005 and 2007 legislation added little transparency, leaving the Chief Electoral Officer asking for more reforms. Premier, this is your chance to prove to the people of Ontario that you are different. Since you are in an open and transparent mood today, are you willing to protect the integrity of democracy and pledge to place limits on third party advertising spending?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I appreciate the question from the member of the opposition. I endeavour always to be in an open and transparent mood, so—

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Hear, hear.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Thank you very much.

We have rules in place to ensure that there is both transparency and free speech in our election campaigns. Those things have to be balanced. We are the party that introduced third party advertising rules in Ontario for the first time, in 2007.

Under current rules, third parties that spend \$500 or more on election advertising are required to register with the Chief Electoral Officer so that there actually is an accounting for how that money is spent. Registered third parties also have to report to the Chief Electoral Officer on election advertising expenses. If election advertising expenses are \$5,000 or more, then those reports have to be audited. So we have taken many steps to make sure that there is openness in this process.

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

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** Premier, that's the same answer you gave me in the fall when I introduced my Bill 101. But Speaker, we are the only jurisdiction in Canada that has no spending limitation on advertisers, who have the power to influence elections. That jeopardizes the integrity of this institution and is a disservice to our democracy.

The Chief Electoral Officer recommends that no group should be able to spend millions of dollars to influence elections without any transparency. Premier, we agree.

The status quo is setting the stage for corruption. Premier, will you implement the Chief Electoral Officer's recommendations?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Well, let me just say that I disagree that there is no transparency, because I think that there have been steps taken by our government to put transparency in place.

But having said that, we're always open to conversations on ways to improve Ontario's electoral process. Third parties supported all three parties during the election campaign, so there's not a difference in terms of the treatment, party by party. If there is a willingness and a desire on the part of all parties and the Chief Electoral Officer to have a conversation, we're open to having that conversation, but I think it's something that everyone needs to take part in.

#### ASSISTANCE TO FLOOD VICTIMS

**Ms. Sarah Campbell:** To the Premier: People across the northwest are still suffering from record high water levels and flooding that started last month, with as many as 10 communities in my riding alone declaring states of emergency.

I toured the area and I saw first-hand the devastation: homes overwhelmed by flooding; sections of highway completely washed away; significant erosion of shoreline, resulting in lost personal property and a threatened cemetery; and evacuations.

People in the northwest are doing an amazing job banding together in this difficult time, but it is up to this government to ensure that there are funds available for cleanup and recovery.

A couple of years ago, when Thunder Bay experienced a similar emergency, it had to wait over a year to receive provincial assistance from this government. People in my riding simply can't wait that long.

Will the Premier help the people of Kenora–Rainy River today by committing funds from the Ontario Disaster Relief Assistance Program to provide badly needed relief to these 10 hard-hit communities and commit to a timeline of when we can expect this funding?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** Minister of Natural Resources.

**Hon. Bill Mauro:** I want to thank the member for the question, but I do want to say that the assertion that after the Thunder Bay flood our government was slow to respond—in fact, not only did we meet our commitments in providing assistance to the city of Thunder Bay, in fact we've exceeded our commitment through the ODRA Program under MMAH.

In terms of the flooding that's occurring in the member's communities, of course we're aware of it and of course it is a very, very serious and significant occurrence. Unfortunately, it seems like we find ourselves in these situations all too regularly now. In fact, what were abnormal weather events seem to be occurring on a far too regular basis.

I can tell the member that I've been in direct contact with the mayors of the three potentially directly affected communities—those that have been directly affected: Mayor Avis in Fort Frances, Mayor Brown in Atikokan and Mayor Canfield in Kenora. I've talked to them. They've been very pleased to this point, I would say, with the outreach and the support that have been provided by all of the appropriate ministries, including MNR. We continue to monitor the situation. I've asked them to contact me at any time that they feel necessary if they are, at some point, uncertain with the response that's coming through.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** There are no deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

I know who my usual suspects are now. I appreciate being given that opportunity to know who they are.

*The House recessed from 1137 to 1300.*

#### ESTIMATES

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** On a point of order, the government House leader.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I have a message from the Honourable David C. Onley, the Lieutenant Governor, signed by his own hand.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The Lieutenant Governor transmits estimates of certain sums required for the service of the province for the year ending March 31, 2015, and recommends them to the Legislative Assembly. Toronto, July 7, 2014, David C. Onley.

#### TABLING OF SESSIONAL PAPERS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I beg to inform the House that during the interval between the 40th and the 41st Parliaments, the following reports from parliamentary officers were tabled:

—on June 4, an opinion from the Chief Electoral Officer concerning the statements by the New Democratic Party and the Ontario Liberal Party under section 4 of the Taxpayer Protection Act, 1999;

—on June 17, the 2013 annual report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario;

—on June 19, the 2013-14 annual report from the Office of the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario;

—on June 23, the 2013-14 annual report of the Ombudsman of Ontario;

—on June 26, the report of the Integrity Commissioner of Ontario concerning the review expenses claims under the Cabinet Ministers' and Opposition Leaders' Expenses Review and Accountability Act, 2002, for the period of April 1, 2013, to March 31, 2014.

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** I'm pleased to welcome my mother, Dawn Potts, into the House today. She kept my

father in check for years in his performance as Mr. Justice J.H. Potts, and she has committed to doing the same for me. Thank you, Mom.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** And we welcome her.

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### RIDING OF WELLINGTON–HALTON HILLS

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate you and every member of this House on their successful election on June 12. I'm looking forward to working with each of them over the next four years in the 41st Parliament as we all seek to make Ontario a better place for all of its residents.

On June 13, the day after the election, we were back to work at my constituency office, and I wrote the Premier to highlight three key issues in my riding: the Highway 6 Morriston bypass, improved GO train service, and high-speed Internet in rural Ontario. On July 3, I tabled three private members' resolutions on these issues. They are the first three items listed on the order paper today.

Highway 6 serves as a vital link between the 401 and the Hamilton-Niagara region and the US border. A bypass around Morriston will eliminate a major traffic bottleneck, improve safety and allow for the free flow of goods to the border.

During the election campaign, the government promised full-day two-way GO train service between Waterloo region and the GTA. What is the time frame for keeping this commitment? How does the government define "full-day two-way service"? Will this include more stops in Wellington–Halton Hills?

Finally, lack of access to high-speed Internet in rural Ontario continues to be a concern. Reliable and affordable access to high-speed Internet is essential in today's economy. A provincial strategy for expanding affordable high-speed Internet would help our local businesses grow and attract new investment to our rural communities.

I commend all of these issues to the government and urge immediate support for them.

#### IMMIGRANTS

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Speaker, on July 1, I had the pleasure of attending several Canada Day celebrations in London. My constituents in London–Fanshawe as well as residents of the other London ridings celebrated in style, with parties, enormous cakes and spectacular firework displays.

In the afternoon, I had the honour of taking part in London's annual Canada citizenship ceremony, where dozens of Londoners proudly raised their right hands under a canopy of red-and-white flags, took the oath of citizenship and officially became Canadian citizens.

It was such a wonderful thing to witness. I have enjoyed it every year, and it was particularly important to me this year in the context of my new critic portfolio of Citizenship and Immigration. There were new Canadians from countries all over the world and of all ages, including several excited children.

I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to everyone who became a new Canadian citizen on Canada Day both in my hometown of London and across this great country. It was an event that really made me feel proud to be Canadian, and I admire these new citizens so much for their love and commitment to our country and their desire to carry the honourable title of citizen to be part of the Canadian family.

### RAMADAN

**Mr. John Fraser:** I'd like to say it's great to be back here at Queen's Park, and I'd like to extend congratulations to all my colleagues here on their successful election and a warm welcome to all those new members.

Mr. Speaker, it is on behalf of all the members of this Legislature that I would like to extend our warmest greetings to the members of our Muslim community who are observing Ramadan this month.

Ramadan is one of the five pillars of Islam. Ramadan is a time for fasting and self-sacrifice. It is a time for prayer, reflection and spiritual growth. It is a time to strengthen ties with family and community. To our Muslim neighbours, thank you for giving your children the gift of faith.

The Muslim Canadian community is an important part of the rich cultural mosaic that is Ontario, and Ramadan is an opportunity to recognize the many contributions Muslim Canadians make to enrich our society. I look forward to attending the many celebrations that will take place in Ottawa South over this month.

To all our Muslim friends, Ramadan Mubarak.

### SEAFORTH LIONS CLUB

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Huron-Bruce.

**Ms. Lisa M. Thompson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It's a pleasure to join you in the 41st Parliament, and I welcome all the new members as well.

I rise today to recognize and congratulate the Seaforth Lions Club on celebrating their 90th anniversary with a fun-filled Canada Day program. The Seaforth Lions Club formed in December 1924 because local individuals recognized the need for service clubs to assist in their community. Today, there are 1,369,000 Lions members in 46,281 clubs in 208 country and geographic areas around the world, and this Seaforth service organization holds the honour of being the 17th-oldest Lions Club in Canada.

The Seaforth Lions' signature project is the operation and maintenance of the beautiful Lions Park on the east side of town, and it is an absolutely gorgeous home to the

community pool, both of which have been operating since 1925. The Seaforth Lions graciously recognize, though, that their community landmark would not be possible without its local community and businesses who have always supported fundraising projects over the years.

Congratulations once again to the 90th anniversary committee for their successful old-fashioned family picnic, an entire Canada Day program.

To the Seaforth Lions, I would like to say, "Keep up the tremendous work." Communities throughout Huron-Bruce benefit from the commitment and vision of local service organizations, and the Seaforth Lions lead by example.

### BÉNÉVOLES

**M. Gilles Bisson:** J'ai eu l'occasion deux fois dernièrement, ce printemps et cet été, d'être capable de célébrer nos bénévoles dans la communauté de Mattice, numéro un, et dans la communauté de Hearst, numéro deux. C'était vraiment quelque chose de spécial parce que, comme on le sait, dans les petites communautés à travers l'Ontario, l'esprit d'une communauté, c'est les bénévoles, et parfois ce sont les bénévoles qui font marcher une communauté. Quand on regarde une communauté comme Mattice ou une communauté comme Hearst, ce n'est pas grand comme Toronto où il y a des services à chaque coin. Ces communautés-là, beaucoup de leurs services sont desservis hors de la communauté elle-même. Parfois ce sont ces bénévoles qui font tout l'ouvrage qui est si nécessaire pour faire fonctionner la communauté.

On a eu deux belles célébrations, la première à Mattice, où on a eu la chance de célébrer tous ceux et celles qui ont été nommés volontaires de l'année pour cette année. J'aimerais les féliciter avec ma collègue, Carol Hughes, qui a aussi amené des salutations. On a eu la chance juste après ça d'être capable de faire la communauté de Hearst. C'est là que ma collègue, Carol Hughes, et moi avons eu l'occasion de travailler ensemble. Tandis que moi j'étais à la célébration à Hearst, elle était à Opatatika en train de faire la célébration des aînés dans la communauté d'Opatatika. De la part, je pense, de tous les parlementaires et des chefs de parti ici, on célèbre avec les communautés de Hearst, Opatatika, et Mattice tous ces volontaires qui font marcher leur communauté. Puis, on dit à tous de continuer le bel ouvrage. Chapeau! C'est vraiment apprécié.

### GO TRANSIT

**Mr. Chris Ballard:** I'm proud to stand for the first time in the Legislature to represent the constituents of my riding of Newmarket-Aurora.

Mr. Speaker, I've heard from residents in my riding for several months now about the need for improved GO train service heading north from Toronto: Late afternoon buses have been standing room only for some time, and

the last train heads north too soon for those who work late. So I'm delighted that, as of June 28, GO Transit has added not one but two additional northbound trains on the Barrie corridor, one leaving Union Station at 3:40 p.m. and the other at 6:45 p.m. These trains make commuting much easier for up to 1,900 northbound passengers each trip by providing a more flexible travel schedule.

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This improvement in GO train service is just one of many over the past few years. This government has invested millions of dollars improving our local GO train stations and bus depots. In response, GO train usage in our area has greatly increased. Our community knows the importance of a quality transit system: improved quality of life, improved business productivity, and improved economic development for our towns.

Mr. Speaker, we are thankful for this improved service. I look forward to building on the achievements of our Liberal government to ensure that residents in my community of Newmarket–Aurora get out of gridlock and get on the GO.

#### TRAGEDY IN KITCHENER–CONESTOGA

**Mr. Michael Harris:** Speaker, today I rise to recognize the courage and community spirit of New Hamburg residents who joined together to overcome a terrible tragedy that happened last Boxing Day. Last year, the Reiner family—Bill, Deana, Alexander and Charlene—experienced the horror of learning that their son and brother had fallen into the Nith River. Five long months later, emergency officials recovered five-year-old Robbie Reiner and brought him home.

The search wasn't easy. It was a long winter and the water levels remained high for months, but the Waterloo Regional Police Service, the Wilmot fire department and the OPP diving team didn't give up. They kept working around the clock. In fact, Sergeant Mark Morrissey spent countless hours off duty surveying the area until Robbie was found.

I would like to thank all the brave men and women who worked together on the search. I would also like to thank the members of the community who supported the family in several ways through these difficult times. Local businesses donated supplies for the search, residents cooked meals for the family, and volunteers hosted a fundraiser called Go Blue for Robbie in January. To see so much support and co-operation to help a family in need is truly remarkable and shows why New Hamburg is truly a special place.

Again, thank you to all those who helped, and my thoughts and prayers go out to the Reiner family.

#### BEACHES INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** Just last Thursday, the day after being sworn in as a member of this House, for which I'm

absolutely delighted for the opportunity, I attended a media conference at the iconic Balmy Beach Club in my ward for the Beaches jazz festival. It was my first official duty as the MPP for Beaches–East York. I'm delighted that my first opportunity to speak here is to tell members more about this great festival.

Lido Chilelli has worked on this festival for more than 25 years. What used to attract thousands is now attracting hundreds of thousands. Organizers expect that in excess of 800,000 people will be coming to the Beach, enjoying the jazz music. Jazz artists from around the world will be playing in select venues from Queen Street East all the way to Leuty Avenue. This year, the main stage will be at Woodbine Park, where thousands will be serenaded by the dulcet tones of some of the world's best jazz musicians.

In addition to presenting jazz music, the festival hosts workshops for aspiring musicians, and for the first time it encompasses the very popular Waterfront Blues festival, celebrating its 10th anniversary.

I am particularly pleased that, each year, portions of the festival proceeds are donated to Toronto East General Hospital. This year's organizers expect that upwards of \$40,000 will be donated to the capital fund for the new addition there. My appreciation goes out to all the residents of Beaches–East York, whose lives are considerably disrupted by this festival but who support it because of the contributions it makes to the city and to our community.

I hope all members will take time out from their busy schedules and enjoy the Beaches International Jazz Festival. I am particularly looking forward to the funky rhythms of Ivan Neville's band Dumpstaphunk on Saturday, June 19.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I look forward to the funk. I apologize. That'll be the last time that happens.

#### EVENTS IN NORTHUMBERLAND– QUINTE WEST

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Speaker, congratulations on your position as Speaker again. I'm sure you'll do a great job.

I'm very excited to be back here in the Legislature representing the good people of Northumberland–Quinte West. I'm truly honoured that they elected me as their MPP once again. Who could ask for a better way to begin my term than to celebrate this great country of ours at Canada Day events across my riding?

I started my day very early in Campbellford, where the Campbellford Rotary club served a fantastic pancake breakfast. Then, for my second breakfast about an hour later, I joined some of my friends at the Codrington Community Centre, where they were also celebrating Canada Day. Then off it was to my hometown of Brighton, where I took part in the opening ceremonies. Then off to the Cobourg parade, where I rode on an antique fire truck. It was great to see people along the way cheering and expressing how happy they were to celebrate Canada Day.



The parade was followed by the official opening with some local dignitaries, and I helped cut the cake that everyone enjoyed.

Then off to Port Hope to have a cold one. It was mid-afternoon. Their festival was great and I had an opportunity to visit with a lot of folks.

Next was Cramahe township, serving hot dogs and cake to help them celebrate Canada Day. I ended off the day in my hometown of Brighton with fireworks.

The day's events helped to remind me of how fortunate I am to be the provincial representative for Northumberland–Quinte West, the best riding in the best province in the best country in the world.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### WORKPLACE SAFETY AND INSURANCE AMENDMENT ACT (POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER), 2014

#### LOI DE 2014 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA SÉCURITÉ PROFESSIONNELLE ET L'ASSURANCE CONTRE LES ACCIDENTS DU TRAVAIL (TROUBLE DE STRESS POST-TRAUMATIQUE)

Ms. DiNovo moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 2, An Act to amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997 with respect to post-traumatic stress disorder / Projet de loi 2, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1997 sur la sécurité professionnelle et l'assurance contre les accidents du travail relativement au trouble de stress post-traumatique.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

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

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Congratulations on your election, Mr. Speaker.

The Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997, is amended to create a rebuttable presumption relating to post-traumatic stress disorder affecting emergency response workers. Subsection 15.3(1) defines emergency response worker to mean a firefighter, paramedic or police officer.

Subsection 15.3(2) states that if an emergency response worker suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder, the disorder is presumed to be an occupational disease that occurred due to the employment as an emergency response worker, unless the contrary is shown.

The bill sets out procedural and transitional rules governing claims to which a presumption applies.

### PLANNING AMENDMENT ACT (ENABLING MUNICIPALITIES TO REQUIRE INCLUSIONARY HOUSING), 2014

#### LOI DE 2014 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'AMÉNAGEMENT DU TERRITOIRE (INCLUSION DE LOGEMENTS ABORDABLES PAR LES MUNICIPALITÉS)

Ms. DiNovo moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 3, An Act to amend the Planning Act with respect to inclusionary housing / Projet de loi 3, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire à l'égard de l'inclusion de logements abordables.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

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

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Section 34 of the Planning Act is amended to allow the councils of local municipalities to pass zoning bylaws to require inclusionary housing in the municipality by mandating that a specified percentage of housing units and new housing developments containing 20 or more housing units must be affordable to low- and moderate-income households.

The new section 37.1 of the act deals with inclusionary housing bylaws in greater detail.

Section 51 of the act is amended to allow the approval authority to impose, as a condition of approval of a plan of a subdivision, a requirement that a specified percentage of housing units in new housing developments in the subdivision containing 20 or more housing units must be affordable to low- and moderate-income households.

### METROLINX AMENDMENT ACT, 2014

#### LOI DE 2014 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR METROLINX

Ms. DiNovo moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 4, An Act to amend the Metrolinx Act, 2006 / Projet de loi 4, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur Metrolinx.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

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

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** This is in honour of Jonah Schein.

The bill amends the Metrolinx Act, 2006, to require Metrolinx to ensure that any passenger railway system established between downtown Toronto and Toronto Pearson International Airport is not powered by diesel fuel.

RESPECT FOR MUNICIPALITIES ACT  
(CITY OF TORONTO), 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LE RESPECT  
DES MUNICIPALITÉS  
(CITÉ DE TORONTO)

Ms. DiNovo moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 5, An Act respecting the City of Toronto and the Ontario Municipal Board / Projet de loi 5, Loi portant sur la cité de Toronto et la Commission des affaires municipales de l'Ontario.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

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

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** The bill changes the relationship in law between the city of Toronto and the Ontario Municipal Board. Currently, under various statutes that cover land use planning, certain municipal decisions can be appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board. Amendments eliminate those rights of appeal with respect to decisions of the city of Toronto. Amendments also eliminate a right to make certain other types of applications to the board, with respect to the city.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further introduction of bills? The Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I just want to make sure that the member for Parkdale–High Park has no more to introduce before I—

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I'm done for now.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Thank you.

INFRASTRUCTURE FOR JOBS  
AND PROSPERITY ACT, 2014

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

Mr. Duguid moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 6, An Act to enact the Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2014 / Projet de loi 6, Loi édictant la Loi de 2014 sur l'infrastructure au service de l'emploi et de la prospérité.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

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

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** No, Mr. Speaker. It has been before the Legislature before. No statement is required.

BETTER BUSINESS CLIMATE ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 VISANT À INSTAURER  
UN CLIMAT PLUS PROPICE  
AUX AFFAIRES

Mr. Duguid moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 7, An Act to enact the Burden Reduction Reporting Act, 2014 and the Partnerships for Jobs and Growth Act, 2014 / Projet de loi 7, Loi édictant la Loi de 2014 sur l'obligation de faire rapport concernant la réduction des fardeaux administratifs et la Loi de 2014 sur les partenariats pour la création d'emplois et la croissance.

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

*First reading agreed to.*

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

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Again, Mr. Speaker, this bill was before the Legislature in the last session, so no statement is necessary.

## MOTIONS

### APPOINTMENT OF HOUSE OFFICERS

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** Speaker, I believe you will find that we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding the appointment of deputy speakers for the 41st Parliament.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The government House leader is seeking unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. Do we agree? Agreed.

Government House leader?

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** I move that Bas Balkissoon, member for the electoral district of Scarborough–Rouge River, be appointed Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the Whole House; that Ted Arnott, member for the electoral district of Wellington–Halton Hills, be appointed First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House; that Rick Nicholls, member for the electoral district of Chatham–Kent–Essex, be appointed Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House; and that Paul Miller, member for the electoral district of Hamilton East–Stoney Creek, be appointed Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The government House leader moves that Bas Balkissoon, member of the electoral district of Scarborough—dispense? Dispensed.

Do we agree? Agreed. Carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

### CORRECTION OF RECORD

**Mr. Arthur Potts:** A point of order, Mr. Speaker: The honourable member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke—I appreciate you must have been listening very carefully to my remarks. He suggested I may have said “June” as a starting date of the jazz festival when in fact it is July. If I can correct the record to that effect, I'd appreciate it.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** It is a point of order. All members are allowed to correct their record. We now note that the jazz festival is in July, not June.

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I've got to tell you, it's a great festival which coincides nicely in September for the one in Brantford, so I just thought I'd put that on the record.

## PETITIONS

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

I have to start with a new trend. The member from—

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

Oh, I'll do that then.

## HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I raise this in honour of Johnny O'Toole.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Green Energy Act has driven up the cost of electricity in Ontario due to unrealistic subsidies for certain energy sources, including the world's highest subsidies for solar power; and

“Whereas this cost is passed on to ratepayers through the global adjustment, which can account for almost half of a ratepayer's hydro bill; and

“Whereas the high cost of energy is severely impacting the quality of life of Ontario's residents, especially fixed-income seniors; and

“Whereas it is imperative to remedy Liberal mismanagement in the energy sector by implementing immediate reforms detailed in the Ontario PC white paper Paths to Prosperity—Affordable Energy;

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

“To immediately repeal the Green Energy Act, 2009, and all other statutes that artificially inflate the cost of electricity with the aim of bringing down electricity rates and abolishing expensive surcharges such as the global adjustment and debt retirement charges.”

I support this, will sign it and send it to the Clerks' table with page Ethan.

## ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** I present a petition signed by people right across Ontario.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

“Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

“Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

“Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

“Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

“Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

“Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

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

“To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research.”

I agree with this petition. I will affix my name and give it to page Ethan to present to the House.

