



No. 133

N° 133

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly
of Ontario

Second Session, 40th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario

Deuxième session, 40^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 29 April 2014

Mardi 29 avril 2014

Speaker
Honourable Dave Levac

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Président
L'honorable Dave Levac

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Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 29 April 2014

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 29 avril 2014

The House met at 0900.

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

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

STRENGTHENING AND IMPROVING
GOVERNMENT ACT, 2014

LOI DE 2014 SUR LE RENFORCEMENT
ET L'AMÉLIORATION
DE LA GESTION PUBLIQUE

Resuming the debate adjourned on February 20, 2014, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 151, An Act to amend various Acts / Projet de loi 151, Loi visant à modifier diverses lois.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a pleasure to get up and speak about Bill 151, Strengthening and Improving Government Act, 2014. Obviously, this is, quite honestly, a very political bill. It consists of five complementary, unrelated housekeeping changes of the sort that usually appear, quite honestly, as minor schedules in a budget bill. There is some question also about the effectiveness of these changes. I'm looking at some of the government members, and I think that they probably have some thoughts on this as well. These are housekeeping measures that are simply a function of new developments, rendering legislative language obsolete.

You must wonder, actually, in this day and age, in this time, how it would be, with all of the issues that are facing this province today, with all of the issues that are facing the economy, the health care system, long-term-care facilities, the education system—just yesterday we heard that there was a report from People for Education which cites a disturbing trend of special-needs children being sent home because they don't have the resources to deal with some of the complex needs that are facing our education system every single day.

There is, of course, the dreaded gas plant issue. Just this morning, your own Minister of Transportation is facing the gas plant committee—and it should be a very interesting session, I would imagine; I'm sure that they'll get a word in edgewise eventually.

But in the grand scheme of things, where we are right now in the province of Ontario, there is obviously a lack of trust and there is a level of cynicism that exists in the broader public of the province of Ontario.

Schedule 1 of this piece of legislation amends the Courts of Justice Act “to add proceedings under the Civil Marriage Act (Canada) to the list of proceedings that are within the jurisdiction of the Family Court. The schedule is also amended to permit additional family law proceedings to be added to the Family Court's jurisdiction by regulation.”

Schedule 2 of this bill deals with “the provisions of the Pension Benefits Act dealing with joint and survivor pensions and pre-retirement death benefits.... The amendments relate to how the definition of ‘spouse’ in subsection 1(1) of the act applies in those provisions for the purpose of determining eligibility for benefits....

“Amendments are made to the Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act, 2004”—this is a small piece of the act in the grand scheme of things and where we are with regard to health care—“to protect the directors, officers, members, employees and agents of the Ontario Medical Association from civil liability for their good faith actions in negotiations with the government of Ontario concerning insured services and physician payments.”

Just yesterday, for some reason, Bill 78 was up on the order paper, which dealt with the eHealth issue dating back from 2009, when the auditor came forward and said that there was a complete and utter lack of transparency and accountability with regard to the way the contracts were distributed and honoured and processed by the government with regard to the electronic health file. It's a strange issue to bring forward during budget week, when you're bringing forward, I think—and I think the people of this province actually think—one of the major black marks in a long history with this government. Actually, I think it was one of the first scandals that came through this House, and so it is strange that, as a whole, the government would be bringing forward, in a very pivotal week for the province of Ontario, an issue that has such negative ramifications for them. It actually gave the opposition, I think, a very good opportunity to go through some of our concerns with regard to Bill 78.

Bill 151, though, the Strengthening and Improving Government Act, has:

“The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act is amended by adding two substantive sections, section 15 dealing with the collection and use of personal information and section 16 dealing with Ontario education numbers.”

There is a lot of work that needs to be done, actually, on the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act, and of course every day we do talk about the importance of post-secondary education, the importance of

access to post-secondary education. This small part, essentially housekeeping changes that usually appear in minor schedules, is in a major budget bill. It does leave more questions than answers, this piece of legislation in particular.

The schedule also creates a stretcher transportation services section of the Highway Traffic Act. I have to say that again: This schedule creates a stretcher transportation services section of the Highway Traffic Act. Under this section, ambulances “must contain prescribed equipment and meet prescribed inspection and maintenance standards. They must be equipped with communication equipment to allow contact with ambulance, police or fire department emergency services.”

So you see, in schedules 1 and 2 there are minor changes to the medicare act, minor changes to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act, and then you throw in some sort of rule about having stretchers and equipment in ambulances. All of this is contained within Bill 151, and it does leave more questions. I mean, the Clerks must be saying, “Who writes legislation like this?” And I know that the Liberal government has, on the whole, a very poor record of creating legislation that is effective. We’ve seen that over and over and over again. Certainly it begs the question: Why is Bill 151 before us at this time in the history of the province?

Each and every day, we have an opportunity to look at the finances in the province, and that is our job collectively as the opposition parties. We’ve seen that the projections for the deficit reduction are way off mark. We have seen job strategies that can barely be called job strategies.

Just in my riding last week, there was almost \$1 billion worth of funding announcements, which—I mean, if you’ve got it, great. And then the member from Kenora–Rainy River got \$1 billion yesterday, too. In my riding, we had over \$800 million announced with regard to developmental services for those adults who need resources, need support as they transition into the community, and as their parents age—because they’re aging and they can’t take care of their high-needs children. This is a long-standing promise, though, from this government. For them to come into the Waterloo region last week and make this grand announcement that this money will flow, when it was supposed to have been flowing almost four years ago—I myself have been working with a wonderful group of parents in my riding, three mothers, and they’ve actually bought their own group home. They’ve just given up altogether on any hope of getting any resources. So they joined together, they pooled their resources, they bought their own group home, under the promise that this government was going to provide some respite for them, for their boys, who are adult sons with autism, and they’re high, high needs. This announcement came last week, and in many respects it’s quite emotionally manipulative. It really is. It’s holding out that carrot, a little bit of hope after 12 years.

0910

And then of course there was the announcement that we’re finally getting the last part of the cancer care centre

in Kitchener–Waterloo. Then there was of course the \$120-million announcement for OpenText, one of the most successful software companies in Canada, and the promise of 1,200 jobs.

Missing in that whole equation, though, is the transportation, the transit file. It’s unfortunate that the Minister of Transportation is in front of the gas plant committee this morning, because it’s the missing link. It is a major job creator. The promise of two-way all-day GO to Kitchener–Waterloo is something that the people of my region are starting to lose faith in, especially when the Premier does come to the riding and promises two-way all-day, except she forgets that two-way all-day means that people from Toronto can get to Kitchener–Waterloo. Almost 10,000 people commute every day to Kitchener–Waterloo. There are good jobs there. The start-up community has done a wonderful job in trying to make sure that those young entrepreneurs, who have quite honestly lost hope in the broader scheme of this province’s economy—they’re not looking for those jobs anymore. They’ve just decided, “You know what? We’re going to create our own jobs. We’re going to create our own economy.”

I will say, though, that the \$5 million that did flow to agencies or organizations like Communitech was really well spent, because it fostered almost 1,000 start-ups in our region. I think that we do need to have a look at that \$120 million: Where are the strings? Where is the accountability?

Of course, we have a very different vision for the economy. New Democrats think that accountability with regard to dollars spent around job creation is incredibly important. We favour targeted tax credits, so if you do create a job—and I know that OpenText is going to create jobs. In fact, they have created jobs, because they’re a mature, successful company with a strong business plan. They would get tax credits for creating those jobs. This has proven to be very effective in other jurisdictions, and for some reason the government has chosen—

Hon. Ted McMeekin: That’s not true and you know it.

Ms. Catherine Fife: No, it has, actually. This government has not even chosen to engage in that conversation, because I think they sometimes think that it’s still a minor majority.

We, of course, favour tax credits for innovation, which obviously is a connection piece for the manufacturing economy, to ensure that we start making stuff in the province of Ontario. But that means you need to commercialize research and you need to get those ideas onto plant floors, because this province has the ability to capitalize on the knowledge economy. Yet here we are not honouring tax credits, not even talking about supporting those researchers who are often connected to training and universities, and they’d love to see some sort of uptake on the commercialization of research to create jobs. They would love to be part of that equation. They would love to be part of that conversation. Obviously, this government is very good at the conversation piece.

Job creator tax credits, the innovation research tax credits, capital so that when companies invest in buildings and structures which hold jobs here to the economy—I think that actually makes a lot of sense, and they're looking for that kind of assistance; they've told us. Small and medium-sized businesses are asking us for support, and they want to know what the playing field is like. They want to know what their role is in this economy, and they want to know how the government is going to play their cards as well—so the job creator tax credit, the research innovation tax credit, capital investment, and then of course training and retraining.

So here we are, talking about 151, the Strengthening and Improving Government Act. Quite honestly, there's very little interest in this piece of legislation. Of course, you have to support it; it's housekeeping. This is something that should just come before us as a matter of rote. It's an administrative bill, yet you have this nice name: Strengthening and Improving Government Act, 2014.

It does lend itself to question what is happening in this place. I know, having spent last week in the constituency and knocking on some doors, people—of course, they would love to see schedule 1 amended in the Courts of Justice Act. That's a top priority for them, Madam Speaker.

You know what they're concerned about? They're concerned about their hydro rates. I knocked on a door last week and there's a mother with a family of six, because her parents are living with them, and she's doing laundry every hour and a half throughout the night because she's trying to save money, because it is a huge cost to them in their household budget. They quite honestly are looking at this place and the people who come here each and every day and they're wondering what we are doing here. If I were to go back—and clearly she was up all night, so she's not watching—but if I was to go back to her and say, “This is what I talked about in the House this week: amending the Courts of Justice Act to add proceedings under the Civil Marriage Act to the list of proceedings that are within the jurisdiction of the Family Court”—first of all, I'd have to explain everything that this actually would mean. But again, it's not a priority.

Schedule 2—this is another thing that I was talking about—deals with the “provisions of Pension Benefits Act dealing with joint and survivor pensions and pre-retirement death benefits ... determining eligibility for benefits.” In the broader context of pensions in the province of Ontario, this is something that obviously could be dealt with very simply. It shouldn't be a huge debate issue in the House today. And if I told her that we're also going to be talking about, “Amendments are made to the Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act, 2004, to protect the directors, officers, members, employees ... concerning insured services and physician payments”—if I were to tell her this, she would say, “What are you talking about? Why is this a priority?”

Do you know what she's concerned about? She's concerned about finding quality child care in the province of

Ontario. She's concerned about the safety of children in unlicensed private child care centres. She's concerned about her child going into the education system and making sure that they have resources for special education, because this is the big thing that parents have finally realized, and I hope the government realizes it one day: when you have five children in a class of 21, and they have special needs, and you have a teacher who doesn't have an educational assistant or resources to deal with those five children, it affects the entire classroom. It affects the entire quality of that education system, because those five children deserve the attention and they deserve the resources and they deserve an opportunity to be successful, but so do the other children in that classroom. That's what people are concerned about.

I do think that the people of this province realize sometimes what is going on here, that you can bring a piece of legislation called Strengthening and Improving Government Act, and in a very simple way I can explain to the people of this province that the government has many issues, and there are pressing issues that we should be talking about each and every day in this place, yet here we are talking about making sure that ambulances have stretcher transportation services under the highway act. It really does leave a huge question of confidence in this government, quite honestly.

Clearly we've seen—even yesterday afternoon we saw three pieces of legislation cycle through this House: the family care act, which, unbelievably, the government got up and said, “Why are you delaying this? Why are you delaying this?” And then they deferred the vote when obviously everybody in this place is going to be supportive of it. We dealt with the eHealth file, Bill 78, which is incredible. I've already talked at length about that. It just leaves the question of who was running the show?

0920

I know that you have serious issues of trust. The people of this province have huge questions about competency, and they see the announcements. They see the electioneering that happened last week. They see the dollars: It was the \$1-billion week last week in the province of Ontario. In my riding, \$1 billion was announced, and \$1 billion was announced in Kenora–Rainy River. There is money flowing out of this place, and the people of this province understand that you don't have it. But they also know that it's their money, and you are spending it; you're making promises to spend it under certain conditions. As I said, I find it incredibly, incredibly manipulative.

The entire objective of this legislation, Bill 151—these are rational amendments to various pieces of legislation. Here we are at second reading, and from a priority perspective, it does leave one shaking one's head. These are housekeeping measures that are simply a function of new developments rendering legislative language obsolete. For example, the changes to the Pension Benefits Act are required because of a court decision that muddied the waters somewhat on survivor benefits.

I was having lunch with some lovely ladies yesterday, and they were talking about the way regulation actually

cycles through this place. They were wondering about the layers—because we did see that the regulations book is now 3,500 pages long. So we're really good at creating new legislation and regulations, but we're not very good at throwing out the old stuff, at having a fresh look at how to do things in this place. Of course, there have been pieces of legislation which promise to cycle through one reg every year per ministry. I think we should set the bar a little bit higher. I understand why the government would want to set the bar really low: so they can say that they overachieved. I think that's the language that we hear so often.

Today in this House, there is a great number of issues, from the energy file to the health file to jobs and the economy, and we've seen very little action on these issues. We've seen lots of announcements outside of this place. To date, we still have no comprehensive jobs strategy from this government.

Last week, I was in the riding. People are getting frustrated; they really are. They are frustrated by the lack of progress. They see that a minority government can be good for them. I will say that, Madam Speaker: They recognize that in a minority setting, there is a possibility of putting people first.

I think actually that we were able to do that very well in the first budget session and the second budget session. I'm not sure why the PC caucus has chosen not to read budgets before they say no to them. I think they've probably done that again this time. When you read through budgets, you actually have an opportunity to strengthen them and to make them more effective. In the first budget session, we were able to increase the fairness tax: 2% for those people who make over \$500,000. That generates almost \$470 million a year.

Mr. Mike Colle: Tax the rich.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's a fairness tax. You agreed to it; thanks very much.

Then we also were able to secure some stability funding for the transition of child care. We negotiated that with the government. We actually made them do what they said they were going to do, which is a new position for us. That funding actually became annualized.

Just as a little refresher course for the government: The instability of child care in the province of Ontario happened because they implemented the full-day kindergarten program without thinking of the negative impacts that it would have on the child care sector, which was already fragile, which was already vulnerable, because there was no comprehensive vision for child care in the province of Ontario—that despite the fact that when you invest \$1 in the child care sector you get a return, depending on the research, of between \$3 and \$7. It is a huge economic driver, particularly for women. So when the government brought in full-day kindergarten and rolled that out in five years—of course we are supportive of FDK. We do think that it will make a difference. There are some quality issues that we've seen rectified over the years, but it's an ongoing learning challenge.

When that full-day kindergarten was brought in, the government just sort of turned their back on the child

care sector altogether, and so we negotiated that stability and that transition funding as they coped with losing the preschool children in their centres, which it was actually using to subsidize the rest of child care. I won't even get into the special-needs issue with children in child care or in FDK because it's heartbreaking. Yesterday's report from People for Education is a red flag for all of us in this House to recognize that every child—the whole principle of public education is that it levels the playing field, that it creates opportunities for everyone, despite your socio-economic background, despite the social determinants of health. What happened here is that there was a push, a political push, for FDK—fine. But then build in the supports for the rest of the system. Child care, which was already vulnerable, which was already unstable, paid the price for that program. What we did in that first budget session was ensure that there was some transition funding that at least buffered the child care sector as this government rushed through with their own agenda. So we did child care and we did ODSP in that first session.

Some people say that budgets are moral documents, that they tell the real priorities of governments. On this side of the House, we also think that when you follow the money, you follow the real priorities. When you're talking about strengthening and improving government, there should definitely be some priorities listed out in a piece of legislation like this with this great title—because you're very good at the titles and the ribbon cuttings and the announcements, as I've already said, which sort of indicate the priorities. If you're trying to be all things to all people, which you were in my riding last week and throughout the various election announcements that have happened, it seems to me that those priorities need to be very clear to the people of this province, and I think they are.

In the last budget, just one year ago, we obviously were able to bring a new lens, if you will, to the budget process in that regard. In the last budget process, we were able to make sure that there was some ultimate fairness on the insurance file. Some people, whenever I have a chance to talk to them about that file, are very interested in it because it affects their bottom line in their households each and every day, particularly for seniors who are in the Tim Hortons on Saturday morning and they're now paying more for insurance than their car is worth. They've never been in an accident, but their insurance continues to go up.

Last night, I had a really great conversation with the insurance brokers at their reception and said, "People want to see those savings come back to them, because that was what was promised. That was what was sold to them when Dwight Duncan stood up in this House and said, 'We're going to standardize those payouts, those premiums, those benefits, and those savings are going to trickle down to the consumer.'" Well, you know what? You have to hold the line on that. If someone in this House is going to get up and say that, you have to make sure that they're going to follow through. So we did negotiate that through the last budget.

We were able, obviously, to also secure a youth employment strategy. Nothing in this piece of legislation will address youth employment, but we made sure that there was some funding there and the government topped that up, and we're tracking that to make sure that those numbers that you keep talking about are real numbers.

I, myself, met with London city council yesterday with my fellow MPPs and learned that London has one of the highest rates of youth unemployment in the province of Ontario. They want to be part of the solution, so they came to this place, and they're willing to come to the table with some money. They want the province to partner, and they need the federal government to also partner. Congratulations to them for taking up the leadership. But youth employment was a focus for us in the budget session. We pushed the line. We pushed the agenda on that. The government had talked about it for years and years and years. Hopefully that plan is working. But we are tracking it, because obviously there are some serious trust issues that we have with this government.

0930

On the whole, though, when the government brings forward Bill 151, Strengthening and Improving Government Act, one has to wonder why this is actually before us; because there is this rumour that—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Excuse me. I just ask that—conversations have reached a point where they are interfering with the speaker. Thank you.

You may continue.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

In the last budget session, just to remind you, we were able to negotiate auto insurance. We were able to bring in the youth employment issue. Of course, on the grand scheme of finances in the province of Ontario, we hoped that financial accountability would be a priority of this government, which is why we modelled the budget officer for the province. We definitely think that a Financial Accountability Officer could help all of us.

It was really interesting, because at the time, the media said to me, "Well, you know, this will be for you as well if you form government." I said, "Good." Every government has proven that they need a sober second thought or a sort of evidence-based, decision-making role from a third party, if you will.

For instance, if we had had that Financial Accountability Officer prior to the PC caucus selling the 407, they would have had some information which may have challenged the way they sold the 407, because as all of us drive on that highway—because we have to, because we must—we are paying for it. We are paying for it each and every day.

Ms. Cindy Forster: And if we had had it around before they did the OLG modernization—

Ms. Catherine Fife: Oh, my goodness. Don't even get me started on the OLG. Although it is great that the OLG—the headline is, "OLG Reboot Slammed by Auditor General." I mean, it's just another example of where

the Liberals pushed and rushed through something. If this idea had been run by the Financial Accountability Officer, I'm fairly certain that we wouldn't be in this place. The auditor called the plan devised in 2012 "overly optimistic." Maybe if the Financial Accountability Officer could have had a look at that plan, looked through the logistics, did some long-term economic forecasting, we would have definitely seen that this plan would actually hurt the people of the province of Ontario, particularly our rural sections.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Five hundred people out of work at St. Kitts and Fort Erie.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Five hundred people out of work at Fort Erie, and we saw that in the Niagara Falls by-election.

This is the thing: When you create legislation which has no teeth, which is not focused on the people who we're serving, it has a negative trickle-down effect. We have seen that time and time again.

When we look at Bill 151, Strengthening and Improving Government Act, they actually have the gall to say that Ontario is enhancing government efficiency and responsiveness. As I've already pointed out, it makes one amendment to the Highway Traffic Act to strengthen non-emergency transport services for medically stable patients—they're making sure that people have stretchers. The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Act would be amended to enable the government to collect information about post-secondary students' enrolment. This is something they should be able to do already—

Interjection: Right now.

Ms. Catherine Fife: —right now.

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: We're concerned about how far they're going to go.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Absolutely. There's always a concern about how far you go. We even heard that yesterday with Bill 78 with regard to the collection of private information of patients with eHealth. Once again, I can't see why they brought that forward. I don't know who's running the show.

Mr. Jonah Schein: Catherine, you should just contract all of this out.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It could all be contracted out. We could just sell the entire government down the river. How about that?

The Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act: This is the third part of the Strengthening and Improving Government Act. This would be amended to provide representatives of the Ontario Medical Association—OMA, a great association—with immunity from legal action for acts done in good faith during negotiations with the government. It's interesting that right now—I think they're in negotiations right now with the government. The timing is just excellent, don't you think?

The fourth piece is the Pension Benefits Act, which would be amended to clarify spousal entitlements to pre- and post-retirement death benefits. Again, this is literally a housekeeping issue. This is not something that is a huge, pressing issue in the province of Ontario. It doesn't

address the unemployment rate. It doesn't address the fact that we have some serious issues in health care. I'm almost speechless.

Ms. Cindy Forster: I'm speechless about the stretcher transportation services piece.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I know.

So you see, in this piece of legislation, these are housekeeping measures. In the broader sense of the province of Ontario, members on this side of the House—our member from Nickel Belt has been vigilant and fierce in her advocacy for change in the health care system. I know that all of us have stories that we could relay back to this place about the weaknesses and the failings in the health care system.

Last week I met with some personal support workers, and I understand that the Minister of Health is going to be making a very timely announcement again, just to be consistent, I'm sure. It could be another billion dollars or maybe just \$500 million this time, but they are certainly deserving of more, because the women I met with, who are members of SEIU, talk about the fact that they have very little money for mileage when they go from patient to patient. There are serious health and safety issues that they face, travelling from patient to patient and also dealing, unfortunately, with people who have dementia, so there are some safety concerns. This is primarily a female-dominated field. They're given 15 minutes for some serious medical issues like changing colostomy bags, for instance. The registered nurses of Ontario have said that they couldn't do their job without these incredible champions for patient health. That's what personal support workers are. They're at the bottom of the health care food chain, and I'm hoping that there can be some change. We certainly are going to be building support for them because we recognize that they are deserving of greater support.

More importantly, when you support personal support workers, you support patient care, and there's a direct correlation to that. We can talk about electronic health and we can talk about Ornge—it all comes down to people in the health care system, and if you've ever been in a hospital—I have a family member right now in the Peterborough regional hospital—it comes down to the quality of the people who are working with you. That's what our focus is.

Actually, just to return back to the whole budget discussion, that's what we've tried to bring. We've tried to bring the lens of the people of this province into the budget session, first in 2012 and then in 2013. The people of this province have responded very well to us in that regard and we know that because we've won four by-elections. I'm just getting that in there for good measure.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Four. Four out of nine.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Four. Here we are on Tuesday morning, April 29, talking about Bill 151, Strengthening and Improving Government Act, which, as I've already pointed out, is generally a housekeeping piece of legislation. It does not address the big questions, the big issues

that are facing the province of Ontario. I just think that we should be more ambitious for ourselves; we should set the bar higher for ourselves.

I know that the government is distracted and I know why they're distracted. There's everything from the gas plants issue—it's still playing itself out, and as I've already said, the Minister of Transportation is in front of that committee this morning. I'm sure that will be amusing for some people, but we don't think it's funny on this side of the House. We think it's pretty serious when you waste \$1.1 billion when there are such pressing needs in the province right now.

Yesterday was the National Day of Mourning. I attended a memorial in Kitchener–Waterloo and I can tell you that the numbers of people—I think 373 people lost their lives last year in the province of Ontario. You should not go to work in the province of Ontario in 2014 and not come home. Your shift should not be something that ends your life. We are looking for compliance and we're looking for stronger regulations. We fought this throughout the early fall, and we made sure that that fall prevention training standard actually could come into play. But you shouldn't have to shame the government into doing what they said they were going to do back in 2009. That should not be the way that this place works.

We're very disturbed by the way that legislation is coming before the House and what the government is showing to be a priority. Housekeeping bills should not be what we are talking about on April 29, 2014. It just shouldn't be that way.

0940

We are obviously seeing, though, a level of desperation, I think, in the way that these funding announcements are coming out. I understand the discomfort—I do; I really do—and I understand that there's a genuine sense of panic, a little bit, on the part of the government.

With the Ring of Fire—I was sitting up there in 2007, when Mr. Dwight Duncan stood in that place and said that the Ring of Fire is going to change the economic future of northern Ontario.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Seven years ago.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Seven years ago. Of course, I knew very little at the time about the Ring of Fire at that point, but I thought, "Well, the resources that are available to us, the resource economy in our northern jurisdictions—those people want to go to work." They want to go to work; they want to be part of the solution, as do our First Nations.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Sit down with a First Nations chief.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Oh yes, the First Nations who have to take you to court. The First Nations should not have to take you to court to get justice in the province of Ontario.

Mining and job creation can't happen without infrastructure. I can see that there's a level of frustration, because on almost every file there is, when you peel back the layers of this government, a level of incompetency which is shocking—especially to a new member like

myself, because I came from a different jurisdiction where there were distinct lines of accountability, there were processes and there were laws that you would follow.

Yet, here we are in the province of Ontario, waiting seven years for what should be an economic success story for our northern communities and for our First Nations, and group after group has had to take this government to court. That's where this is—where this government refuses to do the right thing the first time, which is why we are looking at this piece of legislation—Bill 151—and wondering what is in this that strengthens and improves government. Honestly, what is actually in this legislation which will strengthen and improve government?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Not much.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Almost nothing. Why is it before us? That is the big question in this place today. Why is Bill 151 in front of us at this time and in this place?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: There's nothing else that's important, I imagine.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Well, it is about priorities.

It was really sad for me—and I know that everyone feels this way—that the Milton mother who came to this place, who was only 41, couldn't get Ontario to follow three other provinces and cover Avastin, and she lost her life.

This weekend, I participated in the Ride 'n' Stride for cancer research—the research said that Avastin would prolong her life. One of the speakers this weekend said that cancer research provides hope and time, and sometimes that's the most important thing that you can give somebody.

Those are the emotional stories that come to this place. These are the human stories. She lost her life. She lost her battle with cancer. There are certain names that I have for cancer that I cannot say in this place at this time, but she came to fight for it, and she did a great job of raising the issue of how certain drugs are funded by the province of Ontario and certain drugs are not. I hope that we all share in the concern with how that happens.

Let's work together to actually fix that. I would think that that would be more important than amending the Courts of Justice Act to add proceedings under the Civil Marriage Act.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Or more useful.

Ms. Catherine Fife: I would think that it would be, and I would think that it would perhaps be a little more important than schedule 2, which deals with provisions of the Pension Benefits Act dealing with joint and survivor pensions and pre-retirement death benefits. These are housekeeping issues that are before us.

I guess, though, on the upside, it did give me an opportunity to talk a little bit about what we think the priorities are in the province of Ontario.

