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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Monday 7 May 2012**

**Lundi 7 mai 2012**

Speaker  
Honourable Dave Levac

Président  
L'honorable Dave Levac

Clerk  
Deborah Deller

Greffière  
Deborah Deller

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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO**

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**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO**

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*The House met at 1030.*

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

*Prayers.*

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS**

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Page Carley Maitland is doing a great job here as a page representing Wellington–Halton Hills, and I'm pleased to welcome her mother, Jill Maitland, and her aunt, Kim Peel, who are here today as well.

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** I'm delighted to welcome guests from the Tibetan Parliament in exile: Norbu Tsering, Tsering Youdon, and also with them is Lhawang Jongdong. Welcome.

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** I would like to welcome to the Ontario Legislature today Amie Tolton, teacher, with her grades 11 and 12 senior photography and visual arts students from Stephen Lewis Secondary School, Mississauga–Erindale riding. They are here to showcase Breaking Silence, exhibiting mental health portraits, so I want to extend welcome all the students and the teachers from Stephen Lewis Secondary School, but I also want to encourage the members to see their exhibition as well.

**Mr. John O'Toole:** I'm pleased to introduce guests here today: Amy Phillips, who's a former Queen's Park staffer—welcome Amy; and a good friend as well, Christopher Sallie, also from my community of Bowmanville. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** It's my pleasure to welcome Mr. Mike McRae and his daughter, Marisa McRae. Marisa is a grade 5 student from Richmond Hill and she's here to study governance. I also want to welcome my old friend Mr. Esmaeil Zahedi, the former president of the Canadian Society of Iranian Engineers and Architects. Please welcome them.

**Mr. Monte McNaughton:** I'm proud to welcome to the Ontario Legislature today family friends from the town of Bothwell, Bill and Barb McMaster and Cameron McMaster. Welcome to Queen's Park. I would also like to welcome—I saw her in the hallway at Queen's Park today—former Liberal member of provincial Parliament from my riding Maria Van Bommel. Welcome back to Queen's Park.

**Hon. Michael Chan:** I would like to welcome Troy Young, the chair of the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario, and other members of the board. Please join us for a reception from 5 to 7 in the legislative dining room. To our guests, welcome to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** I'd like everyone in the Legislature to give a warm welcome to my constituency staff that are down today, Bonnie Harrison and Donna Fournier. You can stand up, guys.

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I'd like to extend a very warm welcome to members of Children's Mental Health Ontario, who are here today at the Legislature in celebration of Children's Mental Health Week. I look forward, as many other members of the Legislature do, to meeting with representatives from CMHO this afternoon to discuss the mental health needs of children and youth.

**Mr. Rick Nicholls:** I'm pleased to introduce today my daughter Brooke and my bride of 35 years today, my wife, Dianne.

In addition, I would also like to welcome a former page from Chatham–Kent–Essex back to Queen's Park: Oliver Campbell and his mother, Linda.

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Speaker, would you please help welcome the Kingston Accommodation Partners who are here today. They are Murray Matheson, Heather Ford, Jeff Garrah, Rob Carnegie and Bill Swan, and they're seated in the gallery over here.

**Mr. Michael Harris:** I'd like to welcome Jeremy Wittet today from Kitchener–Waterloo, a former assistant to the great Elizabeth Witmer. Welcome, Jeremy, to the Legislature.

**Mr. Kim Craitor:** I'm extremely proud to introduce the parents of Thomas Mingle. Thomas is one of the students who's on the minister's student advisory council. That's Louisa and Tom Mingle, and they're here in the gallery.

I also want to mention how talented our riding is, because I also have another student from my riding, Connor Bitter, who's here with the Minister of Education's student council, and his parents, Lisa and Clark Bitter.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I'd like to welcome Shirley Wong, who's in the visitors' gallery. Shirley is a University of Waterloo accounting and business student currently volunteering in my office. Welcome, Shirley.

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I'd like to introduce the student advisory council and their parents and guardians who are all here today. Welcome.

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** The Tourism Industry Association of Ontario joins us today, with Gary Masters, Bill Swan, Marie Lalonde and Murray Matheson. Welcome to Queen's Park.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Point of order, Mr. Speaker: I believe we have unanimous consent that all members be permitted to wear ribbons in recognition of Children's Mental Health Awareness Week.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Hamilton Mountain has asked for unanimous consent to wear the ribbon this week. Do we have agreement? Agreed.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I'm delighted to welcome the charming John Winston from Tourism Ontario, who is with us here today. Welcome, John.

**Mr. Shafiq Qaadri:** I'd like to welcome a good friend to all members and to both sides of this House, the honourable Jane Holmes of the Woodbine Entertainment Group.

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** I want to welcome my granddaughter here. She's a former page: Rachel Rynard. She's with us today too.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** And by way of celebration, I would like to bring to the members' attention, returning to the House, the member from Ottawa Centre after the birth of their first child. Congratulations.