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## LYME DISEASE

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

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

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

“Whereas the Ontario public health system and the Ontario Health Insurance Plan currently do not fund those specific tests that accurately serve the process 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 and Long-Term Care to direct the Ontario public health system and OHIP to include all currently available and scientifically verified tests for acute and chronic Lyme disease in Ontario and to have everything necessary to create public awareness of Lyme disease in Ontario, and to have internationally developed diagnostic and

successful treatment protocols available to patients and physicians.”

I’m pleased to affix my signature and send it to the table with page Lavanya.

#### GASOLINE PRICES

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Nickel Belt.

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and congratulations to you on your election.

During the election, what I heard most about at the door was the price of gas, so I’m really happy to present this petition, collected by Leena Luopa in Worthington, in my riding. 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, will affix my name and ask my good page Émilie to bring it to the Clerk.

#### ONTARIO DRUG BENEFIT PROGRAM

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Speaker, I have a petition here to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Health Canada approved Esbriet in October 2012 for individuals with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF);

“Whereas the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has declined to list Esbriet on the Ontario drug benefit formulary or reimburse patients through the Exceptional Access Program;

“Whereas Esbriet is the first of its kind to be approved in Canada for the treatment of IPF and will slow the progression of this fatal disease;

“Whereas the high cost of Esbriet is creating financial hardships for many individuals and their families. Only those patients who have access to a private drug plan can afford the cost of this medication, forcing some patients to go without treatment;

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

“To review and reconsider the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care’s decision to decline any assistance with Esbriet and consider some form of assistance with the cost of this medication in order to improve the lives

of Ontarians with IPF and decrease the cost on the health care system associated with the disease.”

Mr. Speaker, I agree with this petition, affix my signature to it and pass it over to the page.

#### CREDIT UNIONS

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** I want to thank the Libro Credit Union in Kitchener–Waterloo for helping me to collect these signatures.

“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 fully support this petition, will affix my signature and give it to page Daniel.

#### 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 be passing it on to page Ethan.

#### ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** It's a pleasure to rise in the House for the first time—

*Applause.*

**Mrs. Lisa Gretzky:** Thank you. I'd like to present this petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias are progressive, degenerative diseases of the brain that cause thinking, memory and physical functioning to become seriously impaired;

"Whereas there is no known cause or cure for this devastating illness; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias also take their toll on hundreds of thousands of families and care partners; and

"Whereas Alzheimer's disease and other dementias affect more than 200,000 Ontarians today, with an annual total economic burden rising to \$15.7 billion by 2020; and

"Whereas the cost related to the health care system is in the billions and is only going to increase, at a time when our health care system is already facing enormous financial challenges; and

"Whereas there is work under way to address the need, but no coordinated or comprehensive approach to tackling the issues; and

"Whereas there is an urgent need to plan and raise awareness and understanding about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias for the sake of improving the quality of life of the people it touches;

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

"To approve the development of a comprehensive Ontario dementia plan that would include the development of strategies in primary health care, in health promotion and prevention of illness, in community development, in building community capacity and care partner engagement, in caregiver support and investments in research."

I support this petition and affix my name.

#### BOATING SAFETY

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

"Whereas the wearing of life jackets is not mandatory for all boaters, and this has been an ongoing issue for many years and has resulted in many deaths of people of all ages; and

"Whereas there are laws requiring mandatory use of seat belts, motorcycle helmets and other safety precautions; and

"Whereas deaths caused by not wearing life jackets can be prevented;

"We, the undersigned, support the proposal to request the department of Transport Canada that life jackets should be made mandatory for all boaters at all times, including other watercraft, and if not followed, punishments should include fines and other further consequences, including the suspension and/or revocation of boaters' licences."

This was presented by Andrew Vigars in North Bay. I support this. I will sign it and give it to page Émilie.

#### DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition that has been collected by Madame Simone Poirier, from Chelmsford. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government" is making PET scanning "a publicly insured health service available to cancer and cardiac patients...; and

"Whereas," since October 2009, "insured PET scans" are performed "in Ottawa, London, Toronto, Hamilton and Thunder Bay; and

"Whereas the city of Greater Sudbury is a hub for health care in northeastern Ontario, with the Sudbury Regional Hospital, its regional cancer program and the Northern Ontario School of Medicine;"

They "petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to make PET scans available through" Health Sciences North, "thereby serving and providing equitable access to the citizens" of the northeast.

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

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#### ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

**Mr. Bill Walker:** "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

"Whereas the current policies of the McGuinty/Wynne Liberal government only aggravate the looming skilled trades shortage in Ontario;

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

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

I support this. I will affix my name and send it with page Katie.

## LONG-TERM CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition that comes from all over Ontario. It reads as follows:

“Whereas there are a growing number of reported cases of abuse, neglect and substandard care for our seniors in long-term-care homes and hospitals; and

“Whereas people with complaints have limited options, and frequently they don’t complain because they fear repercussions, which suggests too many seniors are being left in vulnerable situations without independent oversight; and

“Whereas Ontario is the only province in Canada—including the three territories—where our Ombudsman does not have independent oversight of long-term-care homes and one of two without oversight of hospitals;”

They “petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to expand the Ombudsman’s mandate to include Ontario’s long-term-care homes and hospitals in order to protect our most vulnerable seniors.”

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

## HYDRO RATES

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, as follows:

“Whereas household electricity bills have skyrocketed by 56% and electricity rates have tripled as a result of the Liberal government’s mismanagement of the energy sector;

“Whereas the billion-dollar gas plant scandal, wasteful and unaccountable spending at Ontario Power Generation and the unaffordable subsidies in the Green Energy Act will result in electricity bills climbing by another 35% by 2017 and 45% by 2020;

“Whereas the soaring cost of electricity is straining family budgets, particularly in rural Ontario, and hurting the ability of manufacturers and small businesses in the province to compete and create new jobs; and

“Whereas home heating and electricity are essential for families in rural Ontario who cannot afford to continue footing the bill for the government’s mismanagement;

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

“To immediately implement policies ensuring Ontario’s power consumers, including families, farmers, and employers, have affordable and reliable electricity.”

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

## HOME CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> France Gélinas:** I have this petition that comes from all over Ontario:

“Whereas many Ontarians need health care services at home and 6,100 people are currently on wait-lists for care;

“Whereas waiting for over 200 days for home care is unacceptable;

“Whereas eliminating the wait-lists won’t require any new funding if the government caps hospital CEO salaries, finds administrative efficiencies in the local health integration networks (LHINs) and community care access centres (CCACs), standardizes procurement policies and streamlines administration costs;”

They ask the Legislative Assembly as follows:

“That a five-day home care guarantee is established and existing wait-lists eliminated so that Ontarians receive the care they need within a reasonable time frame.”

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

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes the time for petitions.

Before I call orders of the day, I want to express my appreciation to the House for again granting me the opportunity to serve as First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House.

*Applause.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** My goal is to be fair and impartial and to be deserving of the trust that you have granted to me. Thank you, again, very much.

Orders of the day? Government House leader.

**Hon. Yasir Naqvi:** First of all, Speaker, congratulations on your nomination by the House.

Government order number 1.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE  
DÉBAT SUR LE DISCOURS DU TRÔNE

Consideration of the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

**Ms. Daïene Vernile:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by Mr. Rinaldi, that an humble address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor as follows:

To the Honourable David C. Onley, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario:

We, Her Majesty’s most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Ms. Vernile has moved that an humble address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

To the Honourable David C. Onley, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario:

We, Her Majesty’s most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has been pleased to address to us at the opening of the present session.

I recognize the member for Kitchener Centre to lead off the debate on the throne speech.

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Congratulations to you for filling in; you're doing a great job so far.

I will be sharing my time with the member from Northumberland–Quinte West.

Well, it is a tremendous honour to move the speech from the throne and to serve in this 41st Parliament, which has witnessed the election of more women in this chamber than any other Ontario Parliament, and to be serving with the first female Premier ever elected in Ontario.

Recently, I was humbled to earn the support of the good people of Kitchener Centre, a community that is reinventing itself in many exciting and dynamic ways. For over three decades, I served my community as a broadcast journalist for CTV News, anchoring and producing the current affairs program *Provincewide*. We reported on a wide variety of important issues and told the stories of the people in our region. Today, I am committed to continuing to work as a strong voice for the residents of Kitchener Centre in a new role as their elected representative in the Ontario Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, in the throne speech you heard our ambitious plan for building Ontario up, for moving Ontario forward, in the days and years ahead. If you want to see this plan in action, I encourage you to come to Kitchener Centre, and I know you don't live far from there. In the past decade, our city was facing the same difficult economic realities as many other Ontario communities: factories shutting down, people losing their jobs and a declining downtown core. But our community was built on an entrepreneurial spirit. We are dreamers and doers, and we love a challenge.

The first Europeans to the Kitchener area, who arrived in the early 1800s, were self-reliant, hard-working German Mennonites from Pennsylvania. Many more immigrants followed, and soon they established the town of Berlin, which came to be known as "busy Berlin." However, with the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, the anti-German sentiment grew in the area, and the name was changed to Kitchener, following the death of the earl of Kitchener.

During the latter half of the 19th century and the 20th century, our stock in trade was manufacturing, big and small. We made tires at Uniroyal, shirts at the Arrow factory and Canada's first colour TVs at Electrohome. But when the tide of changing global forces swept across much of North America, Kitchener's industrial sector was hard hit. We saw numerous one-time successful manufacturers shutter their doors. Unwilling to be relegated to the rust belt scrap heap, the dreamers and the doers in Kitchener got to work on a comprehensive action plan. Playing a critical role was our former MPP, John Milloy, who supported Kitchener mayor Carl Zehr and the local council in a bold and daring plan to attract development and create jobs, optimism and momentum.

In 2009, we saw the launch of our life sciences cluster. The Downtown Health Sciences Campus was open for business, consisting of the University of Waterloo school of pharmacy and a satellite school of medicine of McMaster University. These institutions are graduating needed health care professionals—and this has gone a very long way in addressing the doctor shortage in our area—and the new medical cluster has become a magnet for pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies.

#### 1350

Just down the street, a block away, in what used to be a leather-tanning factory, the Communitech Hub is delivering stunning results in the digital media sector. In just five years, this centre of excellence, which helps tech communities start, grow, and succeed, has helped to launch 1,700 new tech companies and thousands of well-paying jobs.

Each of these companies has between three to five employees, so do the math on that see how many jobs have been created. From one-person tech start-ups to large global players such as Google, Desire2Learn and Christie Digital, these tech businesses have generated more than \$30 billion in revenue.

That is not a bad return on investment. Ontario's Liberal government has invested \$25 million over five years to stimulate the sector. Fostering strategic partnerships is creating new jobs and wealth in our community and in this province.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you about one of these success stories. It belongs to my son Andrew, who is just 26 years old. He graduated at the height of the recession with a degree in computer and video game design, and despite his best efforts he could not find a job anywhere. He sent out hundreds of resumé's.

Then he took his ideas to create video games and phone apps into the Communitech Hub. After receiving some mentoring and some excellent coaching and getting connected with the right people, he set out on his own. I'm very happy to report to you that today Andrew's company is one of the rising stars in this nucleus of tech innovation. His downtown Kitchener office has 25 employees, not just in Kitchener but also in a subsidiary office in Los Angeles. His clients include DreamWorks, the Jim Henson Co. and NBCUniversal, just to name a few.

A very small investment in this young man has gone a very long way in creating knowledge-based jobs in our community. Consider that the people whom he is employing now pay rent. They buy houses. They buy cars. They get oil changes. They buy groceries. They buy running shoes for their kids. They are reinvesting in the community where we live. His father and I are very proud of him.

Adding to the innovation cluster is our commitment to clean technology. Kitchener has always been a leader in its concern for preserving our environment. We were the first community in Canada to implement the Blue Box recycling program, back in 1983.

Our “Go Green!” philosophy promotes walking and cycling and the redevelopment of once-empty factories—and we had many of them. We’re turning these old factories into housing. This is a prime example of recycling that is transforming our city core. The Kaufman rubber factory, which once made rubber boots, is now an upscale condo development. The old Arrow factory, where they made men’s shirts, is now also a condominium development.

We know that if we are going to attract investors and high-calibre talent to live and work in our community, we need to improve transit. With support from the province, residents of Kitchener and Waterloo region are soon going to see the implementation of a light-rail transit system, and we’re very excited about this.

The LRT has been on the drawing board for over a decade, and I’m told that, in the very near future, we are going to see groundbreaking for this world-class transit system. It’s going to serve as a catalyst for downtown intensification. Fewer cars on the road mean less traffic and cleaner air.

All-day, two-way GO train service between Kitchener and the Toronto area is certain to be a game-changer. Rather than facing the traffic-choked Highway 401, where hours are lost every day in gridlock, travelling by train will not only make good economic sense for businesses but it’s going to help people to regain precious time being lost in our lives. We all have appointments to keep and people we’d rather be with.

We also look forward to breaking ground in 2015 for the new four-lane Highway 7 between Kitchener and Guelph.

The people who are working diligently to maintain a strong economic presence in Kitchener Centre are also committed to supporting culture. We have a rich arts scene with an abundance of talent. Most people in Ontario know about Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest, a nine-day celebration based on the original German festival—

*Applause.*

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** —I’m getting a bit of applause there—the largest event of its kind in North America. Our long-time cultural heritage in Kitchener is centre stage as everyone becomes a little bit Bavarian during the festivities. Oktoberfest also features a nationally televised parade, which airs on Thanksgiving Day.

There are numerous other cultural attractions. We’re home to the Kitchener Blues Festival, the Homer Watson gallery, the KW symphony and the Centre in the Square performing arts centre.

One of the biggest annual cultural events in Kitchener is the multicultural festival, which we just had in June, where thousands of people gather in our downtown Victoria Park to celebrate cultural diversity. We have one of Canada’s largest multicultural communities, with almost a quarter of our population born outside of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I count my own family among this group. It was in the late 1950s that my parents, Carmine

and Antonietta Vernile, emigrated from southern Italy to Canada. They were in their early 20s and they had very little money in their pockets. In fact, I think my dad says he had about 50 bucks in his back pocket when they arrived. They heard that Canada was a land of opportunity, so like thousands of other people who immigrated here, they made the long journey to the shores of this country, hoping to find a better life for themselves and their children.

My parents arrived in the north end of Toronto, because that is where other family had settled. With only grade school education to serve them, my father worked in construction all his life, and my mother toiled away in a dry cleaner’s, pressing shirts for 18 years—this was before air conditioning. She also cleaned houses, and she held various factory jobs.

We were very poor in those early days. My two older sisters and I wore second-hand clothes that my mother picked up at church rummage sales. While our Canadian neighbours were annoyed by the dandelions in their yards, we spent hours picking these weeds, called “cicoria,” and we dined on them.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** That’s right.

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** Thank you very much.

Those same neighbours must have wondered why our entire yard was plowed over and turned into a vegetable garden, and why we challenged suburban bylaws by keeping live chickens and rabbits in our backyard. The simple answer was: to feed ourselves.

These very early experiences with poverty became very foundational elements in my life, helping me to shape my values, my views and personal motives.

When I went off to elementary school, like many other immigrant children, I did not speak a word of English. But with the support of caring teachers in Ontario’s excellent education system, we soon learned that Canada was indeed the land of opportunity. Our education system is the cornerstone that empowers young people with knowledge and confidence to help them tackle every challenge in life. At school, we were all equal—equal to learn, equal to set goals and, through hard work and dedication, equal to achieve any dream. How many other places in the world can make this claim?

My dream was to become the first member of my family to attend post-secondary education. This was a pretty lofty dream, considering my father only had a grade 5 education, and my mother, grade 3. The war had cut short their education. So off I went to Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo to study history and politics, juggling four jobs in order to pay for tuition, books, and to keep a roof over my head. With no financial support from my family, the financial picture at times was very grim; but I knew I’d get through it, and it was thrilling to be there and to be learning at a higher level.

My first job as a broadcast journalist was with multicultural CHIN Radio. After a few months reporting in the newsroom, I was appointed to the station’s Queen’s Park legislative reporting position. I sat right behind you in that media gallery, reporting on the daily



events. I never would have imagined back then that I would one day be here in the House, sitting as a member—and it is humbling.

After CHIN Radio came an offer to work for an ABC affiliate TV station in south Texas. That was such an interesting experience, and it showed me more than ever that aside from the weather, Canada, with its tolerance and compassionate social programs, was where I wanted to live.

Returning to Ontario to work for CTV in Kitchener, back then called CKCO-TV, it was a great privilege for 29 years to produce and anchor an award-winning weekly news program. From this perch in Kitchener, I was able to interview Prime Ministers, Premiers and even some American Presidents. Our reports covered issues like politics, business, education, health care and more.

**1400**

But the stories that were the most gratifying were those where we were able to improve someone's life by putting the spotlight on an inequality or a social injustice. Our report on a church community cupboard for the poor brought in a flood of donations which were very much needed at the time. We reported on a downtown soup kitchen requiring a washer and a dryer, and the very next day after the story aired, an anonymous donor provided the needed appliances. An interview with a woman who was dealing with breast cancer, who was humiliated inside a driver's licence renewal office when she was made to take her hat off for a picture revealing her hairless head, prompted me to call the then transportation minister. He offered an apology on the air, and she got to retake her picture after her hair grew back. This is what drew me to a career in journalism: knowing that you can use the media pulpit to bring awareness and to create change.

There are some who might see journalists and politicians as natural enemies. It's often a blood sport, with the two sides very suspicious of each other. Yet at the very core, reporters and elected officials want the same thing, and that is to help people. Reporters do it by reporting on important information and educating the public. Politicians help the public by passing policies and laws which allow people to live their lives in dignity.

When the opportunity came a few months ago to run in Kitchener Centre, my first concern was, would I be able to live up to the legacy of John Milloy? In the 11 years that he served, John secured for our community a new courthouse; a new shelter for abused women; extensive funding for our two local hospitals in the region, our two universities, Conestoga College, support for the Centre for International Governance Innovation, for the Perimeter Institute for Theoretical Physics, for the Institute for Quantum Computing; and as I mentioned previously, a new school of pharmacy, a new medical school, funding for the LRT and GO train service—such great accomplishments by one person in one riding.

Mr. Speaker, for me it came down to the core values of the party I was about to join, the integrity of the leader and the ideas moving forward. I had a chance to speak

personally with Kathleen Wynne, and she shared with me her vision for creating a strong and compassionate Ontario. It was very inspiring. As a cynical old reporter, I will say that I'm not inspired by a whole lot of things these days, but I was inspired by Kathleen Wynne.

I've also been inspired by my wonderful husband, John Matlock, and our three children, Andrew, Curtis and Claire. You heard me talk about Andrew. Our middle child, Curtis, recently graduated from the Royal Military College in Kingston with a degree in political science. He has just accepted an offer to go to law school in England. Our daughter, Claire, who is also studying at the Royal Military College in Kingston, has just finished her second year in English literature. She is an infantry reservist in the Armed Forces of Canada.

It was my family that strongly urged me to pursue this opportunity, and in particular, it was the kids who told me not to be risk-averse. This is a message in our family that has come full circle. When our children were younger, on many occasions I encouraged them not to be fearful of new experiences, like the time that I signed us up to volunteer at the St. John's soup kitchen in Kitchener. It's a drop-in centre that feeds 300 people in need every day. I've never forgotten the early struggles of our family, with my parents trying to put food on the table, so this seemed like a natural fit for our family when it came to volunteering. On Thursday afternoons for over a decade, our family would slice carrots, peel potatoes and do whatever else they asked us to do to help prepare the meal for the next day. Social justice is a very important value in my family.

It is encouraging to see in the throne speech a commitment to introduce a new poverty reduction strategy within 60 days. The Breaking the Cycle plan has lifted 47,000 children out of poverty in this province, and the recent increases to the Ontario Child Benefit and the minimum wage, with annual increases indexed to inflation, aim to ensure that low-income families do not fall further behind.

Mr. Speaker, I will tell you that as a broadcast journalist, I covered elections for over three decades and I thought I understood the complexities involved. However, when you are the candidate at the centre of the events, it's a whole other matter. When we launched into the campaign, my husband and kids and the extended Matlock family worked tirelessly until the very end. Our outgoing MPP, John Milloy, canvassed by my side, and, in an ironic twist of events, role-played with me, with him acting as the aggressive reporter and me trying to answer his blistering questions.

Leading the charge in our election campaign was a team of passionate volunteers who put in long hours, plotted our strategy and worked tirelessly to win every vote. I was humbled by their unwavering dedication every day. And on election night it was overwhelming to see such strong support from the residents of Kitchener Centre, who chose a more positive vision for the future. I was very worried about this election. I was looking at some of the polls in the days leading up to election day.

My campaign team ordered me to stop looking at these polls because it was very tight. However, on election night—I'm going to use their words, Mr. Speaker—they said, "Daiene, it's a landslide." So thank you to all the voters in Kitchener Centre who voted for us.

By allowing me to serve over the next four years as their member of provincial Parliament, my goal is to represent their interests and their needs. Although we are fortunate to live in a province with so many advantages and opportunities, I believe that we can still do better. People are demanding that we manage their tax dollars more effectively. Believe me, I heard that, while knocking on doors, from many, many voters in Kitchener Centre. But they also want the fair delivery of services that allow them to live their lives in dignity, and they don't want to see any sector of our workforce demonized.

We need to strike a balance and we need to strive toward our mandate: building Ontario up. There are so many things that we need to build in my riding and across the province, starting with every child's potential, competitive businesses, new transit, a more comfortable retirement for all seniors, and a fair and inclusive society. We've all heard Premier Kathleen Wynne say that government can be a force for good in people's lives. I stand before you here today as living proof of the possibilities. My life started out in poverty, and I struggled with language and cultural barriers, but hopefully I've become a person who has benefited from Ontario's many opportunities. I'm honoured to serve in this government and I hope to continue adding value in this great province.

I want to thank you for the time to speak and I thank the good people of Kitchener Centre for their support.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I recognize the member for Northumberland—Quinte West.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Thank you, Speaker, and again congratulations to you. I'm sure you'll do a fantastic job. It's good to see you back.

It looks like we have part of the Italian caucus here today on this inaugural day of speaking in the House.

I want to thank the member from Kitchener Centre for sharing her time with me today on this very, very important occasion.

First of all, Speaker, I need to thank my family for allowing me to be back here, because it doesn't matter what we think or what we do, but it's a whole team effort. Without their support, I'm not sure I'd be here today.

Some business before I get into it: I need to thank my wife, of course, as well as thanking my family, but also wish her a happy birthday tomorrow. I'm not going to say the number, Speaker, because I'm not sure that she would appreciate that. But anyway, happy birthday. We'll see you tomorrow when you get down here.

And the rest of my family, Speaker: my oldest daughter, who is a teacher, and her husband, Curt, and their two kids, Jordan and Aly; my oldest son, who lives in Windsor with his wife, Julie, and three kids, three more of my grandkids, Lucas, Madeline and Monica; my

son Mark, who actually lives about five doors away from where we live, and his wife, Angie, and their two kids, Nathan and A.J.—Anthony; and last, but not least, my son Matt and his wife, Lindsay, with their two kids, Morgan and Maddox. I told them to stop because I couldn't afford Christmas anymore, after having nine grandkids.