Ms. Cindy Forster: Organ donation is an important issue, too.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Absolutely. We've seen a lot of health-related issues come before this House. Health is

\$52 billion—that's the budget for health care. Clearly there is a small shift to refocusing on health and early intervention and prevention of disease, but not enough. We even see, on the file about organ donation, for example—this came before us just before the House rose; there have been very political, very high-profile stories around organ donation. This is clearly an issue that we can do better on in the province of Ontario. We were told that organ donation was up; today we hear that organ donor numbers are on the decline. Ontario posted statistics online in the hopes that data comparisons would improve the process and save more lives.

We could be talking about how to streamline the organ donation process here. It's so funny that this is in the paper today, because I was thinking about a young boy in my riding this morning who, at the age of 13, passed away. His parents were able to donate some of his organs, and it gave them some level of peace, I would say. In fact, it actually gave the entire community who were mourning with them a level of peace as well. So the potential for having organ donation take a front-and-centre conversation through a piece of legislation, which might be useful—we would welcome that opportunity to talk about the real issues in health care, around the selling of for-profit plasma, for instance.

Ms. Cindy Forster: They're being sued for that too.

Ms. Catherine Fife: They're being sued for that too.

So this is really the point: that you should make sure that when you bring forward a piece of legislation—and I hope to have this opportunity some day—you craft legislation which actually can be effective, which, when you bring it to this House, there has been some consensus on. In a minority government, we do have to listen to each other. I know it's painful for some people, and I'm sorry about that sometimes, but on the whole, though, I think that when the government brings forward a housekeeping bill the week that a major budget—I think one of the most important budgets in the province of Ontario—comes down, we would be talking about financial issues.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Two-way GO train.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Yes. Two-way GO train; reforming the OMB.

Ms. Cindy Forster: All-day.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Two-way, all-day from Niagara.

All of those transit options that have been in your bailiwick now for almost 12 years—when you had a majority government you didn't even have to deal with us. You could have done the right thing when you were a majority government. Instead, you know what you did? You did eHealth, you did Ornge and you implemented full-day kindergarten without thinking about the negative impacts that it would have on the child care sector. You spent a great deal of money fighting the people you should have been working with, like the Ring of Fire.

So here we are. These are housekeeping measures before us. We have a very different approach to this place in the third party. We recognize that it's a minority government, we recognize that we should listen to the people we are serving, that we should put their interests before

our interests as a political party and as individual politicians, and we bring a level of integrity to those conversations, I think, which is very much needed in the province of Ontario.

I understand that the government is frustrated by this debate, but you should not have brought Bill 151 and opened the door to—this is a vacuous piece of legislation.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Pretty well nothing.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Pretty much. I mean, why would you bring it forward? But that is a question in the grand scheme of things in the province of Ontario, when the economy is lagging, when youth unemployment is so high, when we have some systemic issues in the health care file, when the energy file is a complete and utter mess, when we see, in education, principals having to send home the most vulnerable children because they can't have access to resources, and closing community schools, which are the hub of the community—the file goes on and on and on and on.

That begs the question—that's the word I was looking for the entire morning. That begs the question: Why would you bring Bill 151 before us and call it the Strengthening and Improving Government Act when it doesn't do that? It doesn't do that. Nobody on that side of the House can say that this strengthens government, not with a straight face. I can't even say it with a straight face.

So here we are: gas plants, eHealth, Ornge, chemotherapy drugs—

Interjection.

0950

Ms. Catherine Fife: Hey, get over to your side. Don't heckle me from the PC caucus.

Hon. Mario Sergio: You're heckling your own member.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: She likes it. It's interactive.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Yes, we work together over here. I know there are some issues with regard to that over there.

So here we are: We are talking, on April 29, about the Strengthening and Improving Government Act. We're talking about some minor housekeeping issues. Our point, in the NDP caucus, is that we should be talking about the real issues that are facing the province of Ontario, and there's no shortage of them, quite honestly, Madam Speaker.

I think that the work before us and the challenge before us is to ensure that we get this economy back on track. For us, it is one of the major priorities. We see the economy very differently than this government, who do like to choose winners and losers, which does have a negative impact on how we attract businesses to the province of Ontario. It's just the reality that it is.

We see infrastructure investment as a key component of building the economy. We see transit as having a major impact. For the life of me, I can't understand why this government has not got Metrolinx's budget around their commercials, around their advertising, telling us—the people who are paying for those commercials—what a great job they're doing. It adds insult to injury.

So we see infrastructure, we see transit—we see prevention in the health care file as a key component. That's why our member from Nickel Belt so strongly advocated on banning tanning beds, especially for youth. We forced you—it will not be our legacy. Our legacy will be that we—

Interjection.

Ms. Catherine Fife: Only 1% of the health care budget is spent on prevention—1%. How is that a strategy? How is that an idea that even works? Somebody over there must recognize that 1% of \$52 billion on prevention is not the best strategy. If someone just raised their little hand in the Liberal caucus meeting and said, "Listen, why don't we spend 2%?" Just push the envelope a little bit. Let's try to be better together.

We see the economic file as: infrastructure, transit, prevention and health care. We see some significant changes that can happen in the education file, for instance, in post-secondary and training.

Certainly, on the energy file you could take another hour and just brush the surface of the energy revisions that need to happen. Serious reform needs to happen on the energy file. You see CEOs getting millions and millions of dollars in salaries, and you see the taxpayers, the consumers, the citizens of this province paying the ultimate price for that incompetence. People are getting frustrated, and they're getting frustrated with really good reason, I think.

The social infrastructure of this province has been a huge draw for businesses. I just want to make that point on the economy, because we are incredibly focused on jobs on this side, in the NDP. The social infrastructure draws companies, draws investment into the province of Ontario, so we need to make sure that health care is working. When there's scandal after scandal after scandal in health care, that compromises and undermines confidence in our economy. When you see the energy file, when you see the hydro bills of companies, manufacturing and businesses continue to rise, despite these so-called smart meters, there's a level of frustration which is very real.

So when we came forward with our ideas—we really had hoped that the Liberals would listen to our job creator tax credit because that idea came from the people whom we serve in the province of Ontario, those businesses that say, "We're willing to invest. We're willing to train. We're willing to be innovative and rise up to the new economy, but we want to see that the government wants to partner in that." The job creator tax credit, the tax credits for capital, the tax credits for retraining and training—they like those ideas. It's very clear to them. They see where the role of government is in the economy of the province of Ontario. We like that, too, because it's a level of transparency and a level of accountability with public tax dollars, and the public recognizes that small and medium-sized businesses create the majority of new jobs in the province of Ontario.

There's no better example of that than Kitchener-Waterloo, with the start-ups and Communitech and the

Accelerator Centre, and these youthful entrepreneurs who have done the research and are willing to commercialize the research and then are willing to create the jobs. They are willing and able and ready to be part of the equation on the economy, and, quite honestly, a lot of them inspire me.

But that has nothing to do with what's before us right now, with Bill 151.

Interjection: That's right.

Ms. Catherine Fife: But you call it "strengthening and improving government." When I think of strengthening and improving government, I think of governments that are actually willing to put forward policy and legislation which works for the people. That's what I would think if I was just reading the title—

Ms. Cindy Forster: Who thinks up these names anyway?

Ms. Catherine Fife: I don't know. A poli-sci 101 student came up with that: Strengthening and Improving Government Act.

This bill consists of five completely unrelated house-keeping changes of the sort that usually appear as minor schedules in a budget bill—usually. Maybe you could have thrown this into the budget: minor schedules in a budget bill. Instead, on April 29, we are talking about housekeeping instead of the real priorities of the province of Ontario.

Madam Speaker, I appreciate the time to share some of our thoughts on a piece of legislation which doesn't serve the people of this province. Just to confirm, we can be stronger, we can be better, and the people of this province need us to be that way.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Questions and comments? The Minister of Consumer Services.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: Speaker, I listened to the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, and for the most part I was scratching my head, because she was talking about things that, in my view, are not related to the bill in front of us. So in my little time, I do want to talk about the bill, and I want to take great exception to what she said about there being nothing real here, "nothing for the people," she said.

Hon. Teresa Piruzza: She didn't talk about the bill.

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: She didn't talk about the bill; that's right.

I'll give you a real example of how this is relevant to the people of Ontario, and there are many examples in here.

The changes to the Pension Benefits Act to clarify spousal entitlement: That's a real issue. Strengthening partnerships with the OMA: That's a real issue. Better informing decision-making in post-secondary education—these are our future business leaders and maybe politicians of the future: That's important.

But the one that's really real for me, and I think for other people, is the one under the Highway Traffic Act, and I've spoken about this before. It's to improve the safety and reliability of non-ambulance transportation in Ontario. Now, these vehicles, which are former ambu-

lances, are used more and more for real people in Ontario for medical transport between hospitals, long-term-care homes and back. They are being used for my husband on a monthly basis, from my home to specialist medical appointments.

These vehicles need licensing and regulation. They provide a great service, and the staff who transport my husband are fantastic. However, there's a lot of confusion about these vehicles, about who pays for what and what the qualifications are, and the Ombudsman spoke to this. This is a real issue. This is something that seniors and sick people need to have addressed now, and even more in the future.

So to say that this bill does not address real issues is completely, completely wrong.

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

Mr. John O'Toole: I listened—I interrupted my listening from time to time and went for a coffee. An hour is a long time. Congratulations for lasting, but you didn't use all the time. You had six minutes left, and you could have really gotten down to some serious investigation on Bill 151.

Now, I am saying that I am looking forward to our speaker that's coming up very shortly. The member from Dufferin–Caledon will be leading off for us, and I look forward to that.

The bill has a couple of sections that, as I said—looking at the bill itself, I think there are five sections. Yes, there are five sections to the bill. The one that intrigues me is the one under the Ministry of Finance: the provisions of pension benefits. That's an important aspect, and I expect maybe in the government we'll hear something about the new pension plan for Ontario. I don't know how it's going to be funded. We'll all be waiting for that.

1000

But there's another section here under the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, schedule 4. It looks like in this section here they're setting up another discussion panel, but what's really missing is that they don't really have a coherent plan here. There is a lot of tinkering, a lot of minor amendments to a bill—a number of bills, actually. The Courts of Justice Act is amended, dealing with spousal entitlements; there's a section on that. This bill is a lot of administrivia, but there's really no plan, especially under schedule 4, which I mentioned. That's the part where I'm most troubled about young people in post-secondary education and what they're actually going to do after they graduate. There are really very few jobs for young people today after they've finished spending \$10,000 or \$20,000 or \$30,000 or more on their education. They come out and find that there are no real jobs. When you look at it, everyone can't work for the government. We know that. You have to have somebody who is actually adding value to something, whether it's in the resource sector or in—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. The time is up. The member for Trinity–Spadina.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: I just want to congratulate my friend and colleague from Kitchener–Waterloo for doing a lead that she wasn't assigned to do. Imagine, at the very last moment she does a lead of almost one whole hour—that impressed me to no end.

She spoke well about the title, which is something the Liberals have borrowed from the Conservative Party over the years. “Strengthening and improving government”—please, a little more frankness about what you do. Those kinds of titles are very deceptive in terms of what you do with these things. They are housekeeping measures, and some of them are useful. The Pension Benefits Act is required because of court decisions. Some of these things are useful, although the member from Kitchener–Waterloo makes an incredibly good point about things that are so important to so many people out there. While these are housekeeping matters that are useful, they're not the most critical ones we should be dealing with, especially in the dying days of a Liberal government, I say to you.

I've got to tell you, the Council of Ontario Universities makes a number of suggestions. They declare that they have amendments about the disclosure of students' personal information. They have four amendments, one which includes a provision that a specific Ontario education number will be used in research and analysis as the identifier of an individual, anonymized record. They also say that collection of personal information concerning aboriginal status should not be permitted. There are a number of these amendments that I think are useful to look at, especially as we send this to committee, including the collection of personal information on the use of student services—for example, disability and accessibility services, health services and counselling services—should not be permitted. These are useful suggestions that we should be including in this debate as we send it to committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: I appreciated the clarification from the honourable member there that the member from Kitchener–Waterloo was filling in. I'm relieved to hear that, because it does help me understand why she drifted entirely off the legislation. One of my favourite books is Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, and I think the member from Kitchener–Waterloo could well write the sequel because I think she probably broke both her arms patting herself on the back in her designated pre-campaign rant, which is just something I note in passing.

We have a lot of things in this bill. The member from Durham, my good colleague opposite, has mentioned some of the more useful things. The bill itself is in response to a number of requests from people in the sectors that the bill speaks to to clean up some of the ongoing problems that are there. I have no dispute that it's a housekeeping bill, and if everybody agrees it is, let's just pass the darn thing and get on with some of the things that the member from Kitchener–Waterloo and many others in this House would like to address. I'd be quite keen to do that.

The one thing I did find interesting about the member opposite—

Interjection.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Well, we're working really hard on the developmental services sector. It will be interesting to see, when we vote on the budget, whether you stand in your place and actually vote to invest the kinds of resources that folk in the developmental services sector need, because you were investing zip when you were in government.

All that aside, Madam Speaker, she did mention worker safety. Worker safety is front and centre in this bill, albeit a housekeeping bill, and we should get on with it as quickly as we can.

Other than that, God bless her.

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

Ms. Catherine Fife: I'd like to thank the member from Durham for his comments and, of course, the member from Trinity–Spadina for his comments.

I take great exception: The Minister of Consumer Services mentioned that this ambulance part is important—of course. Under this subsection, ambulances “must contain prescribed equipment and meet prescribed inspection and maintenance standards.” Why isn't it already happening right now? Why isn't it already happening?

When you designed the air ambulances, why didn't the government make sure that people can do CPR in those air ambulances? What about that?

So there are good reasons to actually question the competency of this government. And I do find that, over the last few months, there have been more personal comments made, more and more and more.

When the Minister of Community and Social Services announced the \$800 million in Kitchener–Waterloo last week, the parents came back to me because they don't have any confidence in this government to do the right thing. They said, “You know what? We had some questions.” They wouldn't take their questions. There is a huge lack of trust. The government was promising that they are going to end the wait-lists. You know how they're going to end the wait-lists? They're going to kick kids out of service. That's what I heard from those parents.

That is shameful, to come out before a budget and make a huge announcement that you should have been doing already. You should have been doing it already.

So here we are today talking about housekeeping issues. Individually, they are important, but these are not the priorities of the province of Ontario. Making sure that people actually have the resources in health care and education, making sure that we have a jobs strategy and making sure that businesses know what the rules of engagement are for this government, those are the real priorities. We have to make sure that the people in this province can get back to work. Yet you bring Bill 151 before us, and you say that these are your priorities. Get your act together.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): It being close to 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1007 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

Mr. John O'Toole: I would like to welcome a very good friend of mine, Michael Patrick, who is the new PC candidate for the riding of Durham. He's here to observe question period. Welcome, Michael.

Interjections.

Mr. John O'Toole:—from a few other introductions, if I could. I'd like to introduce a group of members of Advocis, who are with us here at Queen's Park today. From Whitby, there's Jack Snedden, Louisa Majoros, Wayne Daley, Ron Fennell; from Oshawa, Mike Capesky; from Bowmanville, John Willoughby; and from Pickering, Don Turnbull. Welcome to Queen's Park. We look forward to meeting with you.

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

It looks like we have quite a few introductions, so I'm going to ask everyone for their indulgence, to make your introductions as quickly as possible, and I'll try to accommodate everyone.

Introductions?

Hon. Tracy MacCharles: I'll just build on the introductions from the MPP from Durham without repeating and add Claude Rochefort. I don't know if he's here today, but he's also from the Durham chapter of Advocis. Welcome to all from the Durham chapter.

Mr. Michael Harris: I'd like to welcome a good friend from Kitchener-Conestoga, Dennis Yanke, who is here with Advocis as well. For those who get a chance to meet with him today, please ask him about his book.

Ms. Peggy Sattler: I'd like to welcome Chris James, who lives and works in my riding of London West and is here today with Advocis, and who is accompanied by Kusum Sen, who is also with Advocis. Welcome.

Mr. Rick Bartolucci: I want to welcome Advocis and their representatives from across Ontario. I want to especially recognize Michael Vagnini and Phil Sawyer, who are from Sudbury—great examples of what financial planning should be all about. Thank you very much for attending today.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm pleased to welcome Dawn Kennedy from Bruce county today.

Hon. John Gerretsen: I'd like the assembly to welcome two guests from the Kingston area who are with the chapter of Advocis in Kingston: Will Britton, the incoming president of the local chapter; and Ed Bettencourt, the past president of the local chapter for Advocis in Kingston.

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: I'd like to introduce Jeff Elliott, who is the father of page Ethan Elliott, in the west gallery today.

Hon. Brad Duguid: I just want to introduce William Burtch, a constituent who is here in the Legislature with

us somewhere. I haven't seen him yet, but he's here with us somewhere.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: On behalf of New Democrats, I just want to welcome Advocis. My nephew John DiNovo is a long-time member. Welcome back again to Queen's Park, all of you.

Mr. Norm Miller: I wanted to introduce Richard Borland, who's down from Muskoka for the Advocis Queen's Park day. I hope he has a great day.

Hon. Yasir Naqvi: I want to welcome a few friends from Ottawa who are here: Kris Birchard, who's the chair of advocacy from Advocis; and David McGruer, also from Ottawa. I also want to welcome David Juvet, who is the vice-chair of the board; and Roger McMillan and Linda Gratton, who are the co-chairs of the Ontario provincial advocacy committee for Advocis. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I'd like to welcome a friend of mine, Andrew Johnson, who is here with the Advocis group. I look forward to meeting him later on.

Hon. Jeff Leal: It's my pleasure to introduce a number of financial advisers from Peterborough who are here for the Advocis lobby day at Queen's Park: Linda Gratton, Mimi Rogers, Doug Boden, Crystal Wilkinson, Dave Jolley, Jay McMahan, Alex Fischer and Dwight Hickson.

Mr. Jerry J. Ouellette: On behalf of the member from Simcoe North, whose page's mother is here—Mary Lou Doleweerd—as well as the grandfather, Francis Smith.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It's my pleasure to welcome three Advocis representatives who are here today from Waterloo region: Darren Sweeney, Alan Anderson and Roger Jankey. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Hon. Kevin Daniel Flynn: I've got a group of people here this morning to witness our vote on Bill 21. From the Heart and Stroke Foundation: Cristin Napier, Krista Orendorff, Sumi Shan, Mark Earle, Matilda Won Yong Choi, Brian Kellow and Tendai Nzuma; from the Canadian Cancer Society: Florentina Stancu-Soare, Joanne Di Nardo and Kelly Gorman; Alzheimer Society: Delia Sinclair Frigault; and Ontario Caregiver Coalition: Lisa Levin.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Today I'm delighted to recognize a constituent of mine who is here on behalf of Advocis: Paul Higeli; as well as a very good friend of mine, Nithy Ananth, a good Liberal from Hamilton East-Stoney Creek.

Ms. Laurie Scott: I would like to introduce Linda Gratton from Freedom 55 Financial who is here today at Queen's Park.

Mr. Frank Klees: I would like to join with my colleagues in welcoming representatives of Advocis. I'd like to extend a special welcome to someone who I've been supporting with my premiums for the last number of years, Mr. Roger McMillan of McMillan Financial.

Hon. Mario Sergio: We have in our Legislative Assembly today a delegation from sunny Dominican Republic. We have Deputy Rubén Luna, Andres Rodriguez,

Yoneidi Santana, Angela Candelario and Henry Samuel. They are here seeing how we are behaving ourselves today. I hope they will enjoy their stay.

Remarks in Spanish.

Mr. Todd Smith: It's a pleasure to welcome a couple of Advocis members from the Quinte region: Jane Simpson and Shannon Neely, along with the director of government relations, Peter Tzanetakis, who informs me that there are 100 financial advisers here—I think they've all been introduced.

Bill Cook is a retired teacher from Hastings county through Thunder Bay; he's here as well, and I'd like to welcome him to the Legislature.

Mr. Michael Mantha: I want to introduce a good friend of mine today on behalf of Advocis: my friend Eric Barton from Sault Ste. Marie.

JONATHAN JENKINS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: A point of order, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The leader of the third party on a point of order.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I seek unanimous consent for a moment of silence in this House to mark the passing of Jonathan Jenkins who was an exceptional journalist, a press gallery member, and I'm sure we all know that his wife Nancy and his children Dexter and Maizey are going to be suffering today and for many, many weeks to come.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The leader of the third party is requesting unanimous consent for a moment of silence. Do we agree? Agreed.

I would ask all members of the House and those in the galleries to please rise for a moment of silence in respect.

The House observed a moment's silence.

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

IMMIGRATION

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Premier on a point of order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I believe that you'll find that we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice. It reads thus:

This House condemns the distribution by the group called Immigration Watch Canada of hateful material toward the Sikh community in Brampton; and reaffirms the positive values of tolerance and inclusion that are the hallmarks of modern Ontario society; and that the question and the motion be immediately put without further debate or amendment.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): We first need the unanimous consent, so I would ask: Do we agree with the motion to be put forward without notice? Do we agree? Agreed.

The Premier believes that this House condemns the distribution by the group called Immigration Watch Canada of hateful material toward the Sikh community in Brampton; and reaffirms the positive values of tolerance

and inclusion that are the hallmarks of modern Ontario society; and that the question and the motion be immediately put without further debate or amendment.

Do we agree? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

1040

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): At this time, I would like our pages to assemble to be introduced to the House.

Ashley Bowes, Oshawa; Caitlin Boyle, Brampton West; Thomas Brassard, Thunder Bay–Atikokan; Gabriel Chemla, Etobicoke–Lakeshore; Kaitlyn Doleweerd, Simcoe North; Kaia Douglas, Peterborough; Ethan Elliott, Perth–Wellington; Meaghan Frank, Essex; Lavanya Gunentherathas, Scarborough Centre; Emmanuelle Hébert, Mississauga South; Frank Hong, Willowdale; Daniel Hoogsteen, Burlington; Émilie Lebel, Timmins–James Bay; Ayesha Mir, Don Valley East; Zahra Mohamed, Markham–Unionville; William Qin, Mississauga–Brampton South; Victoria Recagno from Oakville; Brendan Sheppard from Barrie; Ethan Walker, Wellington–Halton Hills; and David Zhou, Scarborough–Agincourt: Our new pages.

Applause.

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

TAXATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: I just want to add that I appreciate the moment of silence from the leader of the NDP. Our thoughts and hearts are with Jonathan Jenkins's wife, Nancy. I say to his kids—hopefully they'll see the Hansard someday—I think the highest praise we can give to a journalist is that he was tough, but fair. Every time I talked to Jonathan, there was nothing that dominated his heart more than his pride in his son and daughter. He's watching over them. He's damn proud.

Applause.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I just want to say it's great to have my deputy leader back in the House today—

Applause.

Mr. Tim Hudak: I'm going to ask one of the pages to bring over a document to the Premier entitled Transit in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area. There's a briefing that the Premier received.

Premier, I don't know if you'll have time, but I'm going to refer you to page 26 of the document that you were briefed on. The finance ministry officials say that the greatest negative impact on job creation—in fact, it will cost jobs—are payroll tax increases. Again, that's page 26. I've highlighted it to call attention to that particular bullet; getting a son of two teachers, it just happens.

On page 26, it indicates that payroll taxes will cost us jobs. Do you agree with finance officials that an increase in payroll taxes will cost us even more jobs in our province?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I just want to add my personal condolences to the family, friends and gallery colleagues of Jonathan Jenkins and wish them all well. It's a very hard and sad time.

And I want to welcome Christine Elliott back and just say that your strength is remarkable. It's wonderful to have you back.

Applause.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: To my friend opposite, if what he is asking is whether I believe that bringing in a plan that will allow people to save for their retirement and have retirement security when they are ready to leave the work world, I would suggest that that is absolutely necessary.

We have been very, very clear that an enhancement to the Canada Pension Plan would be our first choice, but we believe that it is our obligation to make sure that the people of Ontario have the ability to have a dignified retirement.

Interjection.

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

Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Well, Premier, I believe our first obligation is to make sure people have a chance at a well-paying job in our province. I think that's what our number one job should be.

I'll tell you a quick story. I was in Brantford recently, and I met with Scott, who is a construction employer. He had—

Interjection.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak:—nine people on his payroll. That was in 2003, when the McGuinty-Wynne government began. I asked him how many employees he has now, and he said none—nobody on the payroll except himself. I said, "Why?" He said, "Just more red tape. The energy bills have tripled in this province, and payroll taxes mean I can't hire."

The Ministry of Finance officials indicate that for every \$2 billion in increases on a payroll tax, that will cost us 18,000 jobs.

If you do bring in an Ontario registered pension plan, or an ORPP, that is going to be a tax increase that will cost us 150,000 jobs. Premier, do you agree with the finance officials' predictions?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It's a very interesting question coming from the Leader of the Opposition, because we just lowered payroll taxes: the employee health tax. We reduced that tax to small businesses. It was a tortured process to get the Leader of the Opposition and his party to acknowledge that that was a good thing to do, Mr. Speaker.

I know what he is talking about. He's talking about retirement security. He's talking about our belief and our proposal that we need to bring forward a plan to make sure that people in this province have the opportunity to retire in security.

We would love to have had the support of the Conservatives at the federal level. We would have loved to have had the support of Stephen Harper, which was called for by governments—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Member for Northumberland–Quinte West, come to order.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:—across the country. We haven't got that, Mr. Speaker, so we are going to move forward. We will be bringing forward a plan in the budget on Thursday to make sure that people have retirement security in this province.

Interjection.

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

Final supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Look, here's the difference between you and me: I want Scott to have the confidence to hire again. I want to see him hire back those nine employees and then more. I want to see that across the province. That's why we stand solidly behind my million jobs plan to create a million well-paying jobs in our province, to get people back to work.

So let me see if I understand this, Premier. You said that you need to lower payroll taxes to create jobs. That's the bill you brought forward that we supported. But now you're saying you're going to increase payroll taxes by \$2,500 a person. That means that if Scott wants to hire somebody, he has to pay wages plus \$2,500, and somebody on the payroll will have \$2,500 less in their pockets. It's pretty hard to make ends meet today when you can't pay your hydro bill. Imagine a \$2,500 reduction in your paycheque.

So which is it, Premier? Do you believe that lowering payroll taxes creates jobs, or do you believe increasing payroll taxes creates jobs? Honest to goodness, you look like Dalton McGuinty. You don't want to have it both ways, do you?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The Leader of the Opposition knows full well that the document that he passed across the floor has nothing to do with retirement security. It was a discussion on a totally different subject. What we have said is that we believe there is not enough saving. We know there is not enough saving that people are capable of; that people are at risk of struggling in their retirement. So we are going to bring forward a plan that will allow people to have that retirement security.