It is now time for oral questions.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** It has been pointed out that a tradition almost got broken, and it won't. In the Speaker's gallery is a former member. Maria Van Bommel is here, joining us. We welcome you.

A point of order for the member from Oxford.

**Mr. Ernie Hardeman:** Mr. Speaker, I'm just reminding, as you introduced the member in the gallery, that I just wanted to let everyone in the Legislature know that at 11:45 we're having the flag-raising ceremony. The Dutch flag is being raised in front of Queen's Park to recognize Dutch Heritage Month in the province of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** That's not a point of order, but it was a really good plug.

It is now time for oral questions.

1040

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### GOVERNMENT SPENDING

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** My question is to the Premier. Premier, the elections yesterday in France, Germany and Greece risk prolonging the slow growth and recession in Europe and also could exacerbate the debt crisis. Your budget, which rests on some very precarious assumptions around a mandatory wage freeze and international economic growth, is now in jeopardy.

*Interjections.*

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Premier, you have had no actions since the downgrade from Moody's, now two weeks ago. Let me suggest some action that will help us deal with growing international concerns. Will you support a mandatory, across-the-board public sector pay freeze to save us \$2 billion?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I appreciate the question. There is, of course, good cause for us to remain optimistic about our future here in Ontario when it comes to our economy.

Not only is StatsCanada telling us that we lead the country when it comes to job creation, but they've just told us that we led the country in terms of building permits in March, at a value of \$2.7 billion. That's over twice that of the second-highest province. The construction industry in Ontario today is thriving. In the last two years, we've created 33,900 jobs, for a total of over 440,000 jobs in construction in Ontario. If there's one indicator—if there's one canary in the coal mine—that tells us about optimism for the future, it's building permits: people making investments and creating jobs right here in Ontario.

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Sadly, the Premier's Pollyanna approach on the economy seems not to have changed at all.

Premier, your budget rests on some very wobbly assumptions around achieving a voluntary pay freeze, which you've failed to do since you announced this policy in 2010, and international economic growth. It seems sensible to us in the PC Party to bring in a mandatory public sector wage freeze across the board. Whether you're a doctor, teacher or firefighter, all of us should share in this. This will save \$2 billion to the taxpayer and address an unfairness where private sector workers are paying more and more in taxes to the public sector that have wages and benefits beyond what is happening in the private sector.

So I'll ask you again, Premier: Since your voluntary wage freeze has been a dramatic failure, will you endorse our approach, a mandatory public sector wage freeze, to save us \$2 billion?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** No, we won't, Speaker. We won't endorse that approach. We have our own approach.

We made it clear in our budget in a very specific way that we will sit down with our labour partners; we will enter into negotiations. Our objective is to ensure that there are no increases in overall compensation over the course of the next couple of years, to begin. We've made it clear that should we not be able to achieve those objectives at the table, then we will take other measures. We made that very, very clear, but we feel a sense of responsibility. Furthermore, we feel obligated to follow the law set up by the Supreme Court of Canada when it comes to dealing with our public sector partners.

So we're not going out there looking for a fight, as my honourable colleague opposite would have us do, but we will stand up for taxpayers to ensure that we hold the line—press the pause button for a couple of years.

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Through you, Speaker, to the Premier: This sort of weaselly use of the language—"other measures"—has not accomplished anything in the last two years. In fact, we've seen public sector wages and benefits accelerate way beyond what's happening in the

private sector under your government. It is the single, biggest driver of expenses—over 55% of the overall budget.

Speaker, if the Premier refuses to take action that is fair and reasonable, the Ontario PC caucus will take that action. In fact, Premier, if you refuse to act, we will bring in our own bill that will be a fair and reasonable mandatory public sector wage freeze across the board, to treat all of us equally and save taxpayers \$2 billion. If you won't act, will your members support the PC bill that will bring in a mandatory public sector wage freeze?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** My honourable colleague will know that we've been engaged in discussions, for example, with our doctors and our teachers. Undoubtedly, there will be more to come. We're now in what I guess you'd call the short strokes—down to the short strokes—when it comes to our conversation with the doctors. I'm sure that my honourable colleague will want to be supportive of the approach that we are taking, although I'd like to hear him on this score.

Our intention is to secure a net freeze in terms of compensation—I mean a real freeze; nothing in between—to ensure that we can, in fact, as we invest more dollars into health care, put that into more home care, for example, and more community-based care, as opposed to compensation for our partners the physicians.

I expect that my honourable colleague will at some point in time express his public support for the approach that we are bringing in this regard.

#### GOVERNMENT SPENDING

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Back to the Premier: Well, I have. We believe that the total compensation package should be frozen.

My question back to you, Premier, is, why don't you believe that should apply to the rest of the broader public service? If you think it's the right approach in this circumstance, why aren't you doing it for the rest of us, whether that be teachers, whether it be firefighters, whether it be administrative staff or managers? It seems to be reasonable that we should treat everybody fairly and equally—an across-the-board public sector wage freeze for us all that will save us \$2 billion.