**1410**

Speaker, this is somewhat different than most other members in this House because I'm not sure if I'm new or recycled or old, but one thing I can tell you for sure is—

**Interjection:** You're here.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** I'm here, and I'm just delighted.

A little bit about myself—for some of the people in this House, this might be boring, but it's worth repeating. I, too, was an immigrant. I came to Canada in 1960 with my mother and my sister. My father came in 1959. Like most other immigrants, my father worked in construction.

Actually, my father was able to get a home in Woodbridge, but Woodbridge in 1960 was open fields and farms. We got here in the first part of February. In the part of Italy I came from, we had never really seen much snow, but it was as high as the farm fences. I actually walked to school, about two miles, and yes, it was a one-room schoolhouse and I didn't speak any English. I could count, though; I could count. Math was okay.

I think my father really felt sorry for us, so come that summer, we moved to where most Italians who moved close to Toronto moved to: It was Toronto. I was able to attend school and go to new-Canadians classes and slowly picked up English. We became more and more Canadian every day, although I really cherish my heritage, which I will never forget.

I was fortunate; with not a lot of education—back then, it was challenging for new Canadians—my mother worked in a factory making little metal parts and got her hands dirty every day. But I did go to high school. I did become an auto mechanic, and I've been self-employed pretty well all my life around the automotive industry. We made a living; we raised our family. For the last 34 years we've lived in Brighton, which is, of course, in the great riding of Northumberland—Quinte West. We have a family business that one of my kids is slowly taking over, and that's a speedway where they race cars every Saturday night. So we do make some noise. But it's something that I'm very, very fortunate one of my kids was able to pick up where I'm leaving off. They're doing, as I said, a great, great job.

Speaker, I just want to focus a little bit on being here. As I said before, I'm an immigrant; my wife is Canadian. It's a real privilege to be here. Sometimes, I guess, as you get a little bit older, you become more cognizant of these things, so I just want to paint a little bit of a picture. Back in Italy, during World War II, my father was a prisoner of the Allied forces. I married my wife, Diane. Her father was a veteran of World War II. I often wonder if my father was a prisoner of my father-in-law. It kind of gives

you a little bit of a chill, but it's reality. My father was lost for about five years during World War II, but then he came home, and that's why I'm here.

I guess what I'm getting at is, this is a fantastic country. It's a great province. I have parents and my wife has parents both from different backgrounds during World War II, but I'm here to sit in this House today. I was able to be a municipal politician for some 12 years, both as mayor and council member.

Speaker, we live in the best country of the world, bar none. We do have challenges—we certainly do—but I think challenges give us Canadians the drive to make this a better country, a better province, a better community. Certainly it's something that will be with me forever.

June 12—well, let's roll back a bit. In October 2011, after spending eight years in this place—people spoke of my riding—by a very small amount, I wasn't able to return here. But what encouraged me to try again is that, a couple of months after I lost that election, over 300 people showed up at a gathering to honour me, and it was very, very moving. These folks said, "Yes, you lost the election. You're gone. You're finished," but about 300 people paid some money to host an event to honour the work I was able to do as an MPP for eight years. Once again, it was one of those moments that was quite touching. I had pretty well all of the municipal leaders, and other agencies attended, and friends. I made a statement that day. I lost by 700 votes, so I said to those folks out there, "I could've saved you some money tonight if each one of you could have had two more votes." Anyway, they took that to heart, and they never relinquished it. I made a comment that night in my remarks, after hearing a number of accolades, that I wasn't bound to go away. I've lived in the community for over 30 years. I raised my family there. My business was there. I wasn't going to go away. "The sun will rise someday." It wasn't the end of the world. It wasn't going to be dark.

Speaker, fast-forward to June 2012 and the time leading up to it. I want to thank the fantastic team who rallied around me. I normally don't like to name names, but there are some times when you're going to name names. I'll probably forget, but I want to thank Elaine Palmateer and Bruce Davis, the co-chairs of my campaign, with big help from Michael Gray, Charrissa McQuaig and about 300 to 350 others—a team of volunteers who were out there to support and get me back to this place.

I've got to tell you a little story, Mr. Speaker. I was in Port Hope campaigning one day, knocking on doors. I was supposed to have about five people come with me, which is always about the norm.

By the way, we have five campaign offices. Each community—we cannot leave them alone. We have to cater to them. I insist that we do that.

Twelve people showed up to knock on doors with me. I was overwhelmed. So we thought we'd take a group picture, and the street we were going to start campaigning on was right behind the police station in Port Hope.

Obviously, they saw these 12 people walking down a residential street—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** I think they got worried, so a Port Hope police officer came around the block once and came around the block twice, and I said, "Hmm." The third time, I stopped them. I said, "It's okay. It's only us. We're campaigning." He said, "Well, I thought you were, but we're just making sure the community is safe." It was interesting. So we split up, but we did have a good day.

We had a fantastic campaign. Like my colleague from Kitchener Centre, I couldn't help but see those polls on the front page of the paper—although I really didn't want to look at them—but that's not the message I was getting at the door. It got a bit confusing, because the front page of the paper would say something and I was hearing something different. I thought maybe I was confused.

But on election night I was relieved when, under the leadership of Premier Wynne, we formed a majority government. I tell you, that was a relief and a feeling that made it all worthwhile. Those long days of walking the streets of all the communities in the riding—some 12-hour days—really, really paid off.

Just to focus on that: We don't have specific records, but I believe we knocked on about 98% of the households in the five urban centres. In the five urban centres, we hit every door—

*Interjections.*

**1420**

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** So, Speaker, as I said before, when some folks honoured me back in December 2003, in 2011, after losing the election, I wasn't going to go away. I was very, very fortunate, by Premier McGuinty then and then followed by Premier Wynne, that they asked me to do some outreach in rural Ontario. We faced reality. We only had a couple of members from rural Ontario. I volunteered my time to do some outreach to help the party rebuild in rural Ontario, Speaker, and it was a great opportunity to still meet people, all different groups, both within the party and outside the party. They offered an enormous amount of ideas, and hopefully, as I fed them up the chain—I think some of the results were seen during our platform. So for me that was great.

But at the same time, most of the people that I dealt with, whether it was mayors, agency leaders that I had the privilege to interact with in a professional sense as an MPP—they still came to me for help and assistance, so you kind of felt you never left. It was really, really fantastic to stay connected. I think that helped me during the campaign because I knew what some of those needs of the communities were. I knew what potential venues we could take care of at Queen's Park if I was fortunate enough to be re-elected, what we could do. It was an awesome experience to do those kind of things, and I certainly enjoyed it.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to spend some time to talk about the great communities that I represent. As I said before, during the campaign, we had five campaign offices, in each urban centre. I'll start with Port Hope.

Port Hope is a great community. All the communities are great communities; we're very, very lucky. Northumberland—Quinte West has boundaries to the west, which is Durham, Newcastle—not counting Newcastle. To the south is Lake Ontario, to the north is Rice Lake, and to the east it's just past the Trent River to Loyalist road. We're right on the lakeshore, we're right on the 401, we're right on the VIA, so it truly is the centre of the universe. I don't want to offend anybody, but it is.

In Port Hope, we've always worked very, very closely. A couple of things that come to mind in Port Hope is that during a previous government, they lost their driver test centre, the only one that was close, within probably 50 or 60 miles. Whether you were a youth trying to get your licence or a senior who had to go through the testing to make sure that you could retain your licence, they would have to go to Peterborough, Oshawa or Belleville. It took a little while, but then, under Minister of Transport Wynne, now Premier Wynne, we were able to re-establish that driver test centre.

Speaker, I can't help but tell you a story about the driver test centre. We had an elderly lady from Bewdley, which is in the north end of the riding near Rice Lake, who had lost her licence through—I won't go into details why she lost her licence, but I know she was having a good time. So she had to do a test. We knew that a driver test centre was going to come back to Port Hope, and Port Hope to Bewdley is only about five or six—well, maybe seven or eight—kilometres. But she didn't want to go to Peterborough or Oshawa or Belleville. I mean, she was in her eighties. We kept telling her, “Well, hold on tight. We'll see what we can do.” The day that we knew that we were going to re-open this driver test centre, we said, “We're going to”—I won't mention her name because the family wanted to keep it a little bit private. We said, “What a great way if we can get Mrs. So-and-So to come and be the first person to come to the centre.” We thought it was a real win. I personally phoned her house. A gentleman answered the phone. I found out later on it was her son. I told him the good news, and he says, “Lou, I really, really thank you, but Mom should not be driving, so I'm not going to tell her the good news.” But anyway, the centre has been well received, and it adds, certainly, service not only to Port Hope but the surrounding areas.

In Port Hope, we were also very successful to tackle a number of projects—in fairness, with the help of the federal government and the municipality: a number of water projects and a number of brand new sewage treatment plants, things that that community really needed drastically.

Then there's the municipality of Cobourg. Cobourg once again has a fantastic waterfront, a downtown on the beach. You couldn't ask for much better, with a beautiful marina park. It's just a phenomenal community, a vibrant downtown, a very historic town hall. One of the things that Cobourg needed was a community centre of some magnitude. They had a hockey rink that was quite old. Once again, with the help of the federal government, I was able, from the provincial side, to come up with about

\$10 million in partnership with the federal government and the community. They now have a state-of-the-art community centre: two hockey rinks, an indoor walking track, meeting rooms and basketball courts—you name it.

But I guess one of the things that former Mayor Delanty—he wanted to leave a legacy; he wasn't going to run for mayor again, back, I believe it was, in—well, the last election, the municipal election of 2010. He wanted an outdoor skating rink. He had been working on this thing forever.

**Interjection:** Peter.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Peter, my good friend Peter Delanty.

So through some programs that we had here provincially, we were able to obtain just over \$1 million. Frankly, the community was a bit divided. Why would he spend this money? So the unofficial title of this outdoor rink became “the frink.” But you know what's interesting is that once that was up and running and you see all these kids and adults and couples in the middle of the day skating on this beautiful outdoor rink, it became the talk of the town. I remember being at a meeting with different mayors of different communities and they said, “So when can we get an outdoor rink?” Because it really became a hub for downtown Cobourg, which lasted—it's still there. In the summertime, it's a beautiful fountain. It really added to the community.

The municipality of Trent Hills, which most people might refer to as Campbellford before the amalgamation of the different municipalities—the Trent water system goes right through Campbellford, a beautiful part of the province.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Hector Macmillan--great mayor.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** A great mayor, Hector. I must say that Mayor Macmillan has some health issues but he's doing well.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** We wish him well.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** We wish him well. He's doing quite well. I know he's going to be a candidate again.

It's a very scenic part of the province. As you go through some of the locks, it really is magnificent.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Empire Cheese.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Excellent. Thanks, Minister Leal. Some of the best cheese—one of the few local cheese makers in the community.

And then, of course, the municipality that I moved to, Brighton, back in 1980. Once again, it's got Presqu'île Provincial Park, with beaches equivalent to any Florida beach—a very long beach area. There's camping. What makes it very unique: On the east shore is a residential component, with over 100 homes and cottages. Mind you, most of the cottages are now disappearing, with grandiose homes, because it's right on Brighton bay. Once again, it's a great, great community. Of course, they benefited from some of the programs I was able to tap into here at Queen's Park, whether it was a community centre, a number of road projects and on and on.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** What about the EODF?

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** EODF. That's economic development. We'll get to that.

I must not forget about the great city of Quinte West and Mayor Williams. I've got to say this about Mayor Williams. I shouldn't single him out, but Mayor Williams ran provincially in 2003 against a good member, Ernie Parsons, and John did run for the Conservatives. His words, not mine: He got his you-know-what kicked.

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**Interjection:** He lost.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** He lost. But we've become good friends. We put politics aside, and Mayor Williams and I work very, very well together. Unfortunately, he has decided not to run again this year. I think the city of Quinte West is going to miss him. He's a very, very committed mayor. He gets things done. I think I was on speed dial with him.

After going through amalgamation about 15 years ago, the city of Quinte West has been struggling. They wanted a YMCA. The previous mayors in previous councils were successful, and some four or five years ago, we were able to help them with some \$4 million towards a new building. It's a fantastic facility.

I must say that I was able to work very closely with Mayor Williams. As we speak today, the shovel is in the ground to build a new marina right at the mouth of the Trent water system.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** You worked on that too.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** We did. It's a beautiful marina. It's at the mouth of the Trent system. Their marina wasn't all that great. It was there for a long time. So this is a brand new establishment that they're hoping to—they're doing all of the dredging as we speak. Sometime next summer, it should be open.

**Interjection:** Tell them about Port Hope.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Well, I spoke about Port Hope. You weren't listening.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** We did.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** West to east.

So, Speaker, a couple of things: One, I am so delighted to be here with Premier Wynne and the rest of our Liberal caucus. My beliefs and what the Premier believes in and the rest of the caucus really line up.

When we talk about the \$2.5-billion commitment to help industry expand, it reminds me of back in 2007. With good help from my good friend Minister Leal from Peterborough and some other rural caucus members from the east, we were able to bring to the platform for the election in 2007 an idea that we needed to spur economic development in eastern Ontario. There was an ask of some \$20 million a year.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Only 20. It was the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** That's right. Well, they gave us the idea, frankly, right? The wardens—they wanted some to stimulate the economy in eastern Ontario. So it was part of our platform in 2007, for a four-year sort of commit-

ment, and then we'll revisit it. Well, it worked so well. It worked so well that in 2011 it was expanded—well, not expanded. Western Ontario has their \$20 million for western Ontario economic development.

The number of jobs that it has created, the number of jobs that it has retained—it's hard to measure specifically, because if it wasn't in place, what would happen? I'm delighted that in 2011 it was made permanent. Although the opposition didn't support it—I don't know why they didn't support it, because a lot of their ridings benefited from it. We tend to forget just the fact that whether we're just going to lower taxes or do away with those investments, that it's like a magic wand; things happen. Well, we played that record before. We played that movie before. It didn't work.

I think industry is very, very appreciative when governments are there to help—not to interfere, but to help. I think that's what our government has been doing for the last 11 or 12 years—

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** What about that big company in Trent—GlobalMed?

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** GlobalMed: world-renowned for products in the medical field. They do business right across the world, frankly—very, very renowned. Minister Leal was there to make an announcement, which was fantastic.

So I think those are the things that sometimes, when we're in this place—we tend to forget what it's like out there. This is why it's so important—just as a suggestion to members—that we not lose touch with the people who put us here. I always say, it doesn't matter what I do or I think; I have to think about what the people tell me in the street, whether it's walking in downtown Cobourg, downtown Brighton or downtown Quinte West. It doesn't matter how smart or not smart we might be in this place. I always say, whenever I meet with folks, "I need your help"—because I do not wake up in the middle of the night with fabulous ideas. Those ideas come from Mr. and Mrs. Smith or Mr. and Mrs. Forch, who always give good advice. I think it's very, very critical that we don't lose that point of contact.

Speaker, it is humbling to be here. I have the experience of being here eight years. Sometimes we forget who brought us here, why we're here. We get hung up with some procedural wrangling or hearing bells ring, which is, frankly, a waste of time.

I remember being elected in 2003. I think some of the folks who were here then will remember sitting until midnight, bells ringing. I never forget a piece of advice from my good friend Rick Bartolucci, who just left us a few months ago—right behind me here in the members' gallery. I think it was about 11 o'clock one night. I was so frustrated and I said, "Why am I here? I could be doing a lot more constructive things than putting up with bells during the day, stretching out debates that aren't necessary." I remember Rick putting his arm over my shoulder and saying, "Lou, you look frustrated." I was very frustrated and, frankly, thought I'd made a mistake by being elected to be here. This was about the first

month we were here. He said, “Just remember one thing: Whenever you get that frustrated”—and I never forgot this—“Lou, you are one of 107 people across the province of Ontario who are privileged to be here to make decisions that will impact all Ontarians for years to come.”

**Ms. Daiene Vernile:** Out of 13 million.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Out of 13 million people.

When I think back to full-day JK—I was part of the team here when we voted for that, along with this side of the House, to support—when we talk about the Eastern Ontario Development Fund and the Southwestern Ontario Development Fund, sometimes we take those things for granted. I have three hospitals in my riding; only one had a CAT scan; now all three have a CAT scan. One of them has an MRI—unheard of in rural Ontario. Family health teams—as mayor of Brighton, I had the foresight, along with some community leaders—not me; some community leaders. One of the challenges was that doctors were disappearing at a rate that airlines could not keep them from flying out of Ontario—and nurses. We in Brighton, when I was mayor—a group established a non-profit organization that we called the family health centre. We built a building to entice doctors to come, with no help from any government. As mayor, I approached the member at that time, Dr. Galt—

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Doug Galt, a veterinarian.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** That’s right—to see if we could get some help from the government of the day. Frankly, there was none. But then, under Minister Smitherman, the Minister of Health, we talked about how we could improve things in the health field in rural Ontario. I won’t take the credit for it, but we came out with family health teams. I was honoured and privileged to have Premier McGuinty and Minister Smitherman open the very first health team in Brighton. We had this beautiful building. We now have five doctors and all the allied services that go along with it. Yes, there’s still a little bit, in some pockets, of a doctor shortage: People don’t have a doctor until they need one, and that’s when we find out that we might have a shortage.

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We kept track of phone calls to our offices, when I got elected, based on subjects, on needs. The number one call we had—we have two constituency offices. In both offices it was, “We just moved from Markham,” or Newmarket, or whatever urban centre. “We’ve been here five years. We’re now 80,” or 85, “and we’re still driving to see our family doctor in Newmarket,” or Vaughan or Toronto, or whatever it was. “We can’t do that anymore.” That was our number one call, that they couldn’t find a local doctor. So fast-forward, and we now have—I saw a sign at the family health unit; that’s where my doctor is in Brighton, and they’re affiliated with the family health team in Quinte West and Trenton—that the family health team in Trenton is looking for patients. I thought I’d never live the day to see that. In Belleville, there’s a number of doctors who are looking for patients. I never

thought I’d live the day to see that. So we’ve come a long way.

It really hurt when, during this last campaign, we heard the platform of the opposition that they were going to fire 100,000 people. And, miraculously, they were going to have a million jobs. It just didn’t make sense. So we’ve come a long way, I think, under the leadership of Premier Wynne and cabinet and the whole of caucus; I think we’re all united in this. We cannot afford to turn Ontario back to where it was some 11 or 12 years ago. I heard that at the doors.

Were people happy with everything we’re putting forward? We have to be realistic as well. There were some challenges. But I think people actually weighed both sides of the equation, right? I think for a lot of them it wasn’t too difficult, frankly, to decide to choose us. I think the commitment we need to make is that we live up to those commitments that we made. Also, I think there are going to be some challenges in some of the issues. That’s what I heard at the door, and I’m sure everybody heard, that before we finalize those things we need to hear back from those folks, now that we have a majority government, now that we have formed government again, to make sure that we line up issues to the best of our ability.

I’ll tell you one thing: People understand that we have challenges; they really do. One of my sayings has always been, even in the days I spent in the municipal sector, when someone approached me with the issue—to them that’s a very important issue; that’s why they’re coming to us, right? I would always say, “So help me out here. How would you fix it?” It is easy to complain, “I don’t like the colour,” or whatever. I go, “So what colour would be best?” Normally, they would have a suggestion. But you know, if we are able to explain that maybe it is a good suggestion but because of A, B, C and D it didn’t quite fit the equation, they would understand that. They would understand, whether it’s financial issues or whatever the case may be.

I think if we’re honest with people, if we tell our story, if we express where we want to go—because people are also patient. That’s one of the things that I actually sold during the campaign. What we’re saying is not for next year; it’s not for the next four years; it’s a 10- or 12-year plan. The eight years I spent down here, I never heard of that before. This is very, very encouraging. As a municipal leader—and I know there are lots of municipal folks here—when we met with the province we used to say, “We just can’t fly by the seat of our pants anymore. We need to be able to plan.” Because normally you can save some money when you plan. I think the direction that we’re taking is a phenomenal direction. But we need those partners to work with, whether it’s municipally, whether it’s the health care sector or the economic development sector, whatever that might be.

One of the things I found out when I was doing outreach for the Premier’s office was that people were really happy that somebody was asking them, “So what do you think?”—to be part of the process. They understood that

we could not satisfy all those needs, too. They really did understand. But one of the comments that I used to get whenever I met with chambers of commerce or agricultural groups was, “So you’re here to listen to me, and you’re going to tell this to somebody in government?” I said, “Of course; that’s what I’m here for.” “Well, that’s never happened before.” That’s something that, for the next four years, in the riding of Northumberland–Quinte West I’m going to keep on doing.

I was doing that before, but that just kind of reinforced that we need to do more, because a lot of good ideas come from the grassroots. They come from the folks that we in this room collectively have the privilege to represent. They really depend on us. The direction we’ve taken, being back here 20 days after an election is unheard of—and the commitments we’re making.

Speaker, it has been about half an hour. I think I’ve said enough. I see you’re still awake, and I would certainly like to keep you that way. Thank you for listening to a few words I have to say.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I beg to inform the House that I have today laid upon the table the 2012-13 annual report of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth.

Further debate? I’m pleased to recognize the leader of Her Majesty’s loyal opposition.

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If it was parliamentary, I would certainly emphasize “interim” leader, but I know there is no such term here in the House.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and congratulations on your re-election and on your selection from our caucus to continue in your role as an Acting Speaker representing our caucus. Congratulations to you on that. And thank you to my colleagues and my colleagues across the way.

I intend to share my time in my response to the speech from the throne, splitting it with colleagues Christine Elliott, Lisa MacLeod and John Yakabuski, the honourable members from Whitby–Oshawa, Nepean–Carleton and Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Thursday’s speech from the throne was a moment of truth for Ontario. We had all hoped that there would be some indication that the government has a plan to deal with the problems hurting people in all parts of our province.

Last May was the 89th consecutive month our province’s unemployment rate has been higher than the national average. I don’t think I’m going out on a limb when I predict that this pattern will only continue if we don’t change direction.

Our energy rates are the highest in North America. That’s driving business and investment out of Ontario and putting the squeeze on hard-working families and especially our seniors on fixed incomes.

Our debt rating outlook has changed from stable to negative, and soon the Liberals will be underfunding more vital services—like they already are with home care, physiotherapy and nursing—to pay for higher interest costs on their irresponsible debt. The government

is clearly living beyond its means, but interest rates today are at 20-year lows; they can only go up. It matters because each point increase in interest rates on the debt of almost \$300 billion by the end of this year could add a minimum of \$3 billion in annual interest payments, which would severely cripple Ontario’s ability to deliver services.

It’s plain for anyone to see that we face a dangerous amount of financial risk in this province. Servicing the debt is already the province’s third-largest expenditure, and it’s about to go up if this government stubbornly reintroduces the same budget that they introduced in this House on May 1, which continues the failed policies that brought us into today’s debt and jobs crisis.

Who will suffer from this unrealistic and unaffordable path that the media have astutely described as a “fiscal fairy tale”? It will be the young, the disabled, the poor, the disadvantaged, the needy and the vulnerable all across Ontario, as front-line services are put in jeopardy. Families in every part of this province will be hurt.