The Leader of the Opposition talks about creating jobs, but everything he has brought forward would cut jobs: education jobs, health care jobs. He does not want

to partner with business in this province. He is against partnering with OpenText. He is against partnering with Cisco. He is against partnering with food processors. He is against partnering with the auto industry. That opposition would reduce jobs.

TAXATION

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Premier: Look, I know you gave \$120 million to OpenText, one of the wealthiest corporations in Ontario. They just gave a big increase to their shareholders. Honest to goodness, that's like giving out food vouchers in Rosedale: It doesn't make economic sense.

1050

Interjection: Been there, done that.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Oh, that's right. You already did that after Christmas. I guess in that you're consistent.

But, Premier, back to the topic. These are your own finance official's documents. You will recall the briefing, I'm sure. Page 15, interestingly, points out that the worst tax increase to slow down the economy is a business tax increase, which is the hallmark policy of the third party. Your hallmark policy seems to be increasing payroll taxes.

Again, on page 26, your own bureaucrats said that a payroll tax increase will lower business investment, will relocate businesses to other jurisdictions, will reduce work effort and will cause an out-migration of people from our province.

So what is it exactly that you like so much about tax increases when your bureaucrats say it will cost us 150,000 more jobs in our province? I want to see more jobs, not fewer.

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: My understanding of a tax is that it would be money that would go into the provincial treasury.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Northumberland-Quinte West: second time.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The Leader of the Opposition knows full well that that is not what we're talking about. What we're talking about is putting in place the capacity for people to save for their retirement.

People who are 20 and 30 and 40 right now are not able to save enough for their future. That's the reality, so we believe, as do many leaders across the country, that having an enhancement to the Canada Pension Plan would be a very good thing.

Stephen Harper, the Prime Minister, is not interested in doing that, so it is our obligation to make sure that the people of Ontario have the capacity to save for their future and have a secure retirement.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: There's a basic fundamental of economics that the Liberal Party seems to be ignoring: It's

not where the tax goes to; it's where it comes from. If you put a tax on payroll, that means it costs more to hire somebody. As your finance officials point out, that will mean 150,000 fewer people working in our province. It also means that money comes out of your paycheque. That means that families will have an average \$2,500 less at the end of the year. That's a tax increase that your own officials say will cost us 150,000 jobs.

I want to ask you this, Premier: If your plan is putting 150,000 people out of work, if they have no paycheque, how the heck are they going to save for a pension when their income is zero?

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm not getting things quiet for someone to heckle.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I just have to say that the Leader of the Opposition is simply on the wrong side of this issue. He listens to people who have worked in the financial—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): If you're testing my resolve, it's working. The member from Northumberland-Quinte West is warned.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: You know, Mr. Speaker, we looked to the federal government to enhance the Canada Pension Plan. In fact, we know that documents from the federal Department of Finance demonstrated that an expansion to the Canada Pension Plan would represent meaningful long-term economic benefits to the country.

The advice at the federal level and across the country is that there needs to be more capacity for saving in this country. That's the reality. That's what we're dealing with. David Dodge agrees with that, leaders across the country agree with that, and federal finance officials agree with that, but the federal government does not want to act. We are taking that responsibility seriously, and we will bring our proposal forward on Thursday.

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

Mr. Tim Hudak: Look, we know what this is about. When you started out, you were going to be the social justice Premier. That sort of disappeared. Then you were going to be the jobs Premier, and Lord knows that's out the window with this latest tax grab. You were going to be the transit Premier and increase taxes no matter what, and then you backed away from that. So you're looking for something to put in the window.

I understand that politicians get that way, but I'm concerned that you are putting your own interests ahead of the interests of taxpayers. I was talking to a senior citizen in my office the other day who can barely pay her hydro bill—a widow. She has paid off the mortgage, but she can't pay the hydro bill. Workers are facing the same thing. If you're working at a part-time job, if you can't pay the hydro bill, you can't set money aside for retirement.

I've got a very different plan. I want to see the middle class create more wealth. I want to see more jobs in our province—that's what I want to see—with more take-home pay; you want to subtract from it.

I've just got to ask you: Why in the world would you make a significant \$2,500-per-person middle-class tax hike? Isn't that going to cost us jobs, not create them?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition for making my case, because the reality is that that woman who was in his office—he's right. There needs to be relief, and the Minister of Energy has brought in programs to help that woman so that she can get some relief on her energy bill.

But, Mr. Speaker, what we know is that if we don't—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'm not going to tolerate people shouting people down.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: We need relief from you, Kathleen.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Timmins—James Bay will come to order.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Thank you, Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): No. No more.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: If we don't take action, people who are in their thirties and forties now will be in that position because they will not have a decent pension; they will not be able to retire with any kind of security. So what we're doing is we are looking down the road, understanding that people are not able to save enough now, and putting in place a support for them so that they will have a decent retirement. That's the long view we're taking.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock, please. Be seated, please. The member from Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke will come to order.

New question.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is for the Premier. When the Premier was in Windsor last July, she told reporters she had just found out that girders installed on what she termed the largest infrastructure project in Ontario did not meet Ontario's safety standards. Does the Premier stand by that statement?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I will reinforce what I have said repeatedly in this House and what the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure has said. As soon as we knew that there was a problem with the girders in Windsor, we stopped the building. We did a review. Those girders are being taken out—they have been taken out. We made sure that the safety standards were in place. We took action, and that is exactly what we will do

any time there is a safety concern with construction in this province.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, according to documents released through FOI, both the offices of the Premier and the minister knew that these girders did not meet safety standards before they were installed. The minister's office learned about the substandard girders in December 2012, after which high-level biweekly meetings were held to discuss them. These meetings included senior staff within the minister's office, and in April of last year the executive director of policy in the Premier's office—

Interjections.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: —was informed of the problem.

Now, is the Premier saying that senior staff in her own office did not tell her about the—

Mr. Rick Bartolucci: I want to do a fact-check on this question.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Sudbury, come to order.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: —public safety concerns on what she calls the largest infrastructure project in Ontario's history?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: No, Mr. Speaker, I'm not saying that. What I'm saying is that the minister's office staff were first briefed on the safety and durability issues regarding girders on the Herb Gray Parkway on June 14, 2013, and the minister was briefed on June 19, 2013, and we took action because of our concerns. That's what I'm saying.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: During the Liberal leadership campaign, the Premier boasted that she oversaw the negotiations and the construction of the Windsor-Essex parkway while she served as Minister of Transportation. We know that the Premier's director of policy was being sent minutes—

Interjection.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: —of the biweekly girder meetings as early as April and probably even earlier.

Does the Premier expect that the people of this province believe that her senior advisers didn't alert her to a potential scandal surrounding faulty girders being installed on a project that she authorized?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: What I can say to the leader of the third party is that we took action, and the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure and I were very clear that as soon as we knew that there was a problem, as soon as we knew that action needed to be taken, we took action.

I don't know if the leader of the third party is making a broader statement that she doesn't support the building

of large infrastructure projects. I don't know if the leader of the third party doesn't believe that it's important for us to invest in infrastructure in this province, but we believe it is. We believe it's important, and we believe that when there is a problem, you take action, and that's what we did.

Interjections.

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

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TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Premier. A July 21, 2013, confidential memo to the Premier on the girder issue states: "There has been some chatter about this situation in Windsor construction circles and we understand that the Windsor Star may be coming out with a story on this matter this week. It may break during the Premier's visit to Windsor on July 22."

Can the Premier tell us why safety issues were ignored until they threatened to disrupt the Premier's campaign to hold a seat in a by-election?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: It is really hard to characterize that question as anything but offensive.

Mr. Speaker, the safety of the people of this province is our number one concern. Yes, we believe that investing in infrastructure projects is very important, but we also believe that when we hear that there is a concern, when there is a problem, as soon as there is a problem, it is our responsibility to make a decision and take action. That is what we did.

On top of that, we brought the MPP from Windsor-Tecumseh into the process. We briefed him. We kept his party and her party informed. She knows that, Mr. Speaker. She knows he was part of the process and she knows we took action.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Speaker, what is offensive is the Liberals putting their own political well-being ahead of the public safety of the people of Ontario. That's what's offensive.

We know from internal correspondence that this government knew that—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Order.

Wrap up, please.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: We know from internal correspondence, Speaker, that this government knew the girders on the parkway were faulty and didn't act on these public safety concerns for seven months. Had the Windsor Star not been investigating these girders, would these unsafe girders continue to quietly be installed on the parkway to this very day?

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, I want to be very clear about this, as I was yesterday. I am deeply offended by the leader of the third party—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That will do.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs is not helpful in the conversation.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Nor is the member from Lanark.

And when I sit down, if somebody else starts up, I'll nail you.

Finish, please.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I hope the leader of the third party will take the time to correct her own record.

I'm going to read into the record very carefully and very slowly the report of both ministries, Infrastructure Ontario: "Minister's office ... staff were first briefed on the safety and durability issues regarding girders on the Herb Gray Parkway on June 14, 2013, and the minister was briefed on June 19, 2013."

Mr. Speaker, the reason I was briefed is because in May, when I was asked, under instructions from the Premier, to thoroughly review each infrastructure project, I was advised that there were concerns. The first week of June, I went to both deputy ministers. Both deputy ministers said they were not aware of any safety concerns, and they undertook a review right away.

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

Ms. Andrea Horwath: When she was the Minister of Transportation, the Premier awarded the project agreement for the Windsor-Essex parkway. She bragged about it during the Liberal leadership race. But documents that we have obtained show that engineers at the Ministry of Transportation were raising concerns about the poor quality of construction and serious deficiencies of this project.

Now, what does the Premier have to say to the people of Windsor, and the people of Ontario, frankly, when they see that she was prepared to put political expediency ahead of public safety?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: When the Premier was the Minister of Transportation, no one in senior management—nor was there any information or knowledge there was a problem.

When I became minister, I heard concerns and rumours. Every minister hears rumours and concerns. I validated those. It was not until this government ordered full destructive testing and two sets of tests that we discovered in late August that there was a safety issue, as a result.

My question is, where was the opposition? The member for Windsor West raised this issue. All your Windsor members were silent. I hope the leader of the third party will rise and apologize for the inaccurate information she is putting on the record.

Interjections.

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

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is to the Premier. Premier, I want to begin by complimenting you on your dedication to fitness. A few months ago, you ran television ads telling Ontarians how much you love to run. It's obviously an important part of your life.

Now try to imagine: What if you couldn't run? What if you couldn't breathe? What if your lungs were constantly filled with mucus? What if you could never run again? How would that make you feel?

Madi Vanstone, a 12-year-old girl with cystic fibrosis, started out not being able to run and barely being able to walk. Now, thanks to the new drug, she can run. She can run like you, and she loves it. She loves being able to do something as simple as being able to run.

But how much longer will she be able to run? The money Madi's family and friends have fundraised is quickly depleting. In fact, right now, her dad's insurance company, that covers half the cost of the drug, is re-assessing his claim.

Premier, help Madi run, or better yet, run with Madi. When will you fund the drug Kalydeco?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care will want to give an update on the situation.

I know that the member opposite knows that I met with Madi and her mom. I don't know if they're in the House, but—there they are. I know that the member opposite also knows that there is a national process that we are pushing very hard. When I met with my colleagues from across the country a few weeks ago, we made it clear that this is not an issue just for Madi, that there are other children and other people in other parts of the country who need this drug to be covered. We need that deal, and we are pushing very hard.

I will ask the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care—

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

Mr. Jim Wilson: Premier, you and your health minister continue to tell us that you have to be cognizant of all taxpayers, that you are waiting to get the best value for the drug Kalydeco. That's your excuse.

But when it came to the gas plant scandal, instead of waiting for the best deal, by cancelling the Oakville plant after the election, you spent \$1.1 billion of taxpayers' money to save a couple of your colleagues' seats. The sky is the limit to save your own political skins, but \$300,000 for a life-saving medication for a young girl has to go through years of negotiations. It's wrong.

And now, ahead of a possible spring election, we see in leaked budget documents that you're set to spend another \$6 billion on various new spending projects while children like Madi suffer. It's absolute nonsense.

It has been 15 months. Madi and her mom are here today. This is a child, a human life. People are dying, waiting for orphan drugs to be approved by your government. When will you do the right thing and fund this medication?

Interjections.

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

Premier?

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

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I, too, welcome Madi and her mom to the Legislature today. As you know, Speaker, we have committed to keeping the family informed of the negotiations. This was an issue that came up when health ministers from across the country gathered. In fact, we collectively agreed to do something we have never done before, and that is that we have asked to sit down with the manufacturer to find a resolution to this issue. Children like Madi do need access to the drug. We want this drug to be listed, but we need to insist that the pan-Canadian process works.

1110

We have successfully negotiated over 30 listings, saving us over \$50 million. We must continue to work with the manufacturer, Vertex, a US-based company. They must work with us so that we can fund this drug for people like Madi.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Percy Hatfield: My question is to the Premier. Good morning, Premier.

Speaker, senior ministry engineers are concerned that because of the design build model on the Herb Gray Parkway, structures won't last even half the lifespan outlined in the project agreement. Senior MTO engineer Joey Chirico says that under the AFP model authorized by Premier Wynne, MTO has little to no oversight and that he is "certain nothing will be done by the construction companies to fix the deficiencies identified by the MTO."

Speaker, why did the Premier authorize a contract that cut the lifespan of the project, compromised public safety and put the public on the hook for costs associated with the delays?

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Mr. Speaker, I just will be very clear. Everything that was just said is in fact not accurate, to say the least. The project is up to the highest safety standards in Ontario, which has the highest roads and bridge standards in North America, the highest safety levers.

The members opposite are not literate about the basics of this. They do not understand the difference between a discussion about compliance—and compliance means everything from grass seed to the colour of a post, so when you see discussions about compliance, they are usually minor issues.

The safety standards by the chief engineer and the deputy minister and independent experts, now three engineering companies—this is the highest standard of safety. Any faulty girder has been removed, and because of the AFP process, the company—not the taxpayers—is paying for it. And you're opposed to that because you would rather have the taxpayers pay for it.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Speaker, it's not all about the girders. There's a lot of other stuff going on there. Senior ministry engineers are saying that the Herb Gray Parkway may not even last half of the lifespan outlined in the project agreement that Premier Wynne authorized. We may have already lost more than half the value of the \$1.4-billion project, and it hasn't been completed.

The Premier authorized the project agreement that stripped away the government's ability to deal immediately with ongoing structural deficiencies. Will the Premier take responsibility for the Herb Gray Parkway project and come clean with the full liability to Ontario taxpayers?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: The member for Windsor West has already been there and done that a year ago. She raised this issue, and we acted. The NDP has more members now in that area than we do, and if they had one more, this would have been a problem, because it was only the member for Windsor West—you guys were on the bench asleep.

Let me just read into the record the member from Windsor-Tecumseh's letter: "Taxpayers" will "be on the hook for those eight months of construction" costs. That is not true. Taxpayers are not on the hook for anything. So here the member is sending out communications that I believe he knows are different than what the facts are.

So I would again—because I thought I had with Mr. Good Morning a collegial relationship, but it appears that he's very prepared to say one thing in this House and another thing out there, and there's a distraction here, because what you are saying out there bears no relationship to the facts, my friend.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: My question is for the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment. I am incredibly proud that our government has demonstrated our commitment to helping young people find meaningful employment through our youth jobs strategy. I know this strategy was developed after a series of consultations which brought together business leaders, employers, not-for-profits, educators, labour and, of course, the young people themselves. This local perspective directly influenced how our government designed our larger strategy.

I know we've had recent announcements on the success of these programs, especially in my riding—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. We could all use a little bit of respect around here.

Please finish your question.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I know we've had recent announcements on the success of these programs, especially in my riding of Scarborough-Guildwood, which has a significant young population in communities like West Hill, Kingston Galloway/Orton Park, and Mornelle Court.

Through you, Speaker, would the minister please update this House on recent developments of our youth employment strategy?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Eric Hoskins: You got it—Economic Development, Trade and Employment. Mr. Speaker, this \$295-million investment that was announced in last year's budget is paying real dividends for youth right across this province. We are very proud of the success that we've seen so far, and I'm going to give a couple of examples of just how we're making a difference in helping young people get employment in Ontario.

At George Brown College here in Toronto they are working at providing skills training in commercial baking, as well as sheet metal construction, for youth here in the GTA who are facing multiple barriers to employment.

I was recently in Windsor as well, making an announcement at the Downtown Windsor Business Accelerator, where that organization—a great initiative in downtown Windsor—is mentoring and supporting young entrepreneurs from the Windsor-Essex region of the province.

Lastly, Operation Come Home: I had the honour, together with the member from Ottawa Centre, just a couple of weeks ago, to visit that facility right in downtown Ottawa, which is doing amazing work with formerly homeless young persons, quite frankly, helping them start highly successful businesses, changing their lives around for their betterment and for the betterment of their colleagues.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I'd like to thank the minister for his answer. My constituents will be happy to hear that the youth jobs strategy is being fully implemented.

As a member from Scarborough, I know our sizable youth population appreciates the opportunities that we've created to help them get a good start. So many organizations like IMPACT 'n Communities and the East Scarborough Storefront are working tirelessly on this issue. I understand the importance of partnering with industry to ensure that we train and provide opportunities for youth, not only for the jobs of today but to help them with their future careers. I know this specifically, having held a youth jobs strategy forum as well as a business breakfast to engage local employers.

Our youth employment fund is a key part of these initiatives. Can the minister give us an update on what the youth employment fund is doing to move towards our government's goal of creating good jobs for young people and growing our economy?

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I apologize to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment.

Minister?

Hon. Eric Hoskins: To the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Building a strong economy and creating job opportunities for youth is a priority for our Premier; it's a priority for this government. In fact, it's one of our top priorities.

I'm pleased to be able to say that our youth employment fund has been an extraordinary success. Since its launch in September, this fund has already helped 11,526 young people find job experience right in the workplace.

The fund has also had a particular focus on youth furthest from the labour market and I think that is what makes it such a success. It focuses on aboriginal youth, youth with disabilities, rural and northern youth, youth leaving care, as well as youth right across this province.

I'm very proud also to be able to share with members that 84% of young people who have completed their placement through the youth employment fund have landed employment. I don't know if it's going to stay that high as this program continues, but it's off to a fantastic start. We're really proud of it. We're giving young people that opportunity in the workplace that they need to help us build a stronger economy.

POWER PLANTS

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: My question is to the Premier. She boasts of her government's openness yet it is her Liberal Party that has been accused by the OPP of destroying documents related to the gas plant scandal, and it is she who is attempting to silence myself and the leader of the official opposition with a lawsuit. And this morning, the Minister of Transportation threatened a lawsuit against the member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

1120

In November 2012, the freedom-of-information request for all gas-plant-related documents in the Premier's office turned up just 100 pages. Then, on the day that she was sworn in as Premier, that FOI was trimmed down to 88 pages. By April 2013, an FOI appeal said it was discovered that emails had been deleted and recovering them would be impossible.

Given that timeline, it's clear that the Premier's commitment to so-called open government was made with the knowledge that several senior Liberals have been deleting emails, because her government would have had to research that and search them. Will she tell us why it took an OPP investigation—

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

Interjections.

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

Premier.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: Mr. Speaker, I believe at the moment we have provided 391,707 pages of documents to the committee, including 30,000 from the Premier's office. The Premier herself has appeared in front of com-

mittee, as has the Minister of Energy. I've appeared. The Minister of Transportation has appeared. We've made ourselves available to answer questions that have been put forward by the opposition. I can't say the same thing about opposition candidates. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, we have co-operated fully with them, and we'll continue to co-operate fully.

The issue of the deletion of documents—the member is well aware—is the subject right now of an OPP investigation, and I think we should allow the OPP to undertake their work.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: The Premier announced that she was going to go through with a project called Open Government. She actually spelled “government” wrong and forgot the N. But I'm going to propose today that we actually change this initiative to “open government” and put a C in there, because this government's record—

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): That is not acceptable. The member will withdraw.

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Withdraw.

Her record on openness is spotty. She told this House the cancelled gas plants only cost \$40 million. When she signed the contract, she would have known the truth.

She held a caucus meeting as Liberal leader and as Premier on January 30, yet she now tries to tell us she wasn't Premier at all. She was Premier while one of her staff had her hard drive wiped by Peter Faist, who, by the way, was still a member of her staff until a month ago.

Surely, the Premier knows that hiding things from the public is going to go badly wrong for her, because we will uncover the truth. Will she be open and honest today with this caucus—

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

Interjections.

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

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The minister without portfolio, come to order.

Government House leader.

Hon. John Milloy: The honourable member has some gall to talk about truth and facts. Let's get the facts on the record, if I can—

Interjection.

Hon. John Milloy: Not my finest moment, Mr. Speaker.

Let's get the facts to the member. On May 7 last year, the justice committee asked for all gas plant documents in the Premier's office. On May 21, the Premier's office delivered 30,000 documents. Here is what the letter from the chief of staff said: “I am writing on behalf of the Office of the Premier in response to the motion passed by the Standing Committee on Justice Policy on May 7 ... on May 9, we were advised by Cabinet Office IT that the email accounts of 52 individuals formerly employed in the Premier's office could be accessed. A search of those accounts was conducted by my office, and any available records applicable to the committee's motion have been

included. I have enclosed with this letter a list of the 52 individuals.”

Mr. Speaker, as a member of the committee, she would have received that letter. What she is doing today is beneath her in standing up and spreading this mischievous—

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

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE INFRASTRUCTURE DE TRANSPORT

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Again, to the Premier: Good morning, Premier. I hope you're having a good morning today.

Premier, yesterday, the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure claimed repeatedly that the safety of the girders was never discussed with the minister's office before he raised the issue in June. However, I'm holding the agendas of 12 weekly and biweekly update meetings for the minister's office on the Herb Gray Parkway. Each of the meetings, from December 14 to June 7, took place six months before the minister claimed he knew. Each meeting references girders and their lack of CSA certification, certification meant to protect public safety.

Does the Premier stand by the statement that her minister made yesterday?

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I'm going to try dans l'autre langue pour une autre fois. C'est très clair qu'il y a des réunions chaque deux semaines. Le sujet des « girders » de béton est discuté chaque fois, mais ce n'est pas une question de si les girders sont saufs ou non. Ce n'est pas discuté. I'll try again in English. There were many biweekly meetings where girders were discussed. Never was there a discussion of safety.

Interjections.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Now, I am not lying; I am telling you the truth. The chief engineer is not lying. The deputy minister is not lying. The assistant deputy minister is not lying. The front-line safety officers are not lying. The independent engineering firms are not lying. For what the member has said to be true, all of those people would have to be lying, so maybe he's wrong.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Percy Hatfield: Read the documents. Yesterday, the minister denied that his deputy ministers knew anything about safety issues on the Herb Gray Parkway. The minister said, “The first week of June, I went to my deputy ministers, both of them, and asked them if they knew anything. They both said clearly that they were not aware of any particular safety concerns.”

According to government documents, the minister's deputy minister was regularly updated on the public safety concerns of the girders in 12 update meetings. We see briefings in their own monthly update meetings on

January 15, the 8th of February, the 8th of March and the 12th of April.

Is the Premier going to stand by while her minister denies what's in front of us in black and white?

Hon. Glen R. Murray: I will try again. It would scare me if these people were ever near power, because—let me tell you what are some of the compliance issues that are outstanding right now. One of them is the shrubs. We have a whole group working to make sure that we have the right kind of shrubs that won't die in six months. That's a compliance issue. The design of a wall and the shape of the wall is a compliance issue. They are not synonymous with safety issues. There are several projects that could have 100 or 200 compliance issues which a junior member of my staff may be briefed on.

The safety issue, until August—we're going all the way to August. I raised this. It gets dealt with: independent testing, twice. The first round of independent testing done by the project company in late July and early August came back with no safety concerns. I was not satisfied, the Premier was not satisfied, and I ordered a second round of testing. Of six girders, one came out faulty. That—

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

HYDRO RATES

Mr. Phil McNeely: My question is for the Minister of Energy. Minister, energy policy has been a hot topic in Ontario. It's an issue that affects every Ontarian directly. In fact, one of the calls I get from my own constituency in Ottawa—Orléans is about their electricity bills and what they can do to lower them.

We have just experienced one of the coldest winters in almost a century. Conservation is the best way to reduce energy costs. I attended the minister's announcement in Ottawa at the Giant Tiger last Friday, where the success of conservation was highlighted.

Residents know that the Ontario Clean Energy Benefit, which the opposition voted against, is set to expire at the end of 2015. I know my constituents are wondering what the government will do to help them with their bills when the benefits wind down.

Minister, can you please tell the House about the details in the announcement you made last week regarding how our government would be helping people with their electricity bills?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: I thank the member from Ottawa—Orléans for the question. The previous government allowed the old Ontario Hydro to accumulate tens of billions of dollars of debt, forcing them to take drastic action. This included adding the debt retirement charge—the DRC—onto electricity bills.

To help ease pressure on residential rates, our government announced last week that we will remove the DRC two years earlier than originally projected. Eliminating the DRC would save a typical residential electricity ratepayer about \$70 a year. In addition, we also announced

that we will provide a bill reduction for low- and modest-income consumers. Together with the elimination of the DRC, this program will give a benefit of \$250 each year for eligible consumers.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Phil McNeely: Thank you, Minister. It is certainly great news for families across Ontario.

I know my office receives a lot of questions about the debt retirement charge. People wonder why that charge is on their bills, who put it there, and, until last week, when it will be coming off. I can understand where they are coming from.

1130

I know the charge was created by the PC government when they were last in power and that ratepayers have been paying it ever since. But given some of the confusion that seems to exist around the portion of consumers' energy bills, I think it would be helpful for the minister to explain to the House the origin of this charge and why we are still paying it.

Can the minister please explain the history of the debt retirement charge and where the money that is collected goes?

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: The debt retirement charge is a direct result of the mismanagement of the old Ontario Hydro under the Hudak-Harris PC government. Also, when we took over government, we inherited a system that was not clean, not reliable and not affordable, so we invested \$31 billion to repair the damage—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I guess that's not good enough. The member from Prince Edward–Hastings is warned.

The member from Durham, come to order—second time.

Finish, please.

Hon. Bob Chiarelli: Speaker, they don't like to hear the truth.

We invested \$31 billion to repair the damage. We also took the opportunity to eliminate coal-fired generation, which is taking the equivalent of seven million cars off Ontario roads.

In addition to removing the DRC, we previously introduced a 10% discount on bills and implemented a number of tax credits and rate mitigation measures. In contrast to PC bungling, our government has consistently reduced the stranded debt by over \$8 billion since 2004.