Premier, why won't you endorse a policy across the broader public sector that makes sense from the taxpayers' point of view and gets us out of this fiscal mess?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I think we may have some common ground here. I think we share the same objective, but I would argue that we are going about the attainment of our objective in a more thoughtful, responsible and lawful way.

Speaker, we are obligated to sit down with our partners to make a determined effort to negotiate a settlement that meets the targets that we've set in our budgetary plan and honours our commitment to the people of Ontario, who want us to press the pause button when it comes to compensation for a couple of years.

Furthermore, I remind my honourable colleague that the Supreme Court of Canada has spoken out on these

matters in a very definite way, as has one Don Drummond in his report, who we objectively approached, being recommended by my honourable colleague.

We are, in fact, working with all of our public sector partners, and we will secure what we need to do on behalf of the plan that we—

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** It's hard, Speaker, to understand the Premier's argument. Sometimes he says that the Supreme Court is an obstacle, then he says it's in his favour—

**Interjection:** A lot of wiggle words.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** —a lot of wiggle words from the Premier.

To me, the matter is clear. There should be a mandatory public sector wage freeze for all of us in the broader public sector, across the board.

Premier, your approach won't apply to colleges and universities; it won't apply to municipalities. Quite frankly, sir, you continue to kick this can down the road, and the can is growing bigger all the time—a \$30-billion deficit we're staring into.

The CFIB recently put out a report that said that a public sector worker is making 27% more in wages, benefits and pensions than the equivalent private sector worker. I don't think that's fair. A way of helping to address this in the world of a \$30-billion deficit, Premier, is a public sector wage freeze across the board for the broader public sector. It's too bad you won't do it.

If you won't act, we will, and we ask for your members' support in making this a law in the province of Ontario.

*Interjections.*

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

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I say to my honourable colleague, he's in a decided minority in the approach that he advocates. You might want to take a look at the approach being brought by all the other provinces, I believe eight out of nine of which are running deficits; and the federal government, which is also running a deficit. All of them have rejected the approach being advocated by my honourable colleague.

Why is it that they are doing that? Why is it that governments of all political stripes facing deficits have rejected the approach being championed by my honourable colleague? Because it doesn't work; because we feel a sense of responsibility to sit down with our partners in the public sector, and we also feel duty-bound to honour the legislative requirements set up by the Supreme Court of Canada.

We will get there, Speaker. We will achieve our objectives, we will meet the targets we set out in our budget, but we'll do it in a way that's in keeping with our responsibilities.

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

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** I'm sad the Premier does not have the sense of responsibility that says leadership means

taking immediate action to address our fiscal crisis. You had a downgrade two weeks ago; you're on credit watch. The Premier says, what about the other provinces? Premier, the deficit that you have dug is greater than the combined deficits of all the other nine provinces combined. That's why we need action in Ontario. That's why we need to take a courageous course that is right, reasonable and fair.

Premier, we've seen you wiggle off the hook before. You had a secret deal with OPSEU that gave wage increases after the election campaign. We have seen, between 2004 and 2009, that public sector pay went up 19% on average, way beyond the private sector, particularly families on fixed incomes.

It is the right thing to do. The time for action is now. Will you support our bill for a public sector wage freeze across the board and save Ontario families \$2 billion?

1050

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** No, Speaker, I will not support the approach recommended by my honourable colleague. I am with Prime Minister Harper on this. I am with all the other provinces on this. I am with Don Drummond on this as well. And I'm with Ontario businesses and Ontario families on this. They want us to act in a responsible way. They want us to act in a way that's going to guarantee that we're going to achieve the result that we have to achieve.

My honourable colleague would have this tied up in the courts for years. He would engender all kinds of labour strife in Ontario. He likes to pick fights. We have a decidedly different approach. We're going to sit down with our collective bargaining partners on a one-to-one basis. We will achieve the objectives because we have to.

#### GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Premier. Does the Premier agree that government appointments should be based on the ability to do the job and that partisan calculations by the Premier or those around him shouldn't be a factor?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Yes.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, this weekend, people all over this province read unnamed Liberal sources claiming that the Premier bragged to his caucus about plans to force by-elections by offering opposition members government appointments.

Now, if we want to know why people are cynical about politics these days, Speaker, we don't have to look any further than stories like that. People want to see politicians here work together to actually get things done for them.