Peter Wallace, the chief civil servant who just stepped down last month, warned the government that its plans will mean slashing services. Moody’s Investors Service warns that the province is facing a greater challenge to return to balanced outcomes than previously anticipated. BlackRock, the world’s largest money manager, said it was on “high alert” for a downgrade.

But it’s not just impartial advice and warnings the Liberal government has failed to heed. Donna Cansfield, a former cabinet minister and long-serving Liberal MPP, warned in May—in a refreshing spate of openness and honesty—that the province is in deep trouble.

#### 1450

The member from Mississauga–Erindale showed great candour when he ran for the leadership of the Liberal Party, and I hope he has the courage to stand behind his comments today. He quite rightly warned that if Ontario’s deficit were left unchecked, it would “stifle both foreign and domestic investment into our economy.” The Ontario PC caucus is in full agreement with this statement, and the following statements, where he went on to say:

“This accumulating debt is also an unfair burden on our children and grandchildren, a burden we must address for our immediate and future economic prosperity.

“Balancing the budget is the most important way we can grow our economy as well as bringing prosperity to Ontario.”

I certainly agree with Mr. Takhar.

Even Dwight Duncan, Dalton McGuinty’s former finance minister, warned this government, a week before it introduced a budget with a higher deficit, that Ontario was faced with a staggering debt, and that the low interest rates of 2013 were “a ticking time bomb” ready to explode. Already, Ontario’s borrowing costs have spiked to a six-month high the day following the last election, just last June 13.

Despite all the evidence and advice, this government has decided that there’s no need to detail how they will

magically balance the budget to protect front-line services. In fact, they have decided to double down on debt.

The Premier downplayed the debt hole, the finance minister advised that no one was freaking, and the President of the Treasury Board says that she isn't worried about it. These denials of reality all remind me of their constant reassurances that we should all trust them when they claimed that the gas plant scandal cost taxpayers \$40 million, when it really cost at least \$1.1 billion.

This government still will not answer how they can possibly balance the budget by spending \$12.5 billion more than taxpayers can already afford. Spending \$12.5 billion that we don't have, and which will cost all Ontarians more in future taxes and service cuts, is not an investment, as the Premier likes to say. It's a crippling burden on all businesses and families in Ontario.

Not only is the government promising the impossible—balancing the budget by spending more money we don't have—it is in absolute denial that it bears full responsibility for the situation that it has dragged all of us into. We keep hearing the same excuses: “Blame the feds. Blame the economic environment”—anyone but the Liberal government of the past 11 years.

A study from the School of Public Policy, released last week, took a look at the root causes of debt accumulation across Canada. The report concludes that Ontario is in much worse shape than Quebec, and it's not the fault of external factors. It expressly lays responsibility on bad policy decisions by this Liberal government. Instead of denying responsibility and accountability, this government would be well advised to take the first step towards recovery, by admitting that they have a problem.

It truly worries me that the finance minister believes that the main issue is that “revenue has not met expectations.” Does this mean that, along with the inevitable service cuts, we should brace ourselves for even more taxes and fee hikes, because he thinks revenue has not met expectations? Even with the HST, eco-taxes and the so-called health premium—and it goes into general revenue—to name just a few, how much more money is the government going to take away from us, the taxpayers?

It's not like they've used our money wisely: more than a billion dollars in the gas plant scandal; hundreds of millions more on Ornge, eHealth and MaRS. At the same time, we've seen services that vulnerable Ontarians rely on, like physiotherapy, cut, or we see how badly they treated Madi Vanstone, in my riding, who needs medication to live.

We've seen front-line cuts: 40 nursing positions cut in North Bay, 90 nurses put out of work in Ottawa, and 34 nurses shown the door in Windsor, to name just a few. Clearly, it's just the tip of the iceberg. There's a lot more to come, yet this government claims that it needs more money for its activist-centred approach to government. Please, you've been too active with our pocketbooks already, and no one buys your voodoo economics

claiming fiscal restraint when you're spending more money than ever.

The claims of having the leanest government in Canada per capita are a red herring. We should darn well expect that, with the highest provincial population, our per capita expenses have to be lower. Any student taking an introductory economics course—which is as far as I got in economics, Mr. Speaker—would be able to tell you that, of course, per capita costs are lower as population numbers are higher. It costs more money per capita to provide a service to one person than it does per capita to provide that service to 10 people. Please, I say to the government, stop insulting the intelligence of Ontarians with that weak and irrelevant argument that you make.

Instead of initiatives in the throne speech to reduce spending, Ontarians received multiple new spending commitments that we simply cannot afford if you can't find the savings to pay for them.

At the same time, while the Liberal government is being absolutely unrealistic and irresponsible with how they spend our money, they have the nerve to tell Ontarians that the government doesn't trust them to plan their own finances. So they're going to dock your paycheques for a pension scheme that won't help anyone, as our economy continues to spiral downward. According to the Fraser Institute, this latest irresponsible scheme means individuals will pay up to \$3,420 more a year in taxes, or nearly \$7,000 for a couple who both work. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business states that 86% of its business members—and most of these are small and medium businesses—are opposed to the idea of the new pension scheme, and 53% expect they will have to reduce staffing if it's implemented. Even the government's own finance officials have warned that the new payroll tax will cost Ontario tens of thousands of jobs. In fact, the document that we received at committee, Mr. Speaker, says that the scheme will cost 150,000 jobs in the province.

What that means is that we will have fewer people working and paying taxes, and those lucky enough to still have a job will be paying more for this government's lack of restraint and failed economic policies. The irony of the Liberals' enforced savings scheme can't be overlooked when the reason average Ontarians can't save for their retirement is that their earnings are being sucked up by skyrocketing hydro bills, HST on everything they buy, higher gasoline bills caused by longer commutes, increasing government fees—all of which are directly caused by the Liberals.

The throne speech leaves many troubling questions as to the direction Ontario is heading. The only thing we know for certain is that all Ontarians will pay the price. Focusing on private sector job creation and balanced budgets is the only way to protect front-line services for all Ontarians. With a debt this large, Ontario will be in real trouble if we continue in this direction. So today I'm calling upon the Premier to show restraint, to rein in her overspending and to protect the front-line services we all depend on, like health care and education.



**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** I am very pleased to rise following our leader, Mr. Wilson, to respond to the speech from the throne as well. But before I do that I would like to say that I'm very honoured to have been returned as the MPP for Whitby–Oshawa, and I would like to thank my constituents for placing their trust in me. I'd also like to thank all other elected members of the Legislature as well.

The Liberals' throne speech, which was delivered on July 3 by our Lieutenant Governor, signals the same unrealistic and unaffordable plan the Liberal government brought forward before the election. It was very clearly stated that the Wynne government intends to reintroduce the budget originally tabled in this chamber on May 1 and anticipates its speedy passage after its introduction on July 14. Mr. Speaker, I have serious concerns with this so-called budget that I would like to discuss in the short time allotted to me this afternoon.

The document introduced on May 1 can only very loosely be described as a budget. In fact, it is really a series of disconnected spending promises that do nothing to help Ontario's economy or help the people of this great province over the long term. Promises contained in the speech signal another era of government living far beyond its means—promises that will threaten our core services and put the things that matter most to Ontarians, like front-line health care and education, in jeopardy. The Liberals' disregard for our economy also threatens the most vulnerable in our society.

The Ontario PC caucus knows the importance of living within our means and balancing the budget so we are able to afford services that matter to Ontarians. As well, a balanced budget allows us to safely invest in infrastructure in our hospitals, schools and transit.

**1500**

However, instead of taking the necessary steps to ensure financial security, the Liberal government has chosen to spend without any concept of priorities.

The economic situation in Ontario is dire, Mr. Speaker. It's far worse than most people realize. Our accumulated debt is approaching \$300 billion, while our deficit has increased under the Wynne government to \$12.5 billion. Why does this matter? Well, it matters because the third-largest expenditure in government, after health care and education, is the interest cost on money borrowed from international lenders. Ontario currently spends \$11 billion per year servicing this debt. This money doesn't pay anything on principal, just on interest payments. Can you imagine what investments could be made in health care and education and supports for vulnerable people with \$11 billion a year? It's completely irresponsible to continue this unbridled spending.

As bad as things look now, they're about to get worse. Last week, Moody's changed the outlook for Ontario from stable to negative, after the Wynne government promised to reintroduce the original budget that sent us to the polls. The consequence of a credit downgrade is an

increase in borrowing costs. We know that a 1% increase in interest rates means an additional \$500 million in additional borrowing costs to the province each and every year. We're also experiencing a 20-year low in interest rates, but they have nowhere to go but up. Although it is doubtful that interest rates will rise to the levels of 18% to 20% that we saw in the late 1980s, there is no doubt that rates will increase in the future. The only question is when and how much.

Mr. Speaker, the throne speech also outlined the government's intention to balance the budget by 2017-18 without a realistic plan to get to balance. However, the budget contains billions more in spending that we cannot afford. This of course begs the question: What services will the government have to cut to balance the budget, or will they give up on balancing the budget altogether, which is a far more scary prospect? The Ontario PC caucus believes that balancing the budget will grow the economy and attract businesses to come and expand in Ontario. While the Wynne government has increased the public sector, small and big businesses have picked up and moved from Ontario, and we've heard the sad stories over the last few months. We need to create the necessary conditions for these businesses to want to stay. Focusing on private sector job creation will ensure that we can protect our front-line services.

One of the cornerstones of the Liberal government's budget, as mentioned in the throne speech, is the proposed Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. This would be phased in over two years, commencing in 2017. Mr. Speaker, the creation of this plan would be a disaster for everyone, from employees to employers and to the government. Several thousand small business owners recently completed a survey by the Ontario branch of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, and a full 86% of them did not support the idea of a provincial pension plan.

It's estimated that Ontario would add about a half percentage point to its unemployment rate if it implemented the ORPP, which is doubly bad considering Ontario has had higher than the national average rate of unemployment over the last five years plus. It would also mean 171,000 person-years of lost work and a permanent drop in wages. Mr. Wilson mentioned that it would cost a couple, where both people worked, about \$7,000 a year. I think this is something that has not been explained to the people of Ontario: that this is going to cost them a significant amount of money. It would be far better for the government to concentrate its efforts on working with the federal government, in looking at enhancements to the CPP at the appropriate time, when our economy is stable. According to Ted Mallett, the vice-president and chief economist of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, "This plan is a whole lot of pain for very little gain." Mr. Speaker, I would agree and I would urge a sober second look at this plan.

The throne speech also promises to build a fairer and healthier Ontario, but as the Ontario PC health critic, I can see that the changes brought forward today by the

Liberals have done nothing to significantly improve our health care system. Mr. Speaker, health care takes roughly 42% of the provincial budget; however, the throne speech did not make reference to the major changes that must occur for our system to be sustainable in the future for our children and grandchildren. Our population is rapidly aging. Children are now taking care of their aging parents, trying to keep them at home as long as possible. We know we can provide home care far more cost-effectively than a hospital. However, in Ontario we're simply not ready for our aging population. The community care access centres that currently provide home care services across Ontario need reform. This was mentioned even just this morning by the member from Dufferin-Caledon in one of her questions. Every day in my community office—and I expect all of the members in this chamber hear the same story—I consistently hear of people waiting months for care, with some people not even qualifying for services that they so clearly need. In addition, I hear stories of individuals only getting one bath a week and personal support workers unable to complete all of their work in the time that they have allocated. We've also seen CCAC—community care access centre—salaries skyrocket in the past few years, with some CEOs seeing a raise of upwards of 144% in the last few years.

That is why, in the last session, I asked the Auditor General to review the spending and practices of all community care access centres across Ontario. And I understand that the Auditor General has undertaken that work and that we will expect to see a report being registered and presented in this chamber early next year.

With more money being directed to front-line care, we will be able to keep seniors in their own homes longer and safely. For those who are unable to remain in their own homes, however, long-term-care homes are the best solution. However, I also consistently hear concerns throughout the province that we do not have a sufficient number of long-term-care placements in many of the communities across Ontario, and even where there are placements, many of them are not up to the standards that individuals and families would expect. In addition, we do not have the proper dementia strategy in Ontario, including safe practices and proper staffing in long-term-care homes. Mr. Speaker, as our population continues to age, we've seen dementia and Alzheimer numbers skyrocket. Not only is the staff in our long-term-care homes at risk of violence, but other patients are as well. This government must address the need for proper training and increasing the number of staff to prevent such problems in our long-term-care homes.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, the throne speech did not address the need for establishing a better solution to the issue of orphan drugs. Last session we saw the courageous little Madi Vanstone battling to receive the wonder drug Kalydeco to fight her cystic fibrosis. While the government hid behind the Pan-Canadian Pricing Alliance, Madi's friends and family were forced to privately fund-raise in order for Madi to continue to have

access to Kalydeco. Without Kalydeco, Madi would have spent months in hospital and would have to wait for a double lung transplant.

Instead of focusing on the single cost of some of these drugs, we need to look at the overall cost to the health care system. Putting aside quality-of-life issues, hospitalizations in Madi's case, without Kalydeco, have extraordinary costs associated with them, costs that we simply wouldn't have if she had access to the appropriate drug in the first place.

We've also seen drugs like Avastin and Esbriet that help improve the quality of life for Ontarians. We need to expand access to these drugs, Mr. Speaker, and we need to develop a solution to the cost so that everybody can get the medications they need when and where they need them.

The throne speech also failed to mention the need for more nurses in our health care system. Again, Mr. Wilson mentioned the need for more nurses and the fact they are being cut in many parts of Ontario right now. We know that nurses are the essential part of front-line care and, in fact, they are the backbone of our health care system. As our hospitals are consistently at capacity and as our population ages, we know that nurses are uniquely positioned to lessen the stress in our health care system, particularly in hospitals and long-term-care homes. That is why the current government needs to follow through on its promise to hire more nurses in Ontario. We need to see action, not just empty words. In addition, we need to look at expanding scopes of practice for health care professionals. We've seen early success with allowing pharmacists to administer flu shots, but there's much more that pharmacists can do within our health care system, and the government frankly needs to follow through on the promises it made to them several years ago. We need to make sure that other health care professionals are allowed to expand their scopes of practice to their full scope, so that Ontarians will be able to get the care they need faster and closer to home.

Another issue that is near and dear to me, and which I've spoken about many times, is helping people with disabilities in all aspects of their lives, from treatment to housing, to education, to social, recreational and occupational inclusion. So I was glad to see mention made of persons with disabilities in the throne speech and the commitment to make Ontario fully accessible by 2025. However, we must move faster to ensure that we're able to hit these targets, because people are counting on us.

#### 1510

We know that the current government has promised \$810 million in the current budget to help people with developmental disabilities, but it's unclear, however, what the plan is for spending this money. For that reason, I would urge the government to take a look at the report that has recently been completed by the Select Committee on Developmental Disabilities. It has yet to be tabled in the Legislature, but I anticipate it will be done within the next short while. It contains many recommendations about the ways that we can help people with

developmental disabilities, and I encourage the government to adopt the report once it is tabled so that people across Ontario and their families can get the help, supports and services that they need.

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** Don't just put it in the DSO.

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** And don't just put it in the DSO, as the member from Dufferin–Caledon has stated.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I hope that the government will heed the comments that have been made, and will be made, by the official opposition and, no doubt, by the third party as well and make the necessary changes to make sure that we can have a sustainable system. We need to cut the cost of spending, we need to get the budget under control and we need to get the debt and the deficit under control so that we have a bright future not just now, but for our children and grandchildren. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** It is my pleasure and an honour to rise in the 41st Parliament and take my seat, once again, as the member for Nepean–Carleton. It's also a personal thrill to be able to speak to the speech from the throne.

I'd be remiss not only to congratulate Premier Wynne as our newly elected Premier—and first female elected Premier—but also to say thank you to our Lieutenant Governor, David C. Onley, who deliberated on his last throne speech. To him, I say thanks on behalf of the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus.

I'm not going to mince words. It was a humbling election for myself and my colleagues. But I'm reminded each and every day I assume my seat in this House how fortunate I am to carry with me the voices of over 130,000 Nepean–Carleton residents here in this Legislative Assembly. So to them, I want to say thank you, and I want to confirm to them that I'll continue the work of their best interests in this mandate, as I have carried on in the previous three.

Speaker, my riding is one I'm proud of, and I know all 107 members are very proud of their ridings. Mine happens to be a very unique one. It's a microcosm, I believe, of the growing and changing Ontario that the Ontario PC Party in this Legislature must seek to represent. Whether it's urban Ottawa transit, managing explosive suburban growth in Riverside South, Findlay Creek and Barrhaven, or protecting our rural Ontario way of life in North Gower, in Manotick, in Osgoode and Greely, I've learned that Nepean–Carleton's residents are diverse, but they are strong.

The people I represent come from all over the world. Others, like me, came from different parts of Canada, and some have lived for generations on the family farm. What unites the people of Nepean–Carleton, however, is not just their geographic location within the city of Ottawa. I believe it is what their expectations are of government—expectations, I suspect, that are shared by all Ontarians.

They pay their taxes, but they expect health care services for their families and schools to be built for their neighbourhoods. They expect us to keep up with roads and bridges and transit. They expect safe streets and, Speaker, they expect clean air and clean water. They also expect their government to live within its means and protect their hard-earned tax dollars that they send to Toronto, and to protect it wisely.

The Liberal government, on this last score, has failed my constituents. Liberals have been engaged in billion-dollar scandals. They're allowing our deficit to increase. They are continuing to spend without a plan, and that puts our very core and valued public services at risk.

It also makes Ontarians question whether they're getting value for the tax dollars they send to Queen's Park. On that front, it's going to be up to the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus to hold this Liberal government accountable for all Ontarians.

Good government comes from strong opposition. If there's one thing that this Progressive Conservative Party has been good at over the past decade, it has been in opposition. I assure the people at home, Progressive Conservatives and otherwise, that we are going to continue to do the job we have been assigned, and that is to hold this Liberal government accountable.

In seriousness, and I think as some of my colleagues have demonstrated, where we can work with the other parties and where we can make progress by working with others, we will do that. We have seen it before. My colleague from Whitby–Oshawa has done an amazing amount of work on a select committee. We have seen it before with my colleagues Steve Clark and Bob Bailey, who have championed private members' business with other members of this assembly. Where it will work, and where it's in the best interests of Ontarians, the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario will continue to work with the other side. I'm proud to have stood with my colleague from Ottawa Centre, now the government House leader, to work on a suicide prevention plan for our city. So where it works, we are going to do it.

But I assure folks that where the government fails, where they do not advance the interests of the population, we are going to make sure, in the Ontario PC Party, that we point out that there is a better way. That is our job, and we take it seriously. We need a government with policies that do good, not just sound good. It will be the place of the Ontario PC Party to provide that opposition, Speaker.

That brings to mind three specific areas where I would like to point out to the government where they can do better and where we believe, in the Ontario PC Party, that there is a role for us to play—a meaningful role that will make Ontario a better place.

First, my colleagues—both our interim leader and of course my colleague from Whitby–Oshawa—talked about needing to live within our means and balancing our budget. When Moody's and Standard and Poor's lower our credit rating, as expected, that will have an immediate and negative impact on our schools and on our

hospitals. It has been pointed out that servicing the debt and the deficit in Ontario is right now our third-largest spending priority. Every single dollar spent on servicing our debt and deficit is a dollar less for a patient in a hospital and a dollar less for a child in a classroom in this province. It is the third-largest spending priority only behind education and health care. So it will be up to a strong Ontario Progressive Conservative Party to hold this government to account on its ability to pay, its contract negotiations and its use of government assets.

I'm grateful to interim PC leader Jim Wilson for appointing me as critic of the Treasury Board, whose role it will be to rein in government spending and tackle the debt and the deficit. It is a key role, no doubt, in the government, and I am committed, as the Progressive Conservative opposition critic, to ensuring that this government does get it right, not only for my daughter's generation but for my daughter's daughter's generation.

The next few years will show whether or not this Liberal government can break their debt dependence. If they cannot, Ontarians will look for a party that they can trust to deliver the services that we all need and do it within a sustainable budget, supported by an expanded economy. I believe that the Ontario PC Party can do that. I believe in our future and I believe that we will rebuild again.

The Liberal record, however, on the economy has not been strong. Our interim leader has laid out the many reasons why we have had a lacklustre performance in the economy. We have lost, in this province, hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs. We have the highest industrial hydro rates in North America. Our debt is higher than all of the other provinces' combined, Speaker. Our government needs to do better. If they cannot, I'm confident that the Ontario PC Party in four years will be able to rise to that challenge. The best way to protect our core and valued public services is not by digging a deeper hole into debt and deficit and raising people's taxes; it's by getting your spending under control with a stronger private sector economy and a balanced provincial budget. It is that simple. It will require hard work and tough choices, but we know the road ahead.

**1520**

A second area where the Ontario PC Party can help Ontarians is by keeping a watchful eye on the Liberals' implementation of a new private sector pension. This plan creates the illusion that future benefits can be achieved without current costs. The Liberal plan will give some people benefits decades from now, but it doesn't address the real issues of today.

The new payroll tax that will pay for the plan will cost some people their jobs. We will lose more jobs as a result of the implementation of this plan. And the forced contributions will take money from the pockets of people who are right now struggling to make ends meet. They're struggling with high hydro bills.

I'm a soccer mom. The other parents I know are struggling to balance their own budget. They're seeing

their mortgages increase, higher electricity costs and higher gas prices. The cost of groceries is going up. It's becoming not only more difficult for them to put their kids through soccer and hockey; it's getting more difficult for them to think about saving for their children's education down the road.

It will be the responsibility of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party to criticize these policies. But we have to do it with logic and hard facts. We have to do it for the best interests of all Ontarians. People need to know why it's a bad plan and what we would do to ensure it's better. Again, I'm confident that we in the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party will provide that alternative for all Ontarians and in this House.

This brings me to the third area that needs to be addressed. It's something that I find to be quite personal. I think it's something we have to have an honest and thoughtful conversation about in this Legislative Assembly.

As one of the few MPPs who represents an urban riding with a large rural committee, I have experience working on urban issues, managing explosive suburban growth and standing up for the uniqueness and wholeness of rural Ontario. The Liberals and indeed all of us as an assembly need to address the urban-rural divide in Ontario. It's something I've worked hard on in the past eight years. I think it's something that we have to honestly address in this Assembly.

On election night, the lines were pretty clearly drawn. While much is made that the Ontario PCs dropped mostly from rural Ontario, the reverse is true for the government. They've been almost shut out of rural Ontario. Ontario PCs can play an important role in this dialogue, and the government must also be part of that conversation. Those living in rural Ontario have felt ignored and abandoned by Queen's Park. In my humble estimation, that has to change. Whether it's the cancellation of the Slots at Racetracks Program or the negative impacts of wind turbines that are splitting communities and costing the provincial treasury, it will be up to the government to bridge those divides and ease those concerns. Where rural schools are concerned, it means the government must consider the benefits of keeping a rural school open. Sometimes that school is the lifeblood of the community, and that has to be a major consideration.

