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(Hansard)**

Wednesday 29 October 2014

Mercredi 29 octobre 2014

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

Greffière
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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO**

Wednesday 29 October 2014

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

Mercredi 29 octobre 2014

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

**PUBLIC SECTOR
AND MPP ACCOUNTABILITY
AND TRANSPARENCY ACT, 2014**

**LOI DE 2014 SUR
LA RESPONSABILISATION
ET LA TRANSPARENCE
DU SECTEUR PUBLIC
ET DES DÉPUTÉS**

Ms. Matthews moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 8, An Act to promote public sector and MPP accountability and transparency by enacting the Broader Public Sector Executive Compensation Act, 2014 and amending various Acts / *Projet de loi 8, Loi visant à promouvoir la responsabilisation et la transparence du secteur public et des députés par l'édiction de la Loi de 2014 sur la rémunération des cadres du secteur parapublic et la modification de diverses lois.*

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Ms. Matthews.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you, Speaker. Today I'm happy to begin second reading debate on the proposed Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, 2014. I will be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, the member for Etobicoke Centre.

I'm very proud of Bill 8. The bill shows that our commitment about being accountable to the people of Ontario is serious. The proposed Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, 2014, would, if passed, build on the Premier's commitment to lead the most open and transparent government in the country. It would tackle tough issues and enhance oversight across the public sector, and it would strengthen political accountability and open up the business of government. The proposed bill is far-reaching and a signature piece of legislation that would, if passed, set a high standard for oversight and accountability in Ontario.

From giving government the power to directly control executive pay in the broader public sector, to enhancing oversight in the health sector to improve the care of

patients and ensure the safety of those who rely on air ambulance service, to further strengthening our record-keeping obligations and legislating the public disclosure of expenses of our elected members, we are serious about restoring trust in government.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Well, I know where you could start.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Renfrew, no drive-by heckling

Hon. Deborah Matthews: The proposed legislation, if passed, would build on a number of measures our government has already taken. For example, in 2009 we introduced the Public Sector Expenses Review Act, which gives the Integrity Commissioner authority to review expense claims of Ontario's 17 largest classified agencies and the four hydro organizations. The Broader Public Sector Accountability Act, introduced in 2010, sets out accountability measures for designated broader public sector organizations.

Ontario has a strong accountability framework in place for its elected members and public servants; and with Bill 8 we propose to set the bar even higher. The 2014 Ontario budget committed to controlling compensation for executives in the broader public sector, and with this proposed legislation we're making good on this promise. The people of Ontario have a right to know how their dollars are being spent, and that includes executive compensation.

This legislation would, if passed, authorize the government to control the compensation of executives in the BPS, the broader public service, and take action to ensure compliance. The provisions in this bill would give government the right to access all compensation-related information so we can set those compensation frameworks, including sector-specific hard caps.

The government would not just be looking at salaries. These proposed compensation frameworks could address a broad range of compensation elements, including pay-at-risk and benefits. If the proposed legislation is passed, the government would take a strong and fair approach to developing compensation frameworks that would provide consistency and clarity.

We recognize the unique nature and challenges of each sector. That's why we would be consulting with each sector as the proposed frameworks are being developed. We want to ensure that sector-specific considerations are built into those frameworks. This would help us apply a consistent method and implement reasonable levels of compensation across the BPS.

Speaker, we value the very important work of our broader public sector employees. We want to ensure that we're able to attract good talent and, at the same time, manage public dollars responsibly. The proposed bill, if passed, would include enforcement and compliance measures. Heads of organizations would be required to submit attestations confirming that they are in compliance with the compensation frameworks; and our government would also have the ability to audit any of these organizations to ensure that they are in compliance with these frameworks. Furthermore, employers could be required to repay any amount that exceeds what is authorized under the act, while minimizing the impact on its services to the public.

Offence provisions have been created that would address wilful non-compliance with attestation or audit requirements, with fines on conviction of up to \$5,000. The proposed legislation would, if passed, apply to hospitals or community care access corporations, school boards, universities, colleges of applied arts and technology, and hydro entities. The government plans to look at options to expand the government's authority over broader public sector executive compensation that would be enabled by this proposed legislation, if passed. Other authorities, boards, commissions, corporations or organizations could be included through future regulation.

This proposed legislation demonstrates the government's commitment to the long-term reform of senior executive compensation in the broader public sector. However, this is not by any means the first action that the government has proposed on restraining BPS compensation. We know that every dollar counts, and all of our partners have a role to play. Our government has already led by example, by extending the MPP wage freeze that began in 2008. It will remain in effect until we balance the books. Sad to say, Speaker, the opposition recently voted against this freeze.

Since the 2010 Ontario budget, the government has implemented multiple initiatives to manage compensation in the broader public sector. We've brought in the Public Sector Compensation Restraint to Protect Public Services Act, 2010, which froze compensation for employees in the OPS and BPS who do not bargain collectively, including political and legislative staff, for two years. Changes made in 2012 to the Broader Public Sector Accountability Act, 2010, froze all aspects of compensation plans for designated executives at hospitals, colleges, school boards, universities and hydro entities.

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In addition, base salaries cannot be increased, and the overall performance pay envelopes for all non-bargaining employees at those designated employers are frozen. Our existing freeze on salaries for executives in the BPS would remain in effect until we establish the compensation framework, if Bill 8 is passed.

Speaker, I'm proud of this government's track record and of this proposed legislation, both of which demonstrate the government's long-term view of reforming executive compensation in the broader public sector. It's

my pleasure to now take this opportunity to outline the components of the bill that would, if passed, strengthen oversight of government and bolster the relationship we, as a government, have with the people we serve.

In the Ontario government, we deliver essential services to over 13 million Ontarians each and every day: services like health care, education and child protection. I'm proud of the work we do and the partnerships we have in place to deliver these services. Our government is continuously looking to improve our services and set a high bar for the people we serve. As we do this, it's important to have a variety of expert perspectives and oversights. That's why we're proposing to improve support for patients in Ontario, in our continuing effort to promote patient-centred care.

The proposed legislation would, if passed, amend the Excellent Care for All Act and establish a patient ombudsman to receive and attempt to resolve complaints from people who have received services from health care sector organizations in Ontario such as hospitals, long-term-care homes and community care access centres. The patient ombudsman would work directly with complainants and health sector organizations to facilitate the resolution of complaints. He or she would also conduct investigations and make recommendations to health care sector organizations, in response to complaints and on his or her own initiative. To increase transparency and drive improvement, the patient ombudsman would issue public reports on his or her activities and recommendations, without, of course, disclosing personal health information.

Our government believes that a sector-specific approach is the right approach when it comes to oversight in health care. The patient ombudsman would focus specifically on health care issues and build on expertise, structures and processes already in place in organizations across the health care system, many of which are specialized and knowledge-intensive. The patient ombudsman's powers and responsibilities are closely based on those of the provincial Ombudsman, but would be tailored to the health care system context. These proposed changes would build on our efforts to improve the patient experience and quality of health care in Ontario, and would provide additional support to Ontario's patients.

Speaker, the Ombudsman of Ontario plays a key role in promoting high standards in helping to address systemic issues in the delivery of services. The Ombudsman is an important voice for the people of Ontario. We recognize the invaluable work the Ombudsman has done to promote transparency and accountability across the public sector, and we're committed to strengthening the Ombudsman's role. That's why I'm pleased that our proposed bill, if passed, would expand the role of the Ontario Ombudsman.

Proposed changes to the Ombudsman Act would provide the Ontario Ombudsman with authority to investigate municipalities, school boards and publicly funded universities. Speaker, our proposed bill would extend the Ontario Ombudsman's role to include the 444 municipal-

ities across Ontario. The provincial Ombudsman could also, upon complaint, undertake a closed-municipal-meeting investigation. If passed, the proposed act would allow the Ombudsman to investigate any decision, recommendation or act done or omitted in the course of the administration of a municipality and most of its local boards.

Under our proposed legislation, municipalities would still have the authority to appoint their own ombudsman; the city of Toronto has one—as well as their own closed-municipal-meeting investigator. Our proposed approach would enable the Ontario Ombudsman to step in for complaints only after local ombudsman and closed-meeting processes have been completed. At the same time, the Ontario Ombudsman, as he now can for provincial matters, would be able to investigate municipal matters on his or her own initiative.

Our government respects municipalities and the work of municipal councillors. This is about making sure every Ontarian in every municipality has access to an ombudsman; this is about providing the people of Ontario with access to stronger accountability processes.

This proposed legislation would also expand the role of the Ombudsman to include the 20 publicly funded universities that serve Ontario's postgraduate students. The proposed amendments to the Ombudsman Act would, if passed, provide the Ombudsman with authority to investigate complaints about our publicly funded universities. This would provide additional oversight and increase accountability within our universities. These institutions play a critical role in our province and for our economy, and we value their contributions immensely. If our bill is passed, the Ombudsman would be required to respect the principles of academic freedom when conducting investigations. These principles are vital to the mission of universities to educate and enrich the minds of young people.

I know universities already have extensive processes in place to address complaints. Under our proposed legislation, publicly funded universities would still have the authority to appoint their own ombudsman. The proposed approach would enable the Ontario Ombudsman to investigate only after all university processes have been exhausted, and the university governing body or senate internal review or appeal processes have been completed. Our proposed changes would help build on these processes, and help to foster public trust and confidence in government.

Our proposed bill would, if passed, enable the Ombudsman to oversee the 82 school boards that serve Ontario students. The proposed act would give the Ombudsman the authority to investigate complaints about school boards. This would give parents and members of the public the option to direct their complaints to the Ombudsman, if they're not satisfied with a school board decision.

Our proposed changes to the Ombudsman Act are meant to enhance local oversight by providing the public with an impartial body to investigate complaints and rec-

ommended improvements to local processes. The Ombudsman would have authority to investigate only after school board internal review or appeal processes have been completed.

Mr. Speaker, the Ontario Ombudsman is an important voice for the people of Ontario. I'm pleased that the bill before this assembly would provide the Ontario Ombudsman with a greater role.

When it comes to oversight, there is perhaps no greater issue than those relating to Ontario's young people, particularly children involved in the child protection system—and I see the Minister of Children and Youth Services is here for this part of the speech.

Our children in the child protection system are among Ontario's most vulnerable citizens, and that's why we're proposing to expand the mandate of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth. The proposed amendments would give the advocate investigative powers for matters related to the services provided by the children's aid societies, and certain residential licensees where a children's aid society is the placing agency.

The amendments would, if passed, require the advocate's office to establish expertise both in conducting investigations and in child protection issues. The advocate already has significant experience engaging with children and youth, and has existing working relationships with the child welfare sector. As a result, the advocate is well-positioned to provide this additional oversight, putting the best interests of children and youth first.

Finally, our government is moving forward on our continued commitment to restore public confidence in Ontario's air ambulance service. Amendments to the Ambulance Act were part of the former Bill 11; these amendments have now been incorporated into this bill.

This bill, if passed, would protect whistle-blowers while allowing the government to take control in extraordinary circumstances. These changes would allow the government to appoint special investigators when it is in the public interest to do so. It would allow the government to appoint members to Ornge's board of directors; amend provisions of the performance agreement with the service provider, at any time, by regulation; and provide whistle-blowing protection for staff who disclose information to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. The legislation would, if passed, build on steps already taken to improve accountability, patient safety, response times and air safety. We're committed to providing responsible government services, and improving protection for families and consumers.

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Speaker, I'm proud of the bill I'm starting second reading debate on today. It provides a robust plan on long-term senior executive compensation restraint in the broader public sector. It sends a clear signal that citizens have recourse for complaints in municipalities, school boards and universities, and it addresses the real need to support patients and protect vulnerable children.

Now, my esteemed colleague, the member from Etobicoke Centre, will outline other proposed measures of Bill

8. We hope that our colleagues in the Legislature will work with us to pass these new measures and make government more accountable for all Ontarians.

Mr. Yvan Baker: Thank you very much, Minister. I'm thrilled to have this opportunity to help move forward with second reading of the Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, 2014. Je suis ravi de pouvoir contribuer à l'adoption de la deuxième lecture de la Loi de 2014 sur la responsabilisation et la transparence du secteur public et des députés.

Over the past few years, as all of us have, I've knocked on many doors and spoken to many constituents; and I heard from them about a range of issues and concerns. One of the issues that I heard from them frequently was the need for government to be accountable, the need for the government to be transparent, that we shepherd our tax dollars wisely and that we ensure long-term financial sustainability as a government, so that we can continue to provide the services that Ontarians have come to rely on, that the constituents of my riding of Etobicoke Centre have come to rely on. That is why I'm so honoured to be parliamentary assistant to Deb Matthews, to work with her on just these issues that my constituents raised. And that is why I am so honoured to be here today to speak to this bill.

This is a signature bill, Mr. Speaker, for this government. It reflects our commitment to set the highest standards for accountability and transparency, and it demonstrates that this government has made it a priority to be more open and more accountable to the people that we serve. All of these things are priorities that we take seriously.

Il s'agit d'un projet de loi prioritaire pour notre gouvernement. Il reflète notre engagement à établir des normes très élevées en matière de responsabilisation et de transparence, et il démontre que notre gouvernement a donné la priorité à une plus grande ouverture et responsabilité envers la population qu'il sert.

Minister Matthews described some of the cornerstones of the proposed bill, including measures to rein in broader public sector senior executive compensation. It is my pleasure to outline the components of the bill that would, if passed, strengthen political accountability; modernize the reporting of lobbyist activity; further strengthen our record-keeping obligations; and provide greater transparency in the classified agency and broader public sectors.

Je vais maintenant vous présenter les grandes lignes du projet de loi. S'il est adopté, il augmentera la responsabilisation politique, modernisera les rapports sur les activités des lobbyistes, renforcera nos obligations de tenue de dossiers et assurera une plus grande transparence dans le secteur des organismes classifiés et dans le secteur parapublic.

Mr. Speaker, our government believes that openness begins with us. It begins with the members in this House, with our elected representatives. We who are elected into office need to lead by example. That is why our government is proposing new measures that, if passed, would

set a high standard and make Ontario a leader by legislating expense reporting for elected representatives.

Notre gouvernement estime que la transparence commence au niveau des représentants élus. Nous qui sommes élus à nos fonctions devons montrer l'exemple. C'est pourquoi notre gouvernement propose de nouvelles mesures qui, si elles sont adoptées, établiront des normes élevées et feront de l'Ontario un chef de file en obligeant les représentants élus à rendre compte de leurs dépenses.

The proposed bill, if passed, would make it mandatory for cabinet ministers, parliamentary assistants, opposition leaders and their staff to post their expense information online. Currently, this expense reporting is done on a voluntary basis.

Under the proposed bill, information on expenses claimed by cabinet ministers, parliamentary assistants, opposition leaders and their staff would continue to be subject to a review process by the Integrity Commissioner, an officer of this assembly.

The Premier, our cabinet and staff have been complying with that spirit of transparency voluntarily since April 1, 2010, and by making online reporting a legislative requirement, we would ensure that the opposition would follow our lead.

Mr. Speaker, our government's proposals to report expense information online do not just stop with cabinet members, parliamentary assistants, opposition leaders, and their staff. Under the proposed bill, online reporting of expense information would also extend to each and every one of the MPPs in this Legislature. The bill, if passed, would require the Speaker to post online information on MPP expenses concerning out-of-riding travel, related hotel expenses, meals and hospitality expenses.

Our government believes that elected representatives need to lead by example. I think we can all agree that the people of Ontario deserve clear and easy access to the expenses of their elected representatives. Taking action to have greater accountability and transparency in expense reporting for elected representatives is one of the key anchors of this proposed legislation. Our government believes that the people of Ontario have the right to know how their elected representatives are spending tax dollars to do the work that we are mandated to do.

Mr. Speaker, lobbying is also an essential part of a healthy democracy.

Notre gouvernement comprend le rôle important que joue la transparence pour laisser savoir à la population ontarienne qui communique avec son gouvernement et dans quel objectif. Nous comprenons également qu'en renforçant la responsabilisation, nous améliorons l'information qui est communiquée au public. C'est pourquoi nous proposons de moderniser la Loi sur l'enregistrement des lobbyistes.

Our government understands the important role transparency plays in letting the people of Ontario know who is communicating with their government and for what purpose. We also understand that strengthening accountability would help to improve the information that is provided to the public. That's why we're proposing to

modernize Ontario's Lobbyists Registration Act. In our province, Mr. Speaker, the Integrity Commissioner also plays an important role as the registrar appointed under the Lobbyists Registration Act, and we value her contribution. The proposed amendments are a response to the registrar's recommendations.

If passed, the proposed amendments would strengthen oversight and enforcement powers for the registrar and enhance transparency of the lobbyists registry. The proposed bill would give the registrar investigative powers and the ability to prohibit individuals from lobbying for up to two years, if they are found to have violated the act. It would also establish new rules for lobbyists. This includes prohibiting lobbyists from lobbying and providing paid advice on the same subject matter at the same time. It also includes establishing a single set of rules that apply to in-house lobbyists at both for-profit and non-profit organizations. Enforcement provisions would include stiffer fines: a fine of up to \$25,000 for a first-time offence and a fine of up to \$100,000 for subsequent offences. These amendments to the Lobbyists Registration Act are part of our continued effort to make government more open and accountable for the people of Ontario.

Now, another key component of our blueprint for enhanced accountability and transparency is our proposed reforms on record-keeping. Our government takes record-keeping obligations very seriously. The Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner has credited our government for implementing important record-keeping reforms and staff training, and to date we've acted on all the non-legislative recommendations. With this proposed bill, we're going further; we're taking further action.

Notre plan d'amélioration de la responsabilisation et de la transparence comprend un autre aspect majeur : un projet de réforme des obligations en matière de tenue de dossiers. Notre gouvernement octroie une importance capitale à ses obligations en matière de tenue de dossiers. Le Bureau du commissaire à l'information et à la protection de la vie privée de l'Ontario a remercié notre gouvernement d'avoir mis en oeuvre des réformes en matière de tenue de dossiers et de la formation du personnel. À ce jour, nous avons donné suite à toutes les recommandations de nature non législative. Avec notre projet de loi, nous franchissons une autre étape.

This legislation would, if passed, take the next step by acting on three of the Office of Information and Privacy Commissioner's recommended legislative amendments to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, known as FIPPA, and the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, known as MFIPPA. The proposed bill would require all institutions subject to FIPPA and MFIPPA to ensure that measures are in place to preserve records, Mr. Speaker, to prohibit the wilful destruction of records with the intent to deny someone the right to access records, and to introduce a fine of up to \$5,000 for the wilful destruction of records.

Our government consulted with the acting commissioner and his office about the recommendations to assist us in the development of this legislation. We wanted to

ensure that we're properly addressing the three specific legislative recommendations. Members may ask, why are we not proposing an amendment with respect to the recommendation to legislatively require the duty to document all key decisions within government?

Currently, there is no legislative duty to document in either freedom of information or record-keeping legislation in any other jurisdiction in Canada. That said, our government is attentive to this and is going to be proactive, and it has been proactive. We've had discussions with the acting commissioner about this and are discussing this further with other Canadian jurisdictions.

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Regardless of how we proceed on this front, our recent and ongoing training on records management for staff continues to emphasize the need to manage and create public records in order to document key government decisions, activities and operations. The other thing I should mention is that all major policy decisions are always documented through meeting minutes, briefing notes, Management Board and Treasury Board notes as well as cabinet minutes.

Our government has listened to the recommendations of the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner regarding the establishment of the offence provision related to the wilful destruction of public records. The proposed offence provision is in line with similar offence provisions in seven other Canadian jurisdictions, including the federal government. If our legislation passes, the establishment of the proposed offence provision would send a clear signal about how organizations and individuals subject to this legislation must manage their records, and the consequences that would flow from the improper destruction of records with the intent to avoid access to information requests.

Mr. Speaker, we are also proposing a longer limitation period in connection with a new records destruction offence provision in FIPPA and MFIPPA. Currently, the limitation period for many provincial offences is actually six months. This means that a prosecution cannot take place six months after an offence has been committed. We recognize that the wilful destruction of records may not be discovered within that time frame; accordingly, we've proposed extending the time period for the prosecution of this new offence to two years after the commission of the offence is first discovered. Under this legislation, if passed, a prosecution for this offence would require the consent of the Attorney General.

Le projet de loi 8 mise sur les efforts en vue d'instaurer une plus grande transparence dans le secteur parapublic et de rendre le gouvernement plus accessible pour toute la population ontarienne. Des changements proposés à la Loi de 2010 sur la responsabilisation du secteur parapublic exigeront, s'ils sont adoptés, que les organismes désignés affichent leurs plans d'activités et autres documents financiers ou officiels précisés.

Another component of Bill 8 would also be to build on the efforts to bring greater transparency to the broader public sector, and help us make government more acces-

sible for all Ontarians. Proposed changes to the Broader Public Sector Accountability Act would, if passed, require designated organizations to post their business plans and other specified business or financial documents. The legislation would give Management Board of Cabinet the authority to issue a directive outlining the specific requirements. Many broader public sector organizations already post their business plans. These proposed changes would make this practice into a mandatory requirement for all and would apply to organizations already designated under the act, including hospitals, school boards, publicly assisted universities and colleges of applied arts and technology, children's aid societies, community care access centres, and organizations that received \$10 million or more in public funding from the government in the previous fiscal year.

Le commissaire à l'intégrité a également un rôle à jouer dans la promotion de la transparence et dans la responsabilisation lorsqu'il examine les dépenses. Le commissaire à l'intégrité examine les dépenses des ministres, des adjoints parlementaires, des chefs de l'opposition et de leur personnel en vertu du pouvoir que lui confère la Loi de 2002 sur l'examen des dépenses des ministres et des chefs d'un parti de l'opposition et l'obligation de rendre compte. Si ce projet de loi est adopté, nos modifications proposées à cette loi exigeront que ces dépenses soient affichées en ligne. L'affichage ne serait plus une pratique exemplaire volontaire; ce serait une exigence législative obligatoire.

The Integrity Commissioner plays a role in promoting transparency and accountability when it comes to reviewing expenses. The Integrity Commissioner reviews the expenses of cabinet ministers, parliamentary assistants, opposition leaders and their staff under the authority of the Cabinet Ministers' and Opposition Leaders' Expenses Review and Accountability Act. If passed, our proposed amendments to that act would require that these expenses be posted online. This would no longer be a voluntary best practice; it would be a mandatory legislative requirement.

Since the Public Sector Expenses Review Act came into force in 2009, the Integrity Commissioner has also been reviewing the expenses of 17 classified agencies and four hydro organizations—the public entities currently prescribed in regulation. This review process ensures that these organizations are complying with the travel, meal and hospitality expenses directive. This is demonstrating a responsible use of public funds.

Our proposed legislation would, if passed, provide the Integrity Commissioner with the ability to select which organizations she would review. The government intends to include all 196 classified agencies through a regulatory change. The Integrity Commissioner would then have the ability to select, in a given time period, which of these organizations would be required to submit expenses for review. These proposed changes are based on recommendations from the Integrity Commissioner. I know these changes would, if passed, help to promote transparency and accountability across all classified agencies and hydro organizations.

La Loi de 2014 sur la responsabilisation et la transparence du secteur public et des députés nous aidera à relever la barre au sein du gouvernement et dans le secteur parapublic. Cette loi, complète, établira des normes élevées pour nous tous et contribuera à instaurer le gouvernement transparent, ouvert et accessible que mérite la population de l'Ontario, qui travaille dur.

Mr. Speaker, when I opened I shared with you how my constituents look for government to be transparent and accountable. I told you that I'm honoured to be working with Minister Deb Matthews on this—and I am—and I told you that I'm honoured to stand here to speak to this bill, and I am. I am honoured because the proposed Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act will help us raise the bar in government and in the broader public sector. This legislation will set a high standard for us all and it will help build a transparent, open and accessible government the hard-working people have asked for, and the transparent, open and accessible government the hard-working people of Ontario deserve.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Two-minute responses?

Mr. Jim McDonell: It's with interest that we hear this bill and hear the discussion on the other side. The talk about leading by example—I think this government has a horrible example to the public of records being destroyed. We talk about that six months may not be long enough. Of course, it took us six months just to get through committee to force the Speaker to make a decision requiring them to release what records they did have, only to find that most of them had been deleted. The commissioner is reporting that no record of decisions has been made. Everything that had led to some of these decisions was deleted, which, in their comments, did not make sense—that decisions could be made with no record of any of the correspondence that went along with that.

In my riding of Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, people were appalled by the record of this government. I see this legislation, and they're holding it up like they are so much mightier than thou, but legislation like this is required because of the actions of a government like this. Whether it be Ornge, whether it be the gas plants—and who knows what else is there because it has been so hard to get information.

I sat in the committee where it took months of filibustering by this government so we couldn't get reports that should have been released to this House. It really is something that we see. Unfortunately with government sometimes we need legislation like this because we can see from experience that this is the type of actions that go on.

We're certainly supporting this bill and we look forward to its passage.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: We certainly support accountability. It's something that is essential in a democracy. It creates a climate for people to have trust in their govern-

ment, so we absolutely support accountability. But by bringing up the accountability transparency act it also raises questions about what the government has done in the past and what they're doing to systemically rectify issues that this government has created with their own doing.