Can the Premier tell us exactly what's going on?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, we're always looking for partners of any political stripe when it comes to moving ahead with a positive, progressive, balanced, thoughtful agenda. I say to my honourable colleague, as I said to those in the official opposition as well, if there are

any people on those benches—and I want to be very public about this, Speaker—who want to come over and sit on this side of the floor, they will be welcomed with open arms and they will be treated graciously—

*Interjections.*

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** This is very difficult for me to say, but there will be no exceptions. They'll all be welcomed.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, people are looking for leadership from their government during tough times, and stories like this—and, frankly, behaviours like this—just turn them off. They're concerned that a Premier would abuse the public appointments process for his own partisan needs. They're concerned about the complete contempt that that shows for other MPPs. And they're most concerned because it means the Premier is more worried about his political challenges instead of the challenges that they face each and every day—challenges like looking for jobs, challenges like finding child care for their kids, challenges like caring for their aging parents. Those are the challenges they want us to be focusing on.

Can the Premier tell those people exactly what his priorities are?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I don't know how much credibility my honourable colleague attaches to unnamed sources, but I attach no credibility whatsoever.

What I can say is that if my honourable colleague is looking for a part when it comes to protecting health care, when it comes to protecting education, when it comes to creating more jobs, when it comes to ensuring that children growing up in Ontario today can look forward to their future with the same sense of optimism that we and our parents did before us, then she's going to find a strong partner right here in the government of Ontario.

#### ENERGY POLICIES

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My next question is also for the Premier. Over here, we're focused on getting results because people are worried about jobs and the growing cost of living. They need results. We've been clear that we're ready to offer positive alternatives for change, and one example is tackling the growing privatization and top-heavy bloat in our hydro system.

Is the Premier ready to work with other parties on change to bring price relief to consumers and businesses in this province, or is he going to offer more of the same old cynical politics?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I welcome the question. My honourable colleague will know that the Minister of Energy has spoken to this on a number of occasions and we believe that we have a responsibility to look for efficiencies as we rebuild what was a dilapidated and unreliable electricity system. In fact, we're rebuilding 80% of it over the course of the next 20 years.

But we've got to look for internal efficiencies. That's why we wanted to go ahead with the merger of a couple

of our hydro entities. We're also going to take a look at our local distribution companies to see if it makes any sense for us to combine the responsibilities that they've taken on. So again, the end result would be less pressure on hydro bills for Ontario families.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Speaker, we've put forward some pretty simple proposals. Start with a review that looks at the system and the role that public power could have in stabilizing prices, and make private power contracts like the ones for cancelled plants in Mississauga and Oakville public so that we know what we're actually paying for.

Is the Premier ready to work with us to make affordable hydro available to businesses and households in this province, or is he focused on making life easier for his government?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Speaker, I know that certainly the slogan of public power hearkens back to an earlier time, in fact over a century ago. But the fact is, we have public power here in Ontario. We're very proud of that. Ontarians own the electricity system that we have in place. It's taken us a long time to develop that and it's close to all of us, Speaker. But the fact of the matter is that it was unreliable. It was at risk when we first formed the government.

We have, I think, invested in some 9,000 megawatts of new generation to this point in time. We have rehabilitated, repaired or renewed some 5,000 kilometres of new transmission. That would take us from here to the Yukon. At the same time, we are shutting down our coal-fired generation, we are cleaning up our air, and we're investing in an exciting new renewable energy industry, creating thousands and thousands of jobs.

I think that's the responsible way for us to deal with public power for the people of Ontario.

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

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** On the contrary, Speaker, hydro in this province is largely privatized, almost completely deregulated. We know that private companies are making all kinds of profits on the generation of power in this province. Even the green energy system is largely privatized, thanks to the way that this government decided to implement the Green Energy Act.

What we are ready to do over here is to roll up our sleeves and work with other parties on making life better for everyday people. The mess in our electricity system is a really good place to start. When rates for business are as much as \$3 million more here in Ontario than in other provinces, we need some real change. Is the Premier ready to focus on challenges like these, Speaker, which are killing jobs and draining family budgets, or is he more concerned about the challenges that are facing the Liberal Party these days?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I appreciate the opportunity to engage in this with my honourable colleague, but I think, in fairness, that at some point in time the NDP need to tell us where they stand on power. We know that

they oppose nuclear power. They oppose the development of new gas generation in Ontario. They oppose the development of renewable energy in Ontario. They oppose the shutdown of coal-fired plants in Ontario; at least I would garner from their refusal to consider new sources of clean energy that they would do that, Speaker.

I think what they need to do is, together with that slogan of public power, drag their policy development from beyond a century back, bring it kicking and screaming into the 21st century, and tell us where they want to go when it comes to meeting the future demands of Ontarians when it comes to electricity in our province today and tomorrow.

## CONSUMER PROTECTION

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** My question is to the Attorney General. The Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries was originally established in 1826 as a public trust for the people of Toronto. Today, the group remains a public trust, and in a letter dated October 12, 2006, from the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee, it was confirmed to be "a charitable institution." The letter also stated, "We will work with it to address this specific concern," that had been repeatedly raised to that office about the operation of the group.

Minister, despite repeated requests for both financial and operational information, both to the public guardian and trustee and to your office, to whom it reports, nothing has been forthcoming for the past six years. Why are you refusing to take action with respect to this rogue organization?