As Ontario PCs, we must continue to defend the little guys and bring their voices to Queen's Park, but we also have a challenge. We have to learn to speak to people in urban Ottawa, in Toronto, in Kitchener and in London. I'm confident we can do that. I'm confident we can help forge a better understanding. We can urge a common ground. But in this area, I firmly believe the government needs the opposition as much as the opposition needs the government, because if we are truly to speak for one Ontario, we have to begin to understand one another. If they have the foresight and they are prepared to admit mistakes have been made, the government will work with us to right the wrongs felt in rural Ontario, starting with changes to the Green Energy Act and fixes to the horse

racing industry. To achieve these results in these areas, it means we must be an opposition that engages all Ontarians, not just one that speaks to itself. But that said, it must be true as well for the government—to speak and engage with all Ontarians and not just the ones whom they are most comfortable with. That is the provincial government's core job. It is their core responsibility. We as Progressive Conservatives will be here to remind them of that.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Thank you very much, Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to the throne speech debate today. I'm going to pick up on some of the comments of my colleagues—my leader, Mr. Wilson; the member from Whitby–Oshawa, Ms. Elliott; and, from Nepean–Carleton, Ms. MacLeod.

First of all, I do want to speak to my people at home and to thank them most sincerely for the trust that they have placed in me once again, in sending me to Queen's Park for a fourth term. I'm honoured and humbled, and I will continue to serve them in the best way that I possibly can. It's the only promise I made to them when I was running for election in 2003: that I would serve to the best of my abilities. I continue to hold myself to that promise, and I know they continue to hold me to that promise as well. Nevertheless, I'm continually honoured and humbled by their support. I have a chance to meet with them so often, to share their lives, to involve myself in their issues and them in mine. It's a relationship that I think has grown over the years. It's a special bond that I think we all develop, as members of this Legislature, with the people we represent. It is something that, when the day comes that I'm no longer here, I'm going to cherish in the most significant and sincere way. So thank to you to those folks from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke for their trust and confidence once again.

I want to pick up a little bit on my colleague from Nepean–Carleton. She finished by talking about that rural-urban divide. I know that, earlier this year, the Premier spoke in an area in southwestern Ontario and said that there is no urban-rural divide. Or maybe she meant rural-urban divide. But either way, she would be wrong. I think this election clarified that. More and more, we're seeing a division in this province based on partisan lines. That's not a good thing. It is clear and it is defined by the map, but it is not a good thing. I've heard from so many of my constituents, saying to me, "John, I hope that the government, now that they've got their majority back, is not going to ignore us here in rural Ontario." I'll take them at their word, because I've had many discussions with many members of the cabinet on the other side for the last 11 years. I've always believed that they have listened to what we've had to say. But there is a feeling out there, folks, ladies and gentlemen of the cabinet of the newly elected, first-ever female elected Premier of the province of Ontario—there is a feeling out there that maybe you don't care as much as you should about the

people in rural Ontario. That's a message that we keep hearing and I think it's one that you need to listen to.

My friend from Peterborough said earlier, in answering a question today, that the most important thing is to listen. Well, I want the folks over there to listen what's being said across this province, not to become complacent and to think that the results of the 2014 election were somehow a vindication or an expression of satisfaction in your government.

We all know that this was a difficult election for us. My colleagues from Nepean–Carleton articulated that. We made some mistakes in the campaign; we understand that. But I don't think it should be viewed by you people over there that it was a complete—

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** Embrace.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** —embrace—thank you very much to my colleague from Etobicoke—that it was an embracing of your policies. It was not. Politics and elections take on their own life, and this one was no different than others. So I want you to be humble over there and understand that you have the power, but with that power comes a great deal of responsibility, and it is important that everyone across this province feels that they are being treated fairly by this government.

My colleagues talked about a number of different things. I want to talk about, firstly, as Mr. Wilson talked about: We've got to stop with this misnomer that you guys keep putting out there, that Ontario has the lowest per capita costs in the country. It is just that: a misnomer. It is misleading, at the very least.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I have to ask the member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke to withdraw that unparliamentary comment.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Withdraw. Apparently, it's not. I certainly find it confusing.

You see, I come from a family of 14 children, and we had lower per capita costs in that house than a lot of the other homes down the street. But we never wanted for anything. We were never poor. We never wanted for anything. But our per capita costs were damn well in line.

**1530**

So if you think you're really fooling anybody, I put a challenge out to the folks in the media gallery too, to stop letting them getting away with that silliness. Because you have lower per capita costs than Prince Edward Island? Please, please. You can do better than that. You can do better than that to try to defend the mess you've been making with the finances of Ontario. Look at the real numbers. As my friend from Nepean–Carleton said, you've got the highest deficit of all provinces. In fact, the deficit of Ontario is higher than the deficit of all provinces combined. The debt in Ontario is higher than that of any other province. In fact, it is higher than the debt of all other provinces combined. Those are the real numbers you need to be thinking of, not going around telling some fairy tale about having lower per capita cost.

You should actually be looking at the real numbers: \$289 billion in debt. That's what you get when you implement this budget, which I'm sure you're going to

do after you introduce it on the 14th. We have no power to stop it. We will not support that budget. We can't support a budget that spends that kind of money without any plan to get us out of debt. My friend from Whitby–Oshawa talked about how you have all kinds of words to talk about how you're going to manage your way out of the fiscal mess, but not one single word about a concrete plan to actually get it done. Words in the throne speech—my gosh. I would call this the dichotomous throne speech.

“Dichotomous” is not a prehistoric dinosaur or something; it's just when you've got two conflicting visions that are not parallel at all. They just make no sense. So on one hand, you've got the government talking about how they're—as His Honour said in the throne speech, “The government is unwavering in its resolve to balance the budget in three years”—unwavering—and in the next breath, they're talking about how, however, no services will be cut. “We're not going to jeopardize the progress we've made in Ontario.” So on the one hand, they're unwavering; on the other hand, it says, “Belly up to the trough, folks. We'll say no to no one, if it's a special interest group that we're going to need somewhere down the road.” You see, you've got this inner conflict over there. You must feel like you're in an eternal tug-of-war within your own beings. The Premier must lie awake, wondering which side of the bed she should turn to, because she's being tossed and turned by her own words: “Kill the deficit, spend more money and reduce the debt. Bring in some more socially activist programs—I love them.” She must be just fighting with herself on a moment-by-moment basis.

But my friend Mr. Wilson said—and, boy, sometimes you've got to put these things into perspective, Speaker. It's scary: For seven years the unemployment in Ontario has been higher than the national average—seven years. Speaker, in the Bible, the Bible that I read—not enough, I'm told by others—they talk of seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine, and to take those seven years of plenty and prepare. Those who did not prepare, they suffered during the seven years of famine. But we now have a crisis of seven years. It is of Biblical proportions. This government is dealing with a situation that they've created; it is now of Biblical proportions. Seven years of unemployment higher than the national average, and what do they do about it? Well, Charles Sousa would say, “No one's freaking about it.” Well, I'll tell you, those people who don't have a job, they are freaking. They are freaking plenty.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** The bankers are, too.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** And the bankers are.

So now they talk about, “What are we going to do? Well, we have the answer, Speaker. We're going to bring in another pension plan.” Oh, yes, because, you see, all of those people out there who haven't asked the questions—and this was great during the campaign. Some people were going around saying, “Well, but the Liberals are going to give me another pension. If the Liberals get in there, I'm going to get another pension.” “Oh, my

goodness gracious,” I said. “You don't know the half of it; in fact, you don't know the quarter of it.” It is just another fairy tale, but I keep telling the people out there, there is no fairy godmother and there is no tooth fairy, because the Liberals kept telling them there was.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** They didn't actually say it.

Years ago, the federal government, in their wisdom, decided—and all parties agreed—that it was very questionable whether people were saving enough for retirement, so they brought in the RRSPs. They said, “You have an opportunity, in a tax-sheltered way, to prepare for those retirement years, in addition to any government pensions you may be eligible for”—plus some people would have their own pensions through their employment. So they gave them the opportunity.

We're in such a crisis now, with the price of hydro and everything else, that I've got families saying, “You're telling me I need to put money away? How can I put money away when the wolf is at the door? I can't put any money away. I can't pay the bills as they are. My kids need new shoes. Have you seen the price of shoes? I can't afford them, because I've got to pay the hydro bill, but I can't afford to pay it. And you're telling me, Mr. Yakabuski, that I need to put money away for retirement? I don't have any money to put away for retirement.”

They can't put any money into an RRSP. They have no money to put away, but now the Premier is going to tell them that, at the source, you're going to be deducted 1.9% of your income. So those shoes you couldn't afford just got less affordable, that hydro bill you can't pay is just going to be more on an overdue basis, because we're going to be taking 1.9%.

By the way, your employer—he or she or it; the corporation, or whatever—is going to have to pay 1.9% of your earnings, as well.

When I talked to people in my riding—I talked to businesspeople—they said, “John, I am going to have to lay off people. I'm not going to have a choice. I can't afford this.” If you're running a grocery store today—you've got so many coolers today in a grocery store—their hydro bills are just out of this world. They have to have a lot of employees, and now you're telling them they've got to bring in a pension plan.

One of the key differences about the RRSP: If you put a dollar in that plan, it's yours, and when it—

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Yes, but you can watch it go down.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Well, sure, you have some risk. Like everything else, you have some risk. Gilles, you've got risk when you get out of bed in the morning. Come on; everybody does. You've got some risk with your investment, but every investment has risk. But at the end of the day, whatever that is worth whenever you retire is yours. That is yours.

With this plan here, those people are going to be paying 1.9%. So if they get a deduction off the cheque and they live till 64, don't collect a penny—they're not married. So when they go, there's nothing. That plan

goes back into the big pool for everybody else. It's like a life insurance policy. They're hoping that some people will kick the bucket before they ever collect, because it's going to put more in there for someone else. But you can bequeath that RRSP to anyone you want. It could be a son or a daughter. It could be a friend, if you're not married, or whatever. It could be a niece or a nephew. Hell, it could be me. Don't sign them all over too fast.

So you have all of those options. But this government pension plan? No option whatsoever. There are a whole lot of questions that need to be answered about this plan.

Let's say they bring in this plan, but it isn't a plan that is brought in by the federal government. So you have a plan in Ontario, but you don't have a plan in another province. You've been working in Ontario, and all of a sudden you have to go somewhere else to work—like that's not a true story? Come on. It's happening every day. Gordon Lightfoot had a song, *Alberta Bound*. It should be re-released; it'd be a million-seller.

So people are going elsewhere. You move to another province, and they don't have a provincial pension plan. Do you get to carry those credits to that other province, or do you have to come back to Ontario someday to die?

There are a whole lot of unanswered questions. It's a big dream that they threw out there with the tooth fairy, and they're hoping that a lot of people voted for them—a lot of people did vote for them on the basis of that, because they thought it was something for nothing.

Ladies and gentlemen, we all know that there is nothing for nothing in this world, and that pension plan is no exception.

**Interjection:** Nothing for free, Yak.

1540

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** That's right.

So let's get back to the—

**Interjection:** Only love.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Well, love is—I'm not even going to go there, but thanks for the admonishment.

We got the credit warning from Moody's. It's not a downgrade yet. It's not a downgrade yet. I'll repeat that one more time: It's not a downgrade—yet. But it is a warning. They've taken Ontario from a stable to a negative.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** Shot across the bow.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** That is a shot across the bow, as my colleague from Sarnia says. He is so absolutely right. It is a shot across the bow; it is a warning to the people across the aisle that you cannot go on behaving the way you are. You cannot go on thinking that you can have your cake and eat it too. Either you are interested in dealing with the debt and deficit of Ontario, or you're not. But you can't have a story one day and a different story the next day. I realize how that keeps people off balance, and people are never really sure where you're going.

But that is not very good for the financial community when it comes to looking at Ontario's situation and wondering, "Is this a good place to invest?" One of the first things they're going to look at is, "What is the fiscal

plan? How do we get to balance here in the province of Ontario?"

They're saying that in three years, 2017-18, we're going to be balanced. You can't get there without a plan. It's not just going to happen. All of a sudden, the magic wand is going to be waved, and we're going to balance the books here in Ontario? That's impossible. They must think that, but it doesn't work that way.

The Premier keeps saying, "Yes, there will be tough decisions." She loves words; she just loves these little phrases: "difficult decisions" or "tough decisions." She loves to say those things, but she never wants to do a thing that actually demonstrates that she's putting a plan into action. Sooner or later, the words are just going to run dry because the numbers are going to go up.

If next year's deficit goes up, the major credit rating agencies are just going to dump on Ontario like a big Mack truck unloading its whole load, a big tandem truck, a tri-axle dumping of the worst possible manure on to Ontario. We're just going to be a pariah when it comes to managing our financial situation.

The credit warning is not something that you people can overlook. Where is there one substantial statement from the Premier that is not just kind of a—everything they say is so ambiguous. Where is the one clear statement that said, "This is a specific action that we're going to take to reduce the deficit. We're going to attack the deficit"—not, all of a sudden, it's going to disappear like some magical David Copperfield act in 2017-18 but—"today we're going to actually do something of significance to reduce the deficit"? There's no such thing in this throne speech. There's no such thing in the budget that was brought in on May 1. And we're told we're getting the same thing tied up with a different ribbon on the 14th of July.

If there's no specific concrete action that says, "This is what we're going to do," then you watch out. That warning from Moody's or Standard and Poor's—whoever—is more likely to be an action of a downgrade. As my colleague Mr. Wilson, our leader, was saying earlier, with a downgrade comes a price. I think you were quoting Jack Mintz earlier today. If we get a downgrade, and that adds even a point—a point—to the interest that Ontario has to pay to service its debt—by the way, folks, the servicing of Ontario's debt is the third-largest line item in the budget. After health care spending and education spending, the next-biggest line isn't some ministry. It isn't some infrastructure program. It isn't some tangible service that we're providing for the people of Ontario. No. It's servicing the debt; it's the interest that we pay on our debt. If the third-largest item in your house was the interest you paid on debt, I'm going to bet that you're going to do something to reduce that debt. You're going to have a concrete plan. You're going to sit down with your family or, if it requires it, your financial planner, but you're going to sit down together and you're going to say, "This can't go on. We have to do something about our debt."

What do they do over there? It's all la-di-da. "We want to make sure that everybody is happy." Over there, the Premier says, "We've got something for everybody. Everybody in Ontario has to be able to aspire to be great." Of course they have to aspire to be great, but we can't do it with money we don't have. There has to be some realism. You can't just spend, spend, spend until there's nothing left and you have handcuffed future generations.

If you don't owe it to the people of Ontario today, you owe it to the people of Ontario of tomorrow, those who have just been born, like my latest granddaughter, Adelaide.

*Applause.*

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** She was born before; she's not that new. I'll show you a picture later. But to that generation, to her parents, Emily and Tom, two young people struggling to get by, like all other young people, but also to future generations, how can you let them start out—Adelaide started out on November 16, 2013, over \$20,000 in debt. Shame on you people. You have to do better.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bas Balkissoon):** Thank you. I beg to inform the House that, pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Ms. Jones assumes ballot item number 29 and Mr. Yurek assumes ballot item number 5.

Further debate? The leader of the third party.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I'll likely be sharing my time with some of my caucus colleagues. I do want to start, however, by saying that it is a pleasure to rise and respond to the speech from the throne. It's good to be back in this Legislature and doing the work that is an important job that Ontarians sent us here to do. They have given the New Democrats very important work, and we are looking forward to accomplishing that work on their behalf.

I also, of course, would like to thank the people of Hamilton Centre, as well as the people around this province who have sent us here to do this work.

Ontarians know very well what New Democrats stand for. They know that New Democrats stand up for families, and they know that we constantly defend quality public services that families rely upon: services like health care, particularly making sure that the home care that people need is there for them; making sure that their hospitals are not so full of patients that wait times in ERs are continuing to climb; making sure that, for example, the kind of services that are needed in southern Ontario are also available in northern Ontario; making sure that we have a health care system that is responding to crises that, frankly, have continued to grow—for example, the crisis in mental health. That's what New Democrats stand up for: a health care system that actually meets the needs of the people of this province.

Education: an education system that is there for families and children; an education system that is not thrown into chaos by the political whims of a governing party

that's looking for more power; an education system that all children can benefit from and can reach their potential by being educated within; an education system that, after the primary and high school grades, then allows young people to get post-secondary training in a way that's convenient and affordable and accessible to them. That's what New Democrats stand up for: a child care system that's available to our youngest of children and their families, one that has been eroded over the last number of years. But New Democrats are the ones that have been sounding that alarm bell and pushing, even today in question period, to make sure that that child care system is shored up instead of allowed to continue to erode by the Liberals.

**1550**

These are the kinds of things, these are the kinds of public services that New Democrats stand up for, day in and day out. Ontarians know that New Democrats fight very hard for them to make sure that their lives are more affordable. We've watched year over year as Ontarians have been telling us they simply cannot make ends meet anymore. So it's New Democrats that have fought to avoid the pinch of the HST on Ontarians when the Liberals decided to bring it in, that are concerned about and trying to find solutions to our fast-growing electricity rates in this province and our auto insurance rates that are completely out of control. These are the kind of fights that New Democrats have taken on, on behalf of Ontarians, to make sure that someone is thinking about the difficult struggles many families face in trying to make ends meet at the end of the month.

Jobs: It's New Democrats that, day in and day out, come to this chamber and remind the Liberals that there are 300,000 manufacturing jobs that have been lost in this province and that many, many of those families have had a serious reduction in their quality of life because the jobs that they had to go to, for those that were lucky enough to get jobs, were ones that paid far, far less and certainly didn't provide the kind of security that comes with a good job—things like pensions and health insurance plans. Those are the things that New Democrats stand up for and fight for in this Legislature: good jobs for people from one end of this province to the other.

Ontarians know that New Democrats work hard to find ways to ensure that the government is held accountable and is responsive and responsible to the people of this province. What does that look like? In the last number of years, New Democrats have brought a number of measures forward, some of which have actually been, at least legislatively, put through this House. We haven't seen the result yet, but things like the Financial Accountability Office. That office still sits dark, but it's an office that will help to ensure that there is transparency and accountability with the public dollars the people send to Queen's Park to ensure that their services are being provided.

But that's not the end of it, Speaker. New Democrats have also been at the forefront of putting pressure on this government to ensure that there is better hospital over-



sight, making sure that there is an Ombudsman that can look at what's happening in our hospital system, long-term care and home care. These are struggles that New Democrats have brought here on behalf of Ontarians because Ontarians know that frankly there is a great deal of investment in the health services that are provided to people in Ontario. But those investments are not always watched over appropriately by a third-party, unbiased body. That's why Ombudsman oversight in the health care system is something that we have fought for some time to have implemented.

It's the same with children's aid societies and the same with the MUSH sector. It's not just about spending money; it's about making sure that the money that we're investing is actually getting the results that Ontarians deserve. When we see what happened with things like Ornge air ambulance, eHealth and all of these kinds of troubles that Ontarians have watched their government get into, it proves even more that these measures of accountability and these measures of transparency are absolutely required here in Ontario. And now that we're in a majority government situation, I would put that in fact the need for these measures is greater than ever before.

But that, Speaker, is the record of New Democrats, and it's a record that we will be proud to continue with. That's why more than a million Ontarians asked New Democrats to come back to this Legislature to hold the Liberals to account. I can tell you, Speaker, that is exactly what New Democrats intend on doing.

But you know, Ontarians also know that this Liberal government has a record. Yes, they've spent several months talking about being "progressive," but the Liberal record is pretty clear. Over a decade, the Liberal government has not been accountable and it has not been progressive. Unemployment has remained above the national average since January 2006. It's not progressive to have a huge unemployment rate, where we have all kinds of people in precarious work situations, where they are being hired by temp agencies that this government has allowed to expand enormously in this province. They've done nothing—nothing—to deal with these temp agencies that are, quite frankly, ripping people off to no end.

They've done nothing to make sure that good jobs stay here in Ontario. It's not progressive to watch as good jobs leave, then see all kinds of part-time jobs and service sector jobs that are low-paid come to Ontario, and then pretend somehow that there's a great record over there for job creation when the facts are simply much, much more clear than that. The facts show clearly that good jobs have left this province, to be replaced by low-paid service sector jobs. That is not progressive.

We've seen hydro bills that have increased 300% since the Liberals took office, and those hydro bills are projected to increase yet another 42% over the next number of years—the next five years or so. There's nothing progressive about sitting idly by while people tell you over and over again that they can't afford the bills,

and all you continue to do is make it harder and harder for people to afford their bills.

I don't know how many people I've spoken to over the last number of years, whether they're small businesses, whether they are individuals, whether they're large families or small, whether they're in northern Ontario or southern Ontario or southwestern Ontario, who have said that they simply cannot afford to pay their hydro bills anymore. A woman from Sudbury told me that she's paying \$20,000 a year now for her electricity bill—\$20,000 a year—and now that is going to increase by 42%, because the Liberals think it's progressive to force people to pay hydro rates that they simply can no longer afford. It's not progressive to do that. It's not progressive to ignore that people are becoming less and less able to pay their rent, less and less able to keep a roof over their heads because they simply can't afford the bills at the end of the month.

You know, it's interesting. New Democrats have always fought to make sure that people are able to afford a decent living. Whether it's on affordable housing, whether it's on social assistance rates, whether it's on the fact that basic necessities like hydro are becoming out of reach, these are the fights that New Democrats have fought. In fact, the founder of the New Democratic Party fought a fight on affordability. It was the affordability of health care. But that is the tradition of New Democrats, and we will continue to fight on behalf of people when it comes to these issues.

But you know, Speaker, it is very, very clear that over the last couple of weeks, when the discussion was ongoing during the election campaign, Ontarians clearly did not want to see austerity here in the province of Ontario. They voted against austerity, they voted against job losses and they voted against cuts to front-line services. New Democrats have a duty to every single person in this province to hold this government to account.

#### 1600

The throne speech that was read on Thursday is really the prelude to what we're calling a Trojan Horse budget. It's a Trojan Horse budget, Speaker, because the Liberals have been bending over backwards to convince everybody that it is "progressive," but you merely need to scratch the surface of that budget to find out that there are some dangerous surprises in store for Ontario.

We know for sure that that budget will likely be selling off Ontario's assets. Who knows exactly what that might look like? The government is, of course, not being upfront and clear about exactly what that looks like, but valuable public assets are on the seller's block by the Liberal government.

I've been elected since 2004. There are members in this caucus who have been elected since before that, and some are newly elected. I think pretty much every couple of years a budget comes along where there's going to be a massive sell-off of assets. Even Mike Harris wasn't able to do it, Speaker. And that's a good thing.

But I don't know why the Liberals think that selling off public assets is a progressive move. Speaker, it is not a progressive move. In fact, it's everything but progressive. Those assets belong to the people of Ontario. Those assets should be delivering for the people of Ontario long into the future. Those assets should be delivering for my son and for his children and for their children. That's why they're assets, Speaker, and that's why the people of Ontario vote against, don't like, reject, the idea of selling off the furniture to heat the house: because it doesn't make any sense whatsoever. In that Trojan Horse budget, we see a massive sell-off of valuable public assets.