To be clear, if you look at the Ornge scandal, the Ornge scandal was something absolutely preventable. There were steps taken by the opposition, by the NDP and by the Conservatives, steps that we took as opposition to ensure that this government would be transparent and would be held accountable. But, systemically, answers were not provided to questions asked years and years ago, when red flags were raised. A number of red flags were raised to the ministry. There were audits conducted, audits that brought forward issues that the government simply ignored.

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Those are systemic issues. Those aren't just one-offs. That is a system that's clearly broken. That shows there's a serious problem: This government does not take accountability and transparency seriously. Those are some of the systemic changes that we need so that if the opposition parties raise an issue, the government has to respond and it has to take action. If there are clear red flags raised, there has to be some measure of accountability that ministry officials can't simply ignore when clear signs are there, are apparent, that there are problems.

While we certainly support transparency and accountability, we would like to see something more in-depth, something more systemic, to address these serious flaws where opposition members who are doing our duty as the hawks of legislation, as the oversight mechanism of this Legislature—to ensure that our role is respected and our role is recognized in ensuring that our government is accountable.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Ms. Daiene Vernile: I'm very pleased to respond to my colleagues, the Deputy Premier and the member for Etobicoke Centre, who both spoke quite eloquently on this issue today on this very important accountability and transparency act. As we've heard, the Premier has made it a top priority for openness and transparency.

I want to comment specifically on compensation for executives in the public sector. A week ago, I had a visit from two representatives from Unifor, who came to my constituency office. They are in the middle of negotiating right now for their hospital workers in Kitchener Centre.

These are very hard-working individuals who wonder why it is that there are some hospital executives who, in some cases, are earning 10 times the amount of money as front-line workers. I ask that question too. If Bill 8 is passed, it's going to take a very principled approach to compensation, because that's what we need.

We are also committed to continuing the MPP wage freeze until we deliver a balanced budget. Sadly, the opposition voted against this.

We're also committed to letting the public know how MPPs are spending their tax dollars. This is why we want to see all expenses posted online. I'll tell you that in my previous life as a journalist, I tried to produce many stories on reporting how it is that elected representatives are spending tax dollars. It wasn't always easy trying to get your hands on this information. This bill is going to go a long way in helping not only the media but the public know how tax dollars are being spent.

Bill 8 is going to take aim at providing more oversight and accountability—this is what we're committed to—and it's going to ensure that tax dollars are going to be spent wisely in the province of Ontario. That is our goal, and we hope that we will have support from the opposition.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: I'm pleased to stand and discuss the relevancy and the merits of Bill 8.

One of the things that has been pointed out—and our critic for this particular file has done an excellent job in updating us and identifying all the different acts that are going to be involved or affected as a result of this. There are about 16 different acts, including the Legislative Assembly Act, the City of Toronto Act, 2006, the Ombudsman Act and the Lobbyists Registration Act, just to name a few. As I said, there are about 16.

I'm all for transparency and accountability; I see no problem with that. We will be supporting this, but again with amendments, because, first of all, I think one of the concerns that I have is that the Treasury Board president hasn't done any costing on this for savings or expenses. Secondly, we feel that the bureaucracy will in fact grow as a result of that, and that bureaucracy then is more taxpayer dollars being spent to pay for or cover an expanding area.

Of course, one of the things that I'd like to point out too is that ethics can't be legislated. They truly cannot be legislated. Of course, the government has put accountability measures in place before, and we know how that has turned out. We talk about the eHealth scandal; we talk about gas plant scandals; we talk about air Ornge scandals. They talk about it, but then there's no follow-through. In sports, we all know that the follow-through is important.

One last thing I'd like to talk about is the lobbyist act. When I read that I thought, "Huh, isn't that interesting? The lobbyist act—they want to put some restrictions on them." When I saw that, I thought, "Why don't you put restrictions on third party and/or special interest groups when it comes to the writ?" Of course, I'll talk further about that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Etobicoke Centre has two minutes.

Mr. Yvan Baker: It's an honour to respond to the points being made by the members opposite.

I'd like to say, first of all, and repeat what I said earlier, that this is broad-ranging legislation. It's designed to increase accountability and transparency throughout

government, and that's why it amends so many acts. I hope we can count on the support of the members opposite.

This is really an opportunity to address the needs of Ontarians, to address what Ontarians asked us for and what they deserve, which is an open and transparent government. One of the things we heard from constituents was that they want to know that we're shepherding our tax dollars wisely. One of the best ways to do that is to start with us, to start with our elected representatives, to lead by example and to make sure that we're disclosing how those tax dollars are being spent.

This bill is going to also rein in broader public sector senior executive compensation. Again, this is about making sure that taxpayer dollars are being shepherded wisely.

This is going to strengthen political accountability. It's going to modernize the reporting of lobbying activity; further strengthen our record-keeping obligations, to address some of the issues that the members opposite have raised; and provide great transparency in classified agencies and the broader public sectors.

One of the other things that I think is important to note about this bill—I come from a business background where some organizations publish their business plans, publish their future plans and their strategies. I've seen the benefits that this can bring to organizations. I think that by asking government to do the same, we are going to benefit not only the operation of government but benefit all taxpayers—again, in the spirit of making sure that we're accountable and transparent, but also to ensure that taxpayers' dollars are being managed wisely.

I think this is a strong bill; it's a signature bill; it's a wide-ranging bill. It increases accountability and transparency. It makes sure that we're shepherding our tax dollars wisely. I would invite the members opposite to support the bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I appreciate the opportunity to engage in Bill 8 debate today as the critic for the Treasury Board. Most of this bill, we agree with, on the opposition side, so I think that with some amendments, this bill would receive support from the official opposition.

This bill had been debated previously, in the last Parliament, and of course that's very fresh in all of our minds. It was just less than a year ago when my former colleague Doug Holyday took to this assembly floor and talked about his thoughts on this piece of legislation. At the time, Doug said, "The omnibus piece of legislation is a far-reaching proposal that, if enacted in full, would expand considerably the scope and impact of controlled supervision of spending by public sector agencies and elected officials." This is something that our party has often agreed with. In fact, I had put forward a very comprehensive truth-in-government piece of legislation in previous Parliaments to talk about greater government accountability and transparency.

That said, every piece of legislation, when it hits the floor of assembly, isn't perfect, and I do intend to share

some of my concerns about this piece of legislation. But before I do that, I did want to say thank you for the very comprehensive briefing that I received from ministerial staff as well as the President of the Treasury Board's ministerial staff. They took me through the compendium. At the time, I had a number of questions, some of which were answered satisfactorily, and others that I think should have further debate not only in this assembly but, certainly, as we engage through the committee process.

I think it's really important that those stakeholders that are affected, including the Ombudsman, the Integrity Commissioner, the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, and the broader public sector should be engaged and brought to this process. I do also point out that several municipalities may actually want to provide deputations themselves, given the expanded role and power of the Ombudsman.

I think that a starting point for us would be engaging in debate here, talking to stakeholders, but I believe a full hearing at committee would be really beneficial as we move forward.

0950

I think it is no secret that this piece of legislation is put before us on the assembly floor, not only now here as Bill 8 but previously as Bill 179 in the last Parliament, because of two ongoing OPP investigations, one into the deleted documents and emails as they pertain to the gas plant scandal from the 2011 election, as well as the air ambulance scandal at Ornge which effectively has rocked this assembly.

There will be a public accounts report that will come out this week regarding that travesty. I can say, as Vice-Chair of the public accounts committee, that that will be made available in both official languages later this week. It will be tabled by my seatmate Ernie Hardeman, who is the Chair. It will talk about some of the recommendations that our non-partisan Standing Committee on Public Accounts has to deal with the Ornge air ambulance scandal.

For the benefit of those members who have just arrived at this assembly in the last four to five months, I think it's important they understand that the reason or *raison d'être* behind this legislation is two OPP investigations into the government.

I had heard it before, and it's important to say one more time—I believe it was my colleague from Chatham-Kent-Essex who said you can't legislate ethics. That's really important, because when you look at why some of this legislation is put before us, it is because of some of the actions of government and some of the actions of government when they were ignoring existing legislation.

Again, I put to the members opposite, and I think this is going to be a challenge for them to come to an answer to on the floor of this assembly: How, if there were previous laws in place, could they have been so brutally ignored? That's going to be one. The example that comes to my mind immediately is public records and archiving. As the former energy critic who sat on the justice committee during the entire probe and looked into the

Auditor General's report, my big concern at the time was that there was potentially a criminal breach of trust, given that there was legislation on the books, enacted by the government, yet even Premier Mr. Dalton McGuinty, who had talked about all of this wonderful new era of accountability and who brought in public records archiving legislation—his own staff had ignored it.

That, to me, is very concerning. So the onus now becomes on the government to say to us, "We will follow our own legislation," because previously they hadn't. I don't think that's unreasonable, for the opposition and the public to ask that question and to hold the government accountable, and we are quite skeptical.

There is an onus on the government to say, "Yes, when we put this omnibus legislation forward," as I believe the parliamentary secretary said—he called it "wide-ranging." If they are going to put this on the agenda, they're going to have to implement it and follow it. But, as I say, you cannot legislate ethics. It is going to be a directive from the top here by the Premier who will make sure that this is a government that is accountable, and that hasn't happened previously.

I can cite numerous examples, Speaker. You have been in this assembly for a little bit—almost as long as myself, and I can certainly say to you this: We have experienced scandals at the OLG, at eHealth, at Ornge, the gas plants and Cancer Care Ontario. We've seen legislation respond to those scandals over the past decade, since this government has taken office. Again, we continue to see more spending scandals and more mismanagement arise. I don't think it is unreasonable for us in the opposition to raise those concerns. In fact, I think that's what the public expects us to do.

I wanted to point out a couple of the challenges and where I wasn't satisfied with some of the responses I received from the bureaucrats and from the minister's office—not to say that the briefing I received wasn't beneficial; it certainly was. They answered a lot of my questions. It was a wide-ranging and fulsome discussion. But in the summer, when I was being briefed on this bill, there were areas that I was concerned with.

The first is the overlap and duplication. My concern is that if we're going to continually expand people's powers, I would be disappointed if there was an auditor's report being done at the same time as an Ombudsman report. I think you're looking at two very thorough legislative bodies that are independent to this assembly but will probably be looking at the same thing. That needs to be refined, and I think the minister has an opportunity to hone in on that and ensure that there are no duplicate processes happening into, for example, the same agency, into the same board or commission or even into a municipality or another public sector entity.

When that occurs, if there is duplication and overlap, two things could happen: There could be conflicting reports, or we could be expending more resources on one agency than need be while we're not focusing on others. Again, that will be quite costly. I haven't received a satisfactory response on that, and I would like the minister or

her parliamentary assistant to provide me with how they see this moving forward. We may have an opportunity to hone down on that in committee, and I think that is an opportunity.

Another area that concerns me—the parliamentary assistant indicated this in his remarks—was a question that I had at the time when I had my briefing: Who is included in the Broader Public Sector Executive Compensation Act? What concerns me is that some entities within the broader public service are not included. It was a question that I had for ministerial staff as well as for the bureaucracy. I simply was not satisfied with the answer that I received, and I wasn't satisfied today with the points brought forward by the parliamentary assistant. The Liberals and the government of the day have an opportunity here to refine their message and to put forward their point of view on this. I believe we should have that discussion in committee, and I think we should have that discussion here on the floor of the assembly.

As I mentioned, my third point is that previous legislation has really not done anything to improve increased accountability here on the floor of the assembly or within the government in the broader public service. I can't tell you how many pieces of legislation I've debated over my four terms here, Speaker, where we were going to end the worst scandal of all time by creating this new accountability piece by the Liberals, and then within that year there was another scandal. Even the Premier herself noted during the debates on the gas plants scandal that it was a politically motivated decision.

The challenge for this government is to indicate to the public, not just members of the opposition, that they're serious about legislation that they pass; that as we move forward, any legislation that they pass will be followed, and there wouldn't be political motivations or personal motivations that would cloud that legislation and break that legislation. As I said, we have before us two OPP investigations ongoing into the government on two major scandals. That, I think, is critical, and it's something that we must remember.

The fourth point I had—and this has bothered me over the past four months—is we're talking about requiring cabinet ministers, opposition leaders' staff and MPPs to post expenses online, and I applaud the government for doing this. I think that's critical. Where I think there is a disconnect and this part of the legislation is lacking is that it doesn't include the Speaker, it doesn't include the Clerk, and it does not include any of the Legislative Assembly staff on hospitality. That is lacking. If you're talking about tax dollars and talking about protecting tax dollars, every single tax dollar should be included here. That means every single person who works for this Legislative Assembly, and that has not been included. I will be putting forward a motion at committee, an amendment, for that. Again, I think that people deserve to know where their tax dollars are being spent, and I think that is a glaring omission in this bill.

1000

There is no reporting mechanism in place here, as well, when it comes to the Legislative Assembly. You'll

notice, if you look into the details of this plan, that it could be up to the Board of Internal Economy. They could choose, for example, to report once every 10 years. I think we need to clearly define that this happens. We'll have to have a conversation with the Integrity Commissioner, who will look at these expenses and then they'll have to post them. I think we have to be reasonable. Maybe she needs a month and this is a two-month process and we should report quarterly or we should report annually, but that is not defined in this piece of legislation. That's something that could be considered quite minor but if the intent of the legislation is to post these online, I think that taxpayers across the province deserve clarity. They deserve to understand when they are going to expect their MPPs' expenses to be posted online.

By the way, I think there are a number of us who actually do post online, and I know we make available our annual expenses to the public and we make them available to the media as well. I don't think there's anything that we should be ashamed of. I've worked in municipal government and I've worked on federal Parliament Hill. I must applaud the staff at our assembly for having what I would consider the most stringent laws on taxpayer dollars in any of the places I've worked. I applaud the people at finance here because they take strict control over what's expensable and what is not. Again, we have a good system here but we need to enhance it and we need to have clear rules about it.

I'm here today not only to discuss Bill 8, which I am the critic for, but I will also be speaking to an opposition day motion later this afternoon, which is a PC opposition motion to ensure that Laura Miller and Peter Faist appear before the justice committee before report writing. I had a question in the assembly yesterday, as most members will remember, asking for them to appear, and getting the support out of the government House leader, to ensure that they appear before us in committee. I didn't get the response that I wanted. We will have an opposition day motion today; I would hope that there will be some members of the Liberal caucus who would support it. I do certainly hope that my colleagues in the third party would support it, and there is a reason for that. I'm no longer the energy critic. I no longer sit on the justice committee.

Having said that, what's critically important to me is that the transparency and accountability that this government wanted to usher in back in July, when they formed their government—they promised us that this would be a new era. If it truly is a new era for transparency and accountability, then they would allow those two individuals to testify as they were expected to back in May of last year, before the writ was dropped.

If the government was truly concerned with transparency and accountability they wouldn't just pass Bill 8 and they wouldn't just listen to our concerns in the opposition and how to protect that; they would actually say that they will support these two individuals appearing before committee before report writing begins. I think

that's critical, I think that's necessary and I think that's in the best interests of the public of Ontario. I plead with the members opposite that if you are serious about supporting Bill 8, if you are serious about government accountability and transparency, why stop at Bill 8? Why stop at debate this morning? Why not support a PC opposition motion and bring in Laura Miller and Peter Faist so that we can finally, once and for all, clear the air before a report is written in the justice committee on the two cancelled gas plants, the two Auditor General reports, as well as the alleged deletion of documents and emails in the former Premier's office?

There are a lot of new members here who were not here during that period of time. I must say, Speaker—and I know you were here—those were very tense moments when we found out, for example, that the OPP was investigating the Premier of Ontario's office. I remember the bombshell that day. I was standing right here. I was given a question, the last question of question period, when we found that out. We found it out because it was reported in the Ottawa Citizen, the Globe and Mail and the Toronto Star—three newspapers. Three newspapers had to work together in order to get a story out. They had pooled their resources about this ongoing OPP investigation into the cancelled gas plants. It took the OPP and three major news outlets to get to the bottom of a massive scandal, while at the same time we had the auditor probing it and the justice committee probing it.

If we want to talk about transparency and accountability, I just want to give you an example of how complex a government scandal can be and how difficult it can be to uncover it. Again, we have said numerous times in this assembly, "There won't be another scandal like the OLG, because we're bringing in legislation." Then it was, "There won't be another scandal like eHealth, because we're bringing in legislation." Then, "There won't be another scandal like Ornge, because we're bringing in legislation." Then, "There won't be another scandal like the gas plants, because we're bringing in legislation."

Forgive me if I've heard this song so many times before. Forgive me if I'm a little bit cynical and skeptical because I've seen this play out on the floor of this assembly previously. Forgive me if I want to bring forward my concerns with this bill, because I really don't think it will always be followed. I've seen this show before. Many of the members who have sat here in this assembly have seen this before. So the onus, as I said, is on the government.

As I said, the official opposition agrees with most of the bill. We've appreciated the briefings that have come forward from ministerial staff as well as the bureaucracy. As I've said, you've put forward legislation before and not necessarily followed it. That has left a bad taste in the mouths of many.

I remind you of what my colleague from Chatham-Kent-Essex said: "You cannot legislate ethics." So the onus will be on the government—any government, regardless of which stripe they are, regardless of who their Premier is. The onus is always on the government to

ensure they follow the letter of the law, not just its intent, and that they must ensure that they rebuild public trust.

But, as I've said, there are many challenges with this bill, and I just want to re-highlight them. I throw this out to the government to deal with the challenges. Overlap and duplication: The government has not costed this piece of legislation. There will be added bureaucracy, not that we're opposed to that on this side, but we want more details. We want to see an action plan from not only the government, but from the respective departments that are going to have to deal with this, and I think we have a tremendous opportunity during committee to speak to those who are directly affected. As I state them one more time, that will be the Ombudsman, the provincial advocate; I think we should speak to the auditor and, of course, the Integrity Commissioner. We may also want to hear from municipalities that will now be affected by this legislation, which I support, by the way. I support that clause, but I think we need to hear from them as well.

I think it's important that we find out which groups are designated and which groups are not designated in the Broader Public Sector Accountability Act. I think if we're going to designate some, we should designate all. That means the LHINs, the CCACs, I think hospitals, hydro entities—they should all be included in this piece of legislation, and I would like an assurance from the government that they will be. I think that's critical. I think that's important. We're not talking about \$200,000 with these entities, like we are with each of the MPPs here. We're talking about billions in public dollars at these entities, and that is where your biggest scandals will occur, and that is why I think we need safeguards in place. I think that is important.

Again, that just allows me this easy segue into what I had said earlier: If we are going to talk about—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I'd like to remind some of the members, who will remain nameless at this point, that when they come in and out of this House, or cross in front of the Chair, they are to acknowledge the Chair. Thank you.

Continue.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: And I would like to acknowledge you, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you.

I think it's important that all people who are employed by the assembly follow the same rules, especially when there are major budgets in play. I'm not suggesting that folks who are working in our cafeteria have to deal with this, but if you have employees in this assembly, you should be included in this legislation. I'm sorry. It might be uncomfortable to say so, but, at the end of the day, if we are talking about protecting tax dollars, you don't just say you're going to do it, you do it. You put forward legislation that does it, and then you follow that legislation and you prove to the public that you're serious. I believe that is something we should say.

1010

Speaker, I know I only have a few more minutes before the House rises for question period, but I did want

to acknowledge that about this time a week ago today, my city and your city were rocked by what occurred. I wanted to say to you, Speaker, that I know you've had a very difficult week, and so has your city of Hamilton. We've all spoken about the nation's capital, where I reside, and the impacts my colleagues from Orléans and Ottawa South and Centre and West Nepean and Vanier—what we've dealt with. But I would like to say at this point in time, with you in the chair—and I wish I had done this at the very beginning of my remarks—that as much as we say that Ottawa is strong and Canada is strong, I know Hamilton is, too. I want to say that to you as well as to the leader of the third party; I know it's been a very difficult week for her.

That's why I think in the last minutes I have on this I want to continue on a positive note, and so I want to end on a positive note. I think this is a great opportunity for us to talk about the values that we hold dear here in this assembly and I think it's—

Mr. Steve Clark: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Point of order.

Mr. Steve Clark: I just thought of this and I wanted the assembly to know. I just want to wish the member for Nepean—Carleton a happy 40th birthday today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I'd like to thank the member. It's not really a point of order, but I also wish her a happy birthday.

Continue.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Thank you.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Sixteen candles.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I'm a long way from 16, Mr. Yakabuski. Steve Clark, the member from Leeds—Grenville, was my best friend up until about two minutes ago. But I did this to him last year when it was his birthday; I interrupted question period to say it was his birthday. So yes, I'm another year older. There's a song about that; you know, another year older, deeper in debt. The province of Ontario is another year older and in a lot more debt.

Interjection.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: What did you say about the pension?

Hon. James J. Bradley: Vote for a pension.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: I was talking about your province, our province; it's in debt.

Anyhow, thanks all very much for the birthday wishes. You've now thrown me off my game for the first time in my nine-year career here at Queen's Park.

Let's finish on a positive note. This assembly was built on the values of democracy and the common values that we share: freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom of the press. A week ago, those values I think became even more dear to every member of this assembly. When we debate legislation, I think I'm going to continue to have those values in mind before I enter the floor of the assembly to discuss pieces of legislation. I think when we stand here and we discuss the values that are important to our province, we should

always remember that there are people who have sacrificed for us.

When we talk about public taxpayer dollars, we must remember that there are hard-working moms and dads, seniors and small business owners who are contributing to the fabric of this province, and they expect us to be important stewards of their tax dollars. They expect us to embrace their values and spend on what is required. I think, Speaker, you and I would agree with this: They would expect us to have a strong economy in order for us to pay for our valued and core public services.

Where people don't like sending tax dollars to Queen's Park is when they feel it is wasted. We've had examples of that in the past in this province where it's been egregious, and it's been done by all governments; that is for sure. But sometimes when we get so disconnected from the public as a government or as an assembly, that is when the worst spending scandals occur. I would encourage all members here to be vigilant on that matter and to ensure that the government is always holding accountability and transparency as a core and valued thing.

I know I have one minute left, and this is what I'd like to say to every member of this assembly: When we put forward a piece of legislation, let's ask a series of questions. Will this be a value for money? How much will this legislation cost? Who will it impact? Does it impact rural Ontario? Does it impact urban Ontario? Does it impact the suburbs? Does it impact our small businesses? Does it impact our local charities? I think these are reasonable questions for members of provincial Parliament to ask, and I think that these are reasonable questions for us to ask in the context of Bill 8. I think they're reasonable questions for us to ask in the context of the debate which will occur later on this afternoon for transparency and accountability under the name of Jim Wilson, who is the interim leader of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party. These are legitimate questions that should be asked each and every single time.

So as I close, I again want to say thanks for the opportunity to debate. I appreciated the briefing from the minister. We agree with most of this bill. We have some concerns; I've laid them out. We all know that I've just turned 40, the province is in debt and I think that there are a number of questions that we have to raise. I hope that was a good summary, because it took me 40 minutes to get here. Thank you all very much. Have a great day.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It being close to 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30 this morning.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Bill Walker: It's my pleasure to introduce the mayor-elect of the municipality of Meaford, Barb Clumpus, and her husband, Dr. Frank Clumpus. They're in the visitors' gallery. We welcome you to Queen's Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: It's a delight to welcome Ontario Pharmacists Association board member, and also my constituent, Brandon Tenebaum, to the House.

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Please help me welcome the grade 10 students from St. Augustine Catholic High School in the great riding of Oak Ridges–Markham.

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I'm pleased to rise today to recognize page captain Greg Van Boekel's family, who are here with us today. In the gallery are his parents, Mike and Jennifer; his sister Hannah; his brother Jacob, who is a former page; and Greg's grandparents, Betty Hampson and Gerry and Thea Van Boekel. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Miss Monique Taylor: I'd like to welcome a board member from the pharmacists' association as well as a person from my riding, Marita Tonkin, to the Legislature today.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I want to introduce Dan Sidsworth, who is a correctional officer at Maplehurst Correctional Complex and is also the chair of OPSEU's Ministry Employee Relations Committee; Monte Vieselmeyer, who is a correctional officer at Toronto South Detention Centre and is a member of the Ministry Employee Relations Committee; and Clark Moss, a correctional officer at Central East Correctional Centre and a member of the Ministry Employee Relations Committee. I'd also like to welcome Mr. Jason Godin, the national vice-president, and a correctional officer, with the Union of Canadian Correctional Officers; and Mr. Chris Bucholtz, who is a correctional officer and the Ontario vice-president of the Union of Canadian Correctional Officers. I welcome them to Queen's Park.

Mr. Jim Wilson: It's my pleasure, on behalf of all members, to welcome student members of the University of Toronto Progressive Conservative Campus Association. They are Alex Robinson, Vlad Yakovlyev, Alanna Newman and Felix Burns. Welcome.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Members will know that today is the Ontario Pharmacists Association lobby day. We have many members of the Ontario Pharmacists Association board with us. From Hamilton Centre, I'd like to welcome Stacey D'Angelo.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm delighted to welcome Jim Semchism here. He is a pharmacist in London North Centre. He's on the board of the Ontario Pharmacists Association and provides excellent service in the Hamilton Road area at Ealing Pharmacy. Welcome, Jim.