1100

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** I'd like to thank the member for the question, first of all. She well knows that the corporation was set up in the 1820s, which is a long time ago from now.

To the best of our knowledge, the Mount Pleasant Group has never received any public funding and has never been a crown corporation. It may be categorized as such by some organizations and some people, but it's not. The initial funding that allowed for the establishment of the organization came from private donations.

I understand that discussions have been going on both within my ministry and the Ministry of Consumer Services on an ongoing basis with the Mount Pleasant Group, and it's my understanding that some arrangement has been made whereby their records will be made more public—to the general public. We're working on that, but it's not a crown corporation and it has not received any public funding.

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

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** In no sense have we suggested that it's a crown corporation, but, as the Attorney General will know, it is a public trust and has remained so since 1826; it's also a charitable organization, which makes it subject to the Charities Accounting Act. As you know, the public guardian and trustee can request infor-

mation from a charitable organization whenever they see fit.

Numerous questions have been raised by many groups about the operation of the Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries, and shockingly it appears that despite all of these requests that have been made to your office and to many cabinet ministers, including the Premier, nothing has been done for six years. Minister, the public deserves to know what has been done with the money generated by the Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries. Where are the profits, Minister, and where have they gone?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** The member is a lawyer, and a lawyer in good standing, and the member well knows that when you've got a dispute between an organization or two different groups of people, we have a method in dealing with that, and that method is the court system in Ontario. The court system is highly regarded, and these kinds of disputes can be handled there. If there's really such a grave concern, why isn't the necessary action taken by whatever group feels that they are not getting the proper information? We'll let a judge decide as to what should happen.

#### MINING INDUSTRY

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** My question is for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. Cliffs Natural Resources is expected to make an announcement this week about the Ring of Fire following closed-door discussions they've with the Ontario government. A number of First Nations communities like Aroland, Marten Falls and Webequie are concerned that they have been excluded from this process.

I hope the minister would agree that for the Ring of Fire to work for everyone, First Nations can't be put on the sidelines. Will the minister explain the status of discussions with Cliffs and whether any commitments have been made to date?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** We know one thing for sure: that the Ring of Fire offers incredible potential to the entire province, it offers incredible potential to our First Nations community in northwestern Ontario and it offers incredible potential to the communities in northern Ontario and all across Ontario. We take our duty to consult very, very seriously. We are committed to ensuring that consultation is on an ongoing basis because we realize that in this instance the Ring of Fire is an opportunity that we don't want anyone to miss out on.

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

**Mr. Michael Mantha:** Although Cliffs Resources may build a processing facility in northern Ontario, the company has indicated that it may only partially process ore here, shipping the semi-processed ore overseas to China. If our communities are going to get the most out of the Ring of Fire potential, we need resources mined in Ontario to stay in Ontario. Will this government make sure that all the resources mined in the Ring of Fire are processed in Ontario?

**Hon. Rick Bartolucci:** The reality is, as we enter into this new era of opportunity for all of Ontario with regard

to the Ring of Fire, we want to ensure that we maximize the potential for job creation for everyone across Ontario. If you look at the supply and services sector, you look at the processing sector, you look at the exploration and development sector, there are incredible opportunities. We want to make sure we maximize those opportunities for all the people of Ontario.

#### NURSES

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Today is the first day of National Nursing Week, a time dedicated to acknowledging and thanking Ontario's nurses for their invaluable contribution made to our health care system. As a physician myself, I've worked for years side by side with nurses as part of a health care team, and I'm grateful for all I that I've learned from them. Nurses work selflessly and tirelessly every day to keep Ontarians healthy.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the minister: What has your ministry done to ensure Ontarians benefit from nurses providing front-line care here in Ontario?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Thank you to the member from Oak Ridges–Markham for this important question. This is an opportunity to say thank you to all of Ontario's nurses for everything they do for patients every day.

Today there are almost 13,000 more nurses working than when we took office in 2003, and 1,100 more nurse practitioners who are now able to diagnose, prescribe, treat and discharge hospital in-patients. They're also now able to order lab tests and complete and sign death certificates. Twenty-one nurse practitioner-led clinics are now delivering care to more than 23,000 patients in Ontario, and these clinics will soon number 26. They're made up of nurse practitioners, registered nurses, registered practical nurses and other providers. When they're fully operational, 40,000 Ontarians will benefit from nurse practitioner-led clinics.

Happy Nursing Week to all our nurses.

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

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** Thank you to all the nurses for the hard work they do to support patients across the province.

Minister, as you've noted, nurses have an important role to play in our health care system and possess many skills to help patients in hospitals, at home and in community settings.

There is more we can do beyond hiring more nurses. Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the minister: Can you tell the House how the Ontario government is providing nurses the opportunity to expand their scope of practice based on their skills and knowledge?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We know that Ontario's nurses are the backbone of our health care system. They're working on the front line. They play a crucial role in patient care. We need to get the most out of the skills and knowledge that nurses possess, which is why we've created five new nursing roles in order to do exactly that. One of those roles is the registered nurse



surgical first assist, in which specially educated registered nurses work collaboratively with surgeons and operating room teams.