We also see that the Liberals are primed to open up new corporate tax loopholes next year. We have said time and time again that that doesn't make any sense, but it's more than that, Speaker. It's that it's not progressive. It's not progressive to give the very wealthiest corporations among us even more tax breaks while you're cutting public services or while you're implementing an austerity budget. We're talking billions of dollars, Speaker—billions of dollars—starting next year that are going to be given away in corporate tax loopholes. That's not progressive. Not in the very least is it progressive.

But yet again, instead of the Liberals fighting the good fight on these corporate tax loopholes, fighting the good fight with Stephen Harper in Ottawa over these corporate tax loopholes, they're happy to just quietly sign them away, making sure that the big corporations can write off their HST on things like entertainment and on things like luxury cars, while the rest of us have to worry about what those 100,000 job cuts might look like—because that's another thing that's in this budget. Another thing that's in this budget is a huge gap when it comes to how the government is going to ensure that its promise to balance the books is kept.

When I asked those questions today in question period, I didn't get an answer from the Premier. I didn't get clarification. Don Drummond, the person who the Liberals hired to review all of the services here in Ontario and give them ideas about how to do things differently, said publicly that his firm belief is that that 100,000-job cut that Mr. Hudak used to talk about during the campaign is actually buried in the Liberal budget; that he sees very clearly that those 100,000 jobs are, in fact, going to be cut by the Liberals. I asked the Premier straight up in question period to be clear about it, to come clean with the public. She chose not to. So that tells us clearly that there is something up the sleeve of this government. It actually reinforces our suspicion about this Trojan Horse budget, that in fact it does have serious, serious ramifications for the people of this province.

I also asked, Mr. Speaker, about the asset sales, and I wasn't able to get a good response in that regard either. It's disappointing, because people expect their government to be upfront with them about what their intentions are in the coming years.

It's interesting: Another thing that the Liberals brought forward in this budget is something called PRPP

pensions. I don't know whether we'll see that in the budget that gets tabled on Monday, but I know it was in the budget that was tabled in May. It's one of the reasons the New Democrats couldn't support that budget either. PRPPs are Stephen Harper-style pension plans, plain and simple. They're are Stephen Harper-style pension plans and they are favoured by banks and insurance companies because they're basically pooled retirement pension plans, kind of like a pooled RSP scheme. The big thing about that pooled RSP scheme, though, is that the banks and insurance companies make a heck of a lot of money on administrative fees. So yes, you can put away your retirement money into one of these pension vehicles, but a lot of that retirement money isn't going to go to you when you retire; it's going to have been absorbed by the banks or the insurance companies that offer you that vehicle.

PRPPs are not a pension plan; they're a way for the insurance companies and the banks to get more out of the pockets of hard-working Ontarians and Canadians. I think it is shameful that the Liberals have brought this forward—in fact, in the budget that we saw back in May, have accelerated—as their primary option, their primary commitment when it comes to retirement security. A public pension plan—well, they kicked that out to 2017, maybe. But this year, 2014, right away, right now, the Liberals are going to make sure that the banks and insurance companies get their cut of Ontarians' retirement money. That is not progressive; PRPPs are not progressive. But of course the Liberals will go ahead with that, because that's in fact what they believe. They believe that the banks and insurance companies should do better. They believe that the big corporations should do better, and that everyday families should have to pay the price. New Democrats disagree with that. We think that is absolutely the wrong way to go. There are interesting things that weren't addressed by the Liberals in their throne speech. Of course, they didn't mention the PRPPs in the throne speech, but they were in the budget that was tabled before, so we're interested to see if they show up again. I suspect that they will.

The Liberals didn't address at all, in their throne speech, the rising electricity rates in this province. I mentioned at the beginning of my speech the numbers of people I've spoken to who are absolutely beside themselves with the cost of electricity in this province. The government, the Liberals, have not made a single commitment around trying to stem those increases. In fact, what they're looking to do is sell off things like OPG, and perhaps sell off Hydro One, to one of their friends, which is Bruce Power. These are things that are quite disturbing, things that I hear are perhaps in the wings. We know that these kinds of sell-offs don't do well for Ontarians. We know that that simply reduces accountability and transparency and increases the cost, increases the price that Ontarians pay.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** The 407.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** We've seen that with the 407, for example; thank you, Mr. Bisson. The member from

Timmins–James Bay is reminding us of one of the colossal failures of privatization, and that was the 407. But we see more of that. In fact, one of the things that I neglected to talk about that we did see in that budget and that we will expect in the throne speech is more and more privatization, Speaker. More and more privatization is headed our way. That is not progressive. That's not a progressive way to go, and yet, somehow the Liberals continue to think that they can label that Trojan Horse budget as progressive.

**1610**

Sell-offs in the hydro sector are not going to help us with our hydro rates, and there is nothing in that throne speech to suggest that the government even gets it, that people are struggling to make ends meet, or that people can't pay their bills, and that one of their biggest bills is their electricity bill. Somehow, I guess that's something that Liberals are not concerned about at all, but I can tell you that Ontarians are, so New Democrats will work hard to make sure that there is some accountability around what the government does in terms of the electricity system, as well as the rates for households and businesses.

Auto insurance—not a word on auto insurance in that throne speech, Speaker, but let's hope that Ontarians who have been burdened with the highest auto insurance rates, regardless of the fact that we have the lowest accident rates in this province, are able to get some relief. We know that the Liberals have dragged their feet thus far. We know that they've given the insurance industry massive breaks in terms of policy changes that have allowed them to significantly reduce their claim payouts—close to \$2 billion on an annual basis over the last couple of years.

None of those savings in payouts went to the rate-payers or went to the insurance payers, the people that pay their auto insurance. None of that money went to them. Now the government's talking about, perhaps, anti-fraud measures, that perhaps those things might contribute to reductions in auto insurance bills. One of the things I think we've noticed is that this government isn't all that good with making sure that commitments to everyday people are kept up with. Commitments to big companies absolutely are, but to everyday people? Definitely not.

Another thing that was missing from the throne speech: a consumer bill of rights—once again, something for people. Who knows whether or not we will ever see the light of day of a consumer bill of rights?

The government talked during the campaign about a fee cap or cut, or some kind of way of reining in hospital parking fees. That wasn't mentioned in the throne speech.

As I mentioned earlier, the Financial Accountability Officer was absent from the throne speech, although the legislation has passed this House.

Child care has been suffering enormously. It's an issue I raised again in question period today. Some 18 communities right now are facing the closure of their

child care centres. Today I talked about Sarnia's Coronation Park Day Nursery. That's one of the 18 communities that are seeing child care centres about to close, but you know, it's only one example. There are 17 other communities where this is happening. The Premier got up and said that there have been no cuts to child care. I quickly got an email sent to me when I got back to my office after question period today, from someone who represents people in the child care sector, who said that the Ministry of Education cut child care by 10% in 2013.

Well, the Premier says there have been no cuts to child care. Child care centres are closing around the province. Oh, and then, lo and behold, a 10% reduction last year to child care. It's not progressive to pull child care centres out of communities, to leave families high and dry and families with no child care. That's definitely not a progressive thing.

They didn't talk at all about the horse racing industry in their throne speech. We know that horse racing has been devastated. We know that that devastation has rippled through rural Ontario. We know that many, many communities have seen significant job losses because of what this government did in implementing a hasty plan that was drawn up on the back of a napkin, because one of their friends in high places thought that they could make a lot of money by bringing big American casinos into Ontario. All because of that dream of the big American casino, they devastated an entire industry in rural Ontario—shameful. There's nary a word of it in the throne speech, Speaker—not even one word.

They didn't talk about health care wait times for emergencies and for surgeries which I've talked about already. I'm pretty sure that their platform talked about bringing down some of these wait times in key areas, but nothing was said about that in the throne speech. Of course, today in question period, New Democrats were holding the government to account on the wait times in the emergency rooms in London.

The Liberals promised more health links programs—not mentioned; memory clinics for people suffering from Alzheimer's and dementia—not mentioned; dental programs for kids from low-income households—I think this is a promise that has been recycled 1,000 times—not mentioned; ranked ballot choice for municipal elections, something that was a huge issue leading up to the campaign—not mentioned; nuclear refurbishments—who knows? Who knows whether we'll ever actually see a business plan for some of those activities that the Liberals intend to undertake?

Part of the problem, Speaker, is that the promises flow like honey from the Liberals, but the achievements simply don't reflect the promises. Whether it's in health care, whether it's in anti-poverty, whether it's in jobs or whether it's just basically meeting the fundamentals that Ontarians expect the government to deliver, the Liberals don't deliver.

So we New Democrats are here to do everything we can over the next couple of years to fight for the people of this province and to try to force their government to

actually make good on the multiple promises that they make during election campaigns. We're going to continue to do that work, Speaker. We're proud to have that important role, and we are going to take that role seriously because the people of this province do deserve a progressive government. They do deserve a government that makes sure that their lives are better. They do deserve a government that's more focused on the needs of everyday people than on the biggest corporations, the banks and the insurance companies. They don't have that government right now, but we are going to work really hard to make sure that the people of this province can get some results that make a positive difference in their everyday lives because as I said at the beginning, that's what New Democrats do.

People know what we stand up for, people know what we fight for, and people know that we'll be doing that work over the next couple of years. We do have an important job to do, and we will hold this government to account. When we disagree with the Premier's decisions, when we disagree with the direction of this government, we will stand up, day in and day out, and put the interests of families and Ontarians first. We will be speaking out against the Liberals' Trojan Horse budget. We will be holding this government to account for the decisions that it makes because it is New Democrats who will be the progressive voices in this House and across the province, as we always have been, notwithstanding the small moments of time when the Liberals try that little jacket on and then discard it after they form a majority government. Speaker, that's who New Democrats are, that's who we always have been, and that's who we will continue to be. We look forward to that work.

I am going to be concluding my remarks very briefly, and sharing the rest of the time with Catherine Fife, the MPP for Kitchener–Waterloo.

I'm proud of the work that New Democrats have been able to provide for the people of this province over the years. I look forward to the work that they've given us to do in the next couple of years. I know for sure that, day in and day out, we'll be in this House standing up for things that are important to the people of this province, like their health care system, their education system, good jobs and ensuring that life is made affordable for families and businesses.

1620

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** It's my pleasure to stand up to make some comments about the throne speech. My copy is fairly marked up. I've renamed this Building Expectations Up in Ontario. This remains our concern about this document: that you don't build a province up by letting the most vulnerable fall behind. This is a concern going forward with some of the promises in this piece of legislation and some of the promises that have been made during the election period as well.

The people of this province gave New Democrats the job, during the 41st Parliament of Ontario, of holding this

government to account. It's going to be a challenging job, and we're very honest about that, and we're very straightforward about it. There's no end to that responsibility, as we've seen already. I'm proud to have been re-elected by the people of Kitchener–Waterloo, to be sent back to Queen's Park and remind this government of their responsibilities and their commitments. I'm proud to stand with the people of the NDP caucus. We are a diverse group, and we're a strong group, and we have a great leader. We are going to hold this government to account and put the people's priorities first in this House going forward.

During the recently completed election campaign, the Liberal government made promise after promise after promise, and for their litany of promises they were re-elected.

I think it needs to be said that fear can be a very powerful emotion.

During this throne speech and at nearly every opportunity since then, when a Liberal has found themselves in front of a microphone, they have talked about building Ontario up. In reality, the people of this province have heard a party that is building expectations up. That is what people hear, because there is a track record that this government has to take ownership of. Part of our role in this House is to remind you of that track record so that going forward, people come first.

If this government's recent history is a predictor of the future, we'll see those expectations let down. New Democrats are here to make sure that when the Liberals don't follow through on their promises, the voices of Ontarians—to whom the Liberals made those promises—aren't left out while they're let down.

This budget was a surprising budget. I agree entirely with our leader: It is not a progressive budget. We still have outstanding concerns with it, as we did two months ago. It wasn't more than two months ago that there was no end to the list of people who were lining up to call the Liberal budget progressive, but very soon—if it hasn't already happened—it will only be Liberals who are calling this budget progressive. As our leader has said, you don't have to look at the Premier's budget for very long to realize that it is not a progressive budget.

Even Bloomberg News reported that after year one of the Wynne budget, the Liberals' own documents show the deepest freeze in two decades. They continued by adding, "A 2017 Liberal government would drop spending by the most per person since former Premier Mike Harris won election on deficit elimination in 1995."

If you look at the hospital operating budgets that have been frozen—third straight year of frozen budgets for hospitals, amounting to cuts to hospital services. When you freeze those budgets, those are cuts. The Ontario Nurses' Association has criticized this decision, stating that they remain deeply concerned by the continuing flatlining of funding of Ontario hospitals. Years of hospital underfunding have cut millions of hours of registered nurses' care, increasing the number of high-risk patient care situations.

This is the track record, so this is why we remained so concerned when the budget was presented in May. This government clearly has a revenue problem. I hope that we can all agree with that. The Liberals made promise after promise, and almost immediately after the election they were warned about the effect their plan will have on this province.

We know that Ontario's credit rating was downgraded in 2012 by Moody's. Now two out of the four major rating firms have Ontario at the bottom rung of the AA range. Standard and Poor's, which is an ironic name, is leaning toward a downgrade with a negative outlook on its rating. Moody's is leaning toward another downgrade with a negative outlook, announced last week.

I want to say why this is so important and why we care about that. Moody's stated that if the government fails to provide clear signals of its ability and willingness to implement the required measures to redress the current fiscal pressures going forward, the credit rating will go down. The Minister of Finance went out into the public at that time and said, "Banks are not freaking out. Don't worry; they're not freaking out. Corporations are not freaking out." But corporations are sitting on billions of dollars and banks, quite honestly, benefit, because they make more money out of the deal.

But this is why it's important: As government misses deficit targets, which is happening right now—the Liberal government prior to 2012-13 was on record to reduce their deficit. That is no longer happening. They were making progress; now they are not. When governments start piling on new debt, lenders will charge them more to borrow. This means governments have less money to spend on the priorities, the priorities that they have said are so important, like education, like health care, like infrastructure. We just heard this morning that in the northern part of this province, infrastructure has been neglected for so many years that you are seeing the effects of that neglect on a daily basis.

But in spite of all of this, which is quite something, the government continues to ignore the possibility of rolling back their corporate tax cuts. This is something that we should be able to work together on. Ontario is one of the lowest-taxed jurisdictions in North America. With the combination of the warnings we are receiving from credit rating agencies and a government that has made many, many election promises, we need to look seriously at eliminating those corporate tax rollbacks. You need the revenue. We are in one of the lowest corporate tax jurisdictions in the country. You will not be able to meet your deficit reduction projections; you just will not. You do not have the money to do it—or, you're going to break promises.

We would contend that the government is quite honestly living in a fantasy world where there are no consequences for their decisions. Actually, I recently read an article in the National Post by Scott Stinson. This is on the pension, because this is quite interesting. It's that now the Liberals, because they're in a majority setting—it's a bit of an adjustment for all of us, because I

was really enjoying the minority part of it. But Scott Stinson says this about what Liberals can say:

"Thus, the line in the throne speech about how the proposed Ontario Retirement Pension Plan 'guarantees financial security for those leaving the workforce'—guarantees—even though it does nothing of the sort. (Are we to believe that retirees who have nothing other than CPP benefits and whatever they amass from an ORPP plan that is not set to begin for more than two years are 'guaranteed' financial security under" this Liberal plan? He's basically stating that they can say whatever they want to say.

We take great exception with that. I feel like sometimes we're going to be doing the reality check here on this side of the House. New Democrats know that in order to spend on the critical social programs needed in Ontario, we need to be fiscally sound. Because the Liberals don't seem to understand that point, they presented a plan that threatens service cuts that we haven't seen since Mike Harris.

Every time the Liberal government brings up the Mike Harris name, which happens a lot—and quite honestly, on the 407 deal it's a valid point. But when Bill 115 was brought to this Legislature in September 2012, Mike Harris wouldn't have gone that far. He would not have squashed collective bargaining rights. He would not have brought in a piece of legislation which would eliminate the rights and voices of those who work in the education sector. For me, this throne speech really is contradictory on so many levels.

This Liberal government did campaign against austerity. I think that's a fair thing to say. Yet their own muse—now he's being called a muse—economist Don Drummond, recently warned Ontario that Kathleen Wynne's plan will likely result in the elimination of 100,000 public sector workers. The government's response has been to send out mixed messages. One day, the new chair of the Treasury Board—congratulations—says that the Liberals will hold the line on public sector spending. The next, she says that perhaps there may be raises, if there's enough money. Maybe it's not coincidental that the ratings agencies are looking at a downgrade.

**1630**

What we are hearing are inconsistencies and contradictory comments with regard to the financial and the fiscal situation of this province, which we all have a shared responsibility to take ownership for. But there has to be this collaboration, this listening that people talk about outside of question period time.

If we are to reflect back on how we got here in this province, and what the Liberal record is—obviously some big promises are contained in this throne speech, but we need to remember the Liberal track record. Unemployment has been above the national average since January 2006. Ontario is still down 300,000 manufacturing jobs. During the last session, we were quite clear that the Liberals seemed to have just totally written off manufacturing, as if we don't want to make anything

anymore, when we have the research, when we have the innovation and when those jobs need to be created.

Hydro bills have increased by 300% since the Liberals took office, and they are projected to rise another 42% over the next five years. I just had a letter right here from the Brick Brewing Co. They have informed me that their last bill went up \$75,000 over their three facilities. That's an increase of 20%. We are not going to attract manufacturing, we are not going to attract these jobs, unless we are serious about getting hydro rates under control.

We brought this issue to the people of this province during the election. We wanted to make sure that there was some streamlining and alignment around the power authorities, those who are regulating our power sources, because there are efficiencies there. If you continue to do the same thing over and over and over again, then you're just going to get the same result.

So with regard to Brick, this is a company, actually, that has invested in innovation, that has created good local jobs. Is this how our government shows commitment to an Ontario craft brewer, or to small and medium-sized manufacturers? Energy has to be on the table when you are talking about job creation and when you are talking about strengthening the economy.

As was mentioned already, the throne speech doesn't talk about some key issues that we should all be concerned about: the high hydro bills for our households and for businesses. I've mentioned the Brick, but they certainly are not alone. The Brick is not alone. There is a reason why southwestern Ontario has listened so closely to some of the voices in our caucus. It's because they like what they're hearing, because we have some solutions, and we're willing to work with them to keep those jobs in those vulnerable areas and because they have not been listened to for so long.

What else wasn't in—oh, bullet trains to southwestern Ontario. I can tell you that I would have really appreciated a bullet train this morning from Kitchener–Waterloo to Toronto, because I was hydroplaning between two 18-wheelers in very terrible weather. I was really happy to make it here. At some points, my language was not the best, but I made it here safely. But the bullet trains, or the high-speed trains, which were touted prior to this budget as being a key part of getting southwestern Ontario's economy back on track, no pun intended, but also leading to greater productivity and safer travel—that's not in the throne speech. There's no mention of it there.

Kitchener city council is holding up construction projects like the Margaret Avenue bridge until it receives direction from this province, so there is a trickle-down effect. When the provincial government doesn't follow through on promises, especially around infrastructure investment, then it has a trickle-down effect to our municipalities. It's a natural thing that happens. They're not going to move forward with that Margaret Avenue bridge until it gets a firm commitment from the provincial government.

As already mentioned, high auto insurance rates—in the election, you would knock on the door, and you talked about the big issues: the economy and jobs. But it was the issues that affect the people directly. Insurance rates—they feel it. The people of this province understand that there's a fundamental lack of fairness with regard to auto insurance rates. Despite how well people drive, despite their driving record, those insurance rates continue to go up—even as the government says, “No, they're going down.” But the lived experience of the people of this province, Mr. Speaker, is contradictory to what you hear from that side of the House.

The Financial Accountability Officer—and I want to mention this because I was on the hiring committee to get the Financial Accountability Officer in place—

**Hon. Steven Del Duca:** As was I.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** As was the member from Vaughan. As was Mr. O'Toole from—

**Interjection:** Durham.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** —Durham. Good guy—I miss him already. Just for the record, Mr. O'Toole and I did not agree with the choice of the Liberal member on that committee. We are looking forward to going forward with that process, but in the press release that came from that member, it said that it was just me. I must be a very powerful person to stop that office from coming into place, and so just for the record—for the public record—I would like to put the truth right out there on the paper.

But I look forward to moving forward with that. That legislation passed in this House. It passed in this House. I think that everyone in the province of Ontario will acknowledge that a Financial Accountability Officer is needed. You can create a President of the Treasury Board, but you need someone who is outside of that boardroom cabinet table. You need a third party who can actually make sure that financial decisions going forward have some integrity. Imagine, that it have some integrity. And you know what? I look forward to that day when that happens, because it passed in this House, and regardless of the majority status, it still needs to happen, and we're going to follow through on that.

Child care: What was really interesting in the budget, and the throne speech doesn't necessarily address it, is that there was an acknowledgement that early childhood educators and personal support workers were very deserving of a wage increase. On this side of the House, we couldn't agree more. The personal support workers, in particular, when you walk the picket line with them, because they've been fighting for some pay equity for so long, you will see that they have essentially been holding the home care system together. Meanwhile, CCACs and LHINs get another manager of communications, another public relations manager. There are three intake workers in our local CCAC in Kitchener–Waterloo and they have nine managers. And yet personal support workers, last round, got a 20-cent-an-hour increase. There's a real inconsistency around priorities.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** But they need full-time jobs.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** They need full-time jobs and they need to work in safe conditions and their work needs to be acknowledged. And yet, in the throne speech there is no true commitment to stabilizing child care. This has been a long-standing issue with this government. When full-day kindergarten rolled out in the province of Ontario, there was no accounting for the negative impact that that program would have on community-based child care. There was no acknowledgement—and we know this because they had to catch up later on and then they threw the child care into the Ministry of Education, and so you're continually catching up. But a throne speech and a new budget would be a perfect opportunity to right that wrong. The time is always right to right a wrong, I think, and why not? Why not now in 2014?

So there is a litany of things that are not contained within this throne speech, and our leader has actually mentioned already a number of them. I wanted just to talk quickly though about this concept of an “activist centre” because we're going to be hearing this a lot. There's a lot of confusion, quite honestly, about it. It sounds really good, though. It sounds promising. It sounds like perhaps something that can—a promise can be broken, though. I think that we have to remember that on this side of the House. But the promise is to govern from the centre and also with an activist sort of vein, and within the framework, of course, of deficit reduction. I would respectfully suggest that those two concepts are at odds with each other and something has got to give.

So I think that our priority on this side of the House is to make sure that the people who are those front-line workers—and that's who we talked about during the election. We talked about the nurses and the personal support workers and the ECEs and the education workers, because there really isn't an acknowledgement that in the health care sector, for instance, where almost 20% of that funding goes to the top echelons of power and bureaucracy, which continues to grow at the expense and the cost of front-line services. We're going to fight for those people, because we see them as key people in the health care system and in the education system. I think it has to be said that this government does not have a strong record of ensuring that the people who are actually making a difference in the health care system—the people who are going into someone's home and helping them get their food and taking care of them, those personal support workers are the people who need to be supported. When we see hospital budgets being frozen for three consecutive years, you have to wonder who's going to go, because someone's going to have to go.