Speaker, I urge the opposition to help Ontario ratepayers save money by supporting our budget and finally taking the legacy costs—

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

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: My question is for the Premier. Premier, why did the government deliberately and heartlessly sacrifice the horse racing industry in favour of

a pie-in-the-sky scheme to build glittering casinos in Toronto, the Premier's backyard?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Mr. Speaker, I know that the member opposite is very supportive of a plan for the horse racing industry that would see it be sustainable over time, into the future. That's exactly what we have put in place.

I came into this job. I knew there were concerns with the changes that were being made in the horse racing industry. The former Minister of Agriculture and Food had made it clear that there needed to be changes made, that the removal of the non-transparent and really not accountable Slots at Racetracks Program—it needed to be changed, but there needed to be a sober second thought on what the replacement would be.

That's why the panel was struck. That's why we took their recommendations. That's why there's \$500 million over the next five years in the horse racing industry to make sure that they have a sustainable future.

I'm proud of the work we've done. We're going to make sure that horse racing in Ontario is sustainable and accountable.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Randy Pettapiece: Unfortunately, her plan is not working.

Those glittering casinos were never even built, and yet the horse racing industry now lies in ruins. The Auditor General's report yesterday confirmed what we have said all along: The Liberal-NDP move to terminate SARP was done with no consultation or consideration of the enormous damage it would do to people in the industry.

The government had the information to know that their decision would mean fewer race dates, less breeding, less employment and fewer economic benefits to the agriculture industry. Because the government ignored that information, we now have racetracks closed, lawsuits against the province and thousands of jobs destroyed.

Does that even bother the Premier? Because that is her record.

Interjections.

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

Premier?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: My government has stabilized the horse racing industry. We put in place a plan that will allow the horse racing industry to move forward.

The Auditor General was not complimentary of the Slots at Racetracks Program. What she said was, "[O]wners grew reliant on their growing" slots revenue share "just to sustain their horse racing operations. They ... submitted requests to the ORC for fewer ... race days per year." So the SARP program was not working.

I acknowledged during our leadership, though, that the replacement for the SARP program was inadequate. We made the changes when I came into this office, and now there is a path to sustainability. The \$500 million that we are putting in place because of the recommendations of John Snobelen, John Wilkinson and Elmer Buchanan will allow the horse racing industry to be sustainable into the future.

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. Gilles Bisson: My question is to the Premier. Your minister stated that there will be no additional cost to the government as a result of the girder replacement on the \$1.4-billion Herb Gray Parkway. Your government correspondence says there may, in fact, be substantial costs billed to the government by the project company as a result of the delays in construction.

Can the Premier tell us, how much is your government's failure to act on public safety going to cost Ontarians?

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I know the Minister of Transportation will want to speak to the details, but what we need to make clear is that the costs for replacing the girders are being borne by the company. They are not being borne by the taxpayers of Ontario. That is because of the agreement that was in place; that's because of the contract that was in place. I know that the minister will speak to the details.

But I really think it's interesting that the member opposite is not standing in his place and talking about the investment that was announced yesterday in the Ring of Fire for infrastructure in the north. I would have thought that the member from Timmins–James Bay would have thought that that was a very good investment. He's silent on it.

Interjections.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The minister claims that there will be no costs to the public associated with the girder replacement, and these construction—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Stop the clock. The Minister of Energy, come to order, please. Start the clock.

Interjections.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: The Premier claims that there will be no costs to the public associated with girder replacement and construction delay.

This reminds me of the gas plant scandals. When news was breaking that the government claimed there were no costs associated with the cancellation, the costs ballooned over \$1 billion.

The Herb Gray Parkway is already costing the public \$1.4 billion. When is the Premier going to tell the people of this province what they will be paying for her failure on the largest infrastructure project in Ontario's history?

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

Hon. Glen R. Murray: The \$1.4 billion is a critical investment in the lives of the people of Windsor. It was an investment that former members Papatello and Duncan and my friend from Windsor West promised, and they delivered—done, done, done. It forced the federal government and the American government to build the

presidential bridge. This will create thousands of jobs and boost the Windsor economy.

Because of your ideological rigidity, you can't support AFP. If this project had been done on the terms of the only way the NDP could do it, that cost would have gone to the taxpayers. It was because of this government's policy and the AFP model that the cost is to the project. The deal is done; the contracts are signed. There is no residual liability.

When will that member and that party stand up for Windsor? When are they going to start demanding that the federal—

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

Interjections.

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

CANCER PREVENTION

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée, the Honourable Deb Matthews. For a moment, Speaker, I, too—

Interjections.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Speaker, I can't hear myself—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member from Eglinton–Lawrence will come to order. The Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, second time. And the minister responsible for seniors is hiding behind his hand again.

Interjections.

1140

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The member for Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry: second time.

Finish, please.

Mr. Shafiq Qadri: Ma question est pour la ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée, the Honourable Deb Matthews. For a moment, I too would like to respectfully acknowledge the courage and resilience of the members for Whitby–Oshawa, the former federal and current provincial.

Minister, even way back when in med school, when we were studying intro dermatology, we were alerted to skin cancer risks caused by ultraviolet radiation, and knowing these risks of DNA damage, I'm concerned about the use and abuse of tanning beds. As we're approaching the end of the school year, I know that many young people in my own riding of Etobicoke North are thinking about one thing: the end-of-year school prom. That's why many young people feel a pressure to look a certain way. We know, for example, from the World Health Organization that the use of tanning beds under the age of 35 increases skin cancer risk by 75%. What are we doing to protect Ontarians?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the member from Etobicoke North. As the member has stated, the risk of tanning beds by young people are very clear, yet more and more young Ontarians have been using tanning beds. In fact, we've seen a doubling of the use for grade 11 and

12 students. At the same time, the incidence of melanoma in Ontario has been rising for young people, and that's why we took action. In October 2013, we passed legislation to prohibit young people from using tanning beds in Ontario. I'm very pleased that that restriction comes into effect tomorrow. Tanning bed operators will need to post signs about this restriction and about the dangers of tanning bed use for everyone. Operators will need to ask for ID from anyone who appears to be under the age of 25 and they'll be banned from marketing their services to youth under 18. This action will save lives, and that's how this year's prom season will be different.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary.

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: Thank you, Minister. I know that many parents in Etobicoke North, of course, and across the province will be pleased with the action that our government is taking to protect young people from cancer. But since cancer, as you'll appreciate, is a multifactorial disease, we know that tanning bed use is only one of the many activities that increase cancer risk. Unfortunately, there are many other forms of cancer, which is, in fact, best thought of as a family of diseases, not a single condition.

As an MD, I know that Ontario's cancer system is top notch and that a person diagnosed with cancer in our province has one of the best chances of survival in the world. But, as always, prevention is better than a cure and there is, of course, more that we should do to stop people from putting themselves in harm's way.

Minister, would you be able to please inform this House what is the government doing in other domains, in other cancer areas, to protect our kids?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I got ahead of myself. The ban comes into effect on Thursday, May 1.

Other things we've done: We've introduced a free vaccine to protect young women against HPV, which is the major cause of cervical cancer. We're working hard to protect our kids from the harmful effects of tobacco smoke. We've already banned smoking in enclosed public spaces and motor vehicles when children under 16 are present. Now we're taking the next step with proposed legislation and regulations that would, if passed, increase fines for those who sell tobacco to kids, making them the highest in the country. It would ban flavoured tobacco products, prohibit the sale of tobacco products in schools and child care facilities and prohibit smoking on and around playgrounds, sports fields and restaurant patios. I'm calling on all members of all parties to support this bill. It's what we need to protect our kids from cancer.

AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

Mr. Steve Clark: My question is for the Premier in her capacity as Minister of Agriculture. Last month, Premier, you were missing in action when a century of excellence in agriculture education was put in jeopardy with the Kemptville college closure announcement. Last week, Minister, you were missing in action again. It was

your ministry that committed \$2 million to the University of Guelph to reinstate some skilled trades programs, but failed to do your job in adding those core agriculture courses. The ag community was very clear: any program that didn't include ag was unacceptable. The agriculture community further wants to remind you that the Kemptville college isn't a trade school; it's an agricultural college.

When are you going to stand up as a minister, and stand up for farmers and farm families for agriculture education?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Be seated, please. Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: The member opposite knows full well that as soon as we knew of this situation, both with Alfred college and with Kemptville, my parliamentary assistant, the member for Glengarry–Prescott–Russell, was on the job and was making sure that we found solutions. And we did find solutions, Mr. Speaker. We found solutions with funds attached to those solutions.

So I have been very much engaged in making sure that we work with the University of Guelph, that we work with the colleges, that we work with the community to make sure that a solution was put in place.

If the member opposite is suggesting that I shouldn't have gone and visited the people in the Belleville area, who were struggling with their flooding issues; if the member opposite—

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): It's with regret that the member from Prince Edward–Hastings is named.

Mr. Smith was escorted from the chamber.

Interjections.

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

Please finish.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Just to say, Mr. Speaker, that it was very important to me that we find a solution on the Kemptville programs. It was also very important to me that I was able to meet with people in the Belleville area as they deal with the effects of the flooding.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Supplementary?

Mr. Steve Clark: Back to the Premier. Premier, the farmers and farm families across Ontario know one thing. They know that it's you, Minister, who aren't doing your job on this file.

Minister, let me contrast what a Tim Hudak Ontario PC government would do for Ontario. We'd make private sector job creation a priority and grow the agri-food and agriculture sectors by supporting the education programs they need to stay competitive.

Under a Tim Hudak government, the University of Guelph would get the same answer they got from previous PC agriculture ministers who wanted to close these campuses. The answer we gave them was no.

On behalf of the students in those ag diploma programs who can't begin their education in Kemptville this

year because you said yes, when are you going to stand up for agriculture education in eastern Ontario? Stand up for those students.

Interjections.

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

Mr. Ted Chudleigh: Stand up for agriculture.

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

Finish, please.

Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: I understand why the member opposite and that party believe that it is in the interests of their party to drive wedges between groups of people in Ontario, to drive wedges between rural Ontario and urban Ontario, to drive wedges between people who work on the farm and people who work in urban centres.

I don't believe that, Mr. Speaker. I don't believe that it's in the best interests of the province's future for those kinds of wedges to be exacerbated. But that is the politics of division that they practise.

We made an announcement last week—actually, it was this week—on food processing. Over 60 food processors, over 60 groups, are getting Local Food funding. That group calls that corporate welfare. They're wrong on that, and they're wrong on the supports for—

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

Interjections.

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

MEMBERS' PRIVILEGES

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): On April 28, 2014, the member from Nipissing, Mr. Fedeli, submitted a notice of his intention to raise a point of privilege. The notice alleges that there has been contempt of the Legislature on the basis that various members of the House made deliberately misleading statements on budget-related forecasts.

Having had an opportunity to review various procedural authorities, including previous rulings by Speakers of this House, I am now prepared to rule on the matter without hearing further from the member, as standing order 21(d) permits me to do.

1150

The notice indicates that the cabinet was informed on February 13, 2013, through a slide deck, that a projected deficit figure for fiscal 2009-10 in a 2009 public government document had been more of a worst-case figure than a realistic figure, and that the subsequent 2013 budget reiterated this figure. The notice makes a second allegation, namely that various cabinet ministers made statements in the House that the government was on track to balance the budget by 2017-18, despite the cabinet being informed on February 13, 2013, through the same slide deck, that no plan was in place to achieve this objective, and that the fiscal outlook beyond fiscal 2013-14 was deteriorating.

I first want to address serious questions as to the timeliness of the member's point of privilege. It has been many weeks, if not months, since the Standing Committee on Estimates received the financial documents that formed the basis of the argument made in the notice. This points to a lack of timeliness in submitting the notice. However, I am reluctant to dismiss the member's point of privilege solely on the basis of timeliness, and therefore will address it as follows.

The notice refers to the so-called "McGee test" for determining whether a statement by a member has deliberately misled the House. Pages 653 and 654 of the third edition of McGee's *Parliamentary Practice in New Zealand* identifies what needs to be established for the Speaker to find a prima facie case of contempt based on a member deliberately misleading the House, as follows:

"There are three elements to be established when it is alleged that a member is in contempt by reason of a statement that the member has made: the statement must, in fact, have been misleading; it must be established that the member making the statement knew at the time the statement was made that it was incorrect; and, in making it, the member must have intended to mislead the House."

As Speaker Carr indicated in a ruling in this House at page 102 of the Journals for June 17, 2002:

"The threshold for finding a prima facie case of contempt against a member of the Legislature, on the basis of deliberately misleading the House, is therefore set quite high and is very uncommon. It must involve a proved finding of an overt attempt to intentionally mislead the Legislature. In the absence of an admission from the member accused of the conduct, or of tangible confirmation of the conduct, independently proved, a Speaker must assume that no honourable members would engage in such behaviour or that, at most, inconsistent statements were the result of inadvertence or honest mistake."

In the case at hand, I make the following observations about the application of the McGee test and Speaker Carr's ruling:

With respect to the McGee test, the repetition of a worst-case financial figure used in a government document, and the supposed absence of a plan to achieve a fiscal objective, is not evidence of the falsity of the figure or of the objective. Moreover, with respect to the allegation that the government led people to believe that it had a plan to achieve the stated fiscal objective, the quoted statements made by ministers in 2013 refer only to being on track toward the fiscal objective, not to the plan to achieve it. Even if they had, I note that the slide deck itself refers to "the plan to balance" relying on "expenditure restraints" and "revenue raising measures."

The slide deck is far removed from pointing to a member knowingly and intentionally making a misleading statement; it does not amount to, in Speaker Carr's words, "an admission from the member accused of the conduct, or of tangible confirmation of the conduct, independently proved." The commentary in the slide deck

is not in the same ballpark as a member making two completely irreconcilable statements in the House, and then conceding that he or she had done so knowingly and intentionally.

Finally, it is not the role of the Speaker to assess the rationale for the use of a worst-case figure in a financial document, let alone to determine whether the figure amounts to misinformation.

The evidence that the criteria in the McGee test have been satisfied is, at very best, speculative.

For these reasons, I find that a prima facie case of contempt has not been established.

I thank the member from Nipissing for his notice.

DEFERRED VOTES

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS AMENDMENT ACT (LEAVES TO HELP FAMILIES), 2014 LOI DE 2014 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES NORMES D'EMPLOI (CONGÉS POUR AIDER LES FAMILLES)

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

Bill 21, An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 in respect of family caregiver, critically ill child care and crime-related child death or disappearance leaves of absence / Projet de loi 21, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi en ce qui concerne le congé familial pour les aidants naturels, le congé pour soins à un enfant gravement malade et le congé en cas de décès ou de disparition d'un enfant dans des circonstances criminelles.

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

The division bells rang from 1155 to 1200.

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

Mr. Naqvi has moved third reading of Bill 21. All those in favour of the motion, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Hardeman, Ernie	Miller, Paul
Armstrong, Teresa J.	Harris, Michael	Milligan, Rob E.
Arnott, Ted	Hatfield, Percy	Milloy, John
Bailey, Robert	Hillier, Randy	Moridi, Reza
Balkissoon, Bas	Horwath, Andrea	Munro, Julia
Barrett, Toby	Hoskins, Eric	Murray, Glen R.
Bartolucci, Rick	Hudak, Tim	Naqvi, Yasir
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Hunter, Mitzie	Nicholls, Rick
Bisson, Gilles	Jackson, Rod	O'Toole, John
Bradley, James J.	Jaczek, Helena	Oraziotti, David
Chiarelli, Bob	Jones, Sylvia	Piruzza, Teresa
Chudleigh, Ted	Klees, Frank	Prue, Michael
Clark, Steve	Kwinter, Monte	Qaadri, Shafiq
Colle, Mike	Leal, Jeff	Sattler, Peggy
Coteau, Michael	Leone, Rob	Schein, Jonah
Crack, Grant	MacCharles, Tracy	Scott, Laurie
Damerla, Dipika	MacLaren, Jack	Sergio, Mario

Del Duca, Steven	MacLeod, Lisa	Singh, Jagmeet
Delaney, Bob	Mangat, Amrit	Tabuns, Peter
Dhillon, Vic	Mantha, Michael	Taylor, Monique
DiNovo, Cheri	Marchese, Rosario	Thompson, Lisa M.
Duguid, Brad	Martow, Gila	Vanhof, John
Elliott, Christine	Matthews, Deborah	Walker, Bill
Fedeli, Victor	Mauro, Bill	Wilson, Jim
Fife, Catherine	McDonell, Jim	Wong, Soo
Flynn, Kevin Daniel	McKenna, Jane	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Forster, Cindy	McMeekin, Ted	Yakabuski, John
Fraser, John	McNaughton, Monte	Yurek, Jeff
Gates, Wayne	McNeely, Phil	Zimmer, David
Gerretsen, John	Meilleur, Madeleine	
Gravelle, Michael	Miller, Norm	

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): 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 are 91; the nays are 0.

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

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

Third reading 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 1203 to 1500.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION

Mr. Frank Klees: This is National Organ and Tissue Donation Awareness Week, and in Ontario, April is Be a Donor Month. On behalf of Tim Hudak and the PC caucus, I want to encourage anyone who has not yet registered their consent to be an organ donor to do so.

As I contemplated this statement, I thought there could be no better way to convey the importance of organ donation than to ask someone who has lived through the ordeal of waiting for an organ transplant and has been given the gift of life. And so I share with you the words of my constituent Bruce Cuthbert:

"Organ donation is truly the gift of life. I and others like me are living proof that it works. It has allowed us to enjoy a full, healthy, active life that I am grateful to be able to share with my family, friends and community that would otherwise not be possible.

"Others are not so fortunate. In Ontario, 1,500 people are currently waiting on the list for a transplant. One of them dies every three days, even though one donor can save up to eight lives and enhance 75 others.

"The reality is that the need for organ donation not only affects the person waiting for a transplant but also their families, friends and loved ones, whose lives are disrupted and who share in the anxiety and trauma of hoping for a miracle transplant that may never come, all the while knowing they are helpless to do anything.

"More must be done to facilitate and encourage organ donor consent registration."

I want to thank Bruce for his motivational words, and I encourage anyone who has not yet already done so to go to beadonor.ca and register today.

HEALTHY SCHOOLS

Mr. Jonah Schein: It's my great honour to represent the people of my riding of Davenport and to bring their voices into the Ontario Parliament. Some of the brightest minds in Ontario live right in my community. Every year, I meet with young constituents throughout my riding. I visit classrooms, and we discuss the priorities of students for our neighbourhood and for our province and the ways that they can advocate for the things that matter to them.

Earlier this year, I was pleased to meet with grade 5 students at Dewson Street Junior Public School. Last week, their wonderful teacher, Ms. Laura Segreto, sent me copies of letters that Dewson students sent to the Premier. These letters highlight the need for greater access to healthy food in schools and more robust student nutrition programs for kids across the province.

Grade 5 student Riley said, "Our brains need proper food to develop and excel." But according to her classmate Noah, "Some kids don't get a snack from home."

Student Kaden interviewed schoolmates and found that 91% of grade 5 and 6 students want a snack program. Riley, Noah and Kaden want healthy food in schools for students of all ages.

In her letter, grade 5 teacher Ms. Segreto says, "Only half of the students in our school receive a snack, because the costs are too high." Ms. Segreto "would love to see funding from the provincial government to help our school provide snacks to all the students."

I want to thank the students and teachers at Dewson. I hope the government and Premier will take these students' words to heart and that they will continue to invest in expanding our province's student nutrition programs.

ADVOCIS

Mr. John Fraser: I'd like to welcome back the members of Advocis, the Financial Advisers Association of Canada, to the Ontario Legislature for their annual Queen's Park day. Professional financial advisors and planners are critical to the economy, helping consumers make sound financial decisions that ultimately lead to greater financial stability and independence. Advocis is an organization that works with decision-makers and the public, stressing the value of financial advice and striving for an environment in which all Canadians have access to the professional advice they need and can trust.

For more than 100 years, Advocis members have delivered financial security and peace of mind through a platform of highly ethical and professional standards. They are here today to promote those higher professional standards and consumer protection and to support a bill put forward by the member from Sudbury, Bill 157, which would further enhance those protections and standards.

They'll be hosting a reception at the Legislature's dining room this evening, and I hope that all members can attend.

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE ANNIVERSARY

Mr. Michael Harris: Today I stand with Armenians across Ontario and Canada who are marking the 99th anniversary of the Armenian genocide. This tragedy began on April 24, 1915, with the arrest and deportation of 250 Armenian intellectuals. From that day forward, an estimated one and a half million Armenian men, women and children lost their lives under the Ottoman Empire.

Unfortunately, at the time, the international community failed to take action to prevent this crime against humanity, and even today, many countries have still not acknowledged what was the first genocide of the 20th century. However, in recent years, many nations have shown leadership by acknowledging this genocide for what it truly was. The Canadian Senate officially recognized the Armenian genocide on June 13, 2002, and the House of Commons followed suit on April 21, 2004, condemning this senseless act as a crime against humanity.

Many survivors of this genocide live in Canada today and play a vital role in our communities like those in my riding of Kitchener-Conestoga, so I am proud that we have acknowledged and condemned something which so deeply impacted their lives. I applaud the members of the Armenian community, who have shown the importance of remembering the past, no matter how unpleasant, in order to shape a better future.

I invite everyone to remember the Armenian genocide as you work together to prevent terrible tragedies like this from ever happening again. Recognition—then remembrance.

TONI ARIGANELLO

Mrs. Amrit Mangat: Before I make a statement, I would like to acknowledge the presence of Toni Ariganello in the Speaker's gallery.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Toni Ariganello, manager of circulation in the legislative library, who's retiring tomorrow after 27 years of exemplary and dedicated service. Toni is truly a delightful individual, and she has always greeted visitors to the legislative library with a warm smile. To me personally, and I'm sure to other members of this House, regardless of political stripe, she has been very helpful.

Toni has been working in the legislative library since 1987. She will be greatly missed by many members of this House, her colleagues and her friends, especially those in the legislative library.

Toni, thank you for your years of dedicated service and warm smile that has greeted me since day one, and many other members of the House and staff over the years. May you have many, many happy, healthy, peaceful years ahead.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There will be one less Montreal Canadiens fan in the place.

KIMM FLETCHER

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It is with tremendous sorrow that I stand today with the people of Halton, on behalf of the member for Halton, to inform members of this House that Kimm Fletcher, a 41-year-old Milton mother with brain cancer, passed away peacefully on Sunday.

Members will recall her visit to this House on October 31 of last year to ask the health minister to investigate the coverage of her prescribed drug, Avastin. Kimm received a standing ovation from all members, including the Premier and the Minister of Health, who denied her OHIP coverage, ignoring the compassionate-grounds argument made by my colleague Ted Chudleigh.

Her situation quickly caught the attention of the Ontario public, who responded to her plight with sufficient financial support that allowed Kimm to receive Avastin. The drug did not cure her, but it did improve her quality of life, and it prolonged her life by five months so that Kim could have more quality time with her children: her nine-year-old son, Keidon; and her seven-year-old daughter, Martie; along with her husband, Scott. Kimm knew she didn't have long to live, so she courageously made every moment of these last five months count, especially by celebrating her last Christmas with her family.

Kimm moved beyond her own impending personal tragedy to generously reach out to others in situations similar to her own. She raised money to assist others who could likewise benefit from using prescribed drugs like Avastin—because OHIP doesn't cover them.

1510

A deeply spiritual person, Kimm especially loved Pope John Paul II and confided how she would love to see him in heaven. Her wish appears to have come true when she passed away, surrounded by those she loved and who loved her, on the day when Pope John Paul II was declared a saint.

A generous and courageous woman: We will never forget you, Kimm.

VOLUNTEERS

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I'd like to say a few words today about volunteerism in London. April 6 to April 12 was National Volunteer Week in Canada, and it's great that there is now a particular time of year when we can take some time to thank current volunteers for all the selfless work they do, and to encourage those who may not have volunteered in the past to get more involved in their communities.

Volunteering was certainly a focus this past weekend in London. On Friday night, I had the pleasure of attending and speaking at the Volunteer Service Awards at the Marconi club in my riding of London—Fanshawe. The ceremony acknowledged and celebrated some of our finest and longest-standing volunteers in the city of London.

On the weekend, I spent some time at the London Food Bank, planted a tree with my fellow MPP Peggy

Sattler, and participated in a city-wide community cleanup, along with hundreds of other volunteers and their families, to beautify our city as we head into spring.

I truly believe that volunteers are the lifeblood of a thriving community, and I am proud to say that London has such a great volunteer service community: thousands of people who help out with a wide variety of organizations, non-profits and community groups. These volunteers freely give the gift of their time, energy and skills to help others. They are often the first to show up and the last to leave, and I would like to acknowledge their dedication today.

DONALD WILLARD MOORE

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: I rise today to remember Donald Willard Moore, a Canadian hero who worked hard to secure civil rights in Canadian immigration policies.

On April 27, 1954, Donald Moore led the first delegation by train of black people to Ottawa to present a brief which criticized the Canadian government for its harsh immigration regulations as they applied to blacks.

Donald Moore's service and commitment to Canada has earned him a place in our history. His self-sacrificing nature led him to forgo self-preservation and, instead, dedicate his life to securing human and civil rights for all Canadians.

Here in Ontario, our diversity is our strength. People from across the world choose to call Ontario home. But were it not for the trailblazers before us, like Donald Moore, Ontario would not be the vibrant, accepting province it is today.

April 27, 2014, marked 60 years since Donald Moore's historic delegation to Ottawa. Today, his legacy lives on in the rights he fought for and the rights we cherish today as Ontarians and as Canadians.

NORTH BAY BATTALION

Mr. Victor Fedeli: Many in the hockey community are still buzzing about the feel-good story of the year. Speaker, I'm talking about the North Bay Battalion.

The Battalion will be in Guelph Thursday night for game 1 of the OHL championship series. None of the experts placed any expectations on this team, but they have risen to the challenge, overcoming a 3-1 deficit in round 1 against Niagara—the member from St. Catharines is still reeling from that—and then knocking off Barrie and sweeping the powerhouse Oshawa to reach the league final.

The team's exploits have not gone unnoticed, garnering national media attention from the likes of North Bay OHL alumnus Nick Kypreos, now of Rogers Sportsnet, and a column from Damien Cox of the Toronto Star, just to name two.

After a 10-year absence from the OHL, North Bay hockey fans have wholeheartedly embraced the Battalion, and the capacity crowds of more than 4,000 that have packed Memorial Gardens show you why North Bay was named Hockeyville in 2007.

To owner Scott Abbott, president Mike Griffin, coach Stan Butler, all of your staff, the players and all of the support staff, I want to thank you on behalf of hockey fans in Nipissing and elsewhere for giving us such a thrill this spring. We are hoping you have plenty more in store as you push toward a berth in the Memorial Cup.