Mr. Norm Miller: I'd like to introduce Bill Roberts, who is in the east members' gallery and whom I had the pleasure of meeting this morning. He is here with the Ontario Pharmacists Association. Please welcome him.

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I too would like to welcome both the national vice-president and Ontario vice-president of UCCO-SACC-CSN, Mr. Jason Godin and Mr. Chris Bucholtz. They are joined at Queen's Park today by a number of correctional officers from the Ministry Employee Relations Committee, including Monte Vieselmeyer, Clark Moss and Dan Sidsworth.

Hon. Reza Moridi: Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to mark Republic Day of Turkey today by welcoming the Consul

General of Turkey, Mr. Ali Rıza Güney, and the vice-consul, Mr. Gökhan Toy.

I also want to welcome several esteemed dignitaries from the Turkish community: Dr. Mehmet Bor, president of the Federation of Canadian Turkish Associations; Mrs. Yıldız Ünsal, director of the Turkish Federation Community Foundation; Mr. Yaman Üzümeri, the chair of the FCTA's external relations council and vice-president of Ankara library; and Mr. Nazif Kurt, vice-president of the Turkish Culture and Folklore Society of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all members to participate in the raising of the Turkish flag today at 12 noon.

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'd like all members to welcome Raj Sandhu to the chamber today. He is here with family visiting from India. He's also the newly re-elected councillor for Bradford West Gwillimbury. His family members include Rana Sandhu, Kiran Sandhu, Balwant Sandhu, Parminder Sandhu, Navreet Sandhu and his daughter Simran.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'd like to welcome Mr. Sean Simpson, who owns Simpson's Pharmacy in Niagara-on-the-Lake. I had the pleasure of meeting with him today. Welcome.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I'd like to welcome, for a second time, Jason Godin of the correctional officers' union, from Kingston and the Islands.

Hoş geldiniz to the members of the Turkish community.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I'd like to welcome Mike Cavanaugh, an Ontario Pharmacists Association board member, who lives and resides, and has his practice, in Lindsay, Ontario.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: It's my pleasure this morning to introduce the Ontario Pharmacists Association, including Dennis Darby, the CEO; and Deb Saltmarche, the board chair. They are here at Queen's Park today with their colleagues. Welcome.

The OPA is hosting a reception this evening in room 228/230. All MPPs are invited to attend.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I want to introduce the parents of our page captain Rachel Huang. Her parents are Ping Yi, also known as Liza; and Xi Justin Huang. They're all from my riding of Thornhill. It's great to see young people so politically engaged. Welcome.

Mr. Toby Barrett: I'd like to introduce an area farm boy from Little Lake: Andrew Hamilton. He's a rep on the OPA board and a fourth-year student at University of Waterloo, pharmacy.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We thank all our guests for being here.

ORAL QUESTIONS

PUBLIC TRANSIT

Mr. Monte McNaughton: My question this morning is to the Acting Premier and is regarding the recent election results here in the city of Toronto.

By capturing nearly 40% of the vote and winning by a margin of over 64,000 votes, Toronto residents elected a new mayor and, ultimately, a new council with a strong focus on resolving traffic gridlock.

Mayor-elect Tory has sent a strong signal that he intends to move forward with big improvements in Toronto's transit infrastructure, including his signature campaign piece called SmartTrack.

Acting Premier, how does your government plan to work with the new mayor and council to move forward on their mandate to improve transit in Toronto?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Deputy House leader, Minister of Agriculture and the member from Nepean-Carleton, come to order, please.

Deputy Premier.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Minister of Transportation.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Of course, I thank the member opposite for that question.

I've already had the opportunity to send some correspondence out to Mayor-elect Tory, along with mayors who have been elected right across the GTHA, right across the province of Ontario.

I think what's most exciting about the results that we saw take place not just in Toronto but right across the region is how much energy and passion there is with respect to the debates around transit.

I look forward to working with Mayor-elect Tory and mayors and councils right across the province so that we can successfully deliver our \$29-billion infrastructure plan.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Back to the Acting Premier: Mayor-elect Tory's SmartTrack plans to deliver a new rail system in the existing GO train corridor within seven years. It is a London-style surface-rail subway that moves the most people in the shortest time across the entire city. Tory's SmartTrack plan promises 22 new station stops and five interchanges with the TTC rapid transit network.

After hearing Premier Kathleen Wynne's "hallelujah" remarks, we know the Premier is excited to work with the new Mayor-elect Tory. Is the government planning to implement SmartTrack, or do we have some other plan?

1040

Hon. Steven Del Duca: As I mentioned in my initial response to this member's question, there is, of course, a great desire on the part of myself and every member of this government to work very closely with all of our municipal partners so we can deliver on the ambitious plans that we have for the province's future.

What's really important to note, not just about the proposed SmartTrack that Mayor-elect Tory has put forward, is that in our 10-year plan, we have a very fundamental piece of that plan, which is two-way, all-day regional express rail for GO. That will provide up to 15-minute service on all of our GO rail corridors over the next 10 years—electrified service. It's something we're very excited about, and there are wonderful opportunities

within that plan, from my perspective, for us to be in alignment with not only SmartTrack but a number of other positive projects that will benefit communities right across the region.

As I said earlier, I look forward to working with all mayors and councils to deliver good results for the people.

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

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Back to the Acting Premier: Your government has promised \$15 billion for greater Toronto and Hamilton area transit expansion over the next decade, but much of this money is already spoken for and already allocated.

The people of Ontario have heard many transit promises from your Liberal government, from two-way, all-day GO service to high-speed rail from Windsor to Toronto to a Scarborough subway. If you're going ahead with SmartTrack, are these other transit projects a lower priority now, and how do you intend to pay for all of them?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: There's lots of great news on this side of the House, of course, with respect to the ambitious plans that we have for the next 10 years. I'm not quite sure where the member opposite is getting his facts or information.

What I do know is that the Ministry of Transportation and the wonderful team at Metrolinx will continue to work very closely with all mayors, all councils and all other municipally owned transit authorities so that we can deliver some tremendous results for the people, including the two-way, all-day regional express rail. That transformation of GO trains and GO service right across the GTHA and beyond will benefit communities like Kitchener, Milton, Barrie and so many others. That's the work that we're focused on.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm going to be quick with this. The shots back and forth are going to stop. If they're not stopped by you, I'll stop them. It stops now.

New question.

ADOPTION

Mr. Monte McNaughton: My next question this morning is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services and is regarding the adoption crisis occurring here in Ontario. Minister, as you know, across Ontario, there are approximately 8,000 children waiting for permanent homes in this province. Adoption is a provincially regulated issue, and it is a lifelong commitment.

Minister, do you agree with the Right Honourable Governor General David Johnston that there is an adoption crisis occurring here in our province?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Thank you for the question. I do take my responsibilities on the adoption file very seriously. I know that the number of children who have been adopted in Ontario has continued to increase.

We have less and less children waiting to be adopted. We are very focused in particular on children in aboriginal communities, where there are perhaps more challenges to proceeding with adoptions. We're working very closely with those communities to make sure that things are culturally sensitive and appropriate.

My commitment is to continue to look at the issues and opportunities associated with the adoption file, and I'd be pleased to meet with the member to discuss that more fully.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Back to the minister: You will know that it is often easier to adopt on other continents than it is to adopt across regional boundaries here in Ontario because each CAS office operates in a silo within their own territory.

In 2009, prior to his appointment, Governor General David Johnston led an expert panel on the adoption crisis. Five years later, the major recommendation remains unfulfilled. Sadly, government red tape and inter-provincial barriers often prevent adoptions from other parts of Canada.

Minister, this is about children in our society. What can we do to work together to help resolve this crisis and ensure that waiting families are matched with children in need?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Again, thank you to the member for the question. He commented on the role of the children's aid societies in adoptions in Ontario. We've made tremendous progress in coordinating adoption efforts between CASs. We actually have a reduction in the number of CASs in Ontario. They are working very closely while maintaining the protocols that have been established for adoptions in Ontario.

I understand his point about international versus domestic. I pursued an international adoption myself until I became pregnant with my twins. I'm very familiar with that process as compared to what we have here in Canada and in Ontario. When we look at the file, there has been great progress. Is there more work to be done? Absolutely. Are there some issues associated with adoptions in Ontario? Absolutely. We'll continue to work on that, and I'm happy to provide a personal briefing on that.

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

Mr. Monte McNaughton: Back to the minister: According to the Adoption Council of Canada, it takes up to nine years for someone to navigate the complicated adoption process. The real adoption crisis here in Ontario is that a bloated and broken system is preventing the timely match of waiting families with children in need. The longer a young child stays in foster care, the harder it is for healthy attachment to begin. As a new father, it breaks my heart to think of children growing up without a loving home.

Minister, November is National Adoption Awareness Month. What specific steps are you committed to taking over the next month to help resolve Ontario's adoption crisis?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: First of all, congratulations to the member on being—is it a new father or having a second child? I'm not quite sure.

We know there are some opportunities on the adoption file. I think it's important, though, when we use numbers around the adoption file, that we be very careful, because sometimes we're talking about averages. We have to look at the specifics of cases.

We have an adoption strategy in Ontario. Again, I'm happy to brief the member on that. As I said, our particular focus is around the aboriginal community and helping to facilitate more appropriate adoptions in care, making sure those are culturally sensitive. Nothing is more important to me than the future of children in our province. I will continue to provide the appropriate leadership on this file and I'm happy to talk to the member further.

POWER PLANTS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Deputy Premier. When the Deputy Premier and President of the Treasury Board got her mandate letter from the Premier she was instructed to “increase our government's accountability and transparency.” Does that include ending the government's attempt to cover up what happened with the gas plants by ensuring that Peter Faist and Laura Miller testify at the gas plants committee?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I thank the leader of the third party for the question. I have spoken often in this House about our government's commitment to being open and transparent in making sure that we've got principles in place that ensure that there is more enhanced transparency and accountability when it comes to government functions. That's why we are really proud that we have tabled government and MPP transparency and accountability legislation, which we are hoping will pass through this House.

Also, Speaker, that is why we have been very clear in stating that it is time for the justice committee to complete its work. It is time for the justice committee to start the work of writing its report. The committees have been working for three years. They have listened to about 90 witnesses. Hundreds and thousands of documents have been considered. It is time for them to give some advice.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I am just going to offer a caution as opposed to a withdrawal: Please be guarded with your language. It was very close. I appreciate the member taking that under advisement.

Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, legislation means nothing if the government is not prepared to keep their word and start being transparent and accountable to the people of this province.

New Democrats fought tooth and nail to get the details about the \$1.1-billion gas plant scandal in the first place. We uncovered the facts about the cancelled gas plants, that they didn't cost \$230 million, as the Liberals had suggested, but they in fact cost \$1.1 billion; we un-

covered that the Liberals put their own political interests first, ahead of the people of Ontario; and we learned that Liberal insiders wiped computers to try to hide evidence from the people.

1050

Will the minister responsible for accountability and transparency, the head of Treasury Board—will that minister tell her Liberal colleagues on the gas plants committee to be truly transparent and fully accountable, to stop hiding the truth and make sure that Laura Miller and Peter Faist actually testify at that committee?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: We have been absolutely clear on this point. We want the justice committee to finish its work. During the campaign, we were very clear that we want the justice committee to engage in report writing, given the extensive amount of work that the members of that committee have done. I remind the leader of the third party—her question, I would suggest to you, Speaker, was full of contradictions, because on April 29, merely three days before the third party decided not to support the budget in this House, a member from her own party, the member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton, moved a motion in the committee stating that the Standing Committee on Justice Policy begin report writing in open session.

Speaker, what has changed? This was three days before a campaign was called. We agree; I think it is time that we should get the work and report writing—I ask the opposition parties to stop stalling the work in the committee. Let's get back to work in justice committee.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I think it's shameful that the House leader doesn't tell the whole story when we're talking about accountability and transparency. We absolutely indicated we wanted to continue to have witnesses come to that committee, and that House leader knows it. Shame on the Liberals once again for twisting the truth.

According to police investigators, Peter Faist is at the centre—at the centre—of the computer-wiping scandal in the Premier's office. Laura Miller, the deputy chief of staff of the former Premier, was orchestrating that scheme. Now Ontarians deserve to know what information was so important to the Liberals that they used—

Interjections.

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

Come to order. And stay that way.

Please finish.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Ontarians deserve to know: What information was so important to be hidden that the Liberals used military-grade software to make sure it got wiped out? They deserve to know who gave the order.

So the question goes back, frankly, to the head of the Treasury Board. In your mandate letter—one more time, I want to remind that minister that increasing the government's accountability and transparency is her job. When is she going to do it?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: With all due respect, the kind of allegations and assertions that the leader of the third party

is making are something that the justice committee should not be looking at. That is exactly the kind of stuff that the Ontario Provincial Police are investigating. We should not insert ourselves in a police investigation. I think that matter should be left up to the police, which is an arm's-length investigation from the functions of the government. In fact, the OPP witnesses, when they came to the justice committee, said the same thing: "Do not engage in work that we are doing."

So I ask the members: Let's get back to the mandate of that committee, and that is to give guidance to the government as to how decisions around large energy infrastructure should be made. That was the mandate of the committee. That's what we need to focus on. That is why we brought a motion in the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly to refer the Ministry of Energy to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy so that members there can resume their work. The members from the opposition are dragging their feet.

GOVERNMENT CONSULTANTS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is also to the Deputy Premier. Does the Deputy Premier and head of the Treasury Board think that privatizing and outsourcing IT services at an increased cost of \$200 million is a good idea when we can do that same work in-house for much less?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the member opposite. I welcome the opportunity to clarify some of the erroneous information that has been dropped in this House. It is true that we need IT consultants. We need them to provide services and programs that Ontarians need in a cost-effective, efficient and convenient way. Ontarians expect their services to be accessible digitally.

We actually have done a very good job reducing our reliance on IT consultants. I think everyone would acknowledge that there are occasions where we actually need to turn to those task-specific consultants, where we don't have the expertise internally, but where we do have the expertise internally, we are bringing those consultants into the OPS. I look forward to the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The Liberal government keeps insisting it is looking for ways to save money and rationalize the way that we run our province. We have IT professionals, but instead of using the professionals who work for the Ontario public service, the Liberals have increased the use of outside consultants by 63% in the last five years. It's just more privatization by stealth and more cost to Ontarians.

Does the President of the Treasury Board, responsible for saving money, think that this makes any sense whatsoever?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Speaker, I can tell you we've worked hard to figure out where that 63% number comes from, because it's simply not true. In fact, you might remember, in 2002, the Auditor General delivered a scathing report on the use of IT consultants. We were

elected in 2003, and since then, we have achieved results. We have cut in half our reliance on consultants since that time. Around 1,500 consulting positions have been converted to OPS staff, most of which were IT positions. The result has been an ongoing savings of \$60 million a year.

In fact, we're not done. We're moving to convert an additional 90 IT consultants, a further \$3.6-million reduction. So I think we actually agree.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The minister might want to talk about action from 2003; I'm talking about an Auditor General's review of much more recent history.

The bottom line is, Ontario now has 63% more consultants doing IT work than it did five years ago—now 11 years ago, five years ago. It costs more than double to hire a consultant than it does to do the work in-house. There are more consultants and we're paying them more money. Those are just the facts.

Now, I can understand if the head of Treasury Board, the former Minister of Health, is having eHealth déjà vu over there across the aisle. Will the head of Treasury Board take the lessons learned from eHealth and, in fact, stop outsourcing and privatizing IT services, bring them back in-house and save the people of Ontario \$200 million?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I'm one who believes that intelligent, well-meaning people armed with the same facts will come to the same conclusion, so I am offering an opportunity to actually make sure that the NDP has the right facts. They have been claiming that the government is spending \$700 million a year on IT consultants. It's simply not true. The number was \$130 million.

What the opposition has done is it has included things like our Microsoft Office licences in that \$700 million. If they think that we should develop our own version of Microsoft Office—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

You have time for a wrap-up.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I just simply do not, cannot, buy the argument that we should be developing our own Internet service within government, our own Microsoft Office program.

POWER PLANTS

Mr. John Yakubuski: Last week, I asked the Premier, who deflected a question on the gas plant scandal—my question is for the Deputy Premier. Last week, I asked the Premier. She deflected it to the House leader. He gave a somewhat dithering, obstructionist response to questions with regard to the gas plant scandal and the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, which had been interviewing witnesses.

We've asked specifically—and the Premier is quoted in Hansard as saying she wants all the facts to come out at this committee. We have two witnesses: Laura Miller

and Peter Faist, eyewitnesses to the caper. They know who deleted the emails, they know who destroyed documents and they know who had unauthorized access to the Premier's office.

So we've asked, and I will ask you again: You're in the big chair today. Make a decision. Will you allow Laura Miller and Peter Faist to come before that committee so that the facts can be known and we can put this baby to bed?

Interjections.

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

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

I will now—

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Government House leader.

Interjections.

1100

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): First of all, I didn't recognize you. Second of all, the next person who speaks when I'm trying to get quiet will get warned.

Deputy Premier.

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I apologize, Speaker. Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Again, I observe the member with amusement—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member from Bruce-Grey-Owen Sound, come to order.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: —with his version of logic that he presents. What he's talking about, again, is very clear.

Interjection.

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

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: The matters that he's—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Leeds-Grenville is warned.

Finish, please.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, the matters the member from Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke is referencing, the way he's characterizing them, are clearly within the purview of the Ontario Provincial Police.

Speaker, as you know, there is an ongoing investigation into that whole matter, and it is up to the OPP to determine what next steps they should be taking and which witnesses they should be talking to. That is not the mandate of the justice committee. The mandate of the justice committee is to look into the decision-making around the relocation of gas plants.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Back to the Acting Premier: The House leader's a lawyer. He knows that the OPP cannot force Laura Miller or Peter Faist to give a statement, but the committee can, if you would allow them to come before this committee.

This morning, you tabled for second reading your Bill 8. I don't know how many times you used the words "accountability" and "transparency." Well, this is your

opportunity to put some action into those words, not hollow words which we usually get from the Liberal Party.

This is a time to stand up and take action. This is the last opportunity. We have an opposition day motion today that will call upon this House to bring Laura Miller and Peter Faist before that committee so that we can hear from them and get the facts. The Premier will have her completed investigation. We'll get to write that report, but the people of Ontario will not be denied the final adjudication of what happened there, and that is what your actions or your failure to act is causing today. You're keeping the facts away from the people. Stand up today and—

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

Government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, I want to thank the member from Nepean-Carleton for referencing the speech from the throne yesterday. This is what the speech from the throne says: "And to ensure that its decisions are always made responsibly, openly and in the best interests of Ontarians, your government will take steps to allow the justice committee to write its report."

That is coming from the speech from the throne which, by the way, was passed in this very House. The speech from the throne clearly says that the government will allow the justice committee to write its report. We are doing exactly that. We have asked the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly to refer the Ministry of Energy to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy so that the justice committee—

Hon. James J. Bradley: Without the Conservative candidates appearing.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The deputy House leader is warned.

Finish, please. Wrap up.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: We have asked the Legislative Assembly committee—so that the justice committee can start the process of writing a report and giving its recommendations to the government.

GOVERNMENT CONSULTANTS

Ms. Catherine Fife: My question is to the Deputy Premier. The President of the Treasury Board's mandate letter says she's responsible for conducting an ongoing review of IT service delivery "including ensuring that costs and expenditures provide value for money"

Does the Deputy Premier think that the estimated \$350 million spent to construct the Guelph data centre, a facility whose services are in fact being contracted out, makes sense?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I really think it's important that the NDP get their facts straight when it comes to IT. This is very important work, Speaker. We welcome the criticism and the opposition from the opposition, but it's important that we start with the right facts.

The member opposite has said that the government is spending \$700 million on consultants—simply not true.

There is a mysterious number floating out there about how much we've increased reliance on consultants; the truth is, Speaker, that we have reduced our reliance on consultants by 50%, saving tens of millions of dollars. We know there is more work to do and we are committed to doing that work.

The Guelph data centre that the member has referenced is a very important part of Ontario's IT plan; we are very proud of that centre. I'm not quite sure what her criticism of that is, but we are very proud of that data centre.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'll make my criticism very clear. Mr. Speaker, the minister is supposedly tasked with finding savings and eliminating waste. Right now, it's estimated that the Guelph data centre's servers are only being used to 20% of their capacity, yet the government is contracting out data storage to a privately operated cloud. Perhaps it's convenient for that data and those emails to be in a cloud somewhere instead of a secure facility run by the trained, qualified IT professionals in the OPS, but why is this government wasting money by contracting out data storage to the private sector when Ontario already has the capacity to do those services in-house and the people of this province have already paid for it?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: That's exactly what we're doing. We invested a significant amount of money in that data centre; there's another data centre in Kingston, and we are consolidating work into those centres. Again, I actually think we agree that the right thing to do is to use the data centres that we have invested heavily in for the best possible value.

There has been concern about using the cloud, and I think it is important that the member understand that the only information that is on the cloud is actually public-facing information. Our ontario.ca website, for example, is on the cloud; there is no personal information stored there.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: My question is for the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services. I'm grateful for the hard work of Ontario's corrections staff, who play such an important role in keeping our communities safe. This is particularly relevant and of considerable concern in my riding of Kingston and the Islands, where we have five correctional facilities. Recently, the minister joined me in Kingston along with a panel of experts from the field of corrections at a town hall event that I hosted at Queen's University. We had experts from a variety of organizations, including the law department at Queen's, Youth Diversion, the John Howard Society and, of course, the federal correctional officers' union. I was happy to have the minister and discuss this issue that hits so close to home.

Discussions about corrections are important, but what Kingstonians and Ontarians expect to see from our government is action. Mr. Speaker, can the minister please tell us what has been done to take action on this issue?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I want to thank the member from Kingston and the Islands for raising a very important issue and for her invitation to the panel discussion that she hosted at Queen's University.

During the introduction of guests I mentioned that we have got some correctional officers who are visiting, sitting in the public gallery. Through them, I want to first of all thank all our correctional officers for their hard work, professionalism and dedication in keeping our communities safe every day.

Our goal is to build stronger and safer communities. At the round table, we discussed the clear mandate that I was given by the Premier to transform our correctional system. I discussed the action that we are taking in addressing capacity issues while working to ensure the safety of all our staff members and our inmates, and also ensuring that support for rehabilitation and reintegration for our inmates is in place to minimize recidivism. I look forward to providing more details in the supplementary.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Thank you to the minister for his response. I'm happy to hear that the minister will be taking action to address the state of our correctional system in Ontario, but we still hear of concerns around mental health services and critical programs to rehabilitate and reintegrate offenders into our communities. These issues are of interest to all Ontarians as they affect recidivism and have an impact on community safety as a whole. That is why it is important that we work together with all of our partners in corrections to address these issues. Mr. Speaker, through you to the minister: Please elaborate on the specific steps that you are taking to address these concerns.

1110

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Speaker, we are focused on a system that keeps our correctional staff and inmates safe while providing more opportunities for training and rehabilitation. That means continually working to improve conditions at every institution across the province by: enhancing education, rehabilitative and training programs for offenders; improving services for mentally ill, female and aboriginal offenders; improving discharge planning and community reintegration; and addressing both capacity and innovation within our correctional system.

I know that our OPSEU partners and all our corrections partners share the same goals. We are already working to improve the safety and security of both correctional staff and inmates. We are moving on: rolling out protective equipment for our correctional officers; developing a regional intermittent centre strategy; and hiring over 300 new officers by the end of this year, not to mention that we are hiring more mental health nurses to provide better care for the inmates who are in our care and custody.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mr. Randy Hillier: My question is to the Acting Premier. Contrary to all your spin, your government is not acting in an open, transparent or accountable manner. I'd like to bring to the public's attention an important detail

from the MaRS audited financial statements: “In 2011, MaRS Phase 2 Inc. ... exercised an option in the amended ground lease with ARE to sublet the property to Phase 2 Trust, thereby enabling it to develop and manage this property.” Minister, this was immediately after you loaned MaRS \$224 million to complete phase 2. What part of the contract was not amended that has now cost us an additional \$65 million, not to mention the millions in interest that we’re also paying now?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I have to say I think the member opposite needs to acknowledge publicly that the building has been valued at or above our investment in that building. Again, I ask the member opposite, what would they have done in the face of an economic downturn that caused real challenges for ARE? Would you have left the hole in the ground at the corner of College and University Avenue, or would you have stepped in to do the responsible thing, where taxpayers are actually getting an enhanced benefit? We took the steps, and we are taking steps, that are necessary in order to actually have an asset that works for the people of the province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Maybe I could have a page bring the financials for MaRS to the minister.

Again, MaRS makes it quite clear in their financial statements that they revised the phase 2 agreement with ARE after your government loaned them \$224 million. MaRS amended the agreement to allow them to both develop and manage the property. Your government has repeatedly stated in estimates that you spent \$65 million to buy out ARE’s phase 2 operations and management rights. How can you spend \$65 million to buy out the ARE contract in 2014 when MaRS’s own audited statements say they took ownership of that same contract in 2011?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: It’s very important to us on this side that we are responsible with every single dollar that taxpayers have paid, Speaker. In order to ensure that we are actually doing the right thing when it comes to the situation at MaRS, we have asked a couple of very prominent people to give us advice—

Mr. Randy Hillier: What skulduggery are you up to?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member will withdraw.