Of course, our action plan, Speaker, will ensure that patients have access to the right care at the right time and the right place. That means we need to help more seniors receive the care they need in their homes, where they want to be. That clearly means a bigger role for registered nurses, registered practical nurses and nurse practitioners.

#### AIR AMBULANCE SERVICE

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Speaker, my question is to the Attorney General. On Thursday of last week, I asked the Attorney General to refer very specific information concerning reports of illegal business practices by Augusta-Westland to the OPP, the RCMP and to the United States justice department. Those reports included alleged kick-backs and bribes in a deal involving the sale of 12 helicopters to India by the same company that did business under similar contracts with Ornge. Can the Attorney General tell us today what he has done with that information?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** First of all, of course, if the member has any allegations with respect to any suspected criminal activity, he should be notifying the OPP himself.

You and I know that the OPP is in the middle of an investigation right now surrounding various aspects relating to Ornge etc. That's ongoing. I'm quite sure that the information that they have is being looked at as well. They'll continue with their investigation, and they will take the necessary action in due course.

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

**Mr. Frank Klees:** Speaker, the Attorney General's response to this question is very similar to the response that the Minister of Health gave me in April of last year when I first raised concerns about what was going on at Ornge. She listened, she defended, she folded her hands and did nothing. The Attorney General knows full well that his responsibilities on the executive council are to be the law officer of the executive council.

Yes, I will send that letter to the OPP as well as the RCMP as well as the justice department in the United States, because it's very clear that this Attorney General will have nothing to do with passing on important information about, quite frankly, the worst scandal that this province has ever seen. I want to know why. I want to ask the Attorney General why he refuses to assume his responsibility as the law officer of this province and not pass on that information himself.

1110

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** Speaker, we are very proud of the work that's being done on a day-to-day basis within the Ministry of the Attorney General, and the member well knows that.

Any information that is received obviously goes to the policing authorities. We do not direct the police. They have their role with respect to investigations. They're de-

ing that right now. They will take all material that comes to their knowledge into account and, in due course, they will take the necessary actions that the situation demands. That's what's happening right now.

If the member has any particular information that he wants to share with them, either send it to them directly or send it to us; we'll send it on to them.

#### SPECIAL EDUCATION

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** My question is for the Minister of Education. People for Education reported that up to half of Ontario's schools are facing board-imposed caps on special needs assessments. That's as low as two students per year. That means many students are falling through the cracks.

Minister, why weren't you aware of these board-imposed caps?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I want to thank People for Education for their report. They are such an important partner, and I look forward to continuing to work with them closely in this regard.

Making sure that every student can achieve their very best is the responsibility of all of us working together in education, and that's why I look forward to the opportunity to work with People for Education and others in this sector to continue to build upon the successful investments that we have put in education, in particular in special education. Special education funding is up since our government has taken office—18% since 2003; 15% of Ontario's students are receiving special education. We should be very proud that the students receiving special education services are succeeding. We are seeing grade 3 writing scores up by 30%. That's something that we should all be very proud of.

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

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Speaker, that was an extraordinary non-answer. The minister has effectively admitted she doesn't know what's going on in the education system, and the only people who actually know are citizen activists who are going out and getting the information.

Students with special needs need timely assessment. They need good, quality special education. The reality is that students in elementary schools are not being assessed. There's been an increase in unassessed students by 50% in a year. Special needs teachers have seen their class sizes or their workloads grow by 30%.

Will the minister actually act like a minister and launch an independent public review of what's going on with special education?

**Hon. Laurel C. Broten:** I have previously had an opportunity to speak directly with Annie Kidder and let her know that we look forward to working with People for Education to ensure that all of our students are getting the supports that they need in our schools, Speaker.

It's very important to know that whether assessed or not, our expectation is that every student will get the special education supports that they need; in fact, the

facts are that one third of students who receive special education programs are not formally identified.

This government has worked for many years now ensuring that students in our schools get the services they need. We've increased investments in children's mental health; we've increased investments in autism services. We've ensured that special needs support in our schools remains, despite the fact that Mr. Drummond said that 70% of those folks who are not teachers in our schools should no longer be there. We know that they do important work. We've continued to make investments. We're always looking for ways to make sure that our services are better, and that's what we will do.

### AEROSPACE INDUSTRY

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Innovation. Ontario has always been known around the world for our prosperous auto industry and the critical role it plays in this major global industry. What is less known is the aerospace industry in Ontario. From a proud past, including the development of the Avro Arrow, to the world-class cluster that has developed in our province today, Ontario has been on the cutting edge in the global market when it comes to aerospace development.

Can the minister please inform this House of some of the notable achievements and strengths of Ontario's aerospace sector?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I'm delighted to bring some light to some of the great things happening in our dynamic aerospace industry.