Go, Troops, go!

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I suspect that if they win the championship, you'll do another statement with a jersey on, or something to that effect.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I'd like to thank all members for their statements.

LEONARD BRAITHWAITE

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

Hon. Jeff Leal: Mr. Speaker, I believe that you will find that we have unanimous consent to pay tribute to one Mr. Leonard Braithwaite, a former member from Etobicoke who served us so ably in the Ontario Legislature from 1963 to 1975, with a representative from each caucus speaking for up to five minutes.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): The Minister of Rural Affairs is seeking unanimous consent to speak in tribute. Do we agree? Agreed.

I will turn to the member from Chatham–Kent–Essex.

Mr. Rick Nicholls: Thank you very much, Speaker. I'm honoured today to rise on behalf of the PC caucus and pay tribute to Leonard Braithwaite, who served in this Legislature from 1963 until 1975. A testament to his popularity, Mr. Braithwaite was approached by members of the Ontario PC Party, the NDP and the Liberal Party; any political party would have been lucky to have him.

Ultimately, he ran for the Liberals in Etobicoke. He would go on to serve as the Liberal critic for labour and welfare, but it was in education that Mr. Braithwaite may have had the most significant impact.

While it may come as a shock to current members here today and to those watching at home, in 1964, Ontario still had a few laws—one particular law, rather—on the books that mandated schools segregated by colour. A 114-year-old clause in the Separate Schools Act, which was originally written to separate Protestant and Catholic students, allowed for the existence of “separate schools for coloured people.”

By 1911, most segregated students had been transitioned into the public education system. However, one separate school remained open in the 1960s. That school was SS 11, in what is now the town of Essex.

In his maiden speech on February 4, 1964, Mr. Braithwaite took a moment to remind his fellow legislators, “There has not been a need for such schools since before the beginning of this century.” One month later, education minister Bill Davis—the future Premier—introduced a bill that updated provincial legislation and repealed the outdated clause that allowed the practice of segregation in Ontario.

SS 11 closed the following year. Mr. Braithwaite would later refer to this moment as perhaps his greatest accomplishment.

While Mr. Braithwaite was indeed a champion for black Canadians, he sought to improve the lives of all marginalized Ontarians. For the pages in attendance today, I would like to mention that it was MPP Braithwaite who pushed for the addition of female pages here in Ontario. Up until 1971, only boys could serve as pages here at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. Thanks to the efforts of Mr. Braithwaite, there are both male and female pages of all backgrounds here today, doing great work in the Legislature.

Following his departure from Queen's Park in 1975, Mr. Braithwaite returned to municipal politics.

He practised law until his death at the age of 88. In 1999, Mr. Braithwaite became the first black bencher elected to the governing council of the Law Society of Upper Canada. Leonard always kept the door to his law office open to anyone who came in to him for mentorship and advice.

He believed very strongly in giving back to his community and to those who had given so much to him. He sponsored youth teams such as the Braithwaite Legal Eagles, which he supported for 26 years. He was active in many associations, such as becoming a founding member of Etobicoke General Hospital's board of governors and the Black Business and Professional Association.

His years of tireless community service and devotion to public office were honoured with multiple awards, including the Order of Canada, the Order of Ontario and the Queen's Golden Jubilee Award. His son may have summed up his father best when he said, “He did what he had to do.”

Even with two years of service for our nation in the air force at the end of World War II and a stellar academic record, Mr. Braithwaite had trouble finding work. He would not let obstacles slow him down, as he eventually went on to open up his own legal practice and serve in public office, where he would break down barriers for future generations.

1520

On behalf of all Ontarians, I'd like to thank Leonard Braithwaite for making our province a better place to call home. Your service within these walls and beyond them will be forever in our memories.

Ms. Catherine Fife: It is my pleasure to rise today and offer tribute to a great parliamentarian, Mr. Leonard Braithwaite. We are joined today by Mr. Braithwaite's son, David. Thank you for coming today.

It is not often that any one of us is presented the opportunity to speak about the life of a true Canadian pioneer. Mr. Braithwaite was this country's first black parliamentarian. He was not a man given to hyperbole and so described his achievements modestly. He was simply beating down the doors. He made a habit of that.

He was born to West Indian immigrant parents in 1923 and grew up in the Kensington Market area of

Toronto, which was at the time home to many new immigrant families. He sought to enlist in the armed forces during World War II, right as he turned 18 in 1941. He was consistently denied by recruiters, not just in Toronto but in Hamilton and Oshawa as well. He travelled there by bus in an attempt to enlist, but he was denied. But he kept beating at the door. He was finally enlisted in 1943 into the Royal Canadian Air Force and served overseas in England and the South Pacific before returning home to Toronto in 1946.

Immediately, he applied to the University of Toronto and sought employment. Despite being discriminated against because of the colour of his skin, Mr. Braithwaite secured a job at Neilson's factory in Toronto, because he was a war veteran. He was the first black employee at that factory. He worked night shifts until he began classes at the University of Toronto.

Even though he graduated with honours and a degree from the commerce and finance program in 1950, Mr. Braithwaite was not able to secure a job, so he applied to Harvard Business School and graduated with an MBA in 1952. Again, finding employment difficult to obtain, Mr. Braithwaite returned to Toronto, enrolled at the Osgoode Hall Law School, graduating as president of the student body in 1958. Leonard was the definition of determination.

He opened a small law practice in Etobicoke before jumping into public life in 1960, winning the election as a school trustee—a great place to start, I think, as a future MPP. He was elected as an alderman two years later. He was a popular local politician and turned down an offer from the Premier at the time, John Robarts, to run for the Conservatives. He also turned down the NDP, before finally running for the Liberals. It was their lucky day. He won the Etobicoke riding by just 443 votes.

Mr. Braithwaite became the Canada's first black parliamentarian the same year that Martin Luther King made his famous speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial: "I have a dream."

He made an impact at Queen's Park immediately, rising on February 4, 1964, for his maiden speech as an MPP. Mr. Braithwaite softly reminded his fellow lawmakers that Ontario still had a law on its books mandating schools segregated by colour. He said, "There has not been a need for such schools since before the beginning of this century." A month later, education minister Bill Davis—the future Premier—introduced a house-cleaning bill that repealed the 114-year-old provision.

Braithwaite also fought for gender equality. In 1966, he stood up in the Ontario Legislature and spoke out for the addition of female pages in the House at Queen's Park. They're here today because of the work of Mr. Braithwaite.

His contributions didn't end there, however, nor did his beating on the doors. Braithwaite was the first black bencher of the governing council of the Law Society of Upper Canada in 1999. For his work, he was appointed a member of the Order of Canada in 1997, and invested into the order on February 4, 1998. He was appointed the Order of Ontario in 2004.

As I prepared for this tribute today, I spent some time looking through stories about Mr. Braithwaite's life from various media, flipping through stories from the 1960s until today. It gave me an opportunity to think about what it means to be an elected representative, to become a politician. It takes strength and the courage of your convictions to decide to run, and it takes a great deal more of both if you're lucky enough to win an election. So often, we lose sight of the person behind the politician. We shouldn't forget that. For all the scrutiny that we receive and all the ink that's spilled about what we say and do, we're all just like anyone else. Each and every one of us who sits in this House and who serves as the voice of thousands of Ontarians from the places we call home—we are all just like anyone else. Some of us understand the importance of this responsibility and the weight of this responsibility.

Leonard Braithwaite was clearly a man of great integrity and dignity. Ontario is a better place because of his advocacy and because of his principles. To his family: We thank you for sharing him with us.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): Further tribute? The member from Etobicoke Centre.

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. A very special thank you to my colleagues for their comments, and a warm welcome to David. I'm delighted you're here joining us today.

It's very difficult to do justice to a person's life in a few minutes, especially someone as esteemed as Leonard Braithwaite. People say he was a good man, and he was a good man. He also was an honourable man, as you've heard others have said in this Legislature. Most importantly, he was a good friend, and a good friend to many. As you heard, he had this wonderful policy: His door was always open and he always had time for some good advice, and some of that I would like to share with you.

You've heard that he was born back in 1923. Life was difficult for that family. There was a time when being a visible minority here in Ontario was not easy. His father was a capable machinist but couldn't get work. In fact, he worked less and less—just the odd job. His mom actually worked as a cleaner in the large homes, probably in Rosedale.

But the one thing his family instilled in him always was love of education and how important it was to study, to work and to get that education. That was certainly something he did well. He studied. He succeeded. He excelled at what he was doing.

I don't know if you know, but by grade 10 he was actually selling newspapers on Spadina. By the time he graduated from Harbord Collegiate, he had successfully established the rights to sell papers on Spadina, he was employing six people, and he had his own business. Now think of that. That's amazing when you go back into that time and that history, that someone had that kind of tenacity and that he did have that kind of tenacity.

But he also, as you heard—we heard this story a couple of times because it was a little fun, in that he wanted to serve and he did serve with a bomber unit, I

think, in England. But every time he went, they would refuse him. As you heard, he went to Hamilton. But, boy, he went back and back and back. Finally, and this was the chuckle, it was a Ukrainian recruiter who actually said, “Okay, enough is enough. I’m going to put you through.” Because I’m of Ukrainian descent we had a little chuckle over that, but I knew it wasn’t one of my grandparents because they were out west.

The thing was that he knew then, as that gentleman knew then, that there was discrimination and that unless they worked together and made a difference, that that discrimination would continue. So here we are, two immigrants, one actually born in Canada of an immigrant family and another probably an immigrant, who made a difference, because certainly he went to on serve, and serve his country well, in the Second World War.

And then he has the most extraordinary career, because, well, he got educated: Bachelor of Commerce, University of Toronto, 1950; Master of Business Administration from Harvard Business School, 1952; and law degree, 1958, from Osgoode. In 1971, he was named Queen’s Counsel; in 1999, elected to the governing council of the Law Society of Upper Canada—just the beginning. In 1960, he was elected to the Etobicoke township board of education. There was our love of children—it really worked. In 1962, he was an alderman on the council. In 1963, he was, as you heard, the first black parliamentarian to be elected in Canada. He made history everywhere he went.

You heard that he spoke against that old race law; you heard that it was a bastion, a holdout, back in Essex county. In his gentle way—he didn’t sort of get in here and thump the table and demand. He simply reminded his colleagues that segregation was long gone at the turn of the century and that they had to get up to date and change the statutes. And bless Bill Davis; he did it in the following year. He reminded them that the Underground Railway had brought the black slaves to Ontario for freedom and that freedom is not in a segregated school.

1530

An equal opportunity person always, he cared about everything he did in terms of that equity and access, when you talked to him. He “beat down the doors” was the quote—even though his door was always open—and he had good advice.

Some of you will remember Dixon Canada. We had a challenge with young Somali youths and we had a challenge with West Indian youths. They were actually fighting. We talked about, how do we find a way to work with both? It was Mr. Braithwaite’s good wisdom that made a difference.

His community was important to him. He received numerous awards, every one of them justly deserved.

As you heard, he didn’t give up. He practised law till he was 88.

Mr. Braithwaite was—and, David, he continues to be—an inspiration to many. He, with others, led the way. They opened the door. We will be forever grateful for the life of Leonard Braithwaite.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): I would like to thank all of the members for their very thoughtful and heartfelt comments in the tribute and to the family. We will make a DVD copy and the written Hansard available to the family as tribute to the family on the gift of their father. I thank all members for participating.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

LORETTO LADIES’ COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS ACT, 2014

Mr. Colle moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr25, An Act respecting The Loretto Ladies’ Colleges and Schools.

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.

WIRELESS SERVICES AGREEMENTS AMENDMENT ACT (PAPER BILLING STATEMENTS), 2014

LOI DE 2014 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES CONVENTIONS DE SERVICES SANS FIL (DOCUMENTS DE FACTURATION PAPIER)

Ms. Damerla moved first reading of the following bill:
Bill 192, An Act to amend the Wireless Services Agreements Act, 2013 to require suppliers to provide billing statements in a paper format, free of charge, on request / Projet de loi 192, Loi modifiant la Loi de 2013 sur les conventions de services sans fil pour exiger que les fournisseurs remettent gratuitement, sur demande, des documents de facturation papier.

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

First reading agreed to.

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

Ms. Dipika Damerla: In plain English, all I’m trying to do—as many of you know, some telephone companies have started to charge you an extra \$2 or \$4 if you get a paper bill. I think it’s plain wrong to charge somebody to tell them how much they owe you, so I am proposing that we ban cellphone companies from doing this and that they give paper bills for free.

PETITIONS

CREDIT UNIONS

Mr. Steve Clark: I want to thank the Credit Unions of Ontario for this petition.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

“—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

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

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

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

CREDIT UNIONS

Mr. Percy Hatfield: I’m pleased to present a petition on behalf of the Credit Unions of Ontario and my good friends at the Windsor Family Credit Union. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

“—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

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

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

I support the petition. I’ve affixed my name to it, and I’ll present it to page Ethan and send it up to the Clerk.

ÉCOLE ÉLÉMENTAIRE CATHOLIQUE ALAIN-FORTIN

M. Shafiq Qaadri: J’ai une pétition ici adressée à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario :

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

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

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

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

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

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

Je vous l’envoie avec page Daniel.

HYDRO RATES

Mr. John Yakabuski: This one will be much shorter.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the cost of electricity in Ontario continues to escalate; and

“Whereas other charges associated with electricity, such as delivery, regulatory, global adjustment and debt retirement charges make electricity increasingly unaffordable; and

“Whereas these costs have imposed a significant hardship on ratepayers and driven industry and jobs out of Ontario;

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

“That the Premier and the Minister of Energy reduce the waste and duplication in Ontario’s electricity sector and take other necessary steps to lower the cost of electricity so that Ontario’s electricity prices are competitive with other jurisdictions.”

Speaker, I support this petition, sign it and send it down with page David.

1540

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

“Whereas people with complaints have limited options, and frequently they don’t complain because they fear repercussions, which suggests too many seniors are

being left in vulnerable situations without independent oversight; and

“Whereas Ontario is the only province in Canada—including the three territories—where our Ombudsman does not have independent oversight of long-term-care homes;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to expand the Ombudsman’s mandate to include Ontario’s nursing homes in order to protect our most vulnerable seniors.”

I sign this petition and give it to page Ethan.

USE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

Mr. Shafiq Qaadri: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I agree, sign it and send it to you via page Ashley.

WORKPLACE INSURANCE

Mr. Monte McNaughton: I have an important petition to introduce here today. It’s addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the WSIB has mandated that, effective January 1, 2013, all independent contractors and small business owners operating in the construction industry must have WSIB coverage;

“Whereas many of these business owners have their own private workplace insurance that in most cases is

more affordable, more efficient and provides more extensive coverage;

“Whereas mandatory WSIB premiums add significant costs to small businesses and adversely affects their growth prospects and in some cases their solvency;...

“Whereas, at a time when Ontario is facing a jobs crisis with” hundreds of thousands of “people unemployed, the government and its agencies should not be discouraging private sector job creation and growth by levying additional, unnecessary costs;

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

“To direct the Minister of Labour to issue an order in council eliminating the requirement that mandates compulsory WSIB coverage on all independent contractors and small business owners in the construction industry.”

Speaker, I fully support this and will sign it.

ALZHEIMER’S DISEASE

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

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease is a degenerative brain disease that causes thinking and memory impairment. Alzheimer’s disease is progressive, worsens over time and will eventually lead to death;

“Whereas there is an estimated 208,000 Ontarians diagnosed with Alzheimer’s and related dementia today, and that number is set to increase by 40% in the next 10 years;

“Whereas Alzheimer’s disease creates emotional, social and economic burdens on the family and supports of those suffering with the disease—over 25% of those providing personal supports to survivors of Alzheimer’s disease and related dementia are seniors;

“Whereas the total economic burden of dementia in Ontario is expected to increase by more than \$770 million per year through to 2020; and

“Whereas Ontario’s strategy for Alzheimer’s disease and related dementia has not been revised since the implementation of a five-year strategy in 1999;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to immediately review, revise and implement an updated, research-informed, comprehensive strategy to respond to and prepare for the rapidly growing needs of those living with Alzheimer’s disease and related dementia.”

I fully support this petition and will affix my signature and give it to Victoria, the page.

ÉCOLE ÉLÉMENTAIRE CATHOLIQUE ALAIN-FORTIN

M. Shafiq Qaadri: J’ai une pétition ici adressée à l’Assemblée législative de l’Ontario :

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

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

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

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

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

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

Je vous l'envoie avec page Frank.

CREDIT UNIONS

Ms. Laurie Scott: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

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

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

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

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

"—maintain current credit union provincial tax rates;

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

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

It's signed by the three credit unions in my riding, and even my own hometown by Sue Strong. I'll hand this to page Zahra.

LONG-TERM CARE

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas resident levels in long-term-care facilities are rising every year, with corresponding pressures on health care demands;

"Whereas aggressive behaviour and mental health issues are on the rise and represent a significant risk to staff and residents alike;

"Whereas facilities are not currently capable of dealing with the increasing number of extremely aggressive residents;

"Whereas not enough research exists with respect to aggressive behaviour risk assessment and management;

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

"That the Legislative Assembly take into consideration the considered recommendations of groups such as the Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes and Services for Seniors, and allocate adequate funding and resources to long-term care for seniors."

I couldn't agree more. I'm going to add my name to the hundreds and give it to Ethan.

ÉCOLE ÉLÉMENTAIRE CATHOLIQUE ALAIN-FORTIN

M. Phil McNeely: « À l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Je sou mets la pétition avec Ethan. Merci, Ethan.

1550

HYDRO RATES

Ms. Sylvia Jones: I have a petition.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas energy costs have skyrocketed as a result of the Liberal government's mismanagement of the energy sector;

"Whereas the billion-dollar gas plants scandal, wasteful and unaccountable spending at Ontario Power

Generation and the unaffordable subsidies of wind and solar projects will result in electricity bills climbing by another 35% by 2017 and 45% by 2020;

“Whereas Ontario’s average cost of electricity is highest in Canada; and

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

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

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to immediately eliminate subsidies for wind and solar, ensuring Ontario’s power consumers, including families, farmers and employers, have affordable and reliable energy.”

I support this petition 100% and give it to page Daniel to take to the table.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The time for petitions has expired.

OPPOSITION DAY

TAXATION

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I move that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario recognizes that Ontario families already pay \$9,970 a year in government paycheque deductions in addition to their personal income taxes—including employment insurance (EI), pension and health tax deductions—and as a result families cannot afford any new payroll taxes during these uncertain economic times; and

That new payroll taxes would significantly lower take-home pay, lead to immediate layoffs and keep youth from finding work;

Therefore the Legislative Assembly of Ontario agrees that payroll taxes and paycheque deductions are a direct tax on the middle class and that no new government programs, like an Ontario pension plan, should be funded by new payroll taxes. Addressed to the Premier of Ontario.

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

Mr. Victor Fedeli: I want to begin my remarks by going back to the start of this year and the pre-budget hearings that took place across Ontario. We heard three main themes over and over from Ontarians: We need lower taxes, affordable energy and less job-killing red tape. The Premier’s proposal in the upcoming budget for an Ontario pension plan flies directly in the face of that advice. It’s not the only advice she’s ignoring, but we’ll come back to that in a couple of minutes.

Earlier today, the Ontario PC caucus presented more documents containing formerly confidential advice to Premier Wynne from the Ministry of Finance. These documents warned Premier Wynne that of all her pro-

posed revenue tools, payroll taxes would have the “largest negative impact” on employment. In fact, the Ministry of Finance calculated that for every \$2-billion increase in Ontario payroll taxes, 18,000 people would lose their jobs. The ministry warns that the consequences will be lower business investment, relocation of business to other jurisdictions, reduced work effort and “out-migration of people.”

Speaker, I do want to repeat one section there. These documents warned Premier Wynne that of all her proposed revenue tools, payroll taxes would have the “largest negative impact” on employment.

Ontario’s 2014 budget will include a proposal for a massive new Ontario retirement pension plan based on the Canada Pension Plan and funded by new payroll taxes. Canadian workers and employers contribute \$42 billion a year nationwide to the Canadian pension plan; Ontario’s share of these annual contributions is roughly \$16.5 billion. Using the Ministry of Finance’s own assertion, that for every \$2-billion increase in payroll taxes we eliminate 18,000 jobs, that would mean the payroll taxes necessary to fund this massive new Liberal pension scheme, based on CPP, would therefore lead to 150,000 job losses across the province. That’s from the Ministry of Finance’s confidential advice to the Premier.

In moving ahead with this, Kathleen Wynne is ignoring the advice of her own Ministry of Finance experts, her own transit panel experts, and even her own hand-picked pension adviser, former Prime Minister Paul Martin, who stated, “Payroll taxes are a cancer on job creation.”

Considering Ontario already has the highest payroll taxes in Canada, she’s also ignoring the advice of Ontario’s job creators. Here’s what they had to say about these increased payroll taxes.

First is the Toronto Region Board of Trade, who said, “The prime concern with payroll taxes was economic in nature. For many groups and organizations, the tool was seen negatively as a tax on employment.”

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce said, “An employer payroll tax could discourage firms from hiring new employees.”

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business said, “Contemplating new forms of taxation to add to that burden will not make these businesses more competitive, nor will it increase their ability to create jobs for Ontarians.”

Why should we be surprised? It’s hardly the first time the Wynne government has been willing to ignore the facts when it comes to Ontario’s finances.

Yesterday, our leader, Tim Hudak, and I presented previously confidential documents turned over to the estimates committee. A slide deck titled “Fiscal Plan Information,” dated February 13, 2013, includes inset boxes of commentary from ministry staff prepared for use by the Premier and her cabinet.

On page 8 is a graphic entitled “Ontario’s Fiscal Targets to Balance,” which starts with a \$24.7-billion deficit reported for 2009-10. The comment box directly

addresses this figure. It states: “\$24.7 billion was never a real expectation. It was a deliberate policy to print what can only be described as a worst case scenario.” It goes on to say, “The path to balance was then drawn from there, assuming a straight-line trajectory of declining deficits.”

In other words, they made the numbers up. They started with a fake number of \$24.7 billion, had a notional number of zero, drew a straight line, and then filled in all the bars. That’s how this government created our budget and that’s how they plan to spend taxpayers’ dollars. I’ve never seen anything like this in my entire business career.

The worst part in all of this is that the Premier and the cabinet knew this. They were told this on February 13, yet they still went ahead and presented this phony \$24.7-billion figure in the 2013 budget, only a few short days later. They knew they had no plan and they knew that their numbers simply did not add up. Just as they did with the \$4.5-billion fiscal gap that we revealed last month with previously confidential documents, they told the Legislature they were on track to balance the budget when they knew that was not the case. This is clear evidence that Kathleen Wynne and the Liberals can’t be trusted with the money of Ontario taxpayers and can’t be trusted to be honest with Ontarians about the precarious state of our finances.

This plan to increase payroll taxes under the guise of helping Ontarians is the latest Liberal cash grab, plain and simple. It’s ridiculous that this government continues to try to excuse their own fiscal mismanagement by pretending it’s all a revenue shortfall and then trying to sell added spending as some kind of benevolent stimulus program.

Here are some facts: As of last summer’s 2012-13 public accounts, revenue was actually up a shocking 18.4% in the three years since 2009-10. It was \$95.8 billion, now up to \$113.4 billion. They don’t have a revenue problem; they have a spending problem. That’s 6% a year revenue growth—a whole lot higher than economic growth and a whole lot more than families are living on, and they still went out and spent \$125 billion.

1600

During the same period, the federal government’s revenue grew more slowly than Ontario’s, yet the federal government’s budget is essentially balanced, while Ontario’s deficits are growing: more than \$2 billion more deficit than the \$9.2-billion shameful deficit last year.

The government claims that revenues have been falling short of expectations. That’s just not true. The 2010 budget projected revenue for 2012-13 to be \$112 billion. It actually came in at \$113.4 billion, higher than the 2010 forecast.

The spending announcements the government has been making, as outlined in another leaked document—the BLT, the budget-leaking team—are permanent increases in the cost of government. This isn’t just \$5.7 billion in new one-time spending; these are permanent increases. None of this spending is short-term. Practically

all of it is permanent and, in fact, the cost of most of it will actually grow over time.

There is no plan here but spend, spend, spend. It has nothing to do with jobs and everything to do with trying to buy another election with borrowed money—sounds familiar to the gas plant scandal. In the end, risky, out-of-control government spending actually costs us jobs.

It’s under this premise that the Wynne Liberals want to increase payroll taxes through this pension plan scheme, which your own finance ministry experts—these are her own experts whom she asked advice of; they’ve told her it will cost tens of thousands of jobs if she does it. In fact, the finance ministry, the infrastructure ministry and the transportation ministry all said that it will cost Ontarians 150,000 jobs.

The Liberals will say or do anything to skate past the next election. Kathleen Wynne is promising a massive new Ontario retirement pension plan to save her own job, not to create new jobs for others.

The Liberals and the NDP will have the opportunity to support my motion and reject a new and higher payroll tax that will cost Ontario 150,000 jobs. It’s time they stand up for the interests of Ontarians, not for their own political interest. Stand up for taxpayers for once. Support my motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate? The member for High Park—

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Parkdale.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Parkdale—High Park.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Don’t forget half of my riding, Madam Speaker. It’s a wonderful half, too.

I’m always proud to stand in this House. It truly is an honour to represent the people of my riding and, in fact, Ontarians. To respond to the Progressive Conservative motion: I think it’s somewhat strange that a motion has come forward from the party to my right about a pension plan that hasn’t been tabled yet.

It’s an extremely ideological motion. It doesn’t really further the cause of taxpayers, and I’ll be upfront by saying that that’s the reason we’re going to abstain from voting for it at all. We don’t take it seriously.

What we do take seriously in the New Democratic Party is the plight of Ontarians—two thirds of them—who don’t have any retirement pension plans. It’s interesting; I was watching the attack ads, the sort of smear campaign that the Liberal Party is running right now on television programs near you, and one of the things they say comes out of the mouth of the Premier—which I think is sad. I think it demeans the status of our jobs and it demeans the status of this Legislature when a Premier says something on television that is blatantly untrue. What does she say? She says that she’s going to be putting forward a pension plan that the New Democratic Party will not support. The actual truth—this is in Hansard—is that four years ago we were the ones that put forward an Ontario pension plan in response to the reality that it did not look, at the time—and now it has been proven to be so—like the federal government was

going to come through with a CPP enhancement. So it was actually our idea.