Mr. Randy Hillier: Withdraw.

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: We have engaged Carol Stephenson, the former dean at the Ivey School of Business in London, and Michael Nobrega, formerly of OMERS, to give us advice on what the right thing to do is.

Let me repeat: The value of the building has been on several occasions valued at or more than what we have already invested. This is a good deal for Ontario, Speaker.

HEALTH CARE

M^{me} France Gélinas: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Speaker, the Liberal

government is undermining our public health care system by allowing secret medical tourism into Ontario.

Ontarians hold the public health care system dear. Front-line health care workers and New Democrats will not stand by and allow it to be dismantled. Allowing people to use their credit card to jump the line goes against every principle of medicare. It goes against care being based on needs and not on ability to pay. It is time for this Liberal government to end the secrecy and come clean on medical tourism.

Will the minister tell Ontarians how many hospitals are already in the business of medical tourism and how many Ontarians have been bumped down the line and forced to wait longer for their care?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I appreciate the question. First of all, zero patients have been bumped down the line. I think it’s important that we not provide misinformation to Ontarians and that it gives me an opportunity, as Minister of Health, to be absolutely clear that Ontario patients must and will always come first. Hospitals are not allowed, and will not be allowed, Mr. Speaker, to displace any Ontarians in favour of international patients.

Our government is committed to ensuring that Ontarians have timely access to the best quality hospital care. I want to say as well that I want to thank specifically the RNAO, the Registered Nurses’ Association of Ontario, and their partners for flagging this issue and bringing their concerns to me. In fact, I met with their head, Doris Grinspun, last Monday specifically on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I’m happy to elaborate in the supplementary exactly what measures we have already put in place, as well as further measures coming up.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: Speaker, I can’t believe that we have a Minister of Health who would stand in this House and defend medical tourism, defend a system that will undo everything that we have done to make sure that care is based on needs, not on ability to pay. Medical tourism will create—

Interjections.

M^{me} France Gélinas: They know as well as we know that medical tourism will create a two-tier system where people with big wallets will jump the queue. This is wrong. This goes against every principle that we hold dear. They know this, but yet he stands in this House and defends this.

Nurses, doctors and midwives are at Queen’s Park today. They are calling for a ban on medical tourism. They are the front-line workers. They can see that this government’s plan is creating a two-tier system. It is putting profit ahead of patient care.

Why won’t the minister listen to Ontarians, act immediately, ban this medical tourism and stop rich people from jumping the queue?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Well, Mr. Speaker, I quite frankly don’t know where to begin. This idea that the member opposite has that somehow these patients are jumping the queue is absolutely not true. The allegation that she suggests, that this somehow is affecting the patient care of Ontarians, is absolutely not true.

But the truth, Mr. Speaker, is that when I first had this conversation with the RNAO and others, I began a review process through my own ministry. We sent a survey out to the hospitals which are actually engaged in some way or thinking of being engaged in international patients. We sent out a survey to get more information. We're reviewing the results of that survey. I mentioned that I met with the RNAO as recently as last Monday on this as well. I take their concerns very, very seriously. But, Mr. Speaker, I have to say that we have already implemented measures where zero public dollars can be used to pay for this type of care.

Ontario patients must and will always come first, Mr. Speaker. Any revenue generated has to go back into hospitals to improve patient care. But we are looking at this, and I'll have further information later.

SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED

Mr. Yvan Baker: My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, during the election campaign, I met with thousands of constituents, and they raised a range of issues. One of the things that they raised was that many of them have family members who are struggling with developmental disabilities, and they need help.

In my riding of Etobicoke Centre, we are fortunate to have organizations like Community Living that provide support to those families and those individuals. But since becoming MPP, I have heard very clearly more support is needed for people and the families of those who have developmental disabilities.

1120

Advocates have asked for more specialized care that is targeted to individual goals and needs. I know that we heard calls for greater support in this House yesterday, when the report of the Select Committee on Developmental Services was tabled. I know that through the budget the government has chosen to prioritize and invest further to support those with developmental disabilities.

Minister, could you tell us who will benefit from these investments and how this will impact the lives of those individuals and their families?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: Thank you to the member from Etobicoke Centre for this question. I was certainly proud to rise in the House yesterday in response to the select committee on developmental disabilities' report and to detail the many actions our government continues to take in this area. As we transform developmental services in this province, our goal is to ensure that everyone can participate fully in our communities.

The 2014 budget placed a further emphasis on this transformation through our \$810-million investment, the single largest investment in the developmental services sector in the province's history. This investment is expanding direct funding to serve 21,000 more individuals and families. Specifically, we will be supporting 8,000 children and their families through Special Services at

Home and 13,000 adults through the Passport Program. In this way we will provide more choice and flexibility within the existing system to better promote inclusion, independence and choice.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Yvan Baker: I'm sure those people impacted will appreciate the significant investment.

Minister, yesterday you mentioned that the government was exceeding its projected targets in providing direct funding supports for individuals with developmental disabilities and to their families.

However, as you know, there are in some cases individuals, both adults and children, continuing to wait for funding from these programs, and this includes constituents in my own riding of Etobicoke Centre. Getting access to these funds so that individuals can start to enjoy more programming and support is obviously critical and top-of-mind to these people and their families.

Minister, how is the government tackling these wait-lists and when can these adults and children in Etobicoke Centre and beyond expect to enjoy that support?

Hon. Helena Jaczek: We committed in the budget to eliminate the current wait-list for the direct funding programs Passport and Special Services at Home, and our government is making significant progress as thousands of people are already benefiting from our budget investment.

Since our budget passed in July of this year, 7,900 people and their families have been approved for direct funding, exceeding our original targets for this year by at least 20%. We're already more than 35% toward our goal to provide direct funding to 21,000 people.

We also, as of October 1, updated the services and supports eligible for funding under Passport so adults with a developmental disability can: get temporary respite for their caregivers; take part in community classes and recreational programs; develop work, volunteer and daily life skills; hire a support worker; and create their own life plans to reach their goals.

TAXATION

Ms. Laurie Scott: My question is for the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. Minister, let me quote from your mandate letter from the Premier: "Continuing to work with the tourism industry and regional tourism organizations to support the sector's economic growth and encourage collaboration among tourism industry partners."

Minister, a report by Fred Lazar of the Schulich School of Business at York University finds that increasing the aviation fuel tax in Ontario could mean a loss of nearly 3,000 jobs and decrease provincial GDP by almost \$100 million annually.

My question to you is: What economic analysis have you done on the impact of job and revenue losses that this aviation tax will cause?

Hon. Michael Coteau: Minister of Finance.

Hon. Charles Sousa: I appreciate the question. As you know, aviation fuel is impacted not just by what the

province of Ontario has recently applied; it hasn't even changed since 1992. The majority of the fees associated with the airlines is actually a federal component.

Notwithstanding that, we also recognize that Ontario has benefited from greater runs, greater airline investments and more opportunities in the province. We also have mitigating opportunities in some of the remote communities that we'll be looking at and we look forward to continuing to enhance tourism and activity—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. Who's next?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No, for the warning.

Supplementary?

Ms. Laurie Scott: Minister, in July, Sunwing announced that they will begin to operate flights out of Buffalo instead of Pearson international airport, largely to avoid the increased costs. Just last week, officials were here from Buffalo international airport, launching a campaign to attract travellers south of the border. They have bought ads on the Gardiner; they are running TV commercials and have a website to emphasize the potential savings to Ontarians.

You like to point at and blame other levels of government, but the bottom line here is, your government's aviation fuel tax increase is bad business here in Ontario. Minister, are you not concerned at all that this increase in taxes is driving businesses and travellers out of Ontario? Are you not at all concerned?

Hon. Charles Sousa: We are stimulating and investing in our economy to promote greater growth and greater opportunities and maintain a very competitive business climate, including the areas around tourism.

Here's what the Buffalo airport's senior marketing manager noted. He said the following: that he, like many other residents of western New York, will use the Toronto airport to fly to international destinations.

We recognize that Toronto Pearson is a very competitive airport and will continue to be so when we look at other airports and other opportunities around the world. We are an international hub. It's still more effective to operate from Toronto and the surrounding regions in Ontario.

What's also important to note is that there are increased investments and increased flights coming out of Ontario than ever before, and we will continue to enhance and support that.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: Mr. Speaker, last month the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services informed me that male offenders from Windsor and Chatham serving intermittent sentences would report to London rather than the new \$247-million facility in their own community. As you know, conditions at the London facility are deplorable, with constant instances of overcrowding, understaffing and lockdowns.

With the minister now announcing plans to build a new facility in London, will male offenders from Windsor be required to report to this new facility, or does the minister ever plan to allow male intermittent sentences to be served at the South West Detention Centre?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I thank the member from Windsor West for asking the question. I am very much looking forward to working with the member on very important issues dealing with community safety and correctional services. I have appreciated our conversations thus far on issues and particularly the issues that she has raised in regard to the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre.

As I have spoken in the House before, I have had the opportunity to visit EMDC along with our superintendent and members of the local union and of the provincial union as well, to better understand the kind of challenges and solutions that we need to determine together. As a result, we are not only implementing the 12-point action plan that my predecessor, the Attorney General, put into action—11 out of those 12 are already in action; we have also announced the building of a new regional intermittent detention centre so that we can separate intermittent inmates from those who are sentenced.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I don't believe I actually received an answer to my question as to whether Windsor and Chatham intermittent offenders will then be returned to Windsor.

We also learned from the minister during his recent tour of EMDC in London that one of the reasons that South West Detention Centre in Windsor isn't fully operational is because it is currently understaffed; therefore, male intermittent offenders are being sent to the EMDC in London. We all know how successful that has been.

In fact, the frequent lockdowns on the weekends at EMDC are due to staff shortages, leading to volatile, ongoing situations there. Minister, the short-staffing of correctional facilities is not just a problem in Windsor, it's not just a problem in London, but across the entire correctional system in this province. It's a health and safety issue for the staff and a safety and service issue for the offenders.

The minister mentioned hiring 300 officers. Windsor alone would take up one fifth of who you plan to hire for this entire province. What will the minister do to fix the problem of staff shortages at existing correctional facilities and ensure all new facilities are adequately staffed?

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: We're really proud of the state-of-the-art detention centre that has been built in Windsor called the South West Detention Centre. We are even prouder of the fact that we worked very closely with our correctional staff, both management and correctional officers, in terms of the design and the operation of the South West Detention Centre, so that not only will we enhance the health and safety of our correctional staff but also the safety of inmates as well.

1130

The South West Detention Centre is at 80% capacity right now. The reason it is at 80% capacity is by plan.

We have a transition plan. You don't just open a jail and fill it up with people. The health and safety of our correctional staff, both managers and correctional officers, is extremely important. We want to make sure that there's a plan and that there's proper transition in place.

As for intermittent from Windsor to EMDC, we're talking about four to six individuals only. But I look forward to continuing to work with the member opposite.

FLU IMMUNIZATION

Mr. Granville Anderson: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Speaker, as I am sure you and most members of this House are aware, flu season has begun in Ontario. My constituents in the riding of Durham are concerned about how easy it is to catch the flu. Sneezing and coughing, lack of hand-washing and children playing at school all make it easy and inevitable for us to get sick this season. Sometimes the individuals who are most vulnerable to the flu, like the seniors in my riding, can experience awful complications such as pneumonia.

Speaker, through you, I ask the minister: What is the government doing to stop the spread of influenza this season?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: I want to thank the member from Durham for this very timely question. Yes, flu season is here. That's why Ontario is once again offering a free flu shot—say that three times fast—for everyone six months of age and older who lives, works or goes to school in the province.

As of last week, the free flu vaccine—I'm not going to get that wrong—was made available at doctors' offices and at community and workplace flu immunization clinics. I even kicked off the beginning of the season last Thursday by giving a flu shot to Galen Weston, who is the executive chairman and president of Loblaws, at one of the downtown Loblaws pharmacies. He said he didn't feel a thing. This was to promote the fact that can you now get your flu shot from a trained pharmacist at almost 2,400 pharmacies across Ontario.

Each year, the flu shot prevents the need for 30,000 visits to hospital ERs and 200,000 to doctors' offices—

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

Hon. Eric Hoskins: —and I'm looking forward to the supplementary, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm sure you are. Supplementary?

Mr. Granville Anderson: Mr. Speaker, through you, I wish to thank the minister. It is great to know that the flu shot will be so easily available for my constituents to access this year. As a matter of fact, I will be taking my flu shot next week in Port Perry at the local Shoppers Drug Mart.

My constituents in Durham are extremely involved in their community, which makes the spread of the flu even easier. Health care professionals suggest that getting lots of rest, fluids and handwashing are methods to prevent the spread of the flu, but we all know this can't prevent the spread of the flu on its own.

I often hear people say that they won't need a flu shot this year because they had one last year. Another thing I hear is that the flu shot can actually cause the flu. Speaker, I wish to ask the minister through you, is there any truth to these rumours?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Before I begin to answer that, I want to also mention the fact that we have so many pharmacists here today as well. Last year, they actually administered almost three quarters of a million flu vaccines to Ontarians, and I know it's going to be even more this year.

I'm happy to set the record straight so that Ontarians are informed about the flu and the flu shot. It's simply not true that you can get the flu from the flu shot. It's also a myth that you don't need a shot every year. It's because flu strains can change annually, so the vaccine you got last fall or winter may not protect you this year. It's especially important for those who are at high risk of flu-related complications, including the elderly, young children and those with weakened immune systems.

The flu vaccine is safe, effective and free for all Ontarians over six months of age. As a physician, I strongly encourage every Ontarian to roll up their sleeves and help stop the spread of the flu this year.

DISASTER RELIEF

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. As you know, on June 17 of this year, a devastating F2 tornado ripped through the township of Essa, creating a path of destruction from the village of Angus to the southwest corner of the municipality. Homes were destroyed, people were displaced and the municipality incurred substantial costs to assist residents and help with the cleanup. In fact, Mayor Terry Dowdall estimates that there was over \$10 million in damages.

Minister, you sent a letter to the municipality just recently and you turned down their application for disaster relief. Under the program, you give them zero dollars. There were over 100 homes destroyed. People were displaced. The township itself had, as you know, over \$55,000 in overtime costs. And yet no assistance; why aren't you able to provide that assistance?

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Well, Mr. Speaker, that's a good question and it deserves a straight-up and good answer. Before I give that answer, I just want to take a moment to thank the honourable member opposite who asked the question for being with us yesterday, standing with us in Hamilton, as our community grieved the loss of a great Canadian hero. Jim, I appreciated you being there, sir.

I want to commend the people of Essa township and Angus for their response, the first responders and the municipal responders. In fact, the community's response to the events in July demonstrated just what a caring and generous set of community partners were there.

Most of the damage that was caused was covered by insurance. Most of it was covered by insurance; that was

the case in this particular instance. I can give more details in the supplemental.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Well, it's hard to give my usual supplemental with those kind comments from the minister.

I will ask you something, though, seriously, and I'll try not to be partisan about it. But it's my first time I've ever asked this in 24 years. I have an article from the Barrie Examiner that says there's no tornado relief coming and it hints that the reason we're not getting any relief, with up to \$10 million in damages, is because it's a Tory blue riding. I hope that's not the case, Minister. I trust that's not the case. I hope ministers aren't saying that privately to people. The mayor certainly has indicated in this article that that might be the case, and the author of the article indicates that. I'm going to give you an opportunity to clear that up. I hope are you not discriminating against my riding because they vote the right way.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I just want to be clear: Political pedigree has nothing to do with ODRAP decisions. There are a number of members on this side of the House and the opposite side of the House who qualified for ODRAP assistance, and when those requirements were met, that assistance was provided.

As I said in the response to the first part of the question, the vast majority was covered by insurance. Overland flooding often isn't, but tornadoes are invariably covered. The total damages from the ODRAP application that the township made were, in fact, expenses in the neighbourhood of about \$77,000. The community itself generously raised over \$140,000, so the township doesn't need the money. They don't need the money because the colleagues in their community were so generous in helping their neighbours, and we should celebrate that.

MINING INDUSTRY

Mr. Michael Mantha: Mr. Speaker, good morning to you. My question is to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines.

Yesterday was Meet the Miners Day at Queen's Park. You had the same briefing and attended the same reception as I did. The message was loud and clear. Industry told us that due to uncertainty, instability, uncompetitive energy prices and lack of framework, the mining sector in this province is suffering. Industry told us that when they went abroad looking for investment dollars, investors said, no, Ontario was not a good investment. When industry came to government for help, they got nothing. When First Nations asked to be included, they were excluded.

Mining companies all across this province are suffering. They are asking for stability, they are asking for competitive energy prices, they are asking for a framework in order to do business here and abroad. Will this government help the mining sector in Ontario or continue to sit on the sidelines and watch as they leave, one by one?

Hon. Michael Gravelle: I regret that we won't get a supplementary question, but may I say that I think you

and I may have been at very different meetings and perhaps at a different reception. That was one of the most positive gatherings of the mining sector we've seen in a number of years at Queen's Park.

We recognize there are a number of challenges, and there is no question that the mining industry, particularly those who were there yesterday, made it clear how important certainty is. But the story is also, and a very important part of the story, that, despite those challenges—they're working with our government on a number of measures. Despite all those challenges, we are still the top jurisdiction in Canada for mineral exploration and mineral production. Despite those challenges, we had \$9.8 billion in mineral production last year.

New mines are opening up next year; new mines are opening up the year after; 10 new mines have opened up in the last 10 years. So while there are many challenges, we continue to work closely with all the mining sector but in a very positive way, moving forward on all aspects of the mining sector, including the Ring of Fire.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry on a point of order.

Mr. Jim McDonell: I just wanted to quickly—I see some residents up from eastern Ontario: Judy Wilcox, Donna Lowen and Leonna St. John here from the riding next, so welcome to Queen's Park.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome.

DEFERRED VOTES

STRONGER WORKPLACES FOR A STRONGER ECONOMY ACT, 2014 LOI DE 2014 SUR L'AMÉLIORATION DU LIEU DE TRAVAIL AU SERVICE D'UNE ÉCONOMIE PLUS FORTE

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

Bill 18, An Act to amend various statutes with respect to employment and labour / Projet de loi 18, Loi modifiant diverses lois en ce qui concerne l'emploi et la main-d'oeuvre.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1141 to 1146.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On October 20, 2014, Mr. Flynn moved second reading of Bill 18.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura
Anderson, Granville
Arnott, Ted
Bailey, Robert

Gravelle, Michael
Gretzky, Lisa
Hardeman, Ernie
Harris, Michael

Milczyn, Peter Z.
Miller, Norm
Miller, Paul
Moriadi, Reza

Baker, Yvan
Balkissoon, Bas
Ballard, Chris
Barrett, Toby
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Bradley, James J.
Campbell, Sarah
Chiarelli, Bob
Cimino, Joe
Clark, Steve
Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Crack, Grant
Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven
Delaney, Bob
Dhillon, Vic
Dickson, Joe
DiNovo, Cheri
Dong, Han
Dunlop, Garfield
Fedeli, Victor
Fife, Catherine
Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Forster, Cindy
Fraser, John
French, Jennifer K.
Gates, Wayne
Gélinas, France

Hatfield, Percy
Hillier, Randy
Hoggarth, Ann
Horwath, Andrea
Hoskins, Eric
Hudak, Tim
Hunter, Mitzie
Jaczek, Helena
Jones, Sylvia
Kiwala, Sophie
Kwinter, Monte
Lalonde, Marie-France
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
MacLaren, Jack
MacLeod, Lisa
Malhi, Harinder
Mangat, Amrit
Mantha, Michael
Martins, Cristina
Martow, Gila
Matthews, Deborah
Mauro, Bill
McDonnell, Jim
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor
McMeekin, Ted
McNaughton, Monte
Meilleur, Madeleine

Munro, Julia
Murray, Glen R.
Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Naqvi, Yasir
Natyshak, Taras
Nicholls, Rick
Orazietti, David
Pettapiece, Randy
Potts, Arthur
Qaadri, Shafiq
Rinaldi, Lou
Sandals, Liz
Sattler, Peggy
Scott, Laurie
Sergio, Mario
Singh, Jagmeet
Sousa, Charles
Tabuns, Peter
Taylor, Monique
Thompson, Lisa M.
Vanthof, John
Vernile, Daiene
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Wong, Soo
Yakabuski, John
Zimmer, David

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

Nays

Arnott, Ted
Bailey, Robert
Barrett, Toby
Campbell, Sarah
Cimino, Joe
Clark, Steve
DiNovo, Cheri
Dunlop, Garfield
Fedeli, Victor
Fife, Catherine
Forster, Cindy
French, Jennifer K.
Gates, Wayne
Gélinas, France
Gretzky, Lisa

Hardeman, Ernie
Harris, Michael
Hatfield, Percy
Hillier, Randy
Horwath, Andrea
Hudak, Tim
Jones, Sylvia
MacLaren, Jack
MacLeod, Lisa
Mantha, Michael
Martow, Gila
McDonell, Jim
McNaughton, Monte
Miller, Norm
Miller, Paul

Munro, Julia
Natyshak, Taras
Nicholls, Rick
Pettapiece, Randy
Sattler, Peggy
Scott, Laurie
Singh, Jagmeet
Tabuns, Peter
Taylor, Monique
Thompson, Lisa M.
Vanthof, John
Walker, Bill
Wilson, Jim
Yakabuski, John

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm supposed to say this: All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes 97; the nays are 0.

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

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to the order of the House dated October 28, the bill is referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

TIME ALLOCATION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We have a deferred vote on the motion for allocation of time on Bill 15.

Call in the members.

On October 28, Mr. Bradley moved government notice of motion number 6.

All those in favour, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura
Anderson, Granville
Baker, Yvan
Balkissoon, Bas
Ballard, Chris
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Bradley, James J.
Chiarelli, Bob
Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Crack, Grant
Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven
Delaney, Bob
Dhillon, Vic
Dickson, Joe
Dong, Han
Flynn, Kevin Daniel

Fraser, John
Gravelle, Michael
Hoggarth, Ann
Hoskins, Eric
Hunter, Mitzie
Jaczek, Helena
Kiwala, Sophie
Kwinter, Monte
Lalonde, Marie-France
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
Malhi, Harinder
Mangat, Amrit
Martins, Cristina
Matthews, Deborah
Mauro, Bill
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor

McMeekin, Ted
Meilleur, Madeleine
Milczyn, Peter Z.
Moridi, Reza
Murray, Glen R.
Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Naqvi, Yasir
Orazietti, David
Potts, Arthur
Qaadri, Shafiq
Rinaldi, Lou
Sandals, Liz
Sergio, Mario
Sousa, Charles
Vernile, Daiene
Wong, Soo
Zimmer, David

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 53; the nays are 44.

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

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There are no further deferred votes. This House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1155 to 1500.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Good afternoon. It is my great pleasure to introduce to the House today, in the members' west gallery, Ashley De Souza, who is the director of government relations for ORBA, the Ontario Road Builders' Association, as well as my sister, Mary-Sue Gardonio, who is here as well with ORBA. She's the chair of the Ontario Road Builders' Association. I want to welcome them to Queen's Park today.

Hon. David Zimmer: It's my great pleasure to introduce members of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission who are visiting in the Legislature today: Justice Murray Sinclair, Commissioner Marie Wilson and Ms. Kim Murray, who is the executive director.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Welcome. We're glad they're here.

Further introduction of guests? It is now time for members' statements.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

INTERNATIONAL PROPERTY RIGHTS CONFERENCE

Mr. Jack MacLaren: I recently attended the International Property Rights Conference in Ottawa on October 4. This property rights conference was the first International Property Rights Conference and it was hosted by the Ontario Landowners Association.

Len Harris, a former senator from Australia; Ron Gibson from Oregon, an expert in letters patent and US constitutional law; Tom DeWeese from Virginia, founder and president of the American Policy Center; and Elizabeth Marshall, head of research for the Ontario Landowners Association and an expert on letters patent and other Canadian constitutional documents were the guest speakers.

The conference was packed with 200 people and included several Progressive Conservative MPPs and a city of Ottawa councillor. The presentations included invaluable information on the destruction of private property rights around the world and the sharing of available common-law tools with which to fight back.

That same evening, interested landowners convened and formed the International Property Rights Association. They decided that the time had come to establish a global network to defend against a worldwide attack on private property rights.

Tom Black, president of the Ontario Landowners Association, was elected as chair of the new association. The mission statement of the International Property Rights Association is "To preserve and protect inviolable rights, property, land and security, under common law."

MUSLIM RESOURCE CENTRE FOR SOCIAL SUPPORT AND INTEGRATION

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I rise today on behalf of the Muslim Resource Centre for Social Support and Integration, established in 2009 to provide a support network for London's diverse Muslim community. The centre engages local Muslim and Arab leaders as well as social service and justice agencies in dealing with complex issues related to integration, family conflict, domestic violence and children in conflict with the law.