Ontario's aerospace industry is growing. It's worth about \$6.5 billion and it's employing 22,000 Ontarians. Ontario is in a unique position, with over 350 companies contributing to the sector, including 13 of the top 25 aerospace firms like Bombardier, Com Dev and Goodrich, who all have a very significant presence here in this province. Eighteen universities and colleges offer 36 aerospace-specific programs, including aerospace engineering at Carleton, Ryerson and the University of Toronto.

Ontario-made parts are used in virtually every passenger aircraft in the world, and we're recognized as a world leader in several areas, including turboprop aircraft, business jets, turbo engines, landing gear systems and space robotics. There's no question Ontario's aerospace industry is fast becoming a global success story.

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

**Mr. Reza Moridi:** Mr. Speaker, it's great to hear that Ontario has such a large and diverse aerospace industry. I would never have known that on almost every passenger flight, there is a made-in-Ontario product.

Minister, you mentioned that some 13 of the 25 industry-leading companies are located here in Ontario, specifically mentioning Bombardier. I have always known them to be a Quebec-based company, but through recent media coverage and their visit to Queen's Park last

month, I have begun to understand that they have a significant presence here in our province of Ontario.

Can the minister please elaborate on some of the exciting work coming out of Bombardier in Ontario?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** Bombardier is a true global leader when it comes to the aerospace industry, and I'm very pleased to talk about some of the success that's going on with Bombardier here in Ontario.

Just last week, Bombardier signed a contract to supply WestJet Airlines with 20 to 46 turboprop Q400 aircraft. According to the Globe and Mail, that's an investment in our economy of \$1.3 billion. It's great news for the 4,000 workers at Bombardier's Downsview plant and it's great news, frankly, for workers right across the province.

Bombardier is making its mark in the green innovation field as well. In April, through Porter Airlines, Bombardier launched its first commercial flight using biofuel. In setting new environmental standards, the Q400 aircraft uses 30% to 40% less fuel—the Minister of the Environment is very happy with that—and produces 30% to 40% fewer emissions than its predecessors.

Bombardier is a global leader in the aerospace industry, another Ontario innovation and technology success story.

### SKILLED TRADES

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** My question today is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Minister, currently a journeyman tradesperson here in Ontario pays \$20 per year to have his or her certificate of qualification renewed. Your job-killing College of Trades is suggesting a massive increase in membership fees for all tradespeople in Ontario.

Minister, will you stand with Tim Hudak and the PC caucus and assure all journeymen tradespeople that they will not see another Liberal tax grab and see their renewal fees increased by the College of Trades?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Woody Allen once said, "I never want to be a member of a club that would have me as a member," for a whole lot of reasons.

Mr. Speaker, this is sort of comical. Again, a party that could never deliver more than 60,000 people in apprenticeships, a party that saw apprenticeships growing by 17,000 a year, a party that had been in power for 40 years that left, as part of its legacy, a complete lack of competitiveness in apprenticeships now wants to lecture this government.

We have 120,000 people in the trades, growing by 30,000 per year. We are ahead of our targets for 2025. We are meeting demand. One day, maybe my critic will stand up, apologize to the people of Ontario for their failure and congratulate this government on its success.

1120

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

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** Minister, that is a pathetic answer for a question that is supporting our already over-taxed working men and women.

Remember, a journeyman tradesperson pays \$20 a year now. The website of the College of Trades is proposing new fees of up to \$200 annually for a journeyman. That's a 1,000% increase for a tradesperson. This is completely scandalous. The college has had virtually no dialogue with the tradespeople of Ontario. Worse, we know your job-killing College of Trades is in bed with your Working Families Coalition.

Minister, will you stand with Tim Hudak and the PC caucus and once and for all kill this Working Families/College of Trades boondoggle?

*Interjections.*

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

Minister.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** It's interesting. Not only is the party opposite hemorrhaging members; it can't even get along with his former caucus members.

Ron Johnson very clearly has put forward a very dynamic agenda there, one that I wish, in spite of our best efforts to collaborate—the member opposite, had he attended the reception here with the College of Trades, would have seen the incredible diversity of business and labour leaders and educators who make up the College of Trades.

It's interesting. When the College of Trades sends out surveys and democratically engages the apprentices and the businesses and labour leaders and associations that work so hard to produce high-quality training, he criticizes that. When they come down to Queen's Park, while 17 members of the party opposite said they were going to show up, not one showed.

If you want to be ignorant and not take any information, not participate in a process—you end up getting questions like that from the member opposite.

## CONSERVATION

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** My question is to the Minister of the Environment. On Friday, I was in Brantford and Cambridge to meet with the Grand River Conservation Authority and Brantford citizens who are fighting to protect the environmentally sensitive Hardy Road area of Brantford, which is now at risk by proposed development. The city of Brantford wants this area protected from development as part of the waterfront master plan. Will this government support the elected officials of the city council of Brantford and protect this important piece of land?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I can tell you that our government is very much in favour of environmental protection. That's why we have a Ministry of the Environment.