It's one thing to have an idea and to have it acted upon—some might say “borrowed”; put into practice. That's good. That's fine. I'm not upset; in fact, I'm flattered—imitation is the best form of flattery—if the government takes one of our ideas and puts it into place. But in this instance, not only did they not put it into place—and who knows what will be coming on Thursday?—but they actually put words into our mouths that we never said, which is that we're not going to support whatever they bring in. How would we support it or not support it? We don't know what it is. Apparently the Conservatives feel they have a better handle on this, but simply to say that we aren't supportive of it, period, and to broadcast this is shocking. It's absolutely shocking.

There was another piece of mail that got dropped off at the subway stations, again with the same shocking inaccuracies. I think it's egregious; I think it's sad. I'm a United Church minister, as many folks know, but it doesn't take a United Church minister to know what is ethically okay, what is ethically right and what is ethically not. That's why I'm sad about it. I'm sadder about it than I am upset about it.

I suppose I should, Mr. Speaker, be expecting such smear campaigns. After all, when I was elected in a by-election some eight years ago, I was elected despite a smear campaign run against me by the Liberal Party. So the fact that this campaign, if there should be one, seems to be starting off on the same note against everyone in the New Democratic Party should be no surprise, but it is a surprise, because, honestly, I think I expected better and I think the voters in Ontario expected better.

What is the status of the voter in Ontario? Well, they're far worse off. That's the simple reality, and I think, to be fair to my colleagues to the right, that's the reality they're responding to. They're far worse off than they were 11 years ago. There's no question about that. Their hydro rates have skyrocketed, their costs of energy have skyrocketed, job numbers have plummeted, poverty rates have skyrocketed under this government's watch, and for 11 years this has been the case.

Now, in the 11th hour of the 11th year, as it were, we're hearing promises. We've been seeing what really results in election campaign promises put forward as bills—bills that would never have a chance of passing. When you put forward a bill a day, you know the legislative process takes some time—and this government has been putting forward about a bill a day until the last few weeks, in which case they've been putting forward a promise an hour, and every promise seems to be pricier than the last: a billion dollars here, a billion dollars there.

When I talk to people in my riding, what I'm hearing is that the bloom is off the rose, as they say. People just don't buy it anymore. They just don't believe it, because they've been hearing the same things for 11 years and they're not seeing the results. They're not seeing the real results in their lives. They're just hearing more empty promises.

To my colleagues to the right, who always claim—and they claim this historically, even though it's inaccurate—that they are the party of fiscal responsibility, I say this: Fifty years ago, Tommy Douglas brought in, I think, 17 balanced budgets. He saw it as a priority to balance a budget, because he knew that if you don't balance the budget, you're giving people's money to the banks and you're not putting it back into social programs. That's what Tommy Douglas did. That was the origin of our party.

Overall, with one exception—I'll talk about the one exception—our provincial governments have been the best fiscal managers of them all. That is history. That is simply incontrovertible history. I'm going to repeat that. Our provincial governments have the best history of fiscal management of all the parties; second, the Progressive Conservatives—

Interjections.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: —and a distant third, the Liberal Party, which I think protests too much.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: What was the exception?

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: To my friend across the way, the Minister of Community and Social Services: The exception was, of course, their own Bob Rae, a former leader of the Liberal Party, who—one could not be surprised, perhaps—ran a deficit. He ran a deficit provincially and then went on to be the Liberal Party leader—I think that's what it takes—and, suffice to say, governed like a Liberal. That's the simple historic reality.

If I could, Mr. Speaker, I would repeat this over and over again, because somehow it doesn't make its way out there into the general public the way it should: that the best fiscal managers are the New Democratic Party historically; that the worst are the Liberal Party; and that somewhere in the middle are the Progressive Conservatives.

1610

Again, to correct an inaccuracy which seems to be out there—one can surmise the source of the inaccuracy—that we are against revenue tools to pay for essential services, what nonsense—what absolute and patent nonsense. We have never said that. What we have been against in the New Democratic Party are regressive taxes, unfair taxes against people who cannot afford to pay for them. What we have always stood, for over the years—province to province, again, with a possible exception—are modest increases to corporate taxes. As our leader, Andrea Horwath, said, modest increases to those who make over \$500,000 a year—that's what we've said. Not to mention a reining-in of—since I've been elected, over eight years—over \$3 billion of absolute waste.

Where has that waste gone? Well, remember eHealth? Actually, I'll go back even further than eHealth, to the first year when I was elected. Remember Colleague? Remember \$35 million out the back door, that was dumped? A million dollars to a cricket club; do we remember that? Some \$35 million. There is some evidence that that kind of dumping at year-end is still going on, but that was my introduction to this place.

Then came eHealth and then came Ornge and then came the gas plants scandal. One could argue that each and every one of those billion-dollar boondoggles was really, again, something that hurt who? Not, of course, the overpaid friends of the government who got the jobs in these various establishments, but the average people, ordinary Ontarians, who see the result on their bills, who see the result on their taxes. That's the problem. That really is the problem.

It's not only that they run deficits; it's the deficits they run, Mr. Speaker. Where is the money going? I can say that \$3 billion of it—and that's just the beginning—has gone for absolutely nothing, unless you count political gain. The Premier has admitted as much—which, again, I don't gloat about. I think this is rather sad. This is a sad commentary on this Parliament. It's a sad commentary upon our jobs. No wonder the voters are cynical when they see this happening by their very own government. It's sad.

Again, to get back to the motion that's being made, it's about a provincial pension plan that, as far as we know, doesn't exist yet—we haven't seen it; we don't know what it is—that the Liberals claim is theirs, which of course has nothing to do with us. Of course, we introduced an Ontario pension plan—a much, one would surmise, fairer one—four years ago, at which time, Mr. Speaker, I have to say, every single one of them voted against it, including Kathleen Wynne. They voted against it. But times have changed. Now we're on the eve of an election, they need something that will be popular. But here's what's so sad—

Hon. Ted McMeekin: You won't vote against ours, will you? It's in the budget.

Ms. Cheri DiNovo: Again, to my friend the Minister of Community and Social Services I say, when it comes out of the Premier's mouth, such an absolutely gross inaccuracy in an ad on television, that we don't support an Ontario provincial pension plan—one shudders at that when, in fact, we were the ones who introduced it. One has to ask, when something like that is made so public—I mean, there are other inaccuracies too. And the latest, by the way, of course, that we've heard is about the infrastructure at Herb Gray.

Every day it seems there is another scandal at this point. Every day there is yet another reason to doubt the veracity of what comes out of the Liberal Party's mouths, collectively and individually. It's sad, but that is the perception out there. That is, no doubt, the perception out there. People don't believe it anymore, because they've seen how it has rolled out in the past. They've seen a Premier say, "Oh, it only cost \$200 million." "Oh, it only cost"—I can't even remember the figures. In fact, it cost over a billion to move the gas plants.

They've seen a Premier talk about her support for transit and then take \$4 billion out of Transit City, basically crashing and burning Transit City. They've seen a Premier now on television saying that our party wouldn't support an Ontario provincial pension plan, when the facts are absolutely the opposite. And of course,

to the right, they have seen a Conservative Party that simply is happy to stand on the sidelines and point fingers, but refuses to read budgets, refuses to come to the table, refuses to have any gains made for the people of Ontario.

And again, we actually point to the facts, what's actually happened. I'm just going to reiterate because my friend the House leader, the member from Timmins—James Bay, is going to be taking some time as well on this. But the facts: First and foremost, the Conservatives have introduced a motion attacking a pension plan that nobody has seen yet, that is simply a promise—something in the air.

The Liberals are talking about this so-called pension plan. We haven't seen it. Nobody has seen it. We don't know what it looks like, but they're using it as an attack against us, saying we don't support it, which is ludicrous since it was our idea in the first place, four years ago. That's what this motion is about.

Obviously, it's ideological. Obviously, it has nothing to do with helping the person who is looking at their hydro bill as we speak or looking at their energy bill or looking at the fact that their child has no job after graduating with a degree. It's not going to help them. It's ideological, therefore we won't reject it or accept it. We dismiss it. It's silly. That's what it is: It's silly.

To my friends across the aisle in government, the reason for the profound cynicism in this province right now is exactly because of the way that they've handled money. The very precious dollars that come from families across this province—from working families, from middle-class families—who have done their best but see people at Ornge and eHealth making, in many cases, millions and look at their own economic fate—it's not nearly so rosy.

Again to that point, which I cannot ever stress enough, because it certainly goes against the spin that's out there, I ask rhetorically: Who is the best manager of money when they are in government? Which party runs the fewest deficits, balances the most budgets? Who does that? That would be the New Democratic Party. Who is the worst? The Liberal Party. Who is second worst? The Progressive Conservative Party. Who is the one exception to the rule that the NDP is the best manager of money? The Bob Rae government—Bob Rae, a Liberal.

That is the simple historical truth. I defy you to prove me wrong. Of course, the one who introduced medicare to this province, Tommy Douglas, released 17 balanced budgets. So that's proof you don't have to attack working people, you don't have to undercut collective bargaining and you don't have to cut back on social services. You know what? You can have reasonable taxes on those who can afford them, and not tax those who can't, and balance a budget and have social services—something, I will close with, neither the Progressive Conservatives nor their friends in the Liberal Party have ever achieved.

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

Mr. Bob Delaney: Now, wasn't that a very interesting history lesson? What we learned is that there's only been

one Ontario NDP government in history. It never balanced a budget, and somehow or other that makes them the best fiscal managers in Ontario history. I don't quite connect the dots that way, but if you subtract a lot of the rhetoric, I actually get the impression that our colleagues in the NDP may be philosophically aligned with those of us over here in the government, but there is another point that they made.

They made a very important point: This is a motion that criticizes what may be a budget proposal in a budget that hasn't been tabled that the Conservatives haven't seen. It presumes to take issue with and criticize a proposal that's never been before this Legislature and won't be tabled until this Thursday, May 1 at 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

1620

But it does bring you back, with a sense of historical perspective, some—what would that be now?—51 years to a federal Liberal minority government, under Lester Pearson, that proposed the then Canada Pension Plan. It was the Conservatives of the day who railed against the proposed Liberal pension plan and called it everything in the book—socialism, I think, was one of the milder ones. So I guess it would be fair to call this opposition day issue a Diefen-motion.

Even at that, Speaker, I sometimes wonder why it is that the PC Party, which hasn't even read the budget, has decided to criticize a portion of it that they haven't seen. It is, however, completely consistent with what we saw in 2012 and 2013, when the PC Party, a once proud institution in this province that has fallen into some degree of disrepair, for two consecutive years declared that it was completely opposed to the government's budget before they even saw it—not just before it was read in the Legislature, but before they even had a chance to see it in the budget lock-up.

Speaker, May 5 next week represents the filing deadline for our 2013 income taxes. As Canadians, most of us find some way to put aside some money for our post-retirement years in our registered retirement savings plans. If you believe the completely weird, neo-conservative motion before this House today, then you would consider your RRSP contribution to be a tax.

In fact, although this motion drips with the usual imported Tea Party venom that implies that people get no value from anything they pay in deductions or taxes, I think you should try to explain that to, for example, police officers, firefighters and first responders, whose livelihoods are made possible because people agree that paying taxes to get a safer society is a fair trade-off. They could try explaining the rationale behind this motion to people in the health care sector. They could try telling them that their career has no worth because everything, from the place that they work to the wages they receive, is paid for in taxes and donations, but mostly taxes. Or they could advocate the American-style free market model, where Americans, to get far less than what we receive in health care, most of which is consumed in your post-retirement years, pay somewhere between 10 and 20

times what we pay here. That's a wonderful free market system, I'm sure, but quite frankly, Americans wish they had it as good as we have it here.

That's why, Speaker, as a Liberal, I'm just finding it impossible to support anything like this presumptive PC motion.

The PC Party, whose underlying message is always that you'd better be prepared to work for less, with few, if any, benefits, is also saying that after a lifetime of work, you'd better be prepared to live on a Canada Pension Plan capped at \$12,500 per year, plus your RRSP, whatever you have in it, your old age security and whatever equity you have in your home and your possessions. But what we've found is that that's just not enough for Canadians.

Since when did the freedom to save for your own retirement become a tax? Since when could employers feel free to take the money that they used to set aside as matching contributions to their employees' pension plans and call that a tax? Well, the answer is that Ontarians are not as short-sighted or as ideologically driven as the Ontario Tea Party considers them to be; and the answer to "Since when" is, in fact, never.

Speaker, we understand that the Ontario PC Party doesn't support helping people and their employers prepare for retirement. We get that. That's what this motion is all about. As a government, we believe they're wrong. As a party, we believe in lifting people up rather than fleecing them of their homes and their possessions after they've stopped working.

As one of the generation of baby boomers, I'm appalled by this short-sighted transfer of wealth from the needy to the greedy. We were sent here as legislators to lead, not to abdicate leadership, as this motion would do. As Ontarians, the share of our GDP composed of taxation has been falling for many years, and in North America has not been as low since early in the 20th century.

To go back as far as 2010, Ontario has publicly supported a modest, phased-in and fully funded enhancement to the Canada Pension Plan. Indeed, it was at the December 2012 finance ministers' meetings that the provinces and the federal government did agree to continue discussions on a modest CPP enhancement. It is, in fact, the feds that should be taking leadership on this, but the provinces have woken up. Indeed, an entire generation of all of us born from just after World War II until about the mid-1960s has said, "You know, we have got to be able to look after ourselves, and we've got to empower our children and their children to be able to look after themselves in their retirement. The status quo isn't enough."

Back in the days when the CPP was originally conceived, the average age for a man would be somewhere between 68 and maybe about the mid-seventies; for a woman, about five to seven years longer. A man would typically retire in his mid-sixties and would be shaking hands with the Almighty sometime in his early to mid-seventies. That, at the time, was what you built your pension plan assumptions around. For a woman, it was an extra five to seven years.

Today, it's routine that people will live healthy, productive lives well into their eighties. For all of us who visit our neighbours in seniors' residences and long-term-care homes, if we were alive during centennial year, we can remember that you could count the centenarians during centennial year, those people who were older than Canada, on the fingers of two hands, I think it was. Today, you'll find one, two, three or sometimes four in every single seniors' home. We're living longer. We've got to make better provisions for ourselves and for our children's and grandchildren's generations to be able to prepare for their retirement.

This is probably not a perfect proposal. It's way better than what we've been able to work out with the feds. It is in the direction of where the provinces would like to go, and it's certainly in the direction that men and women in our Ontario in this the year 2014 would like to see us as a government help them prepare for. It's about people's futures.

That's why this opposition day motion doesn't deserve the support of the government and why I will be voting against it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Further debate? The member for Burlington.

Mrs. Jane McKenna: Thank you very much, Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to speak to the motion brought forward by our party's finance critic, the member from Nipissing. It is a motion I am very happy to support.

It is especially fitting that we are debating this motion just 48 hours before the 2014 budget arrives. Of course, this motion is relevant because it speaks to the state of the province after 11 years of Liberal government and to the economic stagnation with which we are all too familiar.

The jobs crisis has deprived more than 300,000 people of good-paying jobs in the manufacturing sector. The government's response has been to add 300,000 people to the public service payroll. The government has doubled the province's debt in 10 years, and its plan for deficit reduction has been to run the numbers higher and higher.

The member from Nipissing himself has revealed that the Wynne Liberals have known for well over a year that their fiscal plan has veered wildly off course. He has proven that the Premier and her cabinet kept secret a \$4.5-billion hole in their fiscal projections.

Just yesterday, we heard another warning about the government's fiscal bungling from the province's Auditor General. Because Ontario Liberals had no economic development strategy, they put all their chips on gaming expansion as a strategy for erasing the deficit. Yesterday, the Auditor General revealed that this was blind hope and the revenue stream recklessly overstated. In their rush to get their hands on taxpayers' money, Ontario Liberals failed in their duty to review the OLG plan with a critical eye. The Auditor General now estimates that this unrealistic forecast pokes another hole in the province's balance sheet, leaving it up to \$2.8 billion behind.

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Again and again, whether through waste, mismanagement or simple incompetence, Ontario Liberals have

watched billions of dollars simply vanish from the province's revenue stream. This is the same government that proposes to offer its wisdom on financial matters to the people of Ontario. I would suggest that Ontario Liberals have a credibility gap when it comes to responsible, long-term planning.

Earlier, the member from Nipissing summed up some of the expert advice to this government with regard to payroll taxes. He revealed confidential advice warning that for every \$2-billion increase in payroll taxes, 18,000 workers stood to lose their jobs. It is a devastating price to pay, and it is advice that government should heed.

I would add that the Toronto Region Board of Trade took payroll taxes off the table when looking at transit funding. It was seen as a negative burden that would cause employers to employ fewer people or simply relocate to another jurisdiction.

When KPMG evaluated Metrolinx's Big Move revenue tools in March 2013, they red-flagged what would be called the distributional impacts of payroll taxes. It might be helpful to have some of KPMG's evaluations read into the record: "Employers in the affected regions may choose to relocate operations or employ less people if the tax creates excessive additional costs." They continue: "The tax has the potential to reduce the competitiveness of businesses in the GTHA with potential costs resulting from reduced employment or relocation of businesses. It may also reduce the attractiveness of the GTHA as a location for new investments. It is well known that the economic distortions which arise from higher payroll taxes include reductions in hours worked and lower labour force participation, because the return to working declines with the net-of-tax wage."

KPMG found that other changes in economic behaviour also result in inefficiency costs, including reduced work effort, reduced investment in human capital, and changes in the mix of compensation received—in other words, pay packages that shift value to benefits that are not subject to payroll taxes, as well as non-monetary forms of compensation.

In that March 2013 report, KPMG also noted that "an increase in payroll taxes equivalent to 1% of GDP in revenue terms would entail a 0.66% drop in steady-state GDP for Canada as a whole. When applied to the GTHA or even to the province of Ontario, this would imply a larger negative impact on GDP because the jurisdiction is smaller and hence, there is more room for firms and workers to reduce their payroll tax exposure by changing the location of economic activity. Higher payroll taxes could also lead to the relocation of economic activity outside the GTHA and increased unemployment in the GTHA. The resulting reduction in economic activity could represent a significant cost to the GTHA community."

These are very significant considerations and ones that, if the Liberals' reckless plans are implemented, will potentially become a permanent drag on the province's competitive prospects. Ontario already has the highest

payroll taxes in Canada. On average, families pay almost \$10,000 a year in payroll taxes in addition to their personal income tax.

Roughly 600,000 people are currently out of work in Ontario. The province's unemployment rate has been soaring above the national average for 88 months—so that's seven years and four months—which is scandalous. Worse, those jobs created are often not as secure as the jobs that they are replacing.

Since 2009, the number of underemployed workers has exceeded the number of unemployed workers. Temporary jobs have increased at three times the rate of permanent positions, and a third of all part-time workers in Ontario are involuntary. They are people working part-time who would rather be working full-time, if only there was full-time work available.

Premier Wynne has cautioned that there is a huge economic crisis coming if we don't address this issue of improved pension benefits. Speaker, I would contend that we are already undergoing a huge economic crisis today. We will potentially be facing a crisis that is far more severe if the Premier refuses to wake up to the practical realities of the day. I would ask her to give sober second thought to the profoundly negative consequences that go hand in hand with new payroll taxes.

Speaker, the status quo is not working. It should surprise no one that workers struggle to keep their heads above water and are never going to be able to give RRSPs their undivided attention. There are many such workers. Ontario's labour market is not delivering the hours of income that help create economic security. That is the problem her government should be fully focused on solving. That is the true generational challenge the government should be dealing with.

Since the recession, Ontario's unemployed have, on average, remained jobless five and a half weeks longer than they did before the recession. Last year, the average length of unemployment in Ontario was almost 22 weeks. In the United States, the average unemployment duration is now a full month below the current Ontario average. That is the Ontario Liberal legacy, I guess, Speaker. This Liberal government has no turnaround plan, and the people of this province are paying a high price because of the reckless spending and aimless policies.

We can do better. The Ontario PCs have a bold plan to put well-paying jobs first and ensure a bright future for our young people. Our million-jobs plan would balance the budget quickly and reduce taxes on employers so they can hire again. We would ensure that energy is affordable so that we can create jobs, not destroy them. We would train more skilled workers to meet the demand in trades and help our young people find good jobs that give them hope for tomorrow.

We all want a better, stronger Ontario, a place for more jobs and opportunities, a province we can all be truly proud of. To do that, the government needs to focus on reducing wasteful spending, balancing the budget and restoring confidence in Ontario's economy.

Only Ontario PCs have a turnaround plan for Ontario and a plan to create new and better-paying jobs without

increasing taxes. We will take the necessary steps now to plan for a better tomorrow so that we can get this province back on the road to greatness again.

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

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I want to take the opportunity, in this opposition day motion, to lay out where New Democrats think that the vision of Ontario should be and why we think it's different than what both the Liberals and the Conservatives are doing when it comes to their particular approach. Let me just start with the government, only because they are the government and we should start from that point.

One thing is really clear: If you take a look in all of our constituencies—I don't care where your riding is—people back home are starting to feel the pinch more and more every day as a result of many of the decisions that this government has taken. I have talked to I don't know how many constituents—and I'm sure it's the same with government members and opposition members from both parties—when it comes to the price of hydro. Constituents are saying, "I can't afford it anymore. The price of my hydro bill has gone up exponentially by over 100% since this government has taken office," and they're looking at their hydro bills going up yet again. We saw an increase on May 1, of our hydro bills going up. We saw the government's Minister of Energy say, "Oh, it's not a big deal; it's only the price of a coffee." Well, in reality, it's not the price of a coffee. People are paying more for hydro now than they ever have in the past. We're paying more than any other jurisdiction, at least in Canada, if not in North America. People are really feeling squeezed when it comes to the ability to make ends meet at the end of the month.

To make matters worse, Ontario Hydro, with this billing system that they've got where they've changed their computer software programs, has created all kinds of havoc for constituents across the province. I've got people in my constituency who receive bills for \$20,000 and \$30,000 for hydro that they didn't use. Then they spend the next six to eight months, between ourselves and them, the Ombudsman, and the office of the president of hydro, trying to fix these muck-ups that have happened when it comes to their hydro bill. It's just really disconcerting to people. Imagine you're a small business person and you've received a hydro bill in excess of \$30,000 for hydro that you didn't use. You say, "How am I going to pay for that?" In a small business, it's the difference between keeping their doors open and keeping their doors closed.

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Of course, I'd be remiss to not talk about what happened with hydro and high hydro rates when it came to the city of Timmins. We lost our Xstrata smelter refinery as a result of high hydro prices that this government encouraged by way of the policies that they've established, and it was started under the Tories, I would say, under the deregulation of Ontario Hydro and moved towards what eventually the Liberals accelerated. Now

what we have is that it became so expensive in Ontario for a refinery that uses electricity as a means of energy to melt the natural resource into a finished product that they closed down the plant and they moved to Noranda. Why? Because you can buy hydro in Noranda at half the price. So here we are creating an economic disadvantage for the people and the companies in this province beyond the pale.

I'd just say, when it comes to what this government has done just on the hydro file, it is really disconcerting what it's meant to people in their everyday life.

Not to speak about, when this government was first elected, they made a big pledge. Dalton McGuinty, remember? "I will not raise taxes." He did the pledge. One of the first things he did when he came to government is, he raised the HST, and New Democrats at the time said, "God no, don't do that." I know that there are some people within my party who said we should: "Well, we should look at that and we should support the increase in taxes."

I think we need to be careful about who pays those taxes and how we pay them, and to make sure that it's fair. The problem with the HST is that those people who could least afford to pay are those who got socked with having to pay that tax. We, as New Democrats, had a great problem here in the caucus with that because we saw it yet again as a shifting of the burden of taxation from those who could most afford to pay to those who can least afford to pay. My colleague, the whip for the NDP, made some very good points along that line.

We, as New Democrats, have always said we have never been, as a party, opposed to the issue of taxation because we understand that taxation is how you pay for those things that Ontarians want: health care, education, our roads etc., but it's who pays the tax. If you look at what new Democrats have done under Andrea Horwath, it's been pretty darn clear.

During the first budget negotiations with Mr. McGuinty, when this minority Parliament came back, we proposed a fairness tax. We said, "Let's tax those people"—over \$500,000 a year—"who can afford to pay the tax, and generate revenue that's necessary in order to bring down the deficit, because we need to balance our books." At one point, if the credit card isn't paid, you just stop being able to purchase. So we said, "Let's do a fairness tax in order that those people in Ontario who can most afford to pay those taxes pay them," so that we can make sure we can fund those programs that are very important, like health care and education, and we can work at reducing the debt.

You will see that not long ago—I think it was last week—our leader, Andrea Horwath, on behalf of our caucus, talked about an investment in transit, about how transit is not just the city of Toronto, as we understand, but it's cities and towns across this province and it's about regions across this province. We said we shouldn't do an emphasis just to do a fix for transit in one community; we should look at Ontario and we should have an investment that allows us to make sure that there are

proper GO services to places like London and Waterloo, that there is train service restored to the city of Timmins, that we have services in Niagara, that we have electrification of trains all the way from downtown Union Station over to the airport. That's going to cost money to make. We said that we believe there's room, a modest increase in the corporate tax, in order to be able to make part of the money that's necessary to be able to pay for those things.

As well, we said, "Listen, it is preposterous that this government is going to give a billion and a half dollars away on HST inputs to companies in this province." It's money that they're already paying. It's not as if they're going to miss it. And we, as a result of the deal that this Liberal government has negotiated with Mister—I was going to call him Mulroney, but the Prime Minister—Mr. Harper in Ottawa, are going to give a billion and a half dollars back to the corporate sector, back to businesses. And I'm not talking small business here; this is really corporate Ontario that is going to get a billion and a half dollars back by way of HST input. Is that fair? We're saying that "taxation" is not a bad word; it's a question of who pays. What we've seen over the years has been a shift from taxes being paid by those who could most afford to pay, to the taxes by and large being the responsibility of and having to be paid by people who can least afford to pay. The other thing that we said—and we're quite categorical—is that we will not support in this budget any increases of taxes on the middle class.

It is an approach that we think is balanced. What Andrea Horwath has said is that we need to recognize that those who can least afford to pay need respite. We have said, in fact, that we would not support a budget, or any initiative, that would increase personal income tax or taxes on the middle class, and we believe that there has to be a little bit of a shift so that those who can most afford to pay, pay their fair share of taxes. So I say to my friends in the Conservative caucus: The motion, as you've written it—I think we have to just take it as somewhat laughable. The Tories, over the last two and a half years of this minority Parliament, have done one huge error, in my view. They forgot what the people decided on election day. People on election day said, "This is a minority Parliament." They said, "Yes, we are putting the Liberals in the penalty box. We are not giving them a majority government." But neither did they give the Conservatives or the NDP the reward of majority government. They said, "We're setting all of you back, in order to be able to work together to do what's right for Ontarians."