Yesterday, the centre hosted a provincial conference called Culturally Integrative Family Safety Response in Child Welfare. The conference showcased the successful model developed by the centre in collaboration with the Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex to reduce the risk of family violence. Between 2009 and 2012, this model led to a 73% decrease in the number of Muslim and/or Arab children entering the child welfare system. With support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the model has been transferred to Ottawa, Kingston and York region.

In the wake of the violence on Parliament Hill, many commentators have called for just such culturally responsive services to identify Muslims in crisis and connect them to professional supports. Yet the Muslim Resource Centre remains underfunded, its operations dependent on a patchwork of project-based funds.

We all need to work together to protect community safety. Ensuring a culturally responsive social safety net through sustainable funding for agencies like the Muslim Resource Centre is a critical part of those efforts.

McCORMICK CUP

Mr. Arthur Potts: An epic battle between Toronto's two top rugby clubs, Balmy Beach and Toronto Scottish, occurred last Saturday for Ontario men's rugby's oldest and most sought-after prize, the McCormick Cup. Held at Fletcher's Fields in Markham, this contest is a long-standing tradition in Ontario rugby. I must confess to a small conflict, since my daughter Robin has played for the Scottish, whereas the Beachers are in my riding. But now that I have joined the Balmy Beach Club, I guess we'll be cheering for different teams.

The McCormick Cup is a prize for Rugby Ontario's Marshall Premiership league for the first teams, and it allows the winner to boast that they're the best rugby team in Ontario. The cup is named for former Rugby Ontario president Vic McCormick, one of the great builders of the sport in our province.

The McCormick Cup has been won 13 times by Balmy Beach, and last Saturday they beat Scottish decisively 27-22, hoisting it for the 14th time. But that's not all. Two top cups were won that day: The Gee Gage Cup, the trophy for the seconds, was also won by Balmy Beach, a decisive victory of 38-25, again over the Scottish.

The Beachers' head coach, Bruce Gage, was the son of Tubs and Gee, who their local field is named after. They worked very hard to make rugby what it is in Ontario today.

The double victory has never happened before. It's a true testament to the depth of the club. A hard-fought battle—great job, boys. Up the beach!

ABOLISHMENT OF SLAVERY

Mr. Ted Arnott: There are many notable milestone anniversaries this year: The 100th anniversary of the start of the First World War, and the 70th anniversary of D-Day, the beginning of the Battle of Normandy and the liberation of Europe are two that come to mind. But there's another significant milestone anniversary this year that has passed largely unnoticed. In the summer of 1834, 180 years ago this year, slavery was abolished in the British colonies by an act of Parliament of the United Kingdom, and so abolished in Canada.

For more than 20 years, in a remarkable display of parliamentary perseverance, William Wilberforce introduced bill after bill in the House of Commons to end the scourge of slavery in the British empire. His goal was finally realized in 1833, with the passage of the Slavery Abolition Act. Sadly, Wilberforce died one month later, not living to see his bill come into force on August 1, 1834.

Today, August 1 is recognized in Ontario as Emancipation Day, the day when slavery here was abolished for all time, turning Ontario into an important destination of the Underground Railroad for slaves who had escaped the US south.

Bill 111, the Emancipation Day Act, 2008, was the very first private member's bill introduced in the history

of this House that was co-sponsored by two MPPs from different parties, showing that we can work together across party lines to get things done and recognize with pride an important part of Ontario's heritage and history.

HALLOWEEN

Mr. Michael Mantha: Halloween is just a few days away. The kids are excited, and let's be honest: Many parents are looking forward to raiding the stash their kids will bring home as they sleep.

During the Halloween season, it is important to keep your child's safety in mind when planning costumes, decorations, treats and activities. Make sure that Halloween is a safe and happy experience for the whole family by preparing ahead of time. It is important to make your home safe for the little ghouls and goblins. Remove objects around the outside of your house that could cause children to trip or fall. Turn on your outdoor lights to increase visibility and let the trick-or-treaters know they can visit.

Ensure that your children are dressed appropriately for Halloween. Pick brightly coloured costumes. Avoid costumes that are too big. Choose costumes that fit well and can be worn over warm clothes so that children are protected against the cold and wet weather.

Keep your children safe by teaching them to stay visible and be aware of their surroundings at all times. Teach your children to be careful when crossing the street. Always examine the treats and toys that are brought home before giving them to your child.

With all that in mind, Mr. Speaker, enjoy a spook-tacular and safe Halloween.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Boo.

1510

REPUBLIC DAY OF TURKEY

Mr. Bob Delaney: Today Ontario joins with Turkish people around the world to celebrate the 91st anniversary of the proclamation of the Turkish republic. On October 29, 1923, Mustafa Kemal, also known as Kemal Atatürk—"Father of the Turks"—later elected as the first president of the Republic of Turkey, declared that Turkey would become a republic.

Turkey today has the world's 16th-largest economy, a population of some 80 million and a growing, healthy free market. It has a strong infrastructure fabric, and Turkey is more resilient to the peaks and valleys of the global economy as a result. The Federation of Canadian Turkish Associations hosted a flag-raising today just outside the Legislature. The federation was established in 1985 and is a non-profit organization promoting cultural, economic, educational, social and religious issues important to the Turkish community in Canada.

It was my honour today to join with my colleagues, including Minister Moridi, to welcome the Federation of Canadian Turkish Associations, to welcome the Consul General of Turkey, Mr. Ali Rıza Güney, and to join with

Turkish people across Ontario who have come together to celebrate this joyous day.

On behalf of Ontario, I welcome you this evening to celebrate Republic Day of Turkey at Hart House from 6 to 8 p.m.

LAURA COUGHLIN

Mr. Michael Harris: Today I would like to recognize a woman from Waterloo region who devoted her life to helping others: Laura Coughlin. I have been told great things by people within our community about Laura, as well as by her son, Patrick Nelson, who is a friend of many of us in this Legislature.

In Waterloo region, Laura spent the last 30 years working to improve the lives of children with mental health, mood disorder and developmental challenges. Recognizing the gap that exists for families who have children with a mental illness or disability, Laura assisted in strengthening Parents for Children's Mental Health, Waterloo, and founded the Mood Disorder Parent Support Group in Waterloo region. She volunteered for KidsAbility, Waterloo, which is a rehabilitation facility for children with special needs. These are all foundational programs within our community that bring great support to families. More recently, she participated in the Grand River Hospital Foundation campaign to raise awareness of children's mental health.

In amongst all her volunteering, she still found time to provide foster care for almost 40 children and teenagers. Laura's selflessness and dedication are an example for all of us to live by.

On Thursday, October 23, she lost her battle with ALS. It is with great sadness that she leaves us. On behalf of the Ontario Legislature, I want to thank her for the contributions she has made to this province and the legacy she leaves behind in our region of Waterloo.

DARLINGTON FUSION

Mr. Granville Anderson: I rise today to recognize an outstanding achievement by a team of soccer players in my riding of Durham. I am pleased today to tell you about the Darlington Fusion under-16 girls' soccer team, which, over the Thanksgiving weekend, travelled to Mount Pearl, Newfoundland, for the national soccer championships.

They didn't face an easy road to victory in the tournament. Though they earned shutouts in the first two games of the tournament, the team was forced to go to penalty kicks in both quarter- and semi-final games before finally beating Manitoba in what I hear was an extremely well-played game. The team won the provincials, played in Oshawa, to qualify for the national championships.

This group of talented young women have been ably led over the past few years by head coach Dave Staley. Darlington Fusion is part of the Darlington Soccer Club, which has been part of my community for more than 130 years.

My very warmest congratulations to this group of very talented young women and their coaches.

KITCHENER CITY COUNCIL

Ms. Daiene Vernile: October 27 was a momentous day for municipalities across Ontario, and Kitchener was no exception. I'm delighted to tell you and the House about our new council and our new mayor in the great city of Kitchener, as well as to thank our outgoing long-time mayor, Carl Zehr.

After serving six consecutive terms as a councillor for ward 2, Berry Vrbanovic was elected as our new mayor in Kitchener, with a healthy majority of votes. I have personally known Berry for more than 25 years, and I can attest to the fact that he is a very hard-working, generous and committed public servant. Berry will no doubt be a great asset to the city of Kitchener.

With the happy welcoming of Mayor-elect Vrbanovic, it is also with a very heavy heart that we say farewell to our outgoing mayor, Carl Zehr, who was first elected to Kitchener council, where he served from 1985 to 1994. He went on to become our mayor in the city in 1997, making him Kitchener's longest-serving mayor ever. Carl has been a wonderful advocate for our city, and I sincerely thank him for his years of commitment and devotion to our community.

I would also like to welcome Dave Schnider and Sarah Marsh as new members of Kitchener city council and congratulate all the returning members, and I want to give a nod to all the candidates who put their names on the ballot in the K-W area.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I thank all members for their statements, and I do have an announcement. In the members' galleries, east and west, there are the red shoelaces that I promised after the first statement, returning to the House, that the Special Olympics were being held in North Bay. The member from Nipissing announced that. Those shoelaces are in the members' galleries—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Sorry, the lobbies, not the members' galleries. They're yours to help advertise Special Olympics Ontario. So I thank you for that, and I thank the member from Nipissing for having that available.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Toby Barrett: Speaker, I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly, pursuant to standing order 111(b).

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Mr. Barrett presents the committee's report.

Does the member wish to make a short statement?

Mr. Toby Barrett: I'll leave that as presented.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Pursuant to standing order 111(b), the report is deemed to be adopted by the House.

Report deemed adopted.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SAINT PAUL UNIVERSITY ACT, 2014

Mr. Fraser moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr8, An Act respecting Saint Paul University.

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): Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill stands referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

EBOLA VIRUS

Hon. Eric Hoskins: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to outline the actions that our government has taken to prepare for and respond to Ebola virus disease.

Many Ontarians know that, in addition to being Minister of Health, I am also a medical doctor and a public health specialist. I'm also a former aid worker with many years of experience working in the area of infectious disease in Africa, including in West Africa, and these experiences have given me, I believe, a unique and useful perspective when we are looking at the measures to be taken to protect ourselves and confront the Ebola epidemic that's currently affecting West Africa.

1520

Mr. Speaker, the current outbreak of Ebola in West Africa is indeed unprecedented. The World Health Organization estimates that without more help from the international community, by this December there could be as many as 10,000 new infections occurring each and every week.

I'm proud to say that Ontario is supporting the international emergency response by donating \$3 million to support the efforts of the Red Cross and Médecins Sans Frontières in their efforts to fight Ebola in West Africa. In fact, much of that money will go towards our Ontario and Canadian health care experts and aid workers who have and will be travelling to the region of West Africa to confront this horrible epidemic.

Mr. Speaker, with globalization and the movement of people across continents, we can't rule out that Ontario could eventually be faced with its first case of Ebola. While the risk to Ontarians remains very, very low, the

preparedness of our health care system and the protection of our health care workers is a top priority for my ministry and for me.

Fortunately, the province is in a much better position today to respond to a disease like Ebola because of our experience with SARS a decade ago. Among other improvements, we now have a much more robust public health system. We expanded infection control resources and expertise to help hospitals control disease outbreaks, and we now have Public Health Ontario to provide scientific and technical support for infection prevention and control, disease surveillance, epidemiology and emergency preparedness.

Mr. Speaker, it's very important to me that we take action to protect Ontarians and our front-line health care workers—our first line of defence. That's why I recently announced the additional measures that our government is taking to protect Ontarians and, in particular, our health care workers.

My ministry, in collaboration with Public Health Ontario, has worked for many months with Ontario health care providers, health and safety experts, and infectious disease specialists to provide guidelines regarding disease diagnosis; specimen collection; infection prevention and control measures, and testing. Since then, at my request, the interim Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. David Mowat, has issued a directive to all acute-care settings—our hospitals—concerning the procedures that are necessary to protect the health of workers and significantly reduce the risk of spreading the disease. This directive also requires that at all times, two registered nurses provide care to each patient confirmed to have Ebola, and that they must not care for any other patients. In addition, management staff must be designated to supervise the safety of our health care workers.

We're enhancing the province's readiness strategy in six key ways.

First, my ministry has designated 11 hospitals across Ontario to serve as referral centres—designated hospitals for the treatment of any Ebola cases. Those hospitals are the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, Hamilton Health Sciences, Health Sciences North, the Hospital for Sick Children, Kingston General Hospital, London Health Sciences Centre, Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre, the Ottawa Hospital, St. Michael's Hospital, Sunnybrook Hospital and University Health Network's Toronto Western Hospital. These hospitals have very sophisticated infection control systems and procedures already in place that are designed to limit the spread of infection to protect health care workers and to provide the best possible care for patients.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, my ministry is working with Ornge and other emergency medical services to designate and equip ambulances to transport potential Ebola patients to the designated hospitals for treatment. The first responders on these ambulances would wear biohazard suits and transport patients in an isolation pod to protect themselves.

Third, as of October 20, the Ontario public health laboratory now has the capability to test potential Ebola

cases. This has provided Ontario with local capacity that will make test results available even sooner. Specimens will also be sent to the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg for confirmation.

Fourth, my ministry has created a formal Minister's Advisory Table on Ebola Preparedness to ensure that the needs of health care workers are addressed effectively and as quickly as possible. It brings together key stakeholders and partners, including front-line health care workers and their representatives, to provide input and advice to inform the ministry's decisions as we continue to ensure Ontario's preparedness, and that first meeting has already taken place last week.

Fifth, my ministry created an Ebola Command Table, which includes myself; the interim Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. David Mowat; the Deputy Minister of Health; Public Health Ontario; our partner ministries; and representatives from the province's LHINs and designated referral hospitals. Our first meeting also took place last week.

Finally, the province is enhancing the availability of, and its readiness to distribute, biohazard suits to further protect health care workers who treat Ebola patients. This is in addition to personal protection equipment that is already stockpiled by hospitals, and includes additional precautionary protection, such as face shields, hoods and boots.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to gather information about this situation, as it becomes available through the Public Health Agency of Canada and other international and national sources, in order to continue to monitor and assess the risk to the people of Ontario. And we will keep updating our readiness strategies in response to any changes in the current disease situation.

I want to assure all Ontarians that their safety is my top priority, and I'm confident that with the measures now in place, Ontario is well prepared to contain and treat any potential case of Ebola in our province.

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: This month marks the 100th anniversary of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, or what we know as WSIB. A hundred years ago, on October 1, 1914, what was then known as the Workmen's Compensation Board held its first board meeting to begin providing workplace compensation to Ontarians.

It was a time of great change that same year. Our country was sending its first convoy of troops across the Atlantic in the First World War. The Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto had opened its doors to the public for the very first time. And Ontario judge Sir William Meredith had just provided the Lieutenant Governor a report on compensating workers who had been injured on the job.

The report outlined a very historic compromise. It laid out certain key principles for a workers' compensation system, which included no-fault compensation, security

of benefits through the establishment of a fund, collective liability of employers and administration by an independent agency. These principles led to the creation of what is now known as the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, and those principles ring true today, just as they did 100 years ago. And they're going to continue to ring true for the next 100 years and beyond, as the WSIB adapts to changing needs of the workforce in Ontario.

Speaker, our government continues to be committed to those founding principles of the WSIB, because we believe that a strong and fair WSIB is absolutely crucial to Ontario's workers, employers and economy. The injured workers of this province must be treated with fairness, with dignity and with respect, because even in a land of abundance, our workers, the people of Ontario, are the most important resource we have. We must do our utmost to protect that resource and those people.

The WSIB has provided injured and ill workers compensation benefits, access to health care and ongoing support so workers can transition safely back into their job.

I know the WSIB is committed to creating a financially sustainable system that's going to continue to help Ontario workers well into the next century or beyond. So in that regard, Speaker, I'd like to acknowledge and thank the chair, Elizabeth Witmer, and the board. I'd also like to thank the WSIB executive and staff for their ongoing hard work

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This month, we also observe another important milestone. This month marks the 35th anniversary of Ontario's landmark workplace health and safety legislation, what we know today as the Occupational Health and Safety Act. This piece of legislation in Ontario forever changed the way that workplaces address health and safety. It gave workers in this province three very distinct rights: They now have the right to refuse unsafe work, the right to know about hazards in the workplace, and the right to participate in identifying and resolving health and safety concerns.

Since 2003, we've significantly lowered the rate of injury in the province of Ontario. Our province is among the safest places to work in all of Canada. But as long as we have mothers and fathers and sons and daughters who fail to come home at night because of a workplace injury or fatality, we have so much more to do. That's why our government has embarked on the greatest revitalization of Ontario's workplace health and safety system in more than 30 years. One of the most significant changes came into effect this year on July 1. It's a regulation that requires employers to ensure that workers and supervisors complete basic occupational health and safety training awareness programs in their workplace. We're the very first province in the country to introduce such mandatory health and safety training, and we believe it's going to give workers all across this province the basic tools they need to do their job safely.

As we move forward from these important anniversaries, we will continue to focus on the areas of greatest

need—vulnerable workers, small businesses and high-hazard workplaces—because at the end of the day, we all have to work together to prevent workplace injuries, illnesses and fatalities. We all share in that important responsibility. So on this occasion, as we commemorate how the WSIB has served Ontarians and we look forward to the next 100 years, let us also at the same time strengthen our resolve to eliminate workplace injuries. Let us remind ourselves that even one workplace injury is simply too much. Let us continue working together to realize the vision that we all have for healthier, safer and fairer workplaces in Ontario. That's a future we want all our children to see and that all workers in this province deserve. That's the Ontario that we want to build.

CHILD CARE WORKERS

Hon. Liz Sandals: I'm pleased to stand in this House today in support of the 14th annual Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day. Today we recognize the people who devote themselves to caring for our youngest and dearest every day. These early years professionals are passionate, committed and hard-working. They are skilled, knowledgeable and resourceful, and they're vital to our world-class education system. They are giving children the tools they need to learn, grow and feel valued. Above all, they are giving our children a valuable head start.

These early years professionals and registered early childhood educators are also providing parents and families with much-needed peace of mind. Parents are confident that when they leave home each morning, their children are being left in caring and capable hands.

I can tell you that there is amazing work being done each and every day across this great province. In fact, it's worth noting that in many ways, these early years professionals are a child's very first teacher outside of the home. Long before children enter school and full-day kindergarten, early years professionals and early childhood educators are providing valuable guidance, support and encouragement. As professionals, they know that children are born to learn and are rich in potential. They also know that by recognizing a child's individual strengths and abilities, they can help their young minds to flourish. That's why these early learning professionals work closely with parents and families to support a child's growth and development. They give them the confidence and trust to enter the school system and succeed.

It goes without saying that a child's first day in the care of our early learning professionals is a momentous occasion. It marks an important new beginning in a journey that will culminate in the pursuit of their lifelong dreams. And right from the start, Ontario's early years professionals and early childhood educators will be there with a helping hand.

We know the importance of the formative years in creating a solid foundation for a child's entire life. That's why in Ontario we offer an array of programs and

services for children and families. Early years professionals provide exemplary service in child care centres, licensed private home child care settings, full-day kindergarten classrooms, family resource programs, before- and after-school programs, and much more. But whatever the setting, early years professionals are doing amazing work.

I don't just say this as Minister of Education; I say this as a mother, a grandma and a former trustee. I've seen first-hand the great work of Ontario's early years professionals and early childhood educators. These are the champions of our youngest and most precious Ontarians. They do what they do because they want to make a real difference, and they want to change young lives for the better.

All our children have the right to a brighter future, and all children deserve the best possible start in life. Therefore, I urge everyone in this House today to join in support of these dedicated professionals: all of the early years staff and early childhood educators across our great province.

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

EBOLA VIRUS

Mr. Bill Walker: I'm pleased to rise on behalf of the PC caucus—particularly on behalf of the member from Whitby, Christine Elliott, our health critic—in response to the statement by the Minister of Health concerning Ontario's new Ebola guidelines.

While it appears that Ontario is working to bring in strong measures, perhaps some of the most stringent in Canada, it is still disconcerting that the ministry wasn't as initially proactive as it ought to have been in preparing our front-line health workers, primary care providers, walk-in clinics and doctor's offices in responding to Ebola.

It's disconcerting precisely because our province has been through two pandemics in the last decade: SARS and H1N1. In his report to the government, Justice Campbell of the SARS commission warned that we all failed ourselves and should all be ashamed "because we did not insist that these governments protect us better." As such, I question why, just 10 years later, the same workers—namely, the nurses—felt that this government wasn't ramping up their training in protective equipment and protocols as rapidly as it should have been.

Likewise, hospital administrators have shared that they remain unclear as to the reimbursement plan for the new guidelines, as their budgets are being further strained due to the costs of mandatory supplies, personal protective equipment and training. The MOH has yet to identify a reimbursement plan for hospitals, beyond "We will reimburse you at a later date." Surely we don't want this lack of a reimbursement plan to impact hospitals' existing services and, most importantly, patient care.

Today's Ebola scare is a true test of our province's readiness for such an outbreak and our ability to take a

proactive approach to ensure that health workers and patients are protected. I want to thank the health care professionals for being proactive, the Chief Medical Officer of Health and his staff, as well as the health minister and his staff for their efforts in working to address these concerns, and their collective efforts in keeping Ontario families safe during the Ebola threat.

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

Mr. Randy Hillier: Today we are recognizing the 35th anniversary of the Ontario health and safety act, and the 100th anniversary of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. Both of these are government initiatives: one a piece of legislation, and the other an agency with a long-standing history in Ontario.

The Ontario health and safety act has helped provide protection to keep workers across Ontario safe in the workplace, and if they do happen to get hurt, injured or ill, the WSIB, in all its variants throughout history, has been there to provide a helping hand back up.

While both should unquestionably be applauded for the work they do across this province to take care of workers, there is certainly much room for improvement. The WSIB has struggled for many years to properly manage a balance between premiums, benefits, unfunded liability and timely, efficient services and decisions.

All of us in this House ought to recognize that we cannot truly protect injured workers if the institution in place to take care of them fails to manage their responsibilities properly. So as we recognize these two anniversaries in this House, let us all remember it is our responsibility to ensure that both are managed and administered in a responsible and accountable manner.

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CHILD CARE WORKERS

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm pleased today to respond to the Minister of Education on the 14th annual Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day. I, too, agree about the great work they do across our province.

For many years now, my own children—we had a co-operative program we set up right in this small community and hired one of our first early childhood educators many years ago.

But I really want to point out today that, although it's appreciation day for most of them in Ontario, I think one of the things the minister didn't touch on was Bill 10. Bill 10 has a very, very negative impact on daycare in the province of Ontario.

We brought this up in debate. We know right now that the government is trying to push this bill through, and they'd like to see it all passed by Christmastime, in spite of the fact that only 35 recommendations by the Ombudsman have been implemented on this very, very important file.

I know that many of the private daycare operators across this province are early childhood educators. They're very professional in the manner in which they operate their businesses and look after our most precious commodity: our children.

I'm asking the minister once again—and we will continue to push for this in this House, because I want this particular Bill 10 to travel in the winter recess. We can have this thing all cleaned up by the time we get back here on Family Day, with the proper amendments put in place.

I think it's disgraceful that we practise early childhood education day at a time when the government is trying to push a bill through that has a very, very negative impact on 140,000 daycare spaces in the province of Ontario.

EBOLA VIRUS

Mrs. Lisa Gretzky: I want to begin by thanking all of the front-line health care professionals across Ontario who are working so hard to prepare for any potential cases of Ebola. We've been lucky that none of the suspected cases have tested positive. But infection control cannot be based on good luck. It must be proactive, not reactive. It must be based on the best evidence, not the best-case scenario. It must protect everyone who could find themselves at risk.

Our health care workers are on the front lines. When a suspected case of Ebola is found, they go to the bedside of that patient. They need to have every confidence that the government has left nothing to chance.

But we've heard from nurses who said they felt unprepared. We've heard from ambulance services that weren't ready and whose first responders did not feel safe.

We're concerned that due to the three-month wait for OHIP coverage, new Canadians may not have immediate access to health services when experiencing symptoms.

Speaker, it shouldn't take press conferences and failed inspections for the government to get this right. We shouldn't be playing catch-up today, but that's what the government is doing. Primary care workers are still waiting for directives so that they can prepare for Ebola, and the government is scrambling to order enough protective gear, while borrowing from the feds. We must do better.

As NDP critic for community safety, I urge the government to waste no more time in ensuring all front-line Ontario health workers are ready for the challenge they may face. We owe it to our nurses, doctors, first responders, cleaners—the list goes on—to ensure that they have the right equipment and the right training to keep Ontarians safe in all of our communities.

PROTECTION FOR WORKERS

Mr. Taras Natyshak: It is my honour to rise today on behalf of Ontario New Democrats to commemorate two important milestones for workers in the province. It has

been 100 years since meaningful workers' compensation laws were first passed in Ontario. This year also marks the 35th anniversary of the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Also, I'll mention that it is the Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers' 25th anniversary this year.

In 1910, Sir William Meredith was appointed to review the system of adjudicating injured workers' claims in Ontario and to provide a report back to this House. That report served as the foundation of the Workmen's Compensation Act of 1914.

Meredith's work provided the template for the key pillars which are widely referred to even today as simply the Meredith principles: security of payment, a no-fault system, collective liability, and administration by an independent agency. It is indeed our duty in this Legislature to continue to ensure that these principles are adhered to in both the spirit and letter of the law.