1640

I was actually really pleased: My local hospital just let go, I think, two vice-presidents. I guess the question remains: How many vice-presidents does a hospital need? I think that's an outstanding question, but I'm sure one of us will come up with a good idea about it.

As I mentioned, though, this throne speech, *Building Expectations Up in Ontario*, has some great inconsistencies to it. I was pleased, actually, to hear some of the

comments from my colleagues in the PC caucus, but I just want to give you a couple of examples. Many of you know that worker safety in the province of Ontario is an ongoing issue, and I'm going to be working very closely with our critic on this, because two people died in the last two weeks from falling. This is not a new phenomenon. These are tragedies and they are preventable accidents. There is a report on the books that the Liberal government had requested back in 2010, the Dean report, which called for mandatory fall protection training—not just a poster, but some actual training. Yet in the throne speech it says that you are going to follow through on protecting workers while supporting businesses. I'd have to say that this is an ongoing issue and a concern for me.

You also mentioned that through partnerships with businesses and persons with disabilities, your government will work to increase the number of employment opportunities for Ontarians of all abilities, yet as the AODA standards have rolled out in this province, there have been great inconsistencies. Our own member from Parkdale–High Park had to put a freedom-of-information request to the government to find out how many businesses in this province have failed to meet the compliance standards. Yet here in the speech it says you're going to follow through on that as well.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** They're building new buildings without doing it.

**Ms. Catherine Fife:** Exactly. What a missed opportunity. The time to make a building accessible, so people can go to work, so people can gain access to employment opportunities, is as the building is being constructed, not after the fact, with a deadline of 2025.

There is of course worker safety, transit, youth jobs. Some of this stuff I think that we can actually feel a little bit good about. We fought for the youth employment strategy in the 2013 budget. We fought for the auto insurance, and we're going to continue to fight for that. We definitely fought for the five-day home care guarantee. We saw money directly flow because of our advocacy in those budget negotiations, if you will. I think it needs to be said that there are still opportunities to actually influence this budget.

The outstanding question that remains is: Will it still be the same budget, given the credit ratings that have come forward? Because if it is, we know what the future is going to be like. We know that you are going to have to make cuts and you know that we are going to fight those cuts, especially if they affect front-line workers.

There is a lot of work to be done in this province. The revenue problem that we have in this province stems from job creation, but there are savings, as we've indicated, in the health care sector and the energy sector, to find some alignment, to find some savings. Those opportunities do exist, and we are certainly—I have to remain hopeful, because we're looking at four years. So the tone and the tenor of this budget negotiation will be very interesting, I think. I'm certainly hopeful, and I know, as the caucus is as well, that we can influence the priorities of people in this House going forward. That's

our commitment. The people of this province gave us that job, and we're going to follow through.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I recognize the member for Northumberland–Quinte West on a point of order.

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** Speaker, I just want to correct the record. During my deliberation earlier on today, I believe that one time I said, “June 2012.” It should really be June 2014.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very much. Further debate?

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** I am deeply honoured and humble to rise today for the first time in this Legislature as the new member representing Kingston and the Islands to speak to you on the throne speech. But first please allow me to give you some personal reflections on our great riding, a few tidbits on my past experience and how this has framed my standing here in the Legislature today.

The residents of Kingston and the Islands have put their trust in me to work hard and to act with integrity on their behalf. I accept this responsibility wholeheartedly and without reservation.

In addition, I will always be cognizant of and eternally grateful for the assistance, the energy, the imagination and the faith of my family, friends and the numerous campaign volunteers who worked with me. But for all of you, I would not be standing here today.

I would like to welcome to the Legislature—a warm welcome, in fact—my daughter Linnaea, my father and my partner, Chris, who have come from Kingston to be with me today. Chris, I owe you my eternal thanks for your unwavering support, your wisdom and your razor-sharp wit. No political campaign should be without a Chris. I couldn't think of a better person to join me on this journey. We are so blessed to have you in our lives.

I would also like to thank Dan Couture, who's up above us. Dan, can you stand up? When I told Dan that I was running back in December, he said to me plain and simple, and instantly, “Sophie, you will win.” So thank you for that support.

I would also like to thank Sam Laldin. Sam has also travelled from Kingston to be with us today.

*Interruption.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I apologize; I have to interrupt. We appreciate the presence in the galleries of our guests, but they're not allowed to participate in the debate, unfortunately.

So I'll return to the member for Kingston and the Islands.

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I was born and raised in Kingston, and I ask that you indulge me as I speak of my immeasurable love and affection for this great riding and its people, as we can see by evidence of those who are here today. Kingston and the Islands is a unique and truly beautiful place, situated at the confluence of natural waterways where the limestone meets the Shield.

We Kingstonians are proud of our heritage and culture, as illustrated by our many festivals, historic buildings and tourist attractions, and we are very protective of our natural environment. Needless to say, we are extremely happy about our 30-minute rush hour.

*Interjections.*

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** Sorry, folks.

I invite you all to visit our city and her islands and bask in a welcome that will make you feel as if you have arrived at home. Beyond our numerous picturesque vistas and rich historical haunts, I cannot describe in sufficient terms the great admiration that I have for the spirited people of this community.

**1650**

The makeup of our residents is unique and diverse. Consider the staff and students of Queen's University, St. Lawrence College and the Royal Military College. Then consider the soldiers, families and support staff at the Canadian Forces base. We have three acclaimed hospitals, vibrant business communities and artistic communities, world-famous restaurants and, of course, as you all know, too many prisons to mention. We also have Ojibwa Mohawk and Cree First Nations who call Kingston home.

Kingstonians are not afraid to fight for what they believe in, a fact that could not be better exemplified than when the federal government closed the prison farms. I applaud the activists who are part of that continuing protest, some of whom still hold a vigil every Monday evening, rain or shine, sleet or hail.

I would also like to say a few words today about my predecessor, John Gerretsen. John, I thank you. Your amazing spirit, your generosity—extended to me and to others—and your dedication to good governance will not be forgotten. Every day that I have been here thus far, your former colleagues have approached me and spoken of your outstanding commitment to our community. You have cared deeply for the underprivileged, and there are numerous examples of your good work and good heart in every corner of our riding.

Since this is the first day of the 41st Parliament of Ontario, I thought it apropos to speak a little bit about the past, about the future and about the journey that we in this room will share together. Seven months ago, I would not have imagined myself within these walls, never mind addressing my peers with this maiden speech. I feel truly blessed to be here. Over the course of time, however seasoned I become in deliberating the daily affairs of the province and our riding, I will never lose sight of the privilege of service that has been bestowed upon me by my community.

In my seven years of serving the federal interests of Kingstonians in the offices of the Honourable Peter Milliken, the former Speaker of the House, and the current MP, Ted Hsu, I had the good fortune to learn about the concerns and aspirations of our residents through what feels like the lens of a microscope.

At the same time, I became very mindful of the fact that we, as elected representatives, are charged with



acting in the best interests of all people, regardless of race, colour, economic background, gender, sexual orientation or political affiliation. In the widest sense, I believe that this speech from the throne embodies this complexity and responsibility profoundly.

In embracing fairness, accountability and collaboration, this government seeks to build trust and consensus. This in turn leads to greater political engagement and the empowerment of constituents. In this model, government can and will be a force for the good.

Each election is a repository of the electorate's hopes. Looking around this chamber today and last week, I think it is clear that Ontarians want more women in politics, they want more diversity in politics and they want a steady, progressive approach to managing all aspects of the financial and social economy.

In reintroducing the budget, already tabled in May—a budget widely praised at the time—this government has reaffirmed its commitment to an inclusive and innovative agenda, an agenda that will inspire our youth through opportunity, an agenda that will attract new businesses and new jobs to Ontario, an agenda that will invest in the next generation of transit and transportation infrastructure, an agenda that seeks to alleviate the causes of poverty and ill health, and, most importantly, an agenda firmly focused on fiscal responsibility.

On a personal level, I was inspired and I saw many others inspired by Premier Wynne's leadership. Her energy, her integrity, her positive approach and her unwavering commitment to building Ontario up steadily and sustainably without leaving any of its people behind clearly resonated with the wishes of a majority in this province. I share her vision of a fair and just Ontario. Perhaps more than anything, and I heard this on the doorstep time and time again, there's a yearning for public servants who live up to certain standards of good governance, like even-handedness and commitment to a wider public and community good. This expectation is surely a very reasonable one and it's one I wholeheartedly support and will strive to embody.

In the folklore of the Ojibway, one of Ontario's first peoples, whose land we share, this is the time of seven fires, a time of choice—a fork in the road, if you will. There are many challenges that lie ahead: food security, resource limits, maintaining clean air and water, poverty reduction, how we care for the aged, the sick and the mentally ill. The seeds of change planted in the way we govern today and in the investments we make in our people tomorrow will help our children and our children's children to overcome these challenges. Had my mother lived to see this day, she would have been so proud. Even though she passed away more than 10 years ago, her voice was heard through the people I canvassed, who knew her as a respected physiotherapist. It was in caring for her in her last year that I actually returned from my business life in Toronto to Kingston, so in some abstract sense it is because of her that I find myself back here in the provincial capital today. If it is true that the departed live in the hearts of those who love them—

thank you. Sorry. I wasn't going to do this, but I'm really tired. If it is true that the departed live in the hearts of those who love them, then surely she is here with me today.

Please allow me to borrow the words of Linda Ellis in her poem "The Dash" when she speaks of the punctuation mark between the date of our birth and the date of our death on a tombstone—and forgive me if you've heard it before.

For it matters not, how much we own,  
the cars ... the house ... the cash.  
What matters is how we live and love  
and how we spend our dash....

So, when your eulogy is being read,  
with your life's actions to rehash ...  
would you be proud of the things they say  
about how you spent YOUR dash?

I commit to this chamber that I will use my time in this great place steeped in tradition and history, this part of my own dash, working hard and never losing sight of how and why I got here. I will always feel gratitude to those who inspired me and helped me along the way and to the residents of Kingston and the Islands.

#### 1700

When it comes time to leave this earth in whatever fashion, fancy cars, opulent homes—the stuff that some work so hard to gather—matters not. I believe that there is no greater legacy to leave behind than to have made a positive difference in the lives of others. That is what this journey is all about for me, and this is exactly the sentiment I see echoed in every aspect of this throne speech: a sincere wish to make a positive difference in the lives of others.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to making that difference together with each and every one of you: with my colleagues on both sides of this floor, with the leaders of the opposition, with the Clerks in the House, with the staff in these great halls. I make a commitment to all of you that I will do my best to serve the people of Kingston and the Islands to the best of my ability. And of course I will work alongside our Premier to do whatever I can to make sure that this throne speech is carried out in this House and in our constituency offices to the best of my abilities.

I thank you. Je vous remercie tous du fond de mon coeur. Meegwetch.

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

**Mr. Steve Clark:** Mr. Speaker, through you to the member for Kingston and the Islands, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election. I know I had an opportunity a couple of weeks ago to meet you for the first time at the Ontario Volunteer Service Awards. I have to tell you, Speaker, that the speech she made here, speaking from the heart, is exactly the way she was that night speaking to volunteers in her community. She's an extremely genuine member, in the

time that I got to know her that one time, and in the chamber since then. It's so nice that your family is here, and some of your supporters.

I have to tell you that I think one of the great qualities that you express is similar to a number of members'. I know that the member for Ottawa South and myself—we were all working in a constituency office prior to our election. You've had some great mentors in the two members of Parliament you have worked for. I'm so glad that you mentioned your other mentor, your predecessor, John Gerretsen, who served this Legislature well for 19 years. I also had the pleasure of serving as a mayor at the same time that he was, so he gave me a lot of advice. Some of his advice when I was elected to this place I didn't take, for a number of reasons, but I always found that he was a good friend. I was always able to speak to him about issues, in sometimes a non-partisan way. When we couldn't speak that way, we at least respected each other's opinions.

I do want to tell you that you live in a beautiful city. I know many of my constituents go to Kingston and the Islands to work each day. Some of your constituents do play the odd time in Leeds–Grenville. I just want to say that it's very refreshing to have you come and speak from the heart, and I wish you well in your time in the Legislative Assembly.

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

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Bienvenue, Sophie. Welcome to Queen's Park. You know what? We're here. You're going to be sitting as a part of the majority government for the next four years, possibly a little bit more. It wasn't that long ago that I was sitting in the back corner over here and I was wondering, "What the heck am I doing here?" It wasn't that long ago. But you know what? I was really pleased to hear some of your comments that you were making where you are looking to build your own bridges. It's something that I pride myself on: working with people from the opposition, people within my own caucus and within government. You're going to enjoy the roller-coaster ride that you're going to be participating in over the next couple of years. Embrace it, because it's going to go by in the blink of an eye.

I can really relate to a lot of the sentiments that you brought up in regard to your mother. I lost my mum just about a year before I got elected. Mum was very much politically inclined, and she would be sitting here with me. So listen to your mum. She's going to be telling you a lot of things—some good, some you won't like. But listen to her. Also, look at building your own bridges.

There's one thing, speaking as someone who doesn't follow his own advice: Don't forget your loved ones at home. Make sure you find time for them, because they're the ones who permit you to do the job that you're doing here. They keep you grounded, they keep you solid and they make sure that you enjoy the job that you're doing here.

From our caucus to you, that was a wonderful speech. Bienvenue. Je suis encouragé de te voir ici et puis je suis encouragé de bâtir mes liens avec toi. Bienvenue.

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

**Mr. Granville Anderson:** I don't know how I can follow such eloquence and such passion by the member from Kingston and the Islands. It was an excellent speech. She spoke from the heart, and she spoke with honesty and integrity and compassion. That's what we believe in as Liberals. It's refreshing.

All the members in this House are here with good intentions and here to serve the people of their community, and they are to be commended for that. We have a difference of opinion, but at the end of the day we are all here to serve the people who send us here.

Again, we have put forward a budget, which I believe in very strongly, which represents the people, especially in Durham. I was elected based on this budget, and I was supported by dozens of young people, because this budget presented them with hope and an opportunity to succeed and to develop the skills they need to compete in the 21st century—good jobs, good-paying jobs, good education and all the good things that are required to build a family and to build Ontario up.

The Premier was right when she said we build Ontario up. That's what we do, and that's what this budget does. That's what the pension plan does. It helps people who are less fortunate. I've seen it.

I went to one particular house and there was a gentleman who said, "Make sure you don't take my Trillium benefits away." I wasn't even quite sure what that was then, and he showed me a cheque for \$91. It was only \$91, but that's what he depended on. He also showed me a bill for \$24 that he couldn't afford to pay. If he had a proper pension, I am sure he would be able to pay and he would be able to survive.

As Liberals, that's what we believe in, and that's the Ontario I believe in.

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

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I, too, would like to congratulate the new member from Kingston and the Islands on her election to Queen's Park. I've been here just over two and a half years, and it is really a great honour to serve your riding in this very historic building and place.

Ontario is a great place to live. We think, as Progressive Conservatives, it could be better. We'll see over the next four years just how much of this throne speech we will see put forth.

**1710**

Now, I was also glad to hear her talk about John Gerretsen, somebody who had great respect in all parties, I believe, in this Legislature. John was an easygoing, good person to talk to and get some insight from. My days at Queen's—Kingston is a great city. I enjoyed Kingston immensely, and try and get back every year, actually, for homecoming. It's great to see the youth, how optimistic they are. It's our role here to make sure

we provide that reason for optimism, so that when they get out there are good jobs for them. That is a real concern. I have three children who also went to Queen's, and they're out looking for jobs. We want to make sure they're there for them. Ontario was always a place where people came to look for good jobs. We want to make sure we continue with that in the future.

Kingston also has the benefit of a lot of great public institutions. You've got St. Lawrence College as well as Queen's; KGH; the military base, RMC. So it's a source of lots of public income, maybe shielded from some of the effects that other places in the province have seen over the last number of years.

So look across the province and try to make decisions that benefit all of Ontario, not just cities. Congratulations and good luck.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes our time for questions and comments, and I look to the member for Kingston and the Islands to reply.

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** Thank you, everyone, for the wonderful comments and the reception today. I have to say, when I got here this morning and sat here in this room and listened to some of the noise, I was not sure what I'd gotten myself into, but alas, here we are. I do—

*Interjection.*

**Ms. Sophie Kiwala:** We will be nice, yes. I do look forward to working with all of you.

My first political job was with Peter Milliken, the Speaker of the House, as we all know. I respected his nonpartisan stance. I understood what it meant to serve all constituents and have that role be utterly sacred. We were there for the people. We were there to find out what was going on in their lives, what was going wrong, how we could help, and politics didn't play a role. So I am probably one of the least political people who was running in our campaign locally, but I value the Liberal principles to help others, and I am very grateful for your words today in the House, in the Legislature. I enormously appreciate the warmth that has been extended to me and to John. I have so many wonderful words, but particularly to my family. You have all been amazing.

I'm sorry that my daughter Helene and my daughter Jennifer couldn't be here, and my brother. You've been there for me. You've helped me along. You've been there when I wasn't doing so well, when I was tired. You brought food. You played a role that was very, very important in my being here today, so eternal thanks to everyone.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I too would like to begin by saying thank you very much to the residents of Nipissing. It is a great honour to have spent two and a half years in this Legislature representing them, and I do look forward to the next four years, having been returned to this Legislature. So I do want to say thank you to everybody in Nipissing who placed their confidence in me.

My office on Main Street is always open and I look forward to good dialogue. My email is always accessible

and I look forward to hearing from the constituents. As always, we will continue to open our office in Mattawa, at city hall in Mattawa, the last Friday of every month, with our bilingual staff to take care of the people of Mattawa so they don't have to take the long drive, especially in the winter, into North Bay.

I want to begin today by reading something to this Legislature. This is a quote: "Ontario faces more severe economic and fiscal challenges than most Ontarians realize." The second part of the quote is, "Unless policy-makers act swiftly and boldly to prevent such an outcome, Ontario faces a series of deficits that would undermine the province's economic and social future."

Those aren't my words. Those aren't even from a PC press release either. In fact you can find them posted on the Liberal government's own website. Those are words from Don Drummond in the report that was commissioned by the Liberals and released in 2012: "Unless policy-makers act swiftly and boldly to prevent such an outcome, Ontario faces a series of deficits that would undermine the province's economic and social future."

Sadly, what we've seen since the Drummond report is a series of increasing deficits. If you look back to that year, the deficit was \$9.2 billion. It grew to \$11.3 billion the following year. It has grown to \$12.5 billion this year. This is the wrong direction and a very serious problem in terms of a deteriorating balance sheet that we have now found in Ontario.

Before the election, I had spoken about some of the real numbers in Ontario and the fact that it has been more than half a year in Ontario since we've actually seen any real numbers. I'm including the fall economic statement, and I'm including the budget.

Let me explain. It was last October when the finance minister failed to deliver the long-range assessment of Ontario's fiscal environment. He is obligated to do so under the government's own Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act. So I asked him in question period on October 21—I'll read you what I asked him: "Minister, the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act ... states, 'Within two years after each provincial election, the minister shall release a long-range assessment of Ontario's fiscal environment.' Minister, you're two weeks late. When will you be releasing the assessment" that you're legally required to release?

That was a question I asked last October. The answer was, "We have a fall economic statement that's coming out shortly. We've produced first-quarter results that achieve our opportunities and that show the success we've had to date." So he said, "They'll be in the fall economic statement."

However, when the fall economic statement came out, there were no medium-term outlook numbers included. In addition, individual ministry expense numbers were not listed for 2016 or 2017, just the total program spending, which magically falls in 2017 to zero and to a balanced budget, but there are no numbers in there to substantiate it. You have a number for revenue and a

number for expenses, but you don't see any line items in there.

Then in February of 2014, the minister announced he would not be presenting the third-quarter results on February 15, which, once again, the government is required to do under the Fiscal Transparency and Accountability Act.

This is very discouraging because more than half a year—it's coming up closer to a year in the fall, of course, since any actual numbers have been presented to this Legislature that will show whether the province is indeed on track to balance the budget by 2017-18.

As you know, I presented in this Legislature recently items that were disclosed from what were previously confidential documents between the Ministry of Finance and the Premier, and the Ministry of Finance and cabinet. I'll again read a couple of sentences which tell us why we don't have all of those numbers to show how they would balance.

For 2014-15 and 2015-16, the government is "not on track to meet ... budget deficit targets." This is provided by the Ministry of Finance's internal document of March 2013.

**1720**

Shortly after this document was given to the government, the Ministry of Finance came out with a news release that said that the government is on track to meet the steadily declining deficit targets outlined in the 2012 budget, to achieve a balance by 2017-18. So while the government was told by their own Ministry of Finance one thing—that they're not on track to balance—they came out and told the public the complete opposite of that—that they indeed are on track—by steadily declining deficits. But the deficits aren't declining. They're growing, from \$9.2 billion to \$11.3 billion to \$12.5 billion.

We will continue to bring these items to light, because these are so important. When you see the financial news that is out there about Ontario, you'll begin to understand why these various rating agencies are coming up with these negative announcements for Ontario. They don't have the numbers from the government either, and the documents that they do have show that we have increasing deficits, and they show the trouble that we're in.

So when you see a headline in the Financial Post on June 13, the day after the election—now, all of the rating agencies were respectful and during the writ period never made a comment. I think that was fair of them. It's our job as the opposition to bring those facts to light, which we attempted to do, but on the very day after, on June 13, in the Financial Post, there's a headline stating "BlackRock Says It's on 'High Alert' for Ontario Debt Downgrade after Wynne Victory."

I'll read you the sentence from the Post: "We're on high alert that S&P will downgrade Ontario," said Aubrey Basdeo, head of Canadian fixed-income in Toronto at BlackRock Inc., the world's biggest money manager." Speaking of the Premier: "She's front-loading the deficit or the total debt in anticipation future years

will benefit from stronger growth. They're just looking at the raw numbers and they're seeing a deteriorating financial balance sheet."

So because they see the deficit increasing, and they see no evidence of balancing a budget, BlackRock said they're on high alert for Ontario. This was the day after the election. They finally ended with, "It's going to be a challenge for the province to hit their out-year spending." The province will need to issue more bonds as a result, and what does that mean? That means borrowing will cost more money. We need to borrow more. Our interest rates already, as you've heard from many speakers, are the third-highest.

So what you saw this week, as well, was Moody's, another credit rating agency, coming out with a downgrade on their outlook. Now, that's very serious. The day after the budget, May 2, Moody's came out with a credit watch. During the election period, they did not break their silence. BlackRock came out immediately, and now Moody's is out with a downgrade of the outlook. Speaker, I will say to you that that is foreshadowing the S&P downgrade that will certainly come the week of July 14 or 21, once we get to this point.

Again, Speaker, I bring this up because those who are in the know fully understand that there is no balanced budget coming from this government. We saw it in the throne speech. We see it in the budget that's about to be re-presented. Norman Levine of Portfolio Management said it best when he said, "They have not articulated in any way, shape or form how they would get there." I think he says it best.