What I think New Democrats have tried to do over the last two and a half years, and will continue to do, is to look at each item and to say: What does this mean for the people back home? What does this mean to the businesses and corporate sector in Ontario? How is this going to benefit Ontario? And so we have taken some positions that have not been easy to take at times, such as supporting the first two budgets by way of making agreements with the Liberals on both those budgets, because we

thought it was the right thing to do. The Conservatives took the position, “Oh, no. The only thing we do is say no. We don’t read anything. We don’t study anything. We don’t look at anybody else’s proposals. We just say no.” And that’s what this motion is basically about. It’s another “no” before they got to read anything. How responsible is it—you have to ask yourself the question—when a political party, in this case the official opposition, is saying no to something they haven’t even seen? It seems to me that that is the wrong approach. The people of Ontario sent us here and said, “This is a minority Parliament. You shall figure out how to make it work.” This Parliament at one point is either going to run its course or it will be defeated. That is the process by which minority Parliaments work. But while we’re here, we need to ensure that we do the right thing for the people back home.

New Democrats, to the point that the Conservatives are making, have long argued, and will continue to argue—and we will be champions on fair taxation. I am proud to be a member of this caucus who, in the first budget, said it is a fairer thing to do to have a fairness tax for those people over \$500,000, that we shift some of that responsibility to those who most can pay. I’m proud to be a member of a caucus and having a leader like Andrea Horwath who has said, “You know what? If we’re going to pay for transportation across Ontario, we need to find some revenue and we need to find some savings. On the revenue side, a very small increase on the corporate tax rate will not hurt, because we are the most competitive jurisdiction when it comes to corporate taxes.” I am proud that we’ve taken the position that we shall not allow the HST inputs to be passed on, because this is money that Ontario can ill afford to give. Can you imagine, you have a credit card bill of whatever it is, and all of a sudden you take away income that you may have to pay your credit card bill? That’s essentially what these guys are doing.

I’m also very proud, as a New Democrat, to have suggested earlier this spring that there should be a reduction in small business taxes. The NDP government in Manitoba has recognized and has moved to 0% tax on small businesses. Because if you’re going to try to encourage one sector of your economy to be able to invest and to be able to grow, that’s the sector of the economy that needs the most help. You know, I’ve got nothing against any large corporation. As many of you know, I frequent with a number of them—mining, forestry, energy. I’ve been around here a long time. I know many CEOs, I know many boards and managers of mills, and different companies on a first-name basis. I don’t begrudge them trying to run a good operation and making a profit. But I’ll tell you, it’s not that large corporation that needs the biggest break; it’s the small business owner who is working hard, he or she, to be able, through the sweat of their brow, to build something for them and their families and their community. I’m proud to be a member of a caucus under Andrea Horwath that says, “Hey, we’ve got to help the small business

sector, and we’re prepared to roll out a reduction on the small business tax in order to be able to assist that particular sector.”

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New Democrats understand that it’s about fair taxation. The Tories taking the position that they’re taking in this motion is akin to what they’ve done for the last two and half years: no to absolutely everything. “I don’t want to read nothing; I don’t want to see nothing”—it’s like Schultz in the old Stalag 13 series—Hogan’s Heroes.

Mr. Rick Bartolucci: Stalag 13.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Stalag 13 was the other one; that’s right. “I see nothing; I know nothing”: It’s like Schultz. These guys are just not responsible when it comes to the responsibility they were given by the people of Ontario.

As for the pension issue, this one here really bothers me, because I think we can all agree in this place that there is a problem when it comes to people being able to afford to retire. Let me tell you a secret. You might not know this. There are no pensions for MPPs. Unbeknownst to most people, because everybody in my constituency thinks I’m going to get a big MPP pension, there is none. But neither are there pensions for about 80% of the workers in this province. Clearly, something has to be done to try to address that.

What I find a bit galling by this whole process is that Andrea Horwath and New Democrats put out a proposal prior to the last election that looked at providing an Ontario-style pension program that would give workers an opportunity to opt into a defined pension plan under an Ontario pension plan. It wasn’t mandatory; it was a plan where you were able to choose and say, “I’d rather be in an RSP plan,” or, “I want to be in the OPP plan.” And what did the Liberals do when we proposed that? They voted it down.

So here they are in the run-up to their budget and maybe an election, depending on what happens: “Oh, my God, we’ve got to do something about pensions.” Where have you been for 11 years? Why haven’t you supported our motions? We’ve been talking about this issue for years, and you guys, all of a sudden, have woken up and said, “Oh, my God, we’ve got to do something”? Give me a break.

You know, Liberals are pretty notorious at doing what’s right and politically expedient for themselves. You look at what’s going on now. For seven years in northern Ontario, people have been saying, “This government has got to get serious about the Ring of Fire.” There is an opportunity not only to create mining jobs in the Ring of Fire, there is an opportunity to create a stainless steel industry for all of Ontario, and they have been absolutely nowhere for seven years, except they’ve put it, I believe, in two throne speeches that they were going to do something, and they certainly have put it in at least three budgets. And what have they done? Oh, my God, just before a budget and—who knows?—maybe an election, we have \$1 billion for the Ring of Fire. Well, where have these guys been for the last seven years?

We’ve said to you that the secret to the Ring of Fire isn’t very complicated. The province, we said as New

Democrats, should put on the table the money necessary to be our one-third share of the development of the infrastructure to the Ring of Fire. Depending on whether it's rail or road, it's anywhere from \$250 million to \$300 million, up to maybe \$600 million or \$700 million. Where the \$1 billion is that the government comes up is a whole other question, but we'll leave that for another debate.

We have said from the beginning that the province should say, "Here's our share"—the \$200 million, \$300 million, \$400 million, whatever it is—"that we're prepared to put into infrastructure quid pro quo; the private sector has got to put in their third and the federal government has to come in and do theirs. In exchange for doing that, we as a provincial government will do revenue-sharing on new mining when it comes to mining in this province for First Nations and other communities so that we can share in the revenue that the province gets and the federal government gets when it comes to mining"—because First Nations have been completely left out. That would bring them to the table. It allows us to deal with a number of other issues, and we'd be very aggressive on the training programs in order to give the people of northern Ontario the ability to train into those jobs so that they can get them, and with an exchange that we put an emphasis on developing a stainless steel industry for Ontario.

But these guys, what do they do? Seven years and not a lot to be said. So we've got Bob Rae, who's got a plan to make a plan. That's what was announced the other day at the smudging ceremony up in Thunder Bay. Where have they been for seven years? It took them seven years to come up with, "I've got a plan to make a plan." My God, where have you guys been?

Then they announce a billion dollars. It's just like they said, "Oh, we have \$2.5 billion for this. We've got \$800 million for this. We've got another billion dollars"—they're throwing money off the side of the boat, as if it's paper money. Well, maybe it is paper money. Maybe these guys have no intention of spending that money, should they have the opportunity. Where are you going to get the backing, the dollars to do this stuff?

I don't say that investments in the Ring of Fire are bad. I don't say investments in developmental services are bad. I'm not talking against any of this. But where have you been for 11 years? All of a sudden it's like we're coming up to a budget and you are trying to cover your bets and you're saying, "We're going to throw in everything we've got, including the kitchen sink," trying to find some way to appease every voter in the province of Ontario. I don't think it's going to work. I think at one point the public says, "Huh? Are they serious? Where have they been?" Anyway, that's the point I wanted to make to that one.

The other thing I just want to say in regard to the issue of the debt and deficit: My colleague from Parkdale-High Park, our opposition whip, raised this in regard to the record of New Democrats when it comes to balancing budgets. The figures are—and I was listening to the

Conservatives. They were laughing and howling and saying, "Oh, my God, what are you guys talking about?" The figures are that 73% of elected Liberal governments have posted deficits since 1980, and 63% of Conservative governments in power have posted deficits since 1980. Only 50% of NDP elected governments have done the same. So the record clearly is that when it comes to power, New Democrats are much better fiscal managers. I will argue, as a member of the NDP government in 1990 to 1995, that we got elected behind a Peterson government that said there was a balanced budget, and it turned out to be a \$9.5-billion deficit the minute we opened the books. And yes, we had a deficit—

Mr. Steven Del Duca: It wasn't a \$9.5-billion deficit.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It was \$9.5 billion, sir. I was there. I don't know where you were, but I remember looking at the books.

The truth is, the Liberal Peterson government, as the Tories did to the Liberals two elections ago, essentially said to the people of Ontario, "Not only do we have a balanced budget; we have a slight surplus." I think it was \$300 million. We get elected, and I remember going to those first meetings where they said, "Good news and bad news. Hi, everybody. Welcome to the government. Bad news: The government has left us with a \$9.5-billion debt." And we increased that deficit—

Hon. David Zimmer: No.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Yes. We increased that deficit by \$1 billion in order to do an anti-recession fund for investment and to make sure that workers who were laid off got money when it came to their severances.

The reality is that the Liberals have been the absolute worst. I think the proof is what's happening in this budget right now. It would appear—I don't know; I'll have to see the budget when it comes out—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I heard an unparliamentary remark. The member for Vaughan.

Mr. Steven Del Duca: Did I?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Yes. You need to stand up and withdraw.

Mr. Steven Del Duca: I withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Timmins-James Bay.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: So, as I say, the reality is that New Democrats have a much better record when it comes to balancing the books than both the Liberals and Conservatives put together.

I want to also make one last comment on debt and deficit. I was doing an interview with CFRA, I believe it was, not too long ago and they were asking us about why it is that New Democrats seem these days to be much more fiscally prudent than what they imagined us to be in the past. And I said, "No, it has always been the long position of social democratic parties like ours that in fact you don't spend what you don't got."

I'm going to ask you this question: What is the first thing that Tommy Douglas did when he was elected as a government? It was to balance the budget—very, very

first thing. What was the second thing that he did? I bet most people don't even know this. Most people say, "Oh, it was health care, number one," and when I say, "No, no; it was balancing the budget," they say, "Oh, well, then it must have been the second thing." No. You know what the second thing was? He electrified rural Saskatchewan, because he understood that if farming was going to grow and prosper in Saskatchewan, you needed to have electricity in rural parts of Saskatchewan so they could compete with places around the world, especially those places we were competing with in northern Ontario.

It wasn't until three elections later, and a balanced budget, that Tommy Douglas put forward the issue of having a medical program as we know it today. Yes, he raised some taxes for it, because we understood then, as we do now, that at times you have to have—well, not at times, but you have to have the capacity to pay.

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We're saying as New Democrats today that you have maxed out the middle class. Between what we're having to pay with our hydro bills and what we're having to pay with our gas bills, with the 40% increase that we've seen this fall, with what we're having to see with the overall cost of what it's costing the middle class, there is no room. So we have made a pledge that we will not raise taxes on the middle class, point finale. Why? Because they can least afford it.

To the opposition day motion that my friends from the Conservative Party—I just say this is more of the same. This is a Conservative Party who votes against things before they read them. They make up their mind before they read it. They decide that their view of the world is the only view of the world. They don't believe in compromise whatsoever. Worst of all, they don't accept that the people of Ontario, in the last election, said to all of the parties, "This is a minority Parliament. Go back and make it work." Instead, what do they do? They have motions such as this, which we see as being somewhat silly. For that reason, Mr. Speaker, we will see what will happen in the upcoming vote.

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

Ms. Dipika Damerla: There's an abiding memory I have, and that is of my grandfather driving once a month to the pension office to collect his pension. During the summer holidays or the winter holidays, when we were at home, sometimes we would get a chance to go with him, and we looked forward to that because it was a ritual. He would go to the pension office, collect his paycheque and then go to his club to get his monthly haircut. If we went with him while he was getting his haircut, we could also go to the club. I remember the big thing for us was having pop and cheese sandwiches, which were a big treat if you're growing up in India, because cheese is not a common Indian thing. When I've been hearing about these pension debates, that's the memory I always have, of my grandfather going every month.

As he grew older, my mom and his sons would tell him, "You don't have to go to the pension office to

collect your cheque. It can be directly deposited into your bank." But he insisted on going. He would say, "I need to go there to collect my cheque." It was a point of pride for him that he was still financially independent, that he was still getting a paycheque. He, of course, liked to go to the pension office and chat with his friends.

I have this very clear memory of him driving to the pension office, walking up the steps, going to that little service window, getting his cheque. He did that right to the end. A few weeks before he died, he had gone to the pension office to pick up his last cheque. At his funeral, the entire pension office showed up, because he had been their longest customer who actually came physically to pick up his cheque.

I only tell this personal story to talk about how important, in those golden years, having a good pension can be. It is a little disappointing for me, quite frankly, to see the opposition here not standing up for Ontarians.

Quite properly, this ought to be a federal issue. This ought to be something that the Prime Minister of Canada should be championing. It is particularly disturbing because this Prime Minister and his Conservative MPs will have their own pensions. I will give credit to him that they have trimmed the gold-plated MP pensions, downscaled them. Still, the fact is, a Conservative MP can serve just six years and then look forward to a very decent pension from age 65 on, and I don't begrudge them that. What I don't understand is, if you have a good pension, why can't you stand up for your constituents, why can't you stand up for the average Ontarian and say, "Just as I have a pension, these folks deserve a pension"? It is, indeed, very, very disappointing.

My constituents don't care whether it's a provincial issue or a federal issue; they just want things done. I am really pleased and really proud to be part of a Liberal team that's willing to do what someone else ought to be doing. If they're not doing it, we are going to do this. There is a famous saying: Lead or get out of the way. I'm going to say to my Tory friends, members of Parliament and members of provincial Parliament, if you don't want to lead on the pension issue, get out of the way so we can show the leadership that we are trying to show. How can you not show leadership on this issue? You should be, at this point, petitioning your federal members of Parliament. You should be saying to them, "Listen, Ontarians need this. Canadians need this." Study after study has shown that CPP isn't enough. Study after study has shown that Ontarians are not saving enough. We need a solution; we need to show leadership. We can't just turn a blind eye; we cannot be ideological.

The other thing that I can't understand is, if you think the government has no role in providing people pensions, that people ought to be saving on their own, fine. Then, as a student of economics, I can tell you, if you want to incent people to save, what you do is you cut income tax but you raise expenditure taxes and you raise consumption taxes. Why on earth would you cut the GST? It makes no sense. If you want to incent people to save, it makes no sense for the federal members of Parliament

and for Mr. Harper to have cut the GST. So I don't understand. You don't want to lead on pensions, you don't want to help Ontarians save, and you will not even follow a tax policy that would let Ontarians save. At least if you could be consistent in your ideology, that would be helpful.

Mr. Steven Del Duca: Consistently wrong.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Thank you so much to the member from Vaughan.

The other thing that I just want to say is that I get calls all the time from seniors in my riding who talk about the fact that their CPP just isn't enough. I'm sure you get those calls as well. I believe I'm a realist. Let's solve the problem at hand. Let's see what we can do. Why can't we all work together?

This opposition day motion is nothing but—it's just cheap politics. But here's the thing: It's not even going to get you the politics, because I speak to people in my riding, and regardless of their partisanship they all agree—everybody in Ontario agrees—that people ought to be able to retire with a decent pension. I don't think there is an argument around that. So the only issue now is how we go about doing it.

Study after study shows that Ontarians are not saving enough. Since the federal government will not show the leadership they ought to be showing, what we have come up is very simple: a made-in-Ontario solution. Guess what? There are a lot of provinces that actually support us on this. There are a lot of provinces who are now looking at Ontario for leadership because the federal government has failed to provide leadership.

So what we've done is we have struck an expert committee, and this panel is going to look at the best way that we can enhance pensions for Ontarians. I would ask the opposition not to jump the gun. You haven't even heard the details; you have no idea what the plan is. So instead of shooting down an imaginary plan, why not work with us? Why not work with us to help Ontarians have a pension?

I couldn't agree more with what the third party said, which is that the Conservatives have consistently shown that they will shoot down anything and everything. You've become the party of no. You don't stand for anything that says yes, other than the right to work. All you stand for is, "I'm against this, I'm against this and I'm against this." It's about time you started to say that you are for Ontarians, that you are here for Ontarians. It's about time that you started to stand up and say that Ontarians deserve a good pension, and applaud and take pride in the fact, as an Ontarian—take off your partisan hat—that here in Canada we, the province of Ontario—

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: We're sick of you. When are you going to get it through your head? We're sick of you. What part don't you understand?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member from Simcoe North will come to order.

Hon. David Zimmer: Don't be rude.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: Rude? Coming from you?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): The member for Simcoe North, come to order. The member for Mississauga East–Cooksville has the floor.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Thank you, Speaker.

I'm just going to end by saying that I am really, really proud to be part of a team that is looking at a made-in-Ontario solution. I'm really, really proud of a Premier who—

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): I'm going to ask the member for Simcoe North to withdraw his unparliamentarily comment.

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I'm not sure I did anything, but I withdraw, okay? But I'm going to continue heckling.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): Pardon?

Mr. Garfield Dunlop: I withdraw.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott): That's the way to do it. Thank you.

Sorry, the member for Mississauga East–Cooksville has the floor.

Ms. Dipika Damerla: Thank you, Speaker.

I apologize that I got you so agitated, but I'm just stating the facts.

I'm just going to end by saying that I heard the third party say they will not be supporting this Conservative opposition day motion, and I look forward to voting against it and defeating it and standing up for my constituents.

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

Mrs. Julia Munro: I'm pleased to be able to speak to this motion this afternoon. I think people should look carefully at the wording of this motion because I believe it has, within it, a warning—a warning to all of us about the kind of strain that we are seeing obviously on all issues around taxation and revenue tools, but particularly today's discussion centres around the issue of payroll deductions and paycheque deductions. I think it's really important to focus on those because of the fact that they have a direct impact on both employees and employers.

When you look at the kinds of deductions that people face as employers, it seems to be the idea of government and agencies that there is just a well there that you can continue to draw from without regard for the kind of impact that those payroll deductions have. This motion allows us to have an opportunity to delve a little deeper into just how dangerous these are and, as well, for people who look at their paycheques and see what is at the top of the page and then what is the net take-home and the kinds of deductions that are represented there.

What we are looking at, for instance—just to put a few figures on this—is that, today, a person who earns \$34,000 may pay just under \$10,000 in deductions. When you look at that kind of bite out of someone's take-home pay, the notion that there's more room to make more deductions on the payroll just simply does not hold up to any standard of scrutiny because when you take away

that ability of the individual, you're actually taking away his ability to choose. He has less and less money in which to make a choice of how he's going to spend it and he's going to, most likely, spend it in a responsible way. He's going to make sure that the bills are paid—he might have trouble when he gets the hydro bill—but he's going to make sure that he can pay for his mortgage, his rent or things like that. So whenever there is a pressure on that take-home pay, that reduces not only his ability to pay in real terms but it also eats at that ability to make choices and to be responsible when you watch your money disappear.

It's really, I think, an issue that we should look at from that micro issue as well. What is this doing to employers and employees? Employers look at these deductions and they start to see the point at which they're earning less than their employees, in many cases, quite frankly. They're also looking at how they can adjust their business to stay in business, but maybe it means having to let someone go; maybe it means fewer hours. The point is that they, like the employee, are looking at fewer choices that they can make, fewer responsibilities that they have to the vitality and the viability of their business, just like the employee has to look at the viability of his own family life.

When we look at any potential possibility of adding to payroll deductions, we also, as taxpayers, need to look further at the fact that there are 1.3 million people who work in the public sector, so any kind of payroll adjustment decline is going to mean that it's coming out of the pocket of the taxpayer. He gets to pay for himself in his payroll deduction; he also gets to pay for those 1.3 million people.

I think that people, when they are making decisions about payroll deductions or paycheque deductions, need to look at it from that aspect. This is not a bottomless pit. It is not a well that just goes on forever. The companies that are having difficulty keeping their doors open, the families that are having difficulty meeting their responsibilities—these are the people we should keep in mind when we talk about this motion.

The problem is that the government has mused about adding payroll taxes. It's very important to look at what others say about that. We certainly have lots of evidence to suggest that this is a very dangerous precedent to begin. The CFIB has looked at the impact of any kind of payroll taxes and recognized that it's a job-killer. It means that people have to make those hard decisions. And so when you look at the expert advice and many others who have identified this kind of problem, they have also been able, through the Ministry of Finance, to look at their analysis, and their analysis shows that for every \$2 billion—I have it written down; \$2 billion is equal to several thousand jobs. Potentially, 150,000 jobs are at stake.

That's the kind of thing that on the macro level should make an impact on people who might skate over the problem of the individual or the individual business. But when you look at it as a macro issue, it's frightening to

think that so much could be at risk when we, in fact, are waking up every morning with 600,000 people and more unemployed and then to potentially, at will, take steps that would mean a further 150,000 people who would then be out of work.

Any kind of payroll tax is a job-killer, and obviously a new payroll tax would be a detriment to Ontario's economy. It's really a concern when you look at the fact that so much investment is fluid today. People can take their money out of the province or they can bring it in. When you consider that there's that fluidity with investment, it also means that we live in a very competitive world for job creation, and so it's most important that the government live within its means. What we're looking at today is the opposite.

The purpose of this motion is to provide a warning and it's also to recognize that you need to have a plan. Tim Hudak has provided that plan. We recognize the value of a job, and that is the centerpiece for our plan.

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

Hon. David Zimmer: I'm pleased to join in this debate. You know, there's been a lot of talk this afternoon, but the reality that we're really talking about is that under the existing CPP, Canada Pension Plan, it provides about \$12,000 a year. That's not enough money for anybody to live on if that's their only source of income. If you are a wealthy person and you're picking up another \$12,000 a year, you wouldn't even realize if you got it or if you didn't get it. But for those people who have spent a lifetime on minimum wage or low-paying jobs and who do not have a pension and find themselves having to survive after 65 or so on \$12,000 a year, that is very, very difficult.

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I know that the member opposite from Simcoe North probably won't agree with me on this, but I rather expect—I know that the College of Trades is a big buzz under his bonnet. It's people who are members of the College of Trades, like hairdressers, who probably don't have pensions, who will really appreciate the \$12,000 a year plus the enhancement that we want the federal government to sit down and do.

Now, what's the federal government's position on this? One way to address the shortfall to enhance the pension is to get the federal government to sit down with the provinces and with others and come up with a formula to increase that \$12,000 to a more realistic figure that's required in this modern day and age to live. But what has the federal government's position been? Well, the federal government's position at one time was that they seemed to be interested in it. Lately, the federal government, notwithstanding that a number of the provinces are very interested in working out some plan to enhance the CPP, has moved away from its initial support. Initially, back in 2010, they seemed to be in favour of CPP enhancement, but now they're citing a lack of consensus among provinces. Instead, it is promoting its own version of a program which is known as PRPP.

Hon. Jeff Leal: What does that stand for?

Hon. David Zimmer: I'm not quite sure what that stands for, but it's a savings program where they are putting the onus on the worker who wants to retire at 65 to have saved up enough money to supplement his own pension. But the problem is, how does someone on minimum wage save that extra money if they have a wife and a child and they are in a minimum wage job and they're suffering periods of layoffs and so on? They do not have the luxury of setting aside a chunk of money every month.

Now, those people who are on minimum wage and are depending on the CPP are entitled to be treated respectfully. One way that you treat them respectfully is that you provide them with a decent pension. Twelve thousand dollars a year is not a decent pension. Nobody can live on \$12,000 a year. Most of the people that are depending on that CPP pension are probably renting their living space, an apartment or something. Where in Toronto do you get a place for under \$1,000 a month? Where in some of the small towns of Ontario do you get a place for less than \$600 or \$700 a month? By the time you pay your rent, if you are in Toronto, you don't have anything left over. If you are living in other parts of the province, you've probably got a bit left over. But I do not understand why anybody of good conscience would not want to see people have a reasonable income with which to retire.

Now, the federal government says, "We can't move ahead with the enhancement program on the CPP because we can't find a consensus among the provinces." Well, the fact is that Ontario, Manitoba, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island support a CPP enhancement. Who is opposed? Well, you get wealthy provinces like Alberta, apparently, and some of the other provinces. Quebec is proceeding, I understand, with its own plan to enhance the program.

So what should we do here as responsible legislators? As responsible legislators, in the absence of federal leadership on this issue—and it's not surprising that there isn't federal leadership on this issue, because there's a whole host of issues that affect Ontario where there's a complete absence of federal leadership or participation where there should be.

Hon. Ted McMeekin: Like what?

Hon. David Zimmer: I'm asked for an example. Let's look at the Ring of Fire, because that's topical this month.

The Ring of Fire would help First Nations people. It would help the Ontario economy. It would help the Canadian economy. It would help everybody in Canada, and they are not at the table. They are not participating.

We want to sit down with the federal government and work out a plan to enhance the Canada Pension Plan. Where are they? "Well, we're not prepared to sit down on it. We don't want to do anything on it. We'll leave you on your own. We're not going to do anything." So the province and this Legislature, as responsible legislators, are prepared to step in and do something about enhancing pension plans for the people who most need them.

In fact, in Ontario, we absolutely recognize that Ontarians have a right to retire with security; it's a clear right, if you will. The federal government? That's not their view. They have unilaterally blocked any enhancement.

What is the result of that? Well, the result of that is, in fact, the federal government is abandoning seniors. They're abandoning the seniors who most depend on that modest pension, those for whom a modest and reasonable increase in the pension from \$12,000 to a higher sum would make a dramatic change in their life. It would take the emotional pressure off of them of how they're going to make ends meet and so on. The fact of the matter is, \$12,000 is just not enough to survive on.

Ontario is prepared to step in, and we will make, if necessary, a made-in-Ontario system. In fact, we've taken some steps in that regard. We've asked former Prime Minister Paul Martin—who was a Minister of Finance, who balanced budgets, who understands government finances, who understands how to manage government finances—to head up the panel.

The panel is made up of other pension experts. I can tell you their names: Bill Morneau, Keith Ambachtsheer, David Denison, Susan Eng, Melissa Kennedy and Jim Keohane. They're going to take a look at this whole issue of how we can have a viable pension plan and what we can do to enhance the CPP or come up with our own pension plan so that people can have the retirement they are entitled to. The panel will advise government on steps to be taken and the best way to achieve what we want to achieve, and that is a secure, reasonable, honourable and respectful retirement for our most vulnerable.

The leader of the official opposition: What's his view of this? He thinks that Ontario should not take leadership in anything. That's not surprising, because he's the same leader who, last year, was not prepared to even read the budget and who this year, apparently, is telling us he's not prepared to read the budget when it comes out, nor is he prepared to support it.

But our government knows that Ontarians expect leadership on this issue of retirement security and pension reform. They expect it, and they need it. We are prepared to step into the gap, the void, created by the federal government and develop a pension plan that is viable, that is fair and that is reasonable.