I also want to take a moment to recognize the hard work of people like former Ontario Federation of Labour president Gord Wilson and Leo Gerard, from the United Steelworkers, for their advocacy in establishing OHCOW clinics across Ontario to provide service, education and clinical expertise from a worker's perspective, and in making this service available free of charge to all workers in Ontario.

On this historic occasion, Speaker, let every member of this House commit to honouring and protecting those critical elements to a fair and just system of compensation for injured workers, and to properly funding our health and safety associations.

CHILD CARE WORKERS

Mr. Peter Tabuns: It's a privilege to recognize the 14th annual Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day. Every day in our province, moms and dads depend on the work of early childhood professionals. In all of our communities, kids are able to learn and discover because of the dedicated work of over 42,000 staff, including 17,000 registered early childhood educators. It really is the most important job we could ask anyone to do.

But these vital workers just don't get the support they deserve. The median wage for early childhood educators in licensed daycare is just over \$16 an hour. Other child care workers are paid even less.

Full-day kindergarten classrooms are overflowing. Over 600 rooms were crowded with more than 30 children last year, and I've talked to parents this year also dealing with substantial overcrowding in all-day kindergarten classrooms.

The government will say they've recognized these challenges, and New Democrats certainly support a long-overdue wage enhancement for these vital workers. But the fact is the Liberals continue to drag their heels when it comes to investing in a truly seamless, licensed, not-for-profit child care and early education system that serves all the children of this province. There remains

only one licensed daycare spot for every five children in this province, forcing far too many families to turn to unlicensed care.

Child care and early education need to be a priority for Ontario.

PETITIONS

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Bill Walker: “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 fully support it, will affix my signature and give it to page Jamie.

CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Ms. Catherine Fife: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario’s youth justice facilities are run by two completely different sets of policy guidelines depending on whether they are part of the Ontario public service (OPS) and funded directly by the provincial government, or the broader public service (BPS) and funded indirectly; and

“Whereas OPS and BPS facilities serve the very same youth, and both receive their funding from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services; and

“Whereas unlike in similar OPS facilities, there is no provincial mandate for youth corrections community agencies to provide WSIB coverage, meaning many agencies have inadequate private insurance coverage; and

“Whereas youth corrections community agencies are struggling with chronic underfunding;

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

“We strongly urge the provision of a provincial mandate for all youth corrections agencies to provide WSIB coverage to their staff. We further urge the assembly to improve systemic inequities by ensuring that all youth corrections facilities receive proper funding.”

I fully concur with this petition. I will be affixing my signature, and I will give it to page Ben.

HOSPICE FUNDING

Mr. Jim Wilson: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there is a discrepancy between how hospices are funded in Ontario; and

“Whereas Matthews House Hospice is the lowest-funded hospice in the Central Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) and among the lowest-funded in the province, even though it serves as many clients or more than other hospices that receive greater provincial support; and

“Whereas Matthews House has been told by the Central LHIN that LHINs do not fund residential hospice operational costs and yet hospices in other LHINs, including Barrie, Huntsville, Richmond Hill, Owen Sound and now Collingwood, all receive operational funding from the province; and

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“Whereas in February 2010 Matthews House Hospice was promised a solution to its underfunding by the Central LHIN which has never materialized;

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

“That the Wynne government immediately develop a comprehensive strategy to deal with hospice funding to ensure that people in south Simcoe and all Ontarians receive equal access to end-of-life care.”

Mr. Speaker, I agree with the petition and I’ll sign it.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Rick Nicholls: “Whereas the Auditor General of Ontario defines the global adjustment charge on hydro bills as ‘mostly consisting of the difference between the market price and the price paid to generators as set by the board for OPG or under contract with the government or the OPA’; and

“Whereas the Auditor General says the global adjustment has been rising steadily over the last few years and is expected to continue to rise from \$700 million (prior to the 2009 passage of the Green Energy Act) to \$8.1 billion by 2014; and

“Whereas the Liberal government’s 2010 fall economic statement stated that hydro bills are expected to rise 46% by 2015, and that new renewable power generation would account for 56% of that increase; and

“Whereas small to mid-sized businesses across Ontario are seeing the global adjustment portion of their monthly hydro bills increase significantly to the point that it is now larger than the actual energy portion of their bills; and

"Whereas many of those businesses are now delaying investment or hiring, or both, and considering either closing or moving outside of the province of Ontario as a result of delivered-to-market industrial energy rates that are now the highest in North America;

"We, the undersigned, do hereby petition the government of Ontario to reverse course on its expensive energy policy by cancelling the feed-in tariff ... subsidies and treating Ontario's energy as an economic development tool so that it once again is a competitive advantage for Ontario in retaining and attracting jobs and investment."

I agree with this petition, will sign my name to it and give it to page Morgan.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Mr. Ted Arnott: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"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."

This is signed by dozens of my constituents, and I'll affix my signature as well.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: "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 and I'll sign my name to it.

CORNWALL OUTDOOR RECREATION AREA

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

"Whereas many people use this 200 acres to walk their dogs on the scenic trails around the quarry. The MNR has stocked the quarry with trout every year for at least 40 years. The quarry is also great for bass fishing. This provides year-round enjoyment;

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

"Reopen the Cornwall recreation area trout quarry."

I agree with this and will be passing it off to page Jamie.

ONTARIO RETIREMENT PENSION PLAN

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas it is absolutely crucial that more is done to provide Ontarians retirement financial security which they can rely on;

“Whereas the federal government has refused to partner with our government to ensure that Ontarians have a secure retirement plan;

“Whereas more than three million Ontarians rely on the Canada Pension Plan alone, that currently does not provide enough to support an adequate standard of living;

“Whereas the Ontario Retirement Pension Plan will provide the safe and stable retirement that Ontarians need;

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

“That all members of the Ontario assembly support a plan to move forward with an Ontario-made pension retirement plan that will provide a financially secure retirement for Ontarians.”

I support this petition, affix my signature to it, and hand it to page Faith.

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: I have a petition here 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 thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to present this petition.

DIABETES

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

“Whereas the Liberal government implemented cuts to the Ontario health insurance program such that Ontario residents suffering from diabetes saw their annual eligibility for blood sugar test strips reduced to 200 per year, less than one a day; and

“Whereas a blood sugar test strip costs approximately 70 cents; and

“Whereas this latest cut to services to Ontario patients is just another misguided measure to nickel-and-dime Ontarians; and

“Whereas a focus on preventing disease and hospitalization is in the long-term interest of patients, their families and the province;

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

“To immediately reinstate full and unlimited eligibility for blood sugar test strips covered by OHIP for all Ontario residents suffering from diabetes.”

I agree with this and will be passing it on to Meher.

1600

OPPOSITION DAY

POWER PLANTS

Mr. John Yakabuski: I move that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario calls upon the government to recognize that the Standing Committee on Justice Policy has been investigating the destruction of documents regarding the cancellation of the Mississauga and Oakville gas plants during the 2011 election. Further, that the committee has not fully completed its investigation, and that the two essential witnesses of the investigation who were named in the Ontario Provincial Police’s information to obtain, Peter Faist and Laura Miller, who were originally scheduled to appear at committee before the June election, have not yet testified.

Therefore, in order to complete the original mandate of the committee, it is the opinion of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that the Standing Committee on Justice Policy is able to fulfill its mandate by requiring both Peter Faist and Laura Miller to testify to the committee before report writing commences.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Mr. Yakabuski has moved opposition day number 1. I recognize the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I’m going to give a little bit by way of history. Several years ago—and first of all, I want to say that it’s a sad thing that we’re doing here today. It’s sad that it has come to this point. It is sad that we require an opposition day motion in the Legislature as our last hope, even though the hope is faint—it’s the faint hope clause, as they say—because we know that now, with the majority, the Liberals are going to do their best to muster their members here into the House sometime

before 6 o'clock and defeat this motion. Unfortunately, that's likely to be the case.

However, I'm going to hope that some of those new members who were elected in June, who have probably not drunk enough of the Kool-Aid yet, might have a moment of conscience and ask themselves, "Do we just want to do what the rest of them have been doing since 2003, act like a bunch of trained seals and do what the Premier's office tells us? Or are we going to think independently and do what our constituents have asked us to do, and that is the right thing"—to do what is right and give the people of Ontario the opportunity to hear from two key witnesses in this investigation, Laura Miller and Peter Faist.

Let's go back in time a little bit, Speaker. Several years ago, the government decided that they needed power badly in the area of the western GTA, specifically Oakville and Mississauga. They put out RFPs and they went through all kinds of processes. My God, there was all kinds of opposition to these power plants. I remember being in Oakville several times. The people didn't want the power plants there, but the government decided, "We're building the power plants"—near the Ford area in Oakville and in Mississauga, one that was actually under construction when they cancelled it. The people didn't want the plants there, but the government said, "We're building them anyway."

Then, after they made those decisions, political reality for them kicked in and they thought, "Oh, my goodness gracious, we're getting a lot of opposition to these plants. For starters, we're going to have to save Kevin Flynn's seat in Oakville." So about a year before the election, five years or more after the decision was first made to build the plant there, magically, somehow the power wasn't needed in Oakville anymore. That was their story, the excuse: The power wasn't needed in Oakville anymore.

Interestingly enough, after beginning construction—in fact, there was millions of dollars of construction. We've all seen the pictures of the gas plant in Mississauga getting bigger every day. Then all of a sudden, during the 2011 election, they were worried about the members in Mississauga, like the member from Mississauga—Streetsville—I won't say his name because he'll rise on a point of order within about three seconds. Him and his colleagues from Mississauga, like the finance minister, Mississauga South, and other ones—Etobicoke—Lake-shore, Etobicoke Centre—were all concerned; some Etobicoke candidates as well as Mississauga. They were all concerned about losing their seats in the 2011 election. And, oh, it got even better in Oakville.

At the eleventh hour, just a few days before the election, Dalton McGuinty, who was the Premier then—you remember Dalton McGuinty? Hard to forget—announces that, "We're not going to go ahead with the building of the Mississauga plant." This is a plant that they were already building. They had already started to build it, and then they cancelled it because again, magically, we didn't really need the power. We needed it

two months before when we started building it—or three months; whatever—but now we didn't need it. It was the seat-saver program where they were willing to throw all logic out the window and cancel plants.

Then the story begins. "Okay, folks, we've got to come up with a real doozer here because this thing is going to cost us a bucketful of money. So let's get our stories straight and make sure that whatever emails we're doing we look at them maybe and we're going to have to delete some of those maybe later, but we've got to get our stories straight because we've got a real story to tell the people, because how are we going to justify this to the public, this decision to cancel these plants?"

They got it all wrapped up together and cancelled the plants. Then they announced, "Oakville: We're going to build that plant up near Napanee, hundreds of miles away, and it's not going to cost a lot of money. Mississauga, we're going to move to Sarnia and it's going to cost \$40 million." That was the story and they were sticking to it. Then, surprise, surprise. Do you remember Jim McCarter, the past Auditor General? Jim McCarter says, "I'd better take a look at this."

Mr. Jim McDonell: It smells.

Mr. John Yakabuski: "Something really doesn't smell very good here." That \$40 million turned into over \$200 million. Okay, 40 and 200; keep those numbers in mind. Then the Oakville plant turned into about an \$800-million fiasco. They're moving it up to the Napanee and Bath area near Kingston, and what are they going to do? They have to actually build power lines to bring the power back to Oakville. "We can't build in Oakville because we don't need the power in Oakville, but let's build in Napanee because we need the power in Oakville and we'll build all nice power lines to bring that power back to Oakville.

"Oh, but you know what else we've got to do? Oh, we forgot. We've got to build more gas lines to bring gas to the plant in Napanee." Millions and millions turned into a billion—\$1.1 billion. We can't get that money back. It's all contracted out. It's gone for the next 20 years. You'll be paying for that on your hydro bills.

The expectation was that we have to get to the bottom of this. We have to find out what went wrong. So the justice committee begins its work, and as we're interviewing witnesses—and we had lots of witnesses. We're going to hear that from the government: "You had 70 witnesses and hundreds of thousands of pages of documents, and this and that. We want to end the investigation."

We did interview all kinds of people, and some very good information came from that, and some very good information from the documents that we were able to look at. But, you see, a lot of those documents we didn't get to see because there was some little gremlin in the Premier's office who was deleting emails, and all kinds of people in the minister's office were deleting emails. So we're never going to get to see them. But then the OPP got involved too. They turned this into a criminal investigation. Do you understand that? A criminal

investigation. When I hear the words “criminal investigation,” I hear the sound of jail doors slamming and people being incarcerated. Because they must have done something wrong, somebody must have done something wrong, or at least there’s the belief on the part of the OPP—and I hear so many times from the government about how much they respect the work of the OPP. Well, the OPP decided that, “We believe there’s some criminal wrongdoing here.” So they released a statement called an information to obtain. This is where we get to the crux of the matter.

1610

The information to obtain was where we found out about—we had spoken to Laura Miller earlier, and we weren’t able to pick up on everything. But when the OPP released their information to obtain, all of a sudden, Laura Miller’s complexion changed. We saw her in a different light. This girl, this lady, this woman was key to this criminal investigation. And then we found out she had a boyfriend, a fellow by the name of Peter Faist. But the problem was, Peter Faist seemed to know all about computers. And he was in and out of these offices like a mouse in the fall getting ready to move into your house for the winter. He was in, he was out, he was in, he was out. And every time he would come in, more emails would disappear. Every time he would come in, more documents were deleted. And you know what the funny thing about it is? Peter Faist didn’t even work for the government. Yet, somehow, he was getting inside these top-secret offices. He was just weaving his way in there. Who was letting him in? We’d like to know these things. The people of Ontario would like to know these things.

So what we did, our folks here—my colleague Lisa MacLeod from Nepean–Carleton; my colleague Vic Fedeli from Nipissing; myself; my former colleague from Cambridge, Rob Leone; Lisa Thompson, my colleague from Huron–Bruce—we were all part of this committee. And we thought, “My God, we might be on to something.” So with the help from our friends the New Democrats, we decided we were going to go after Laura Miller and Peter Faist and get them to testify at this committee. They agreed they would testify, and as they were scheduled to testify, Premier Wynne called an election. She went to the Lieutenant Governor and called an election. She got a little bit of a threat from Andrea Horwath in the morning that said that we weren’t going to support the budget, and right away, she ran as quick as she could to the Lieutenant Governor and called an election. She said, “My goodness, this is one sure way we won’t ever hear from Laura Miller and Peter Faist, right? All we have to do is hornswoggle the people of Ontario into getting us a majority and we’ll never hear about this again.”

Well, that’s exactly what happened, unfortunately, and that’s exactly what this government wants to do now: deny the people of Ontario that testimony from Laura Miller and Peter Faist at this committee. That’s what they want to do now: deny the people of Ontario their chance to get to the bottom of this, their chance to hear the truth.

We heard from Premier Wynne so often about how she would do everything in her power to see that all of the information that was pertinent was brought forward by the committee, that the committee would have all access. I’ve got some quotes from her. It’s quite remarkable how much she believed in the work of the committee before she got her majority:

“I remain committed to being open and transparent on this issue. I have said that as there are questions that come forward, I want those questions to be answered. This is not about protection of anyone. It’s about opening up the process....” That’s what Kathleen Wynne said in this House in Hansard. My goodness, how things have changed.

So now, over the past couple of weeks, I’ve been asking questions—my colleague Lisa MacLeod spoke about it today—about bringing Laura Miller and Peter Faist back to this committee. That’s all we’re asking for. The government House leader—he blathers on about all kinds of stuff. He’s barely coherent when he’s answering questions because I think he’s got this feeling of terrible guilt. He knows what he’s doing is wrong, and the right thing would be to bring those people before the committee. But he’s under—

Mr. Bob Delaney: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Point of order, the member from Mississauga–Streetsville.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Chair, I recognize the member’s passion, but if he wishes to discuss the issue, he should do it without violating standing orders 23(h) and 23(i), which refer to the making of an allegation against a member, which he has done repeatedly, and to imputing a motive to a member, which he is doing even now. I would request that the Speaker enforce standing orders 23(h) and (i), to bring the tone of the debate down to a parliamentary level.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I take that under consideration, and I will tell the member to tread softly when he gets into those areas. It’s obviously a sensitive area, and I would ask you to try not to presume that someone did something they may not have.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you very much, Speaker. If I implied that I was reading the mind of the House leader, I apologize. It’s my belief that the House leader is feeling guilty about this, and that is why his actions in the House have been as they have been. Because he is under orders from headquarters; that much we know. The Premier rules with an iron fist. Everybody over there does exactly what they’re told—exactly what they’re told. They are told when to smile, they’re told when to laugh, they get the questions to ask and the answers are prepared in advance. We know how it goes over there.

We don’t want this committee to go on forever; we want the committee to end. I know that I’ve spoken to my colleagues in the NDP. We want this thing to end. We want to get to the bottom of it. Two more witnesses—we’ve spoken to 70 witnesses, approximately—

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Ninety.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Ninety. The House leader trumps me. If he says 90, I believe him on this one—90

witnesses. Days and days and days of depositions; it's gone on for months. And we're asking for two more. If you deny Laura Miller and Peter Faist their time before this committee—our committee's time with them—it is like having a world-famous murder trial and we shut it down before the eye-witnesses are heard from. These are the people who can solve this caper. These are the people who can direct the public to the truth, and the only person standing in the way of them is in China. The only person standing in the way of them is Premier Kathleen Wynne. If she decides—and I ask—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore has a point of order.

Mr. Peter Z. Milczyn: I'm new here, but my understanding is that members are not supposed to refer to the absence of other members.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): As long as the member says Premier Kathleen Wynne, he is within his boundaries. Individual members and ministers can only be named by their riding or title.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I've made my decision. Thank you.

Mr. John Yakabuski: When you're here a little longer—we hope it's not too long—you'll get to know about the standing orders.

The only one standing in the way of getting to the truth is Premier Kathleen Wynne. Her Deputy Premier, Deb Matthews, will be here today. The Premier, we all know—it's in the Toronto Star; she's been advertising it herself—is on a trip to China. But this party over here will have the opportunity to stand up for the truth.

I'm going to end here shortly, but I'm asking all of you people—and I say to the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, the new member, let your conscience guide you today. Do the right thing. I say to the member for Davenport, the new member for Durham and the member from Barrie, let your conscience be your guide today. Don't just do what the Premier's office is telling you to do. This is your opportunity to stand up for the people who elected you, to stand up for the people of Ontario and to stand up for the truth and support our motion. Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? The member from Toronto–Danforth.

Mr. Peter Tabuns: Thank you, Speaker. You're very gracious in the way you say that.

I rise to support the motion before us today. As you are entirely aware, Speaker, the gas plant scandal was, and is, a sorry chapter in the life of this province. I want to talk about the context of this whole matter.

1620

After being elected in 2003, the Liberals, who had campaigned on a program of maintaining public ownership of our hydro system, decided to take an entirely different tack. In true Liberal fashion, they ensured that almost all new generation of electricity in this province was private, so that as coal power was phased out, private power was phased in.

It was a slow-motion privatization, a stealth privatization, which should be a warning to this whole House about where it appears this government is going with the treatment of electricity distribution companies in this province. Frankly, it was a mistake to privatize generation in Ontario, and it will be a mistake leading to similar scandals if the government is to proceed with the privatization of electricity distribution companies.

The Liberals claim that there is a huge advantage in turning generation over to the private sector, that it eliminated risk for the public, for the ratepayers. If there were going to be cost overruns, the private sector would have to pay them. If there was a delay in construction, the private sector would have to absorb the loss. If there were political problems, it was the private sector that would have to deal with them. I have to say that the experience with the gas plants in Mississauga and Oakville destroys that argument.

Let me review what happened. In 2009, a contract was signed with TransCanada PipeLines to build a gas-fired power generation plant in Oakville. Within a year, that contract was cancelled, and the reason given was that the plant was no longer needed.

I have to tell you this, Speaker: That plant wasn't needed in 2009. Power demand had been dropping in the southwest GTA for a number of years at the time that that contract was signed. In fact, power demand in Ontario has continued to decline, and part of the reason we're seeing an increase in electricity costs is that the long-term energy plan factors in an ongoing decline in power demand in Ontario. That is the reality of a province that is undergoing a change in its economy, a loss of manufacturing.

When the Liberals decided to privatize this system, when they committed to the power generation industry, the power development industry, that there would be these contracts out there, they stopped looking at actual demand and started looking at the potential to engage in contracts and create huge business opportunities.

That plant was not needed in 2009 and, frankly, this government knew that. In this House, I and other New Democrats talked about the total lack of any need for that plant to be built. The people of Oakville made it completely clear that the plant was unnecessary. Before the contract was signed, the town of Oakville put in place a number of bylaws and zoning regulations that would have blocked that plant. Nonetheless, the government signed a contract, knowing there were these obstacles, being made aware that the plant was unnecessary.

So, in 2009, a plant that's not needed has a contract signed, and the government states that all the risk has been transferred to the private sector.

But that isn't what happened, Speaker. Two big considerations: One, TransCanada PipeLines came back to the government in 2010 and said, "Hey, this city is blocking us from going ahead. We want you to step in and override their bylaws."

The other consideration is that in 2010, we were getting into the election period. This government looked

at the need to preserve the seat, looked at the polls that were showing, in 2010 and 2011, a very good chance that the Conservative Party was going to win, looked at the opposition they were getting in Oakville and finally declared that this plant wasn't needed. At the time when they decided that the plant wasn't needed, they actually didn't know what it would cost to cancel or relocate.

The closest they had—and this was an email from someone in the Ontario Power Authority back to the Minister of Energy—was: “We think it could be a billion bucks.” That is the sum total of the deep analysis. That was it.

The privatization was supposed to transfer risk to the private sector. What it didn't transfer was political risk, and the Liberal Party decided that it wasn't going to take that Liberal risk; it was going to make a deal with TransCanada pipeline, save its own skin, save its own seats, and let the public and the ratepayers pay for that mistake.

This plant was cancelled at great cost to the public and relocated to Napanee, where it will be built at great expense to the public for years to come. As you're well aware, Speaker, earlier this year we did the calculations that in Ontario right now, we spend \$1 billion, a billion and a half, a year for power that we sell outside Ontario for about \$500 million. We are effectively a family with three cars that only needs one, and we're paying a lot of money to keep those other cars on the road. Occasionally we rent them to friends, get 20 bucks or 50 bucks, and we defray some of our costs, but we're stuck with this huge expense. This government went ahead with plants that weren't needed, cancelled them to save their skins and stuck the public with the bill.

In 2005 a contract was let to Greenfield power developers to build a power plant in Mississauga, and in 2005, in this House, Howard Hampton, who was then the head of the Ontario NDP, warned about the cost and the risk of proceeding with these private power deals. This government knew what it was getting into. It only had to listen to people who were involved in the energy sector to understand the risks they were taking on.

In 2009, again, after several years of dropping demand in the southwest GTA, the Liberals renegotiated the contract with the power developer. Why did they have to renegotiate? Because the developer had not been able to get financing for the plant. Think about it: a guaranteed contract for a guaranteed delivery of power and no one was willing to put money into it. By 2009, the numbers didn't work anymore.

An opportunity presented itself for this government to say, “We don't need to build this plant. We're just going to say, ‘Okay, your numbers don't work anymore. Good-bye.’” But they didn't do that. Even though power demand was dropping, they renegotiated that contract so it could go forward.

In 2011—remember 2011, an election year, an interesting year—the private power developer was able to get financing at 14% interest from a hedge fund operating with its money coming out of the Cayman Islands—14%

interest. The province of Ontario pays about 3.9%, 4% interest right now; 14% is quite extraordinary.

If you read the emails that circulated around the Ontario Power Authority at the time from some ministerial staff, there was a state of shock. It was: “How do we get out of this now? Maybe we should declare that there's an environmental problem.” “It might not work.” “Maybe we should just annul the contract.” “We could get into difficulty there.”

1630

And so the problem just rolled on and rolled on until the campaign buses were rolling. Those developers were not fools. They knew that if they poured concrete, if they rolled forward, they would be able to collect substantial damages.

If people remember, in that fall, the numbers for a while looked like they were going with the Conservatives, and so an announcement was made during that election that the plant would be cancelled. Quite extraordinary, Speaker. It was said at the time that this plant was in the wrong place. I have to say, the plant site had been identified in 2005. Six years later, someone realized, “Oops, maybe it's in the wrong spot.”

Speaker, it's not credible. What's credible is that someone was reading polling, someone made a political decision, and the public got to pay the price. What the Auditor General said about the Oakville and about the Mississauga plant was that in both cases we paid for effectively two plants. That was the cost.

Speaker, if these had been publicly owned plants, public projects, the public would not have been on the hook for 20 years' worth of profits that had to be paid out as damages to these companies. That was the great fear, because when you sign those contracts, it isn't like a construction contract, where you're just stuck for the cost of the building; no, you're stuck for the operational life of the plant. In fact, in some of the negotiations, there was concern by the private developers that they didn't want just 20 years of profits; they expected the plant to continue for 40 years, and they wanted that to be part of the consideration.