Speaker, there is no mention of the cuts that will be coming from this government, but I can tell you, when I speak on behalf of the 40 nurses and health care professionals who were terminated in North Bay, and 290 who were terminated province-wide during the election—it was announced that 60 beds in my hometown of North Bay in the brand new hospital would be closing. Some 34 more people lost their jobs. Last week, eight teachers were laid off at the Near North District School Board. All of these things are a result of not being able to balance the budget. That's why we saw 39 fewer days of cataract surgeries last year. That's why we saw diabetes testing strips cancelled. That's why we saw physiotherapy for seniors being cancelled. It's because there is no balanced budget, and there is no balanced budget in the forecast.

I've heard others here talk about the gas plant. I do want to speak very briefly about it—only in the context of the throne speech, Speaker; I'm not about to relive that battle today. In the throne speech, we heard the Premier's words, through the Lieutenant Governor, that they're looking forward to the final report. Well, I take that as a signal that there will be no more hearings. Certainly with a majority government, we're never going to see another document. We fought so hard through a lot of tremendous battles to get our hands on, first, the 36,000 documents, followed by 20,000 documents, which grew up to 300,000, where we learned that it wasn't \$40

million, it was \$1.1 billion. But all those documents that we got, especially in estimates as well—I fear that those days are over.

Estimates taught us through the documents that we received that there is no plan to balance the budget. The Ontario Northland is another one. When the government announced they were having a fire sale of Ontario Northland because they would save \$265 million, I stood up that day and said there's not a chance you're going to have any savings. It took almost a year—in fact, it took a little over a year—to prove that there were no savings. We called in the Auditor General. The NDP joined me in the vote. We won the vote. We called the Auditor General in. We looked at the documents that were previously confidential and saw that it would cost—cost—\$820 million to sell Ontario Northland, not save \$265 million.

So when I heard the throne speech that said “bring the final report for the gas plant hearings,” I was saddened by that part. That was code for, “There are no more documents. You're never going to see what really are the underpinnings.”

That brings to mind MaRS, when the scandal that broke during the campaign—we learned that the purchase of the MaRS building, the bailout of a private American real estate developer, may cost the taxpayers \$500 million. There was no mention in the throne speech, but they need to tell us how much this is going to cost.

During the campaign, we did learn that there would be a \$45.7-million shortfall in operating costs because MaRS would be running in the red. We do know that there was \$317 million in payments. We did learn that the government planned to break leases throughout Toronto and move people into there, government offices into there. We did learn that the \$106 million would be spent in fit-up costs and the province would be paying \$11 million a year for 40 years—that's \$440 million—in amortization costs above and beyond the \$317-million bailout.

But what we learned afterwards from whistleblowers—we haven't heard much about this—was that there was a \$5.2-million swap breakage cost and consulting fees to the government's consulting for those 30 days of work. We also learned there is a debt service guarantee that was activated. We want to know to whom. How much is the government on the hook for? We also learned that interest rates on overdue rent were payable. Again, from whom and how much?

These are the kinds of things I would have hoped we would hear more details about. Instead, we heard sort of loose guidelines about an ORPP, an Ontario Retirement Pension Plan. Again, we did learn throughout the campaign that 86% of small businesses are opposed to this; 53% say they will reduce staff. But that shouldn't come as a surprise to the government, because one of those formerly confidential documents that we received was from the Ministry of Finance. Let me quote from the Ministry of Finance documents talking about this payroll tax. What you will receive as a result of it are “lower

business investment, relocation of business to other jurisdictions, reduced work effort, out-migration of people.”

**1730**

This is your own Ministry of Finance telling you that if you go ahead with this ORPP, this Ontario Registered Pension Plan, you will lose 150,000 jobs in the province of Ontario. That's the number from your finance ministry if you match the CPP. To put it in their exact wording, you will lose 18,000 jobs in Ontario for every \$2 billion you take out of the system in this tax. So that's why your own ministry said to the Premier, in a confidential memo, that you're going to have lower business investment, relocation of business, reduced work effort and lost jobs by the tens of thousands. That is your own ministry's advice to you in saying, “Don't do this; this is very harmful to Ontario.”

I do want to conclude with a bright light, if I can call it that. This is the billion-dollar commitment to the Ring of Fire. Now sadly, there's no time frame to the Ring of Fire. There was an announcement about forming the development company.

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Good news

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** It is good news. However, it is the fifth time you've announced this, so we're hoping that maybe this time it might stick. I am going to hold out good hope. I had a conversation with the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. I said, “Minister, you are here for four years. This cannot wait another five years of no activity.” I've been to the Ring of Fire five times. I've watched it deteriorate to what it is and I said, “I pledge to help you in any way. I will help you in any way because we need to have this to kick start the economic activity in the north.”

The bottom line, Speaker, is that spending is going up, revenue is going down, and both are heading the wrong way. Spending is going up, revenue is down. The Bank of Canada told us that we will not make our revenue targets in Ontario for 2013-14 and next year. Speaker, that's very concerning to us because the throne speech—and the budget that we have coming next week—as they've told us, it will be the same budget—has \$5.7 billion in additional spending. That is worrisome because we have a \$12.5-billion deficit this year, and this additional \$5.7 billion in spending, that's not just this year's spending. This is permanent. This is baked into every budget going forward; that's what's so concerning. As I think the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke called it earlier—a dichotomy.

We have great aspiration to provide all of these services and no plan to balance the budget. An offer to balance the budget, an aspiration to balance the budget, but both go in diametrically opposed directions. So you've got the Bank of Canada telling us that our revenue is going down in Ontario, and the Premier and the finance minister telling us that spending is going up. They're both going the wrong way. The hole in the middle is getting larger and people are getting more concerned. As you've heard others say, interest is our

third-largest ministry, if it was a ministry, and, Speaker, that's where we need to draw some attention. Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak today.

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

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** First of all, I'd like to thank the residents of Niagara Falls, Fort Erie and Niagara-on-the-Lake for giving me the honour and the privilege to come back for the 41st Parliament. And also, I know the members who are here and the Speaker—Speaker, I know you'd like this as well: The 'stache is back, so I'm really pleased for that. I know a lot of people are.

I'd like to congratulate all parties, the new MPPs who have gotten elected. It is a thrill and an honour to be here, and I'm really looking forward to listening to the comments from the other newly elected MPPs. I know I enjoyed my 20 minutes when I got elected, so I'd like to congratulate the MPP who spoke earlier.

I want to get a couple of points in about my riding, which I believe weren't addressed.

There is no allocation of funding or a firm commitment for year-round GO train service to Niagara Falls. I've spoken on this a number of times.

There's no mention of support of the horse racing industry or the horse racing partnership. When you take a look at the horse racing industry in Fort Erie, they're down to 37 days. Their races are four, five or sometimes six horses. You watch Woodbine yesterday, with 30,000 people there, where they had 13 races of 10, 11, 12, 13 horses. We need that in Fort Erie. There are 1,000 jobs there that can be taken care of, just like that. When you talk about the highest unemployment in Niagara, we have to do that. We need to bring the slots back to Fort Erie. That's another 250 jobs.

They're important things, easy things that can be done by the Liberal government.

Then you take a look at the GO service to Niagara. In the Niagara area, we have the Falls. Some 11 million tourists come to Niagara Falls every year. They need to have GO service so they can come. Take a look at the 12 mayors who are supporting GO. They're saying it's a game-changer. The regional council is saying that—

**Hon. Jeff Leal:** Jim Bradley supports it. What about Jim?

**Mr. Wayne Gates:** I would love to meet with Jim. He knows. Me and Jim go back a long time.

I tell you, we have to get GO to Niagara, and the Liberals can do it.

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

**M<sup>me</sup> Marie-France Lalonde:** Bonjour, monsieur le Président. J'aimerais remercier les gens d'Orléans pour m'avoir élue et mon prédécesseur, M. McNeely, pour les 11 ans de service qu'il a faits au sein de cette Chambre.

J'aimerais mentionner à mon collègue que nous avons subi et vécu la pire récession depuis 88 ans. De ce fait, tout comme le gouvernement fédéral, nous avons dû faire un investissement majeur et faire des partenariats pour aider l'économie de notre province, ce qui a contribué

effectivement à une augmentation de notre dette. Mais j'aimerais souligner à M. le Président que notre dette est très comparable au gouvernement fédéral.

Nous avons et nous allons maintenir, dans notre discours du trône, une affirmation de balancer le budget pour 2017-2018 en favorisant une approche d'investissement dans l'infrastructure et dans le transport tout en continuant en partenariat avec les entreprises. Cet investissement va nous permettre de faire de l'emploi aujourd'hui et dans les années à venir. Merci.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments. The member for Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and, again, congratulations to you on your appointment. I know you'll do a fine job and represent the whole House well.

It's a pleasure to stand and bring some comments in regard to my colleague from Nipissing, our finance critic for the PC Party. One thing with Vic is that he does everything in a thorough fashion. He does his homework, he's always prepared, and he brings facts to the table. In his dissertation, he gave a lot of details.

He talked about the pension plan. If they implement this—I heard at the front door, every day of the campaign, from small business, medium business and large business that they will be losing jobs. Some of them may move, in fact. I think he used the number of 150,000 potential jobs we're going to lose in this province, at a time when we're already way above the average of what we should have.

He talked about the Ring of Fire—again, something that could, in my mind, probably bring us back to being a manufacturing sector. It could bring our economy back. They've had their 10 years in government to implement this, and we're still no further ahead. In fact, Cliffs, as we all know, walked away last fall.

MaRS, a \$500-million scandal: After the gas plants, after eHealth, after Ornge, just when you thought it couldn't get any worse, now they're talking \$500 million—potentially a billion dollars—that they're going to waste on yet another boondoggle.

He talked about interest debt. The third-largest expenditure of this government is interest on our debt. Every single dollar that we pay is not going to front-line health care. It's not going to the disadvantaged and those people who don't have a voice. It's not going to people with special needs. It's not going to Community Living and kids with mental disabilities. It's not going to people who need those strips for diabetes.

That credit rating has already come out and said that there's a warning that it may get downgraded. That's going to add another half a billion to the interest payments. That not only affects us, but it also affects hospitals. It affects school boards. It affects municipalities in the amount of interest they're paying.

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Spending is going up; revenue is going down. It's heading the wrong way, and it continues to be

Liberalnomics. We can't afford it, Mr. Speaker. We need to make a change.

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

**Mr. Percy Hatfield:** It is indeed an honour to be representing the people in my constituency again from Windsor–Tecumseh. Congratulations to all and to all the new MPPs, those who have spoken today, and the members of my caucus, the new members from Sudbury, Oshawa, and of course Windsor West.

The member from Nipissing was talking about his concerns about the financial future of this province. I must say the member from Nipissing is a man of high integrity who speaks very well on his critic's portfolio on matters of high finance. He has some questions about the election promises, the expensive promises, and how the government is going to pay for them, as do we on this side of the House.

When I was going door to door, Speaker, people would say, "Why didn't you support the budget?" I said, "Well, the last time the NDP supported the budget, there was a handful of promises they made to us as New Democrats for that support. They haven't kept them. If they can't keep two or three promises, how do we expect the Liberals to keep more than 70 new promises?" So that was easy to explain.

I believe my leader earlier today talked about the Trojan Horse budget. It is a Trojan Horse budget, or a budget of smoke and mirrors, if you will. Ontario is a land of great promise, but we should not become known as the land of broken promises, and I'm afraid that's where we're headed with the many promises that were made in this budget.

I know my friends in the Conservatives like to say they've sprinkled some pixie dust across Ontario in order to get the majority government. Well, you can fool some of the people some of the time, but you can't fool anyone west of London, obviously, because it hasn't worked with all the pixie dust that was sprinkled around the province.

I would like to talk more about harness racing. I know I'm almost out of time, but please. We only get 13 racing dates in our part of the province, and we need a lot more than that. I'd like to speak to that more at a future date.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes the time for questions and comments. We return to the member for Nipissing for his response.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** I do want to thank the member from Niagara Falls and the member from Windsor–Tecumseh both for your passionate speeches, especially about the racing days. You have 37 days; you have 13 racing days. In Sudbury, they have zero. It's gone now. That sector is gone. The jobs are gone. The revenue to the city is gone. So I do want to thank you for your commentary about that.

To the member from Ottawa–Orléans, thank you very much for your thoughtful comments. Now, I know it's your first shot at the talking points, but I have to say to you one thing: Blaming the recession and blaming the

fedts: Those are yesterday's talking points. When you think about the fact that we have a \$12.5-billion—

*Interjections.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I would ask the government members to come to order. The member for Nipissing has the floor, and I'm going to give him a few extra seconds.

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** When you look across the country and you see that every other province, collected, with the federal government—that their deficits combined are a fraction of our one deficit of—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Victor Fedeli:** You can't shake your head "no" when the answer is yes. Look it up. When you add up all their deficits and you add up the federal—almost balanced—you will find that.

You also talked about the fact that you are on target to balance the budget, but again I bring your attention—and when I'm here tomorrow, I'll forward the ministry documents to you that say you are not on track to balance the budget. I'll dig up the actual confidential documents and I'll send them over to you. You will see.

To the member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, I thank you for your always thoughtful comments.

Speaker, thank you for the extra seconds to make up for the interference we had.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Further debate?

**M. Gilles Bisson:** J'aimerais débiter en disant, premièrement, merci au monde de Timmins–Baie James qui m'a rapporté ici à l'Assemblée pour la septième fois. C'est quelque chose dont je suis très reconnaissant et je veux dire au monde de mon comté un gros remerciement.

I just want to say at the beginning, before I get into the throne speech debate, that I want to thank the people of Timmins–James Bay for having brought me back here for the seventh time. I appreciate it, I understand it, and I am humbled. I will continue to do the work that I have to do in order to represent the people of Timmins–James Bay.

That being said, I've got to say something happened along the way to the Legislature from the last budget. The government—I was paying attention, as were all of us, during this election process—was quite interesting. The funny thing about Liberals is, when it comes to wanting to run in an election, they never want to sound like a Liberal; they want to sound like a New Democrat. So they campaign like New Democrats, and once they get over here, we start to find out that they're really a bunch of Tories in a hurry.

If you look at what is going on through this throne speech, and that is going to be the precedent of what is going to happen in this budget, there are more things in this budget that are coming that, quite frankly, would make most progressives reel in really understanding what the government is up to. If you look at the budget document that was presented here in May and you take a look at what the government said in the throne speech, there are a number of initiatives there that are quite troubling.

They're talking about privatizing some of the largest assets in the province of Ontario, be it OPG, be it hydro, be it LCBO.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I'm not saying they're going to do it all, but your Premier has said today that, in fact, we're not ruling anything out. We look at all proposals, and we'll decide what to do based on what we're presented with.

But the fact that the government is actually prepared to look at the selling of assets such as OPG, Hydro One and others, I think, is quite troubling, as a New Democrat, because we understand in our history that we nationalized in some cases, or we created crown corporations, for a reason. That is, we understood when we set up Ontario Hydro that it was an economic development tool. It was important for the province of Ontario to provide cheap, affordable power not only to its citizens when it comes to paying the bill at their homes, but also to industries across this province if we were going to attract people to invest in the province of Ontario.

As a result of having, at that time, the cheapest electricity prices in North America, Ontario was able to attract very large investments in this province when it came to mining, forestry, manufacturing and other such industries that utilize large amounts of power, because the original crown corporation known as Ontario Hydro of the day essentially produced electricity and sold it back almost at cost. Whatever it cost to run the system and to invest in the new builds is what Ontario Hydro would charge, and as a result, we had some of the lowest hydro prices in the province of Ontario.

What's really interesting is that when the government was in opposition to the Tories, back in the days of Ernie Eves, I used to listen to the energy critic, and I used to listen to then-leader Dalton McGuinty, who you don't name anymore. At least, now you started again because you're into a majority government—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, now that you've got a major government, you mention his name; I understand. He was a liability prior to that.

But I used to listen, and they used to be reeling in opposition to the Conservatives when it comes to the government, being the Tories, of the day trying to privatize the hydro system. My God. You thought that the Liberals had been wounded mortally when you used to listen to Ernie Eves say, "We will find a role for the private sector in the hydro system of Ontario." I used to listen to the Liberal energy critic and the then Leader of the Opposition, Mr. McGuinty, and they railed against Mr. Eves. They railed against the direction that government was taking, and they promised how virtually they would never do that and they would turn the clock back.

Well, again, they campaigned as if they were a bunch of New Democrats back then. They got elected and what did they do? The Liberals have been in charge of the largest privatization—the largest privatization—of our electricity system in the history of this province. There is

now more private power being generated in this province than we've ever had before. What's worse is, the contracts that you negotiated by way of the FIT program have made it so that we pay more than it costs a crown corporation to generate the same amount of power. And we wonder why our hydro bills have gone up?

Now what we've also got is, we have five agencies instead of one. It used to be Hydro One. Now you've got OPG, Hydro One and others that are there, essentially all doing the same thing, all with their own administrations, spending far more of the ratepayers' money than they have to, jacking up the price. What has been the result? Southwestern Ontario has been decimated. If you look at London, Chatham, Windsor and a number of other communities in the southwest, we've seen factory after factory close down in this province—

*Interjection.*

1750

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** —and Hamilton, and northern Ontario and Timmins with Xstrata Copper. One of the major reasons—I'm not saying the only reason; in the case of Xstrata Copper, it was the only reason—is the price of electricity. Now when we talk to people who want to do investments or expansions in Ontario, one of the things that's holding them back is the hydro prices that this government is charging.

This is from the party that says they're progressive. Progressive, my eye. When these guys get to government, they're nothing but a bunch of Tories, and a good example of that is what they're about to do, possibly, when it comes to the privatization of a whole bunch of other services in Ontario.

People will forget that there's a process that was set up by the previous government, in the minority Parliament, when Mr. McGuinty was there, and it was kept after Madame Wynne became the leader. It was a process by which they would take stock of all of the agencies that they have in the province of Ontario—Hydro One and whatever else they might be—and take a look at which ones we should keep and which ones we should sell off. It's actually a part of what this budget is all about.

I say to my friends across the way—and I mean this in all sincerity: If I listened to you during an election, I might be tempted, if I didn't know a heck of a lot, to vote for you. But once I look at you in government, I begin to realize that you guys, quite frankly, are a bunch of Tories in a hurry.

If you take a look at—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** You're Tories in a hurry; there's no question about that.

If you take a look at other initiatives that you have—take a look at your pension proposals. We're probably like-minded on the creation of a public pension plan similar to the CPP. In fact, it was Andrea Horwath who suggested that some years ago. There were differences in what we were proposing, but that's a whole other debate. But one of the things you're now saying is that you want to put in place a PRPP. You want to put in place Stephen



Harper's pension plan, where hard-earned dollars that we make from our employers would be put into a pool-type RRSP where banks and financial institutions are able to get away with making larger fees and more money than they would otherwise.

I think the argument is that we shouldn't be pushing people into more RRSP-type solutions—being PRPP in this case—and doing what Stephen Harper is doing. What you should be doing is looking at what we can do to secure the income of people, not only when it comes to pensions, but when it comes to the cost of living.

We all knocked on doors. You're not going to tell me, as Liberal members of this caucus who got elected, that you didn't knock on doors where people said to you, "My hydro bill is going through the roof. What are you going to do about it? My auto insurance is going through the roof. What are you going to do about it? Gas prices are going through the roof. What are you going to do about it?" You heard the same things that we did.

What's really amazing is that you didn't learn anything through that election. You guys figured you wanted a majority; therefore, "We can do what we've got to do."

I heard the Premier, in the throne speech, saying, "Oh, we're going to reach across the aisle." She sounded like Bill Clinton. Remember how Bill Clinton was going to reach across the aisle? Obama: "Reach across the aisle, and we're going to find a non-partisan way to work together." Well, we're finding out that that's really not the case. Just watching the actions of this government, in fact, you guys aren't doing that. You're prepared, quite frankly, to do a whole bunch of things that are going to create a fairly significant problem for Ontarians in this province.

I'd just say that Liberals must be taken with a grain of salt. The great thing about being a Liberal, as my good friend Michael Prue, who I miss dearly in this place, used to say—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I miss him dearly. He was a great member. I would say that the Liberals—how did he put it again? I may get this wrong: Liberals have principles; if you don't like this one today, they've got another one tomorrow. In the words of Michael Prue—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** No, that was Michael Prue.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** No, that wasn't Michael Prue.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** We have approximately five minutes to go, and I would ask the House to come to order, to allow the member for Timmins–James Bay to sum up his speech. I need to be able to hear.

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** I say to my good friends across the way: We look at this throne speech, and we look at what's in this budget. The government says they're going to introduce virtually the same budget that they had the last time. What we're saying is that what's in that budget, quite frankly, are a number of things that are very, very troubling.

That's why we call it a Trojan Horse budget. You take a look at a number of initiatives that you put forward, that you're proposing in that budget, and we can find ourselves going down a road in this province that I think most people would not have voted for. I think what people heard during the election—they certainly heard that they didn't like the austerity moves put forward by Mr. Hudak. Quite frankly, that was—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Gilles Bisson:** Listen, I'm being fair; it was an issue in this election.

What people clearly said is that they didn't want to go down the way of losing 100,000 jobs. If you take a look at what Mr. Drummond said the other day on TVO with your good friend Mr. Paikin, in fact, if the government is going to reach the targets that it puts forward in its own budget, they're going to have to find a way to cut a number of jobs, and he suggested that that number is probably close to 100,000.

It's going to be interesting to see, Mr. Speaker—as we look at the clock ticking down—that in fact, the government is going to be in an interesting situation come a year from now. Will they still be able to say to Ontarians, "We're the progressives of this province"? Or probably, more likely, will they be saying, "In fact, we hate to admit it, but really, we're the guys who ran from the left but are actually governing from the right"?

With that, I'll save the rest of the time for the next time that we speak.

*Debate deemed adjourned.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** It being close to 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1756.*

**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	
Anderson, Granville (LIB)	Durham	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b>	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
<b>Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bento Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiques, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Cimino, Joe (NDP)	Sudbury	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
<b>Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of 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
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
<b>Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)</b>	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Associate Minister of Health and Long-Term Care (Long-Term Care and Wellness) / Ministre associée de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée (Soins de longue durée et Promotion du mieux-être) Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
<b>Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)</b>	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure / Ministre du Développement économique, de l'Emploi et de l'Infrastructure
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
<b>Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)</b>	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Hoggarth, Ann (LIB)	Barrie	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	
<b>Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
<b>Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)</b>	Oak Ridges–Markham	Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Kiwala, Sophie (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)</b>	Peterborough	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	Brant	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
<b>MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)</b>	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Malhi, Harinder (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy / Ministre responsable de la Stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté President of the Treasury Board / Présidente du Conseil du Trésor
<b>Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonnell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
<b>Miller, Paul (NDP)</b>	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)</b>	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
<b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	York–Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
<b>Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)</b>	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
<b>Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Sault Ste. Marie	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Potts, Arthur (LIB)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
<b>Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)</b>	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
<b>Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)</b>	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	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	
Vernile, Daiene (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Wilson, Jim (PC)	Simcoe–Grey	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Wong, Soo (LIB)	Scarborough–Agincourt	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of 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	
<b>Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)</b>	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉS PERMANENTS DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

**Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses**

Chair / Président: Vacant

Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs / Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Vacant

Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: Vacant

Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Vacant

Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de la justice**

Chair / Président: Vacant

Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Vacant

Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Vacant

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: Vacant

Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

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

Chair / Président: Vacant

Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

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