I say in closing, I daresay there are a whole lot of hairdressers at the College of Trades who are going to be very, very happy with pension enhancement.

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

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I'm very pleased to stand here and support my colleague from Nipissing on this very important motion. I feel that it demonstrates how the PC Party of Ontario is actually listening, actually getting it and actually taking action that reflects the will of the population in Ontario.

It's very interesting: Let's talk about and reflect a little bit on a tax on jobs. Essentially, payroll taxes are a type of tax based on workers' hours, wages or salaries. Governments collect payroll taxes in two ways: from workers

through deductions on their paycheques and from employers based on the amount of work their employees do.

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Payroll taxes are often called a tax on jobs because they are a government-imposed cost on hiring. That's key here.

Ms. Sylvia Jones: It's the Liberal way—

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: As my colleague from Dufferin—Caledon said, it's the Liberal way.

It's important to note that Ontario has the highest payroll taxes in Canada. On average, as we heard earlier, families pay \$9,970 a year in government payroll taxes, in addition to their personal income taxes. Quite frankly, Ontario cannot afford another Liberal scheme.

We have to talk about this a little more. We received documentation from the Ministries of Finance, Infrastructure and Transportation. This piece of documentation cites that any increase in taxes would have negative, long-run, macroeconomic impacts on the GDP and employment. Specifically, it goes on to say, "Payroll taxes would have the 'largest negative impact' on employment."

Madam Speaker, I'm afraid that what we're witnessing here is more of the same from a tired, old Liberal government that's out of gas. They have no other means to correct the mistakes they have made, except for digging into taxpayers' pockets. It has to stop.

Again, in this particular documentation that some of the members across the way from me might be familiar with, it goes on to say that a payroll tax lowers "business investment, relocation of business to other jurisdictions, reduced work effort and out-migration of people."

In my experience as critic of small business and red tape, and speaking to people around this province, that exact negative impact is starting to happen, and yet this Liberal government is turning a blind eye.

Before I get into those specific examples, I want to use my time by sharing some news, as well, that reflects on this negative tax.

On January 28, 2014, the Canadian Press posted a couple of quotes from Premier Wynne. It's interesting. Premier Wynne is quoted as saying, "The minority Liberal government is worried people are not saving enough for retirement." Well, I ask the party opposite, why are they not able to save for their retirement? It's because, time after time, this government is exposing taxpayers to the cost of their scandals, expecting them to just stand by and let that Liberal government dip their hands into their pockets more and more.

One of the recommendations that this motion implies is that the government needs to stop taxing the Ontario taxpayer for their mistakes. We have so many scandals that are wasting good, hard-earned taxpayer dollars. We have the green energy scheme. We have the billion-dollar scandal where we saw \$1.1 billion spent and wasted to save a couple of seats so that the Liberal government could form a minority government in 2011.

There was another news article posted on Monday, April 28, and it was quite interesting. This is from the

Star. There's a particular quote that reads, "It's not the government that's going to do it"—in terms of managing this OPP, which is a knee-jerk reaction in terms of titling. Recently, we've heard that it has been renamed the ORPP. This particular article posted yesterday, Monday, says the government is not going to do it; it's going to be an arm's-length organization that's going to manage, facilitate this ORPP. Well, Madam Speaker, and to everyone watching today, I say, no, thank you; we've had enough.

Let's think about Ornge for a second. How well has that worked? Let's think about eHealth. Ontario taxpayers cannot afford another Liberal arm's-length organization squandering hard-earned dollars.

This province is just a mess. I want to talk now about the end result of this mess that this Liberal government is creating.

There was a big focus on Windsor over the last couple of days. When I visited Windsor, I met with a small business owner who actually showed me his bills, and his electricity rates are higher than the rent he pays. How on earth is he going to afford another jobs tax? This ORPP is just not going to be palatable. People are out of money, and they are going to be looking for an out because, quite frankly, they're tired of paying for Liberal mistakes.

I want to talk about attending a meeting for Merit Ontario as well. I had the pleasure of meeting an industrious couple who are very, very worried about their future in Ontario. In fact, it's getting so bad, they're saying it won't take much more—like another tax, like ORPP—for them to close the doors of their Ontario business and relocate to Alberta, where they have a second business going, because they're fed up.

Then let's talk about the small manufacturer in Huron county that I met with a couple of weeks ago. They say that the only specialty and expertise that has been witnessed in this decade of despair from this Liberal government is the ability to fill file cabinets. What does she mean? She's talking about the burden of red tape and the unnecessary taxing and the unnecessary paperwork. This particular owner, it's sad to say, said that they are not encouraging their children to succeed them. Usually, if you put your whole heart and soul into growing a business, it would be a desire to have family members carry on the tradition that you strove so hard to establish. Sadly enough, their conclusion is, there is no future in small business in their particular manufacturing reality because of all the taxing and all the red tape and burden. So as I said, this particular Huron county manufacturer is recommending that their kids not go into their business. How sad is that?

Another thing we need to talk about is that the reality is that they talk about a pension plan, but for the retirees who are struggling to make ends meet, this particular tax will do nothing for them. Time and again, be it in my Blyth constituency office or my Kincardine constituency office, I have seniors coming in. This one couple in particular—they showed me their paperwork. Their electricity is more than what they're bringing in in old age security.

So I would say to this Liberal government: Get your act together. Stop the scandal. Start listening. You have the ability to right a number of wrongs. The Green Energy Act in particular is a piece of work that has done nothing but increase the cost of living in Ontario. When I think about those seniors who are seeing their bills go up as of May 1, because OEB is recognizing renewables over the next 12 months—that's causing it to happen—I say, shame on this Liberal government.

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

Mr. Steven Del Duca: I always enjoy starting off my remarks in this Legislature by talking about how I feel honoured to have the chance to stand and speak. I do again today on this particular motion, opposition day motion number 4. I've also had the benefit of having now been in my seat over the last little while and had the chance to listen to members from all three caucuses provide their comments. It's interesting—

Hon. Jeff Leal: This speech is going to be so good, I want to sit beside him.

Mr. Steven Del Duca: It's always good to have the very close support of the Minister of Rural Affairs and the member from Peterborough.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Good to be with you today.

Mr. Steven Del Duca: He's doing a phenomenal job representing the people of his riding and doing a phenomenal job as the Minister of Rural Affairs.

Hon. Jeff Leal: Thanks very much.

Mr. Steven Del Duca: It's quite amazing, because as I sat here and listened over the last little while to the comments made from virtually every person who spoke on this from both opposition caucuses, I wasn't quite sure where to begin with my comments, because there is so much that I heard over the last while that, in all truthfulness, has almost nothing to do with the motion that is before us, including the comments made just most recently by the member from Huron—Bruce, who ended up talking about things, from the Green Energy Act to a whole host of other matters, that don't actually get to the heart of what we are here to talk about this afternoon.

Interjection.

Mr. Steven Del Duca: It's clear that I've struck a nerve with that member, because of the comments that are coming back from the other side at this particular point.

What we are here to talk about with respect to this motion is how important, how crucial it is, because Ontario is at a very important juncture with respect to making sure that, as Ontarians age and as they leave the workforce because it is time to retire, this province does what it can to make sure that they have a secure retirement.

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We have heard everyone—certainly members of the NDP caucus who have spoken and members on this side—acknowledge that, while the CPP is a fairly foundational, fundamental social program here in the province of Ontario and in our country, after many, many

years of providing significant support to Canadians and to Ontarians, it's no longer sufficient.

That's why, over the last number of months, Ontario's Premier, Kathleen Wynne, has time and again demonstrated significant, strong leadership on this file, along with Ontario's Minister of Finance—the Minister of Finance I have an opportunity to work with closely as I serve as his parliamentary assistant.

The Premier and the Minister of Finance have demonstrated pan-Canadian leadership on this file. They have recognized that there is a looming crisis with respect to retirement security for the people of our province, and so they didn't actually just begin a conversation out of nowhere with respect to the importance of providing additional retirement security. They actually began the discussion and the dialogue with other provincial Premiers and counterpart finance ministers, and sought to engage the federal government in a meaningful discussion around this very important issue.

As has been said by members on this side of the House and has been said by the Premier and the Minister of Finance and many members of the governing caucus, there was actual consensus that was forged amongst the various provinces that had an interest in moving this agenda forward—not necessarily flicking a magical switch on a Monday and saying on Tuesday that everything will be ready and set to go, but seeking a federal partner that would at least be willing to sit down and have a conversation so that all of us, provincial representatives in the various Legislatures across the country and federal members of the House of Commons, could look into the eyes of people who would seek to retire in the future and would say that we did our bit, that we worked together, that we rolled up our sleeves and we came up with a plan that would make sense for every single Canadian, including for those living, of course, here in our wonderful province of Ontario.

After months of very hard work, determination and energy, and after forging that consensus that I referenced just a second ago, the Premier of Ontario and her counterparts reached out to the federal government and said, "Sit down with us; work with us. Let's be constructive about this; let's push partisanship to the side. It doesn't matter what part of this country you come from; everybody deserves the opportunity to have significant security and sustainable security in their retirement."

They sought to have a federal partner begin and engage in that kind of meaningful dialogue. And what happened, Madam Speaker? As the Premier of Ontario, Premier Kathleen Wynne, made that attempt alongside her fellow Premiers, Canada's Conservative federal government said, "We don't even want to engage in a conversation. We don't even want to entertain the discussion that perhaps Premier Kathleen Wynne and the rest of her provincial counterparts have come up with a plan that makes sense in terms of enhancing the retirement security of Canadians from coast to coast to coast and, of course, for Ontarians."

So what did the Premier then do, Madam Speaker? She decided that it was important to demonstrate, yet

again, what leadership is. And what leadership is, in this case, is working hard to develop and eventually to deploy a made-in-Ontario retirement or pension security plan.

As we've heard over the last number of days, if not weeks, that is in fact the course that Ontario will be embarking on and, of course, Minister Sousa, this coming Thursday, May 1, will present his budget in this Legislature. It's important to make sure we note: In this Legislature the budget will be presented, not elsewhere; not at Magna, not in Brampton, not elsewhere, but in this Legislature. In that budget, I think every Ontarian looks forward to seeing the details of the plan that, over time and in the future, will provide that significant support.

So here we are today, and we have this motion and, of course, the debate that surrounds the motion, particularly from the official opposition and also from members of the third party—hopefully, I'll have enough time to respond to some of the comments that we've heard from members of the third party in the course of debate this afternoon.

Specifically, it saddens me to think that members of the official opposition are yet again determined to be nothing but destructive and reckless with such an important issue, very similar to their federal counterparts, the counterparts the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville referenced they should be reaching out to, they should be petitioning and they should be lobbying. Instead of doing that meaningful work on behalf of Ontarians who will seek to retire and want that security, they've done nothing but come up with their own reckless proposals and ideas, and we see the manifestation of that recklessness in today's motion brought forward by the member from Nipissing.

I had the chance to listen very closely to both the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs in his remarks today, the member from Mississauga East–Cooksville and the others from this side of the House—the member from Mississauga–Streetsville—who spoke very eloquently on our side about the importance of moving forward with a constructive dialogue. I think it's really important to remember that when the official opposition had the opportunity to work with us—and this is a pattern that we've seen emerge over the last couple of years: that without even giving a thought to working with the government or working with the members of the third party, the NDP, they seek to lash out, to move forward, again, in that very reckless way and not demonstrate the kind of leadership.

They talked a lot, in the course of the debate this afternoon, about the importance of jobs. Of course, we on this side of the House don't disagree at all about the importance of creating good-paying jobs. That's why, just earlier this week, the Premier spoke to the Empire Club and unveiled or talked about the details, announced the details, of the government's significant plans around job creation for the next 10 years.

As I sat in the audience and listened to the Premier speak at the Empire Club just the other day, it actually brought to mind the opportunity that I had just last week,

where myself and the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, the Honourable Michael Coteau, spent some time at a company in my riding called Vision Extrusions. We were there to make an announcement in conjunction with the announcement that the Minister of Energy was making simultaneously in Ottawa about some of the measures, some of the reforms that are transformational in nature, that our government has brought forward to help companies like Vision Extrusions and hundreds of others in similar positions across this province that continue to thrive. I want to thank the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration for being there that day to make that specific announcement in my riding.

What that announcement will mean is that this particular company, Vision Extrusions, will be better positioned to expand their operations, hire hundreds more Ontarians, and position themselves to compete not just with other companies in Ontario, not just with other companies across Canada, but right across North America. In fact, that is a company that has over 70% of its current production sold in the United States. They are based in my riding. I'm very proud of that fact. But as we walked around the factory, a spotless factory that Mr. Vic De Zen created with his own creativity, with his own energy, with his own enthusiasm and entrepreneurial spirit, as we had the chance to walk around and take that tour of that particular factory, what was interesting was to see and meet the individuals who work in that factory. It's like a big family, actually, in that particular factory: hundreds of people, women and men, many of whom have worked for Mr. De Zen for quite some time. And they're thrilled to work for him. He's a great employer. But as the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and I looked at those people and had the chance to speak with them and interact with them, what became clear to us was that not only did they want that job that pays them well today; they want to know that, in the future, they and their children will have the opportunity to retire in dignity and to have the kind of security that they need.

By engaging in this discussion now, by demonstrating exactly what leadership is, the Premier of Ontario is providing those people with hope. She's providing them with a real, concrete plan for how to make sure that the kind of retirement security that's needed in this province is actually delivered. There is only one leader in this Legislature and in this province who has demonstrated consistently, over the last number of months, that she has a real plan—and not just a plan, because I heard the member from Timmins–James Bay, in his remarks this afternoon, talk about all the great things the NDP have come up with over the last 10 years and how we haven't done anything for the last 10 years, apparently, on this side of the House. There is only one leader in this Legislature who not only has the plan, but has the determination—

Hon. Jeff Leal: Vision.

Mr. Steven Del Duca: —the energy and the vision to move forward with that plan, and the strength of vision to

move forward with that plan, and that is Ontario's Premier, the Honourable Kathleen Wynne. I'm telling you, when I think of the tens of thousands of people that I'm proud to represent from my community of Vaughan, and I look at them and I say, "In the future, because of the decisions we make in this House, because of the leadership demonstrated by Premier Kathleen Wynne, you will have the retirement security that you need," it makes me proud to be an Ontario Liberal and be an MPP and serve in this Legislature.

I encourage every member in this House to vote against this motion and to join with us to bring meaningful retirement security to the people of this province. Thank you very much.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The time has expired.

Mr. Fedeli has moved opposition day number 4. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, say "aye."

All those opposed, say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

This will be a 10-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1750 to 1800.

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

Interjections.

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

Mr. Fedeli has moved opposition day number 4. All those in favour, please rise one at a time to be recognized by the Clerk.

Ayes

Arnott, Ted	Jackson, Rod	Nicholls, Rick
Bailey, Robert	Jones, Sylvia	O'Toole, John
Barrett, Toby	Leone, Rob	Ouellette, Jerry J.
Chudleigh, Ted	MacLaren, Jack	Pettapiece, Randy
Clark, Steve	MacLeod, Lisa	Scott, Laurie
Dunlop, Garfield	Martow, Gila	Thompson, Lisa M.
Elliott, Christine	McDonnell, Jim	Walker, Bill
Fedeli, Victor	McKenna, Jane	Wilson, Jim
Hardeman, Ernie	McNaughton, Monte	Yakabuski, John
Harris, Michael	Miller, Norm	Yurek, Jeff
Hillier, Randy	Milligan, Rob E.	
Hudak, Tim	Munro, Julia	

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

Nays

Albanese, Laura	Duguid, Brad	McNeely, Phil
Balkissoon, Bas	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Meilleur, Madeleine
Bartolucci, Rick	Fraser, John	Milloy, John
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Gerretsen, John	Moridi, Reza
Bradley, James J.	Gravelle, Michael	Murray, Glen R.
Cansfield, Donna H.	Hoskins, Eric	Naqvi, Yasir
Chiarelli, Bob	Hunter, Mitzie	Oraziotti, David
Colle, Mike	Jaczek, Helena	Piruzza, Teresa
Coteau, Michael	Kwinter, Monte	Qaadri, Shafiq
Crack, Grant	Leal, Jeff	Sandals, Liz
Damerla, Dipika	MacCharles, Tracy	Sergio, Mario
Del Duca, Steven	Mangat, Amrit	Wong, Soo
Delaney, Bob	Matthews, Deborah	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dhillon, Vic	Mauro, Bill	Zimmer, David
Dickson, Joe	McMeekin, Ted	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 34; the nays are 44.

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

Motion negatived.

The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac): There is a late show. As we settle, we'll continue with the late show once we're done.

ROYAL ASSENT

SANCTION ROYALE

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I beg to inform the House that in the name of Her Majesty the Queen, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been pleased to assent to certain bills in his office.

The Deputy Clerk (Mr. Todd Decker): The following are the titles of the bills to which His Honour did assent:

An Act to amend the Employment Standards Act, 2000 in respect of family caregiver, critically ill child care and crime-related child death or disappearance leaves of absence / Loi modifiant la Loi de 2000 sur les normes d'emploi en ce qui concerne le congé familial pour les aidants naturels, le congé pour soins à un enfant gravement malade et le congé en cas de décès ou de disparition d'un enfant dans des circonstances criminelles.

An Act to revive 434753 Ontario Ltd.

An Act to revive 1360906 Ontario Limited.

An Act respecting Toronto International Film Festival Inc.

An Act respecting YMCA of Hamilton/Burlington/Brantford.

An Act to revive 394557 Ontario Limited.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Pursuant to standing order 38, the question that this House do now adjourn is deemed to have been made.

ADJOURNMENT DEBATE

RENEWABLE ENERGY

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The member for Huron-Bruce has given notice of dissatisfaction with the answer to a question given on April 16 by the Minister of Energy. The member has up to five minutes to debate the matter, and the parliamentary assistant may reply for up to five minutes.

Please begin.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I am pleased to have a second opportunity to revisit a very important subject, not only to the residents in my riding of Huron-Bruce, but across Ontario, because the underlying issue impacts all of us.

As this green spiral continues out of control, every person in Ontario is witnessing and experiencing some-

thing that has never been experienced before in Ontario, and that is an outrageous gouging in terms of electricity prices, which just recently the Ontario Energy Board has indicated is the cause of a rate hike that we're going to experience on May 1—and that cause is the onslaught of renewables that will be coming online over the next 12 months.

In that spirit, Speaker, I asked the Minister of Energy on April 16 why he would not impose an immediate moratorium.

All the while, we're experiencing jurisdictions that are benefiting from our surplus energy. We're experiencing proponents of renewables that are benefiting, at the taxpayers' expense, for not generating a source of electricity, in terms of turbines being curtailed. We're experiencing a lot of strife.

Families are moving out of Ontario. Just this past week—

Interjection.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: They are so. Esther Wrightman and her family are relocating.

Interjection.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: You'd better tune in to what is really going on in Ontario. There are residents moving out because of your failed green energy scheme. Esther Wrightman and her—

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): I'm going to interrupt. I want to be able to hear the speaker. I do not want to have it drowned out.

Please continue.

Ms. Lisa M. Thompson: I really appreciate that, because this is very serious.

Families are relocating and being driven away from their home communities because of the mismanagement of the energy file.

To that end, it is not acceptable for the Minister of Energy to evade questions when such large amounts of taxpayer dollars are at stake. The minister has a responsibility to be accountable and to ensure that decisions are made in the best interests of the public. Evading questions and sitting on hands is not the answer. That's what we see, Madam Speaker, unfortunately, from both the Liberals and the NDP. Valuable members, as I've mentioned, of local communities have just notified me that they're selling their homes and their businesses, and moving to another province because they don't see a future for their family here in Ontario.

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Interestingly enough, when the OEB announced their rate hike as of Thursday, Brady Yauch, an economist and executive director of the Consumer Policy Institute, reported that, according to the OEB, "the cost of electricity from renewable energy producers will be \$3.4 billion over the next 12 months, while the value of that power on the open electricity market is \$400 million."

Speaker, while we have the province turning upside down and irate over the scandalous \$1.1 billion wasted on gas plant cancellations, people should be equally

dismayed and concerned over this scandal and this mismanagement of hard-earned dollars. Again, I want to repeat: "The cost of electricity from renewable energy producers will be \$3.4 billion over the next 12 months, while the value of that power on the open electricity market is \$400 million."

I encourage people to stand up and say to this Liberal government, "Enough. Change is needed."

The OPA has under contract 8,170 megawatts of renewable, non-hydroelectric generation, and the latest request for a qualification directive to the OPA is to run two more procurements.

Madam Speaker, I come back to my original question: Why on earth is this Liberal government continuing on a course that is not only going to bankrupt this province but is going to bankrupt the ordinary citizens who are striving so hard to make ends meet? It just doesn't make any sense whatsoever. Enough is enough.

Parker Gallant estimates that if the contracts are implemented, renewable energy developers will be paid approximately \$100 billion over the 20-year term of the contracts.

When other jurisdictions around this world are finding ways to correct their mistakes as they experienced with renewables, I encourage this Liberal government in what seemingly might be some of their few weeks, few months in office, to do the right thing and place an immediate moratorium on any more renewables.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The parliamentary assistant has the floor.

Mr. Bob Delaney: First of all, I thank the member for Huron-Bruce for her questions and certainly for the concerns she raised.

She raised the matter of the impact of renewable energy in the area that she represents, and I get that. One of the things that's worth mentioning, however, is that in the member's riding is the Bruce nuclear power development, something of which, as Ontarians, we're all very, very proud.

One of the challenges facing us as Ontarians in the next 20 years is going to be taking our world-class fleet of nuclear reactors, of which there are eight at Bruce and four at Darlington and currently eight at Pickering—the Pickering reactors represent a 1950s design and a 1960s construction, and there is in practical terms no realistic way as those reactors reach the end of their useful life. By useful life, I mean that no matter how well maintained a piece of machinery is, there's a point at which the piece of machinery is simply worn out. So those eight reactors will need to be replaced with other sources of generation, possibly with new reactors as time goes on. All eight of the Bruce reactors will need to come out of service, one at a time, for refurbishment and all four of the Darlington reactors will need to come out of service one at a time for refurbishment, a process that will begin shortly and actually take somewhere in excess of 20 years to complete.

The question then is, why is Ontario still procuring electricity from renewable sources? Part of the reason is that the alternative might be to generate it from coal, and

now Ontario is the first jurisdiction in North America to be completely, absolutely free of coal. We no longer generate electricity by burning coal. That's meant, particularly for those of us in urban areas, substantially cleaner air.

So while the member has raised questions about wind turbines in her area, let me tell you about some of the impact of wind turbines and other forms of renewable energy, which would include water power, solar photovoltaics, landfill gas, biogas, but for all practical purposes, water power, solar photovoltaics, or solar PV, and wind turbines. It has meant that in an urban area, such as where I come from in Mississauga, where 10 or 12 years ago we would have a dozen or two dozen smog alert days and heavy air days in the course of a summer, last summer we had two. The previous summer, we had one. The summer before that, we had none.

Hon. John Gerretsen: Cleaner air.

Mr. Bob Delaney: We have cleaner air. Part of the return for the Ontario taxpayer on renewable energy is cleaner air. It has also meant that in our schools our kids are not showing up with puffers. It means kids can breathe. There are some very short-term health impacts in moving to renewable energy.

In the long-term energy plan, which I know the member has read—and she should have internalized a bit

more of it, which is something I'm sure she will as time goes on. As she grasps the impact of the long-term energy plan, she'll know that, in listening to some of the concerns she and her colleagues have raised, in changing the way renewable energy is procured, now wind power is what's called "dispatchable." This means that when wind power and solar PV power is not needed, it can be unplugged from the grid. I think she gets this point.

The feed-in tariff, for people who don't know, allows homeowners, business owners and private developers to generate electricity from renewable energy and to sell it to the Ontario grid at a contracted price for a fixed term; in other words, in many ways, treating that supply contract just like a mortgage.

Hon. John Gerretsen: They put up the capital cost.

Mr. Bob Delaney: As my colleague from Kingston says, in this case, instead of the taxpayer putting up the capital cost, the developer puts up the capital cost. This would apply to wind, which the member has mentioned, to water power, to biogas, to landfill gas and to solar photovoltaics—that's all the time I have, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): There being no further matter to debate, I deem the motion to adjourn to be carried. This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1817.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
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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

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Bartolucci, Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
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Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Coteau, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Del Duca, Steven (LIB)	Vaughan	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
Flynn, Hon. / L'hon. Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
Gates, Wayne (NDP)	Niagara Falls	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	

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Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor–Tecumseh	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Holyday, Douglas C. (PC)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Employment / Ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et de l'Emploi
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Hon. / L'hon. Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	Minister of Rural Affairs / Ministre des Affaires rurales
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Hon. / L'hon. Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
MacLaren, Jack (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Hon. / L'hon. Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Milligan, Rob E. (PC)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Moridi, Hon. / L'hon. Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation

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

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Laura Albanese, Steve Clark
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Rob Leone, Amrit Mangat
Taras Natyshak, Jerry J. Ouellette
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Douglas C. Holyday, Mitzie Hunter
Monte McNaughton, Michael Prue
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Donna H. Cansfield
Sarah Campbell, Donna H. Cansfield
Grant Crack, Dipika Damerla
John Fraser, Michael Harris
Peggy Sattler, Laurie Scott
Jeff Yurek
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**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
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Lorenzo Berardinetti, Percy Hatfield
Mitzie Hunter, Jim McDonell
Randy Pettapiece, Monique Taylor
Lisa M. Thompson
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Phil McNeely
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Bob Delaney, Frank Klees
Jack MacLaren, Phil McNeely
Rob E. Milligan, Shafiq Qaadri
Jonah Schein
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

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Bas Balkissoon, Grant Crack
Vic Dhillon, Garfield Dunlop
Cindy Forster, Lisa MacLeod
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha
Todd Smith
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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des comptes publics**

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France Gélinas, Helena Jaczek
Phil McNeely, Norm Miller
John O'Toole, Jagmeet Singh
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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Catherine Fife, John Fraser
Monte Kwinter, Jane McKenna
Rick Nicholls, Peter Tabuns
Bill Walker
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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Ted Chudleigh
Bas Balkissoon, Ted Chudleigh
Mike Colle, Vic Dhillon
Cheri DiNovo, Ernie Hardeman
Rod Jackson, Helena Jaczek
Paul Miller
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Select Committee on Developmental Services / Comité spécial
des services aux personnes ayant une déficience intellectuelle**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott
Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon
Cheri DiNovo, Christine Elliott
Mitzie Hunter, Rod Jackson
Sylvia Jones, Monique Taylor
Soo Wong
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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