There is huge risk to the public when you privatize this infrastructure. This whole event illustrated it in an extraordinarily clear way.

I have to note, because there has been a lot of, I'll say gently, misdirection of vision in the course of this debate, that in 2008-09 we opposed building the plant in Oakville. We said it was a mistake. Howard Hampton said it was a mistake to go ahead with the privatization of our electricity system, and talked about the risks of the plants like the one in Mississauga.

In 2011, during that election campaign, Andrea Horwath was asked for the position of the Ontario NDP on the cancellation of the Mississauga plant, and her response, which is on record, was that she wouldn't proceed without knowing what the cost was. That was her position, just so people are clear. What did the leader of the party say? “Wouldn't proceed without knowing the cost”—a reasonable approach.

So we find Ontario in a situation where it has two plants that are being cancelled, huge liability, and the Liberals find themselves in a minority government situation. When this whole matter came before the estimates committee, when the opposition parties asked, “How much is it costing to cancel and relocate these plants?”, the government had a mess on its hands because, contrary to some earlier statements that we were talking about very small numbers, the reality was that we were talking very big numbers of public money that had been risked and lost.

It was when we asked for documents and asked for people to come forward to speak that the door got kicked open on what was really going on in the Liberal Party, in the Liberal ministerial offices, because when we asked for records from the Ontario Power Authority, from the Ministry of Energy and from the Minister of Energy, we got records from two of the three but nothing from the Minister of Energy’s office; zero—zero.

I took the opportunity at that time to talk to former Conservative ministerial staff and former NDP ministerial staff. Would you be in a situation on a major file where you would have nothing? Apparently not. That was unusual, to have nothing in ministerial files on a major issue.

We did find out, when a former chief of staff to a former Minister of Energy appeared before us, that on a routine basis, he deleted everything, contrary to the Archives and Recordkeeping Act that the McGuinty government had put in place in the middle of the last decade.

After a while, Speaker, it was hard to conclude anything other than that people were very systematic and conscientious about ensuring there was nothing written kept in place.

The last remaining area to be investigated is the question of records in the Premier’s office. It has been alleged that there was large-scale wiping of computer disks, that Laura Miller and Peter Faist were involved in this, as has been alleged. It is currently under investigation.

Speaker, we’ve had a very sorry and disturbing story of privatization, of waste of public funds and of missing records. There’s no doubt that the public interest has been lost in this whole matter.

It’s up to this government to support this motion. It’s up to this government to support the calling forward of those two witnesses to talk about who directed whom to do what, what precisely had to be allegedly wiped out, what were the conversations that led to these allegations and, presumably, the actions that have been discussed by the OPP.

Speaker, I call on the government to support this opposition day motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate? Further debate?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: He’s talking to his favourite Tory.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Well, the government House leader.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: Thank you very much, Speaker, for your patience and for recognizing me, as I was talking with my good friend from Ottawa. Actually, we were just talking about last week and what happened in our city last week, and we were just sharing notes. Thank you for your patience.

I’m very happy to have the opportunity to speak on this motion and to present our point of view on this motion. Speaker, as you have heard me say in this House a few times, there has been a lot of work done through the justice committee on this particular issue that is the subject of this motion. In terms of work, we’re talking about almost three years since committees began examining this issue.

I do want to take this opportunity, because I don’t think we have done that enough, to thank all the members from all three parties who have been part of the justice committee, spending hours and hours of their time listening to 90 witnesses, looking through all those hundreds of thousands of documents that have been put forward. I want to thank them. I want to thank them as members in this House, performing a very important responsibility that was given to them through this Legislature.

But, Speaker, I also say, and you’ve heard me talk about that before, that after all the time that they have spent, after all the analysis they have done, it is time that the committee starts their work on writing a report and providing recommendations to this House.

It is not a time to start yet another process as the member opposite, through his motion, is suggesting—a process, in fact, that the opposition brought to an end by calling an unnecessary election. There was a process ongoing and it was put to an end because the Parliament got dissolved as a result of the lack of support for the budget that the government had put forward back in late April or early May.

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The work that the committee was doing was moving ahead at that time, was coming to a conclusion. In fact, members were engaging in the process of writing the report, and I’ll come to that in a moment to remind members of what was said in the committee in that regard. But it is important, as other members have done who have spoken to this motion before me on this issue, to have a little bit of the history on this file, because, depending on who you listen to, you get a bit of a different narrative on what happened.

It’s very clear that the government listened to the concerns of the residents and relocated the Oakville and Mississauga gas plants. I recall very clearly that the residents of both Oakville and Mississauga were not content with the decision to site those particular gas plants at those particular locations. As many community members said, and as we representatives of our communities would hear our constituents on different issues, there was a very clear and strong opinion on the part of the communities in Mississauga and Oakville about those gas plants. Members who came from those areas did their job

by advocating on behalf of their constituents, like we all do in this House every single day on issues that are important to our communities. And the government did the right thing. The government listened to those communities and made the decision to relocate the Oakville and Mississauga gas plants.

The government was not the only one who made that decision. Of course, the government, being in the position of governing, gets to make decisions, and they made the decision. But all three political parties listened to the same residents in Oakville and Mississauga and committed that, if elected, they would relocate the gas plants in Oakville and Mississauga.

Interjections.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I remind members who may be heckling on the sidelines of their own records in stating that. In October 2010, for example, the NDP member from Toronto–Danforth stated, “I don’t agree with the Oakville power plant; I don’t think it’s necessary.” In September 2011, the member from Toronto–Danforth again stated, “We wouldn’t build it,” and that was about the Mississauga gas plant.

In September 2010, the former PC member from Halton, Mr. Ted Chudleigh, stated in question period—and I remember him actually speaking quite a few times and voicing his opinion on behalf of his constituents in Oakville when it came to those gas plants. But in September 2010, he said, “Oakville residents have called on you to change the location of the proposed Oakville power plant.... I have listened to the people of Oakville, and I agree with them”—very clearly saying, “Hey, government, relocate the gas plant” in that particular instance.

Our favourite, something that my predecessor, the former government House leader, often reminded us of, was when the former leader of the official opposition, the member from Niagara West–Glanbrook, was asked if he would scrap the Mississauga gas plant—this is in October 2011, in the middle of an election campaign, and it’s all documented in a YouTube video. You don’t have to take my word for it; you can Google it. It’s one of the best-sellers out there. When he was asked point-blank by one of the reporters from this Legislature whether or not he would scrap the Mississauga gas plant, he replied, “That’s right.... Done, done, done.”

All three political parties expressed their support. By listening to the concerns of the residents of Mississauga and Oakville, they expressed their support to relocate those two gas plants. The government, being successful in an election campaign on the promise to do so when elected, fulfilled its promise and did take the action to relocate the Mississauga gas plant after the October 2011 election.

In the past election that just happened in May and June 2014, we as a party were very clear that the justice committee should complete its work by writing a report. The media have asked us often about that and we were very clear that that’s the direction we want to go. We want the committee to complete its work by writing a report.

In fact, as I mentioned earlier today in question period, and as the member from Nepean–Carleton reminded us yesterday in question period, in the speech from the throne subsequent to the election we stated very clearly that we would like the justice committee to resume its work and start the process of writing the report. There’s a very good reason for it: It has been over nearly three years in which committees have considered this particular issue. Ninety witnesses have testified and over 400,000 documents have been provided to the committee, including 30,000 documents from the Premier’s office. There is a lot of information that has been shared that is in the possession of the committee to now write the report and give its advice to the Legislature. Many of the witnesses, in fact, have appeared twice, including the Premier and the Minister of Energy. It is critical that the committee be able to present a report to the government so that we can move forward and benefit from the recommendations.

As I said at the outset of my comments, we’re not the only ones who have been saying that it is time to write the report. In fact, members of the opposition have also recognized the need to get to report writing. I’d like to again quote—that’s the good thing about Hansard: You’ve got that information at your disposal. On December 12, the member, again, from Toronto–Danforth stated, “I believe it’s time for us to get down to report writing. We’ve amassed a large amount of evidence, both oral and in electronic copy.” Then he moved on to put forward a motion in justice committee to begin report writing, in which he stated, “I move that the Standing Committee on Justice Policy meet on the following days for the purpose of report writing.”

I couldn’t agree more. It is time to start writing the report. The committee has amassed a lot of information upon which it can now write a report and present its recommendations to this House.

On April 29, merely days before the leader of the third party informed all of us that she and her party would not be supporting a very progressive budget that this government had put forward, the member for Bramalea–Gore–Malton, a few days before the leader of the third party decided not to support a progressive budget in the province, moved a motion in the committee to begin report writing. It states: “I move that ... the Standing Committee on Justice Policy begin report writing in open session.”

So I just ask the members of the third party: What’s changed? This is as early as April 29 of this year. The simple reason is, and I agree with the belief they had, that there is enough information. The committee has a lot of documents in their hands. They have talked to a lot of people. They’ve had access to the Premier and to the Minister of Energy. They have time to write the report.

Now the people of Ontario have sent our government back to Queen’s Park with a strong mandate, and they’ve asked us to get this work done.

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Speaker, as I stated earlier, we’ve expressed that view in our speech from the throne, and we are very com-

mitted to having a productive parliamentary session and delivering on the promises we made during the election. This means that there will be a lot of work for committees to consider, and we need all the parties to work together to get that done. We must ensure that committees, including the justice committee, are able to move forward and consider the important legislation before them.

Speaker, as I'm getting closer to the end of my comments, I would like to note that the entire premise of this opposition day motion, in our view, is not correct. The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke is asking this assembly to express our opinion on what is necessary to fulfill the justice committee's mandate. As the member knows, there is currently no mandate before the justice committee. This past May, Parliament was dissolved after the opposition parties triggered an unnecessary election by refusing to support the budget. Because of their actions, all business before this House and its committees came to an end. Even though the justice committee's prior mandate was terminated in May, the Premier committed to giving the justice committee an opportunity to write its report.

The member's motion, Speaker, also misstates the original mandate of the justice committee. The committee began by considering a *prima facie* finding of contempt related to the production of documents by the Minister of Energy and the Ontario Power Authority to the Standing Committee on Estimates. The Premier later expanded the scope of the committee's mandate to also include the tendering, planning, commissioning, cancellation and relocation of the Mississauga and Oakville gas plants. Speaker, it is simply incorrect to suggest that the committee had a mandate to investigate matters relating to an OPP investigation into the actions of the former chief of staff to the former Premier.

By putting forward this motion, the member is suggesting that we insert ourselves into an ongoing police investigation. Speaker, you'll agree that this would be entirely inappropriate.

We have full confidence in the OPP's abilities. The police are doing their work, and we must let them continue to do that work. In fact, former OPP Commissioner Chris Lewis testified last spring about his discomfort with legislative committees looking into ongoing police investigations. He explained that he would "rather not see these committees occur in the middle of ongoing investigations."

Speaker, we will continue to co-operate fully with the police investigation, but we will not hinder it by pretending that we, ourselves, can stand in the place of police or that we are competent to do their jobs.

It is time that the opposition stop delaying and allow the justice committee to finally write their report.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: It's my pleasure to join the debate, as the former energy critic for the official opposition.

I'd also like to recognize two people, before I begin my debate, who are from eastern Ontario and are very good friends of mine. First is Chris McDonell, who's the mayor of North Glengarry—he's also the brother of the member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, Jim McDonell—and our good friend George Currier, who is here, as well, up from eastern Ontario. George is in town, in the big city of Toronto, to receive an award tomorrow night, and we're very happy that he's here.

I'm pleased to follow the debate from the government House leader, who at the beginning of his remarks said he was over talking to me. We are friends. Our ridings are very close to each other in the city of Ottawa. But we part ways on our interpretation of the events that unfolded with relation to the cancelling of the two gas plants in Mississauga and Oakville, the political direction that came from his party, and then of course the investigations by the Auditor General—two had taken place—as well as the OPP.

I must say at the outset that I attended all of those hearings, as the energy critic and the lead for our party in the justice committee at that time, and at no point ever did the OPP say that we shouldn't be probing this; in fact, they were very helpful to our cause, in the assembly and in the committee, and we received a lot of good advice from the OPP.

But let's go back to 2011: 2011 was when, in the middle of an election campaign—and I remember clear as day seeing a Robert Benzie tweet on a Saturday, in the Toronto Star, that Dalton McGuinty was going to cancel one of the two gas plants. The other one had been cancelled about a year before.

It was a blatant play and later admitted to by the current Premier, that it was a political play—politically advantageous to the Liberals—in order to win the 2011 election. What resulted after that, and I say this for the benefit of new members and those at home who may have forgotten this drama, is that the two opposition parties, the Progressive Conservatives and the New Democrats, rose and wanted a point of privilege to deal with a *prima facie* breach. When we did that, it was found by the Speaker that there was a breach, because we had asked for documents, and we were not provided them. It started out in the estimates committee.

Then we were able to succeed in having the justice committee probe this cancellation. The Auditor General then, through public accounts, took on not one but two special audits to deal with this, and we found out the cost would eventually become \$1.2 billion.

And if that wasn't bad enough—and this is why we're here today—then there was the alleged destruction of documents, and the OPP, for the first time in Ontario history, decided they were going to do an ongoing investigation into the Premier's office. That all occurred in April 2014. I say this because Chris McDonell is here—he's a former OPP officer—and he and I have spoken about this on many occasions.

What we are concerned with here in the opposition is not to debate the facts between what happened with the

cancellation of the plants or where things should have been sited—no. What we are talking about now is the alleged destruction of documents and a role that two individuals may have played who at dissolution were expected to appear before committee, and that is Laura Miller and Peter Faist. What we are asking for with this Progressive Conservative opposition motion, Speaker, is simply to invite them to committee for them to testify and let us know what they know with respect to the alleged destruction of documents just two feet down the hallway here, in the Premier's office. That isn't too much to ask, and it does not delay. It could be done on the same day. It could have been done by now. It could have been done during the summer break.

But it is the Liberals who are obstructing our ability to do that, and I take certain issue with that, particularly on a day when they have put forward for debate second reading of Bill 8, which is about transparency and accountability. On the one hand, you cannot say you are wanting a greater degree of transparency and accountability in the province of Ontario with respect to your government, and then, on the other hand, quash this motion and prevent us from speaking to the two people who know more about the cancellation of the gas plants and the deleted emails than anyone else.

As Progressive Conservatives or as members of the third party in the New Democrats, we have a duty: Our duty is to stand up for the minority in this province, the people who do not support the government agenda. They have a right to be heard as well, and there is an expectation—and I believe a reasonable expectation—placed upon the government to do what is right by the people of this province, regardless of who they voted for in the last election.

If you truly want to talk about accountability, if you truly want to talk about transparency, then you would support this motion. What harm could it do? If they don't have anything that's relevant to testify, then it will be in your favour. You'll look like the reasonable adults in the room. Otherwise, what it signals to the people of the province, what it signals to the media, what it signals to the opposition, what it signals to the people who are looking for increasing transparency and accountability, is that you're too afraid to let the sun shine in, you're too afraid to allow these individuals to take the stand.

On that note, I thank you all for allowing me to participate in the debate. I congratulate our energy critic, John Yakabuski, and I look forward to hearing from my colleagues.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Mr. Speaker, I'd like to clarify some issues here that we've spoken about but haven't been very clear on.

First of all, let's understand one thing: There's a criminal investigation, and we have to understand the parameters of that. What does that mean? What does it mean when the OPP is investigating the actions of this government?

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The OPP have a specific mandate. They investigate potential violations of the Criminal Code of Canada. They investigate what might be a crime. If there is evidence to establish that there is a crime, there will be a prosecution of that crime. That's a very important role that the police play, but that's not mutually exclusive to the role that we play as the opposition.

The opposition's role is to provide oversight for the government, to provide oversight into what the government does, to act as a check and balance to the power of the government. It is incumbent upon us, as the opposition, to ensure that we fulfill our obligation by holding the government to account. How do we do that? We need to ask questions. We need to gain information. We need to present that information to the public.

When the government House leader states that doing what we are supposed to do—what our obligation is, what our responsibility is—is somehow inserting ourselves into a criminal investigation, that's absolutely wrong. In fact, it is our responsibility to check the powers of the government, to hold the government to account, to ask the question: Did the government act in an appropriate manner?

It also requires us to look at the different burdens of proof. In a criminal investigation, if it looks like someone probably did it, very likely did the crime, that's not enough to prove guilt. The burden of proof in a criminal investigation is proof beyond a reasonable doubt. To attain that level of proof beyond a reasonable doubt—that's a high standard. You might have all sorts of evidence that might actually hold up in a civil court, that might actually result in a lawsuit that's successful. You might be able to sue someone for damages and get a million-dollar settlement because, on a balance of probabilities, it's more likely than not that someone was wrong or negligent or made a mistake. Then you can win a court case on a civil level.

In a criminal investigation, you have to prove beyond any reasonable doubt that someone was guilty of the offence. If there's any reasonable doubt raised, the person is no longer guilty. Does that mean there's no accountability? Does that mean we can't move forward with making sure the government acts in an appropriate manner? If there are no criminal charges laid or there's no conviction, does that mean the government acted appropriately? No. That's absolutely not the case, and it would be silly to think that.

Let me give you a strong example of the difference between a criminal investigation and our job as legislators in the opposition.

The Ornge scandal was a very serious scandal. This an essential service provided by our government. The air ambulance service is something we need. In certain remote communities, that is the only source of ambulance to get someone who is injured to a place where they can be taken care of. That is the only way to do it.

The air ambulance service had all sorts of problems. There were some serious scandals involved with that.

There was also a criminal investigation into Ornge. The opposition party, with the help of some great journalism and the opposition's work—we found that there was a serious problem. Questions that we asked years and years ago about the CEO's compensation, the salary of the CEO of Ornge—when that went off the sunshine list, we asked questions: Why did that get off the list? Where is that salary? When we finally got the answer to that and we found out the CEO was making \$1.4 million, an outrageous amount—more than the biggest hospital in the province—we realized there was a serious problem.

So without any criminal investigation, without any criminal charges laid, the CEO was removed; the entire board was removed; the entire air ambulance system was changed by the opposition. By challenging what was going on, by calling this government to account, by challenging the way the government was handling all these red flags, the work of the committee created some great change. We actually were able to change the entire face of this air ambulance service with the work of the committee. That wasn't because of the criminal investigation. The criminal investigation is still ongoing, and there have not been any charges laid.

This is a clear example of how our work as opposition actually helped improve the quality of care that we receive here in Ontario. By asking questions, by saying, "Listen, let's bring witnesses to the committee. Let's hear from them. Let's learn what went wrong and hear what went wrong to fix it." The pressure that we applied on Ornge improved it.

Similarly, in this circumstance, we need to do our job. Our job is to hold this government to account. In no way do we suggest that, by holding the government to account, we are somehow inserting ourselves into the criminal investigation. The criminal investigation is separate. They have a separate onus. They have a separate burden of proof. It's a completely different issue. Holding someone criminally liable, to prove someone to be guilty or not guilty, is absolutely different than our job as opposition, to hold this government to account. I take issue with those two roles being conflated.

Now, why are these two witnesses important? There are a number of successes that we were able to achieve, as the opposition, with respect to the gas plants issue. First and foremost, we learned through the committee hearing process that the manner in which this government cancelled the gas plants was the most expensive way possible to do it. We learned that there were alternative ways to cancel the gas plants, which may have or could have resulted in actually no costs to taxpayers, that those options were not used. Why? Why was it the case that this government didn't pursue an option to cancel the gas plants that wouldn't have cost us anything? That's something we need to know. We need to know because it holds the government to account, it instills trust in the institutions so that the public understands why these decisions were made, and if they were made in error, we can learn from those mistakes. We can ensure that they aren't made again in the future. That's

the role of the opposition. That's the role that we have to fulfill.

We also learned that the estimates provided by the government as to the cost of this cancellation were completely off the mark, off target. They initially suggested that the cost was in the hundred millions, maybe \$200 million, in that range. Well, it turns out it was \$1.2 billion. That's something that we uncovered because of the work of our committee, because of the work we did by bringing witnesses to committee, asking the questions and requesting documents. That was the success that we were able to achieve by holding this government to account, to say, "Listen. Your estimates were absolutely wrong. When you estimated that it would be \$100 million or \$200 million, in fact it's \$1.2 billion." That was something that we were able to achieve as part of the opposition.

All the while, all this was achieved without any criminal charges laid, without any sort of convictions. This was the work of the committee. This is important work. This is separate from a criminal prosecution, and I want to highlight that. We can achieve a lot without the criminal investigation component, which is important, which should continue, which we encourage to see what can happen from that as well.

Why are these two witnesses so important? On one hand, we see the government made a crass political decision to cost taxpayers billions of dollars, to cost taxpayers so much, to save seats. That's one thing that we wanted to hold this government to account for. On top of that outrageous cost, that absurd cost to our system, to our taxpayers, to Ontario citizens, that could have been used in other ways more effectively, more productively, could have built hospitals, could have built a university—

Ms. Catherine Fife: Paid for PSWs.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: —could have paid for PSWs—actually paid for PSWs instead of saying maybe we'll pay for them, or we'll pay for some but not others. That's one component.

The second component is, when we talk about transparency and accountability, the public deserves to know why the government is making decisions, what the basis of those decisions was, how they happened, why they happened, the details of those decisions. How does the public know? How do we know, as opposition, what decisions were made? We know that by looking at the evidence. What is the evidence in this case? That is the records.

It's interesting to note this: The records aren't the Liberal government's records. The records aren't the opposition's records. These records are the people of Ontario's. They own these records. Those are their records. This is a part of the institution and a part of the history of this province. It provides us with a narrative of what went on. It provides us with evidence as to why decisions were made.

When this government allegedly deletes records, this creates a serious barrier to accountability and transparency. We can't tell what happened because all the emails

were allegedly wiped and deleted. Computers were allegedly wiped and deleted. We can't find out what happened. There is no accountability or transparency because of the deletions.

1710

Secondly, these are documents that are a part of the history of this province, of the legislative proceedings, of the decision-making that goes on in this province. This is information that should be protected and maintained for the public. So when they're deleted, it's pretty important to find out why they were deleted. Who deleted it?

Now, at the heart of this, at the heart of the deletion, are two individuals. They are the subject matter of criminal investigations, and they are the alleged people who actually deleted or wiped the computers. Now, if you agree with us that transparency is important, and you've alleged that transparency is important, if you agree that accountability is important, then we should find out, in the gas plant committee, why these two individuals deleted those emails. Why did they allegedly wipe those computers? What was their purpose to do that? Who told them to do that? What were their instructions? Why did this happen? These are pretty fundamental questions that we need to answer.

Again, this is our role as opposition: to check the power of the government. This is something that's a long and tested and true foundation of our legislative system, and we want to simply fulfill our obligation here. This is something that we're not only entitled to, but that we need to do. It's our duty to do this, to ensure that the public has a true picture of what went on.

Doesn't it make sense that if this is the heart of the problem, that records were deleted—you're bringing forward an accountability bill; you're bringing forward a bill to say, "Okay, we won't delete records in the future." Why are you bringing forward that bill? Because they were deleted right here. That's why you're bringing that bill forward. So if you're bringing that bill forward because records were deleted, doesn't it make sense for us to find out why they were deleted? Doesn't that make sense? Unless you're simply bringing forward that bill as a guise to hide and to move away from, to distract from the real issue, then I understand; then that's a different issue. But if you're genuinely bringing forward a bill that talks about the importance of record-keeping, then wouldn't you think it's important also to find out why records were deleted?

I'm just putting that forward to you. I think that's pretty straightforward. I think that makes some sense. I see some nods over there. I'm glad to see this is getting through a little bit. That's why I'm standing in support of the motion. This is essential, that we get to the bottom of this.

Another issue that has been raised by the government House leader—to me, it's quite interesting that these issues are raised, when we have examples of this all the time. The government House leader from the Liberal Party mentions that I brought forward a motion saying we should begin report writing. Of course we should

begin report writing, but that doesn't mean we can't hear from additional witnesses. How does that preclude us from hearing additional witnesses? The fact that I say, "Hey, let's write a report"—writing a report doesn't mean, "No, you must not have any more additional witnesses." There's no logical connection between that.

In fact, in Ornge—this is in a sitting committee that we had—we had report writing and at the same time, on other dates, we had witnesses. We did that. That actually happened. You can look into Hansard and confirm this. In the Ornge committee, we began report writing because we realized there was a lot of evidence and we needed to start writing the report; of course we did. But at the same time, we heard from some additional witnesses.

So, again, to the House leader: How does that make any sense, that if you want to begin the report writing, you can't hear from additional witnesses? Yes, you can. You easily can. You begin the report writing. When the witnesses come in, you pause. You hear from those additional witnesses and you go back to report writing. It's not very difficult to do. There's actually no problem with that.

I'm confused, and I can bet you—who wants to join in this bet? I bet anyone on the government side that when we ask this question again—I'm going to tell you right now; I'm going to foresee the future. When we ask this question again, "Why is this government not willing to allow these two witnesses to come forward?" you're going to say two things. I'm going to tell you what you're going to say. You're going to say, "Oh, we don't want to insert ourselves in a criminal investigation." I've already told you we're not doing that. You're going to say that again, though, because—I don't know—that's what you're going to say. Secondly, you're going to say, "Oh, but the members said they wanted to begin report writing, so how can we hear from a witness and begin report writing?" Well, we did that in Ornge, actually. It's very easy to do that. So yes, we can definitely do that. You're going to say it again. I'm going to say this again, because it's pretty straightforward: I'm confused as to why you're going to bring up illogical explanations that don't add up, but please feel free to continue. We'll continue to point out how illogical they are.

In my remaining minutes, let's summarize the position here.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Are you going to support Horwath or not?

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: I am most definitely going to support our leader, Andrea Horwath.

Interjections.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: Let's understand the situation here—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): All right. Remember me? You're having little cross-border discussions there. I'd like to be part of it. I feel left out.

We've got seven sidebars going on over here. I can hardly hear the speaker, and he's got a strong voice. So if you'd like to have major discussions, maybe you'd like

to take some of your groups on the other side of the wall, especially the member from Etobicoke North. I know he's very co-operative. Thanks very much.

Continue.

Mr. Jagmeet Singh: In summary, one of the hallmarks, one of the foundations of our democratic institutions is transparency and accountability. For the people of the province to have trust in the government, they need to see that the government is transparent and it's accountable.

We see that there is, year after year, a declining number of folks who are actually participating in the political process. Voter turnout is going down, year after year. That's a serious problem. Part of that problem is that politics has become cynical. The problem is that when we see a government that lacks accountability and transparency, it turns people off from politics. They think that it doesn't matter, that there is no trust, there's no faith in this government. That's why it's so important for us, as opposition, to make sure that we do our job to re-instill some faith in the political process by fighting for transparency and accountability. If you take seriously this promise that your government has made, you'll understand that this motion is simply talking about ensuring that there is accountability and transparency.

Our job as opposition members is very different from the criminal prosecution side and from the criminal investigation side. Our job is to make sure the government did the right thing and, if they didn't, to say that you did the wrong thing and point it out by you looking at the evidence.

We need to look at the evidence; that's our job. The evidence will come in the form of looking at additional witnesses. We can definitely begin report writing, but we need to hear from these additional witnesses. We need to hear from the two people who lie at the heart of the records deletion. We need to talk to those individuals and find out why they deleted those records. Why did they wipe computers?

This is at the crux of this issue. If you are truly serious about accountability, then you need to support this motion, as I will, to ensure that there is accountability and transparency in our government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Bob Delaney: Good afternoon, Speaker. It's a pleasure to speak to this particular opposition day motion, which has been so much a part of my legislative life for the past two and a half years.

I'd like to start off by recounting what the committee was set up to do in the late winter of 2012. It was about two things. Thing number 1 was to determine whether or not the former Minister of Energy was in contempt of the House. Our first witness, the former House of Commons Speaker, Peter Milliken, acknowledged as the dean of procedure in Canada, testified, in hour 1 of day 1, that in his estimation, he was not. In essence, that part was resolved on day 1.

The other part, and perhaps the weighty part: The committee was charged with producing a series of

recommendations on the siting and the relocation of energy infrastructure in the province of Ontario. The committee is now ready to offer that precise advice.

What the committee was not set up to do was some of the things that are mentioned in this particular motion. The assertion behind this motion is that the answer to whether or not the committee has any recommendations on the siting and the relocation of energy infrastructure in Ontario has something to do with—wait for this, now—the boyfriend of the former assistant to the former chief of staff of the former Premier. That's a pretty distant smoking gun, Speaker.

Perhaps, after this opposition day motion, the opposition may move on to something else, but let's just deal with this opposition day motion. Let's start by putting it into some measure of perspective.

1720

We're considering here—let's call it, for the purposes of this particular address—the gas plant committee. Let's compare the gas plant committee with two other committees of inquiry that people know in their history books. Let's compare the gas plant committee with Lord Mersey's committee into the sinking of the Titanic. It was commissioned on the 2nd of May, 1912, and it held 36 hearing days in the UK and 18 hearing days in the United States. Let's compare that with the Warren Commission in the United States, which was commissioned by President Johnson on the 18th of November, 1963, and submitted its final report on the 24th of September, 1964. That was an 888-page report done in not quite 11 months—not quite 10 months.

Now, in the past two and a half years the gas plant committee has heard from 91 witnesses, it has heard 145 hours of testimony and it has examined some 400,000 pages of documents. As a member of that committee, as the government's lead on it, I too examined my share of those documents, sat through nearly all of those hours of committee and participated in the questioning of the various witnesses who came forward. I think it would be incumbent on me, in ending the government's remarks on this particular opposition day motion, to just recount what we actually found out during our examination of the gas plant committee.

To grasp the whole truth on that committee you've got to go back to the August 2003 power blackout. Now, this concerns an area in which I live, because I'm a Mississauga member. When the lights went out on the 14th of August, 2003, one of last areas to get their power back was an area called by the Ontario Power Authority the southwest GTA. When the lights were back on—this, by the way, was still on the watch of the government that preceded us—we asked, "Why did it take so long to get the southwest GTA"—for all practical purposes this means Mississauga and Oakville—"back on line so quickly and what were the risks looking forward?"

One of those risks was that Mississauga and Oakville lacked the ability to generate power. The estimates were based upon data collected on the watch of the former government between 1995 and 2003. We said that based

on the best information that the province had right now in that year of 2004, one of the things that the province of Ontario needed at that time was additional generating capacity, peak-power generating capacity, in the southwest GTA. This means Mississauga and Oakville.

In 2004, the Ministry of Energy put out a request for proposals for power generation to cover the southwest GTA. There were four bids submitted, two later withdrawn, and it left two that were accepted. Those two were by TransCanada Energy in Oakville and a firm called Eastern Power in Mississauga.

Let's recap: What is a gas plant? A gas plant is something that's off between 90% and 95% of the time. Between 5% and 10% of the time what a gas plant does is it boils water, and it raises steam which spins a turbine which generates electricity. The advantage of natural gas as a fuel is that you can turn it on and off very, very quickly.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oh, we wish we could turn it off.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Order, please.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Now, being able to turn a gas plant on and off means that in the event that you have a sudden power outage, you can recover from it. This was the thinking at that time.

There has been an assertion of, "Well, who put the plants there?" It's an interesting question. It's one that, actually, the gas plant committee resolved and resolved conclusively.

We received testimony from Gregory Vogt. Gregory Vogt is the president of Eastern Power, the firm that won the contract to build the gas plant in Mississauga. Mr. Vogt turned over a letter that was sent to him dated—wait for this—July 12, 2005. The letter is from the planning and building department of the city of Mississauga. On July 12, 2005, the supervisor of zoning of the planning and building department of the city of Mississauga advised the proponent, Eastern Power—and I'm going to use the words of the letter exactly. Referring to the property on Loreland Avenue in Mississauga on which the Mississauga gas plant would later be started and was at the time proposed to be built, it said, "The lands may be used for, among other things, manufacturing or industrial undertakings which would include the generation and distribution of electrical power."

Who put the plants there? We now know the answer: the city of Mississauga.

With the plant located there, on the strength of an authorization by the city of Mississauga to the proponent—now, the reason this was done is because that land was zoned, and I'm going to quote the exact wording of the zoning, "industrial/power plant." The land in Oakville was zoned "industrial."

Very clearly both proponents—TransCanada Energy and Eastern Power—legally, properly and ethically acquired land zoned by the respective municipalities precisely for the purposes for which they had legally acquired a contract to build a power generation station.

Note that at this point the province of Ontario is not involved. It was the responsibility of the power plant proponents to find that land, which they did. It was the responsibility of the proponents to ensure that the land was properly zoned by the municipality, which they did.

The Oakville plant was very clearly located in the wrong area. In fact, Oakville mayor Rob Burton gave testimony before the committee and he said the same thing as Mayor McCallion: In both cases, the land had been zoned many years earlier, and it was only later that the municipalities said, "Oh, we hadn't really realized that we had zoned that land for that purpose, and in light of the development around it maybe we shouldn't have zoned it that way." To which the proponent said, "Well, we legally acquired the land. Why didn't you tell us when we were about to buy it, or, more appropriately, why didn't you just change the zoning?"

Now, this gives rise to one of the obvious recommendations to come out of this committee, which is that municipalities must review their zoning for electricity infrastructure and do it regularly and do it with proper public consultation. This didn't happen.

Mississauga took Eastern Power to the—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I would like to remind the member—I appreciate the background information—there is a motion put forward and I would ask that you specifically address the motion, which is with regard to the standing committee, and that you refer to the individuals involved and what the standing committee needs to have done. Thank you.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Thank you, Speaker. The Speaker did grant the other speakers a degree of latitude to explain the context within which they had made their motion or made their arguments. It's my contention that the premise—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Point of order, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Point of order.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I've been here for about 11 years now and it is not only not customary, it's against the rules to challenge the ruling of a Speaker. That seems to be what the member for Mississauga–Streetsville is doing right now. You've asked him to stick to the topic at hand, the motion that has been presented before the House. He seems to be challenging you on that, saying that you gave somebody else more latitude. It's not the job of the member to tell the Speaker what to do.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke. I will take that into consideration.

I'll refer back to the member from Mississauga–Streetsville.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Thank you very much, Speaker. Despite the member's intent to impute motive, that was in fact not my motive.

Speaker, the motion asks us—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Point of order: I recognize the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakabuski: Thank you very much, Speaker. That is a direct accusation against myself by the member from Mississauga–Streetsville. I was not impugning his motive whatsoever. What I was bringing to your attention, Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member for bringing that to my attention, but I will turn it back to the member from Mississauga–Streetsville and I would encourage that that banter discontinue. Thank you.

1730

Mr. Bob Delaney: Thank you very much, Speaker.

Let's go back to what we're here to talk about, where we were at before some of this stuff came about: With respect to the motion, we were talking about. How did the siting of the two plants arise? Because many of the documents that the motion talks about relate to the siting of these plants.

With the plants located where they were, despite the fact that the locations in the context of that time were seen to be inappropriate—and, in fact, I've just produced the document that came up in the process of the committee that says very clearly that permission came from the city of Mississauga—what we ended up with is a situation in which the only entity that could take action was the province. As with Oakville—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Point of order, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): Point of order, the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakabuski: I draw your attention to standing order 23(b)(i):

“23. In debate, a member shall be called to order by the Speaker if he or she....

“(b) Directs his or her speech to matters other than,

“(i) the question under discussion; or

“(ii) a motion or amendment he or she intends to move; or

“(iii) a point of order.”

The question under discussion, as you have pointed out to the member, Speaker, is the motion before the House, the motion that is asking the House to rule that Laura Miller and Peter Faist be called before committee. The member from Mississauga–Streetsville is on an engineering expedition talking about the siting of plants, not about the witnesses and their testimony, which is paramount to this investigation.

I would ask you to direct the member back to the matter at hand: the motion that is before the House, under 23.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rick Nicholls): I thank the member for that. Again, I would reference that the member from Mississauga–Streetsville make his comments as they are relevant to motion number 1, the motion at hand.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Thank you, Speaker. As I said in my opening remarks, I covered the actual terms of reference for the committee. Let me continue on this.

In a cancellation—this is the seminal event that would subsequently give rise to the documentation to which the member who has just objected to my remarks is referring. So I think it is germane, Speaker, that we talk about that decision that would later give rise to the documents about which the member has made this motion.

At this point, and this would be 2005 or 2006, there was very little point in paying cancellation costs if the taxpayer of Ontario wasn't going to get any electricity for their money. In the context of the 2011 election, which is something both parties have talked about, this is exactly what they were proposing. This is why the government chose not to do it.

The province worked out a swap with Eastern Power to have them relocate their plant—

Mr. John Yakabuski: Point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): The member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

Mr. John Yakabuski: He seems to be drifting right back to where he was under standing order 23, Speaker—drifting right back to where he is, making excuses as to why they cancelled and relocated the gas plants, when the motion is about bringing Laura Miller and Peter Faist before the Standing Committee on Justice Policy. That's the motion that is being debated before the House and the one we will shortly vote on, but the member is not speaking to that motion. He seems to be making excuses as to why they made the decision to cancel and relocate the gas plants. I would ask that he stick to the motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): That is a point of order taken under consideration, but I believe the member from Mississauga–Streetsville was trying to entertain the fact of your question, and he was trying to link why he was going down that way of thought. I think there is a link—it may be remote—to his explanation of why.

In reference to your comments about the two witnesses you'd like to bring back, obviously he doesn't feel that's part of his answer or his review. So I am assuming that this is a very touchy situation that could go either way, and I don't feel that that was a point of order.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Thank you very much, Speaker. One of the other things that the documents which the motion refers relate to is in fact the cost of the relocation. Now, as reported in the Legislature, the cancellation cost, in the case of Oakville, was \$40 million, and this amount was fully paid out in the year 2011. For Mississauga, it was \$275 million. This amount was fully paid out in the year 2012.

Now, here's a point about which the other two parties have both presented information that's not accurate: The balance of the costs and savings—because there are savings involved in the cancellation of both plants—were for changes, both up and down, in gas delivery costs, transmission costs, renegotiation of contracts and the like.

Mr. John Yakabuski: It cost \$1.1 billion.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Speaker, these costs and savings were not paid out—they were not paid out—and both the costs and the savings will be spread out over the next 30 years or the expected lifespan of the two plants, should they ever have—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Are you two done?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Oh, I don't think we're done.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): You may be done. You may be done. You will be done, done, done.

Go ahead.

Mr. Bob Delaney: Now, Speaker, these extra costs and savings amount to this: Over a span of 30 years, costs of between one and two one-hundredths of one cent per kilowatt hour and savings of between two and four one-hundredths of one cent per kilowatt hour during the same time span. If your mental math tells you that the extra savings would cancel out the extra costs, you would be right. For a home that consumes about 1,000 kilowatt hours every two months, your extra cost would be between 10 and 20 cents, offset by additional savings of between 20 and 40 cents, netting out to an average savings of between 10 and 20 cents on your bill every two months over the span of the next 30 years.

Now, Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Thank you. Further debate?

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: It is absolutely my pleasure and honour to bring this debate back on topic after we wandered for the last few moments. I want to start off by saying that I'm positive this past week has had an impact on all of us. For me particularly, and I hope for all of us in this chamber, it has heightened our awareness and our sensitivity, and actually our pride in democracy. That brings us exactly to point why we need to see two key witnesses come to the justice policy committee. This is about fulfilling our democratic responsibility as official opposition to do our job and get it done.

I don't take this responsibility lightly at all, and it troubles me: We've only been back two weeks, since October 20, and we heard a member opposite refer to committee work as a dog-and-pony show earlier this week. Just moments ago, I heard another member opposite say, "I want to go home." Well, Speaker, that's not the type of representation that citizens—taxpayers and ratepayers—in Ontario deserve. They need people to stand up for their rights in how their money is being wasted by this scandal-plagued government.

Speaker, never before have I stood before you so determined to make sure that we do right, because it comes back again to honouring our democratic responsibility. I'm just so troubled by the manner in which this government, in two short weeks, is showing so much arrogance.

Ladies and gentlemen watching at home, we have a situation ahead of us where we have a government actually trying to block work that needs to be done in the

committee. We're talking about \$1.1 billion, scarce tax dollars that we can't afford to have wasted on any more scandals.

1740

It's interesting that when we talk about our committee work—I want to quote the Premier. Just last Parliament, in the 40th Parliament, the Premier said, "I've been clear that my position is that the committee should have the opportunity to ask the questions that it wants to ask." Well, Speaker, we want to hear from Laura Miller; we want to hear from Peter Faist.

I sat on this justice policy committee, and I was troubled with the manner in which smokescreens were shared by the government. I am really interested and intrigued by the manner in which they danced around issues that so many people brought to light and said we needed to delve into further. I think of our privacy commissioner of the day, Ann Cavoukian. She takes full responsibility for everything she does, and she doesn't do it lightly—nothing is a knee-jerk reaction. Ann Cavoukian struggled with determining what was right and what was wrong, and I can tell you that she determined—by calling this Liberal government out—that there is a problem here with the information that has disappeared. She, too, in the spirit of democracy, wanted to see that hidden information come to light. It reinforces the work that the good people on the standing committee were doing. We have a job to do, and all we ask is that this Liberal government stop blocking us from getting our job done. Again, it's very interesting how this mass on the floor opposite from us is sitting there in a way that is manoeuvring and blocking. It's not a game anymore. I come back to upholding our democratic responsibilities as official opposition to hold this government accountable.

It's an interesting thing, and I want to emphasize the fact, that it was \$1 billion of scandal-plagued activities that has seen this Liberal government just spiral out of control. If we don't kick off this 41st Parliament leading by example and holding this government to account, then we're not doing our jobs.

I, too, echo some comments that my colleague from Nepean–Carleton shared earlier today. It's pretty rich, on a day that we're debating Bill 8, about transparency and accountability, that we have a Liberal government doing everything they can to keep us from getting to the truth. This is unacceptable, and Ontario deserves so much better.

Our opposition day motion insists that the committee mandate be expanded and allow Mr. Faist and Ms. Miller to testify. I was taken aback a little bit during this debate when the government House leader suggested that the committee wants a new process. Nothing is further from the truth. We just want to finish the job that we started. Ontario taxpayers deserve that. Honest to Pete, when you talk about destroying evidence, when you talk about the overt actions that were taken to keep us from learning the truth, it's despicable, and we should be embarrassed by

this Liberal government and the actions and extent they're going to, to keep us from getting to the truth.

As I conclude my remarks for today, I want to say that we have to do right. We have to finish the job that got started. This is not a new process. We can't let this Liberal government confuse people and suggest that it is. We need to stand tall and bring Peter Faist and Laura Miller to committee so we can get to the bottom of it once and for all.

I look forward to hearing from my colleague from Chatham–Kent in a few moments.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Further debate?

Mr. Rick Nicholls: It is a privilege to stand before this assembly and to discuss and debate the opposition day motion pertaining to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

Speaker, we've all been sent here—all three parties—for a mission, and that mission is to best represent the people in our ridings, but in this case, the people of Ontario. I call it bang for buck, and unfortunately, what has occurred prior to this last election was a Liberal government that was caught with their hands in the cookie jar as it pertains to scandals—gas plant scandals.

Of course, there was sensitive information that had been found on hard drives. People were in fact saying, "Listen. We need more of that information." Then, suddenly, two people were required to testify at the committee on justice policy, those two people being Peter Faist and of course Laura Miller. They had been asked to testify. Ironically, they said, "Yes. We're more than happy to testify."

Then, an election occurred. Of course, the results from our side weren't what we had hoped they would be. I have heard that this Liberal government has said to us several times, "We won, you lost. Get over it." I turn that around and I say, "Well, guess what, government? We lost, you won. You get over it"—get over that, in some cases, condescending attitude, one of arrogance, because they believe that in fact the people of Ontario had sent them back with a mandate, now that they have a majority government. It was for all the wrong reasons. Somewhere in that election—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Could you remove the prop, please, that the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has? Thanks so much.

Continue.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Thank you, Speaker. I'll probably have to read Hansard now to find out where I was.

The point being that the government felt they had been given a mandate by the people of Ontario, but it was all for the wrong reasons. As a result of that, when you think about what had occurred in the election, it was all about 100,000 jobs as opposed to the true scandals and the money that this government has in fact cost the taxpayers of Ontario. That's the true issue.

What the committee on justice police wants to do—they want to finish the job. I agree with that. Let's finish

the job. They want to write a report. I agree with that. Write a report. But before you write that report, allow the two individuals, Ms. Laura Miller and Peter Faist, to come back and testify. That's what is needed. That's all they're asking, and then we will in fact be on the same page. Without being on the same page—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Quite the social butterflies today. Please keep it down. I can't even hear him. If you want to have a group discussion, go outside.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I don't want to have any backtalk, either.

Continue.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Thank you very much, Speaker.

I'd like to again bring to the House's attention and to those watching at home and perhaps in other places—this was from Hansard, dated September 11, 2013, when the leader of the third party asked a question to the Premier. The Premier's response to the question was: "I remain committed to being open and transparent on this issue. I have said that as there are questions that come forward, I want those questions to be answered. This is not about protection of anyone. It's about opening up the process...."

We've heard many, many times since we've been back in the 41st Parliament that the Premier is all about openness and transparency. If they really, truly believe those words, and if she's a woman of her word, then she will allow both those individuals, Peter Faist and Laura Miller, to testify at the Standing Committee on Justice Policy.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Mr. Yakabuski has moved opposition day number 1. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour will please say "aye."

All those against will please say "nay."

I believe the nays have it.

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

The division bells rang from 1750 to 1800.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): Order. Members, take your seats.

Mr. Yakabuski has moved opposition day motion number 1. All those in favour of the motion will please stand one at a time.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Hillier, Randy	Sattler, Peggy
Bailey, Robert	Horwath, Andrea	Scott, Laurie
Barrett, Toby	Jones, Sylvia	Singh, Jagmeet
Cimino, Joe	MacLeod, Lisa	Tabuns, Peter
Clark, Steve	Mantha, Michael	Taylor, Monique
Fife, Catherine	Martow, Gila	Thompson, Lisa M.
Forster, Cindy	McDonell, Jim	Vanhof, John
French, Jennifer K.	McNaughton, Monte	Walker, Bill
Gates, Wayne	Miller, Norm	Wilson, Jim
Gretzky, Lisa	Munro, Julia	Yakabuski, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Natyshak, Taras	Yurek, Jeff
Harris, Michael	Nicholls, Rick	
Hatfield, Percy	Pettapiece, Randy	

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): All those opposed to the motion, please rise.

Delaney, Bob
Dhillon, Vic
Dong, Han
Flynn, Kevin Daniel
Fraser, John

Matthews, Deborah
Mauro, Bill
McGarry, Kathryn
McMahon, Eleanor
McMeekin, Ted

Takhar, Harinder S.
Vernile, Daiene
Wong, Soo
Zimmer, David

Nays

Albanese, Laura
Anderson, Granville
Baker, Yvan
Balkissoon, Bas
Ballard, Chris
Berardinetti, Lorenzo
Bradley, James J.
Chiarelli, Bob
Colle, Mike
Coteau, Michael
Crack, Grant
Damerla, Dipika
Del Duca, Steven

Gravelle, Michael
Hoggarth, Ann
Hoskins, Eric
Hunter, Mitzie
Jaczek, Helena
Kiwala, Sophie
Kwinter, Monte
Lalonde, Marie-France
Leal, Jeff
MacCharles, Tracy
Malhi, Harinder
Mangat, Amrit
Martins, Cristina

Meilleur, Madeleine
Milczyn, Peter Z.
Moridi, Reza
Murray, Glen R.
Naidoo-Harris, Indira
Naqvi, Yasir
Oraziotti, David
Potts, Arthur
Qaadri, Shafiq
Rinaldi, Lou
Sandals, Liz
Sergio, Mario
Sousa, Charles

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):
The ayes are 37; the nays are 53.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): I declare the motion lost.

Motion negatived.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paul Miller): It being 6 o'clock, this House is adjourned until 9 o'clock tomorrow morning.

The House adjourned at 1803.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon. / L'hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, OC, OOnt.

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	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Baker, Yvan (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Ballard, Chris (LIB)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	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	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade / Ministre des Affaires civiques, de l'Immigration et du Commerce international
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	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	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	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	
Damerla, Hon. / L'hon. Dipika (LIB)	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
Del Duca, Hon. / L'hon. Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Dong, Han (LIB)	Trinity–Spadina	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	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	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	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	
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
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
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	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	
Hunter, Hon. / L'hon. Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Associate Minister of Finance (Ontario Retirement Pension Plan) / Ministre associée des Finances (Régime de retraite de la province de l'Ontario)
Jaczek, Hon. / L'hon. Helena (LIB)	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	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	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
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	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	
Martins, Cristina (LIB)	Davenport	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	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
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry / Ministre des Richesses naturelles et des Forêts
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McGarry, Kathryn (LIB)	Cambridge	
McMahon, Eleanor (LIB)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Milczyn, Peter Z. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton–Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	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
Munro, Julia (PC)	York–Simcoe	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of the Environment and Climate Change / Ministre de l'Environnement et de l'Action en matière de changement climatique
Naidoo-Harris, Indira (LIB)	Halton	
Naqvi, Hon. / L'hon. Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Orazietti, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	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	
Sandals, Hon. / L'hon. Liz (LIB)	Guelph	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Hon. / L'hon. Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	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	
Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)	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	
Zimmer, Hon. / L'hon. David (LIB)	Willowdale	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Monique Taylor
Bas Balkissoon, Chris Ballard
Grant Crack, Han Dong
Cindy Forster, Michael Harris
Randy Hillier, Sophie Kiwala
Monique Taylor
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Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Victor Fedeli, Catherine Fife
Ann Hoggarth, Monte McNaughton
Peter Z. Milczyn, Daiene Vernile
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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Arthur Potts, Shafiq Qaadi
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Laurie Scott, Jagmeet Singh
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Han Dong, John Fraser
Ernie Hardeman, Percy Hatfield
Lisa MacLeod, Harinder Malhi
Julia Munro, Arthur Potts
Lou Rinaldi
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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Bill Walker
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Marie-France Lalonde, Amrit Mangat
Gila Martow, Kathryn McGarry
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

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