Whenever there are proposals that come forward to the Ministry of the Environment, we give very careful consideration to those proposals. We analyze them using the best information that could be provided to us. Our ministry staff, who are highly trained and highly educated, do a great assessment of all proposed projects, and then we provide the very best advice we can. We also take into

account the views of the local people, particularly those who are the elected representatives in the area, and have our input when these decisions come forward to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

So you can be assured that we have a great concern in this area and will do what is appropriate.

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

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** Back to the Minister of the Environment: I was very honoured to be given the tour of the Hardy Road area. It's beautiful. It's of huge ecological significance and archaeological heritage. It's connected to Brantford's main source of drinking water. It should be protected from development.

I'm proud to say I'm with citizens of Brantford who have fought hard and long to protect this area, but why won't the government protect this provincially significant wetland area and support the elected officials in Brantford? Instead, why are you giving it over to the OMB to do this work?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I think the member would like to hear from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing on the procedure that is followed, so I'll allow her to answer that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Just defer.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** On the specifics of this case, if there are issues that you'd like to bring forward to me or to the Minister of the Environment, we'd be happy to see them.

But what I would like to say is that the planning regime that we have put in place in Ontario, right from the provincial policy statement to Places to Grow to the greenbelt—all of those pieces of legislation and those plans have really changed the culture of development in this province, and the purpose of that change of culture has been to protect much of the sensitive land that certainly surrounds the GTA and to preserve agricultural land and preserve those sensitive areas.

So I'd be happy to look at the specifics of this case, but I think we need to remember that land that was not protected previously is protected because of the planning regime that we have put in place.

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** I've got a question today for the Minister of Natural Resources. Constituents in my riding of Oakville have contacted me about your ministry's three-year transformation plan. I understand that the 2012 budget proposes a series of amendments to nine pieces of legislation to protect our province's natural resources. Some of my constituents have expressed their concern that the transformation may change MNR's commitment to protect Ontario's natural resources.

Minister, all of us have a role to play, obviously, in contributing to the government's commitment to balancing the books by 2017-18, and I know MNR is doing its share. Minister, would you share with the House and with my constituents how your ministry plans to modernize itself while ensuring you protect Ontario's vital natural resources?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Let me thank the member for Oakville for that question; it's an important one, certainly. Let me begin by saying that the Ministry of Natural Resources is very proud of our long and respected history of overseeing the management and conservation of Ontario's natural resources. We want to be sure we maintain that commitment, which is why we've embarked on a three-year transformation plan to actually help us deliver our services more efficiently, to potentially streamline some of the permits, policies and processes that are in place but also, as I say, to maintain that commitment.

I am aware that some groups are raising concerns about our plan, specifically around the perception that there's going to be limited opportunity for public consultation. I want to assure Ontarians that that is not the case. If the budget bill is passed, we will be consulting extensively on any proposed regulatory change. Any change will be posted on the Environmental Registry for public review and comment, and I invite all people who are interested and concerned to speak with us and sit down with us.

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

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** People in Oakville will be glad to hear that response.

In 2007, our government introduced the Endangered Species Act, and since that time, it has gained much international acclaim. That was opposed by the official opposition. I'm pleased to note that today the act protects more than 200 vital species at risk. As you are well aware, there are questions being raised now specifically about the changes proposed to the Endangered Species Act that are outlined in the budget and how they are going to affect our good standing record on species at risk.

Minister, I know that our government's commitment to the protection and the recovery of native species in the province is unwavering, but I want you to assure Ontarians and the members of this House and explain how the proposed changes to the Endangered Species Act will affect native species in the province of Ontario.

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Again, I appreciate the question, and I certainly want to say that under our proposed changes, the Endangered Species Act will continue to be a North American leader in protecting endangered species.

The proposed changes also will maintain that necessary balance we often speak about for endangered species protection while at the same time reducing red tape and providing some greater certainty for business, which we know is important for them as well.

While I recognize that there are challenges ahead, I believe we are very much on the right course. May I also say that I'm encouraged, certainly, by the Environmental Commissioner, Mr. Miller, when he pointed out that our plan can be well done? What he really said was that "big-picture ecosystem management is superior to micro-managing individual species," and we appreciate that.

Let me remind you again: Regulatory changes—anything proposed—will be posted on the Environmental Registry for public review and comment.

## AGGREGATE EXTRACTION

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** My question is to the Minister of Natural Resources. Minister, as you know, at the Standing Committee on General Government last Thursday, only 12 hours were set aside for public hearings on the aggregate resources review act—all in Toronto. Minister, I know you understand that aggregate extraction occurs in many communities in Ontario, with the exception of Toronto. Will the minister commit today to direct his Liberal colleagues on the committee to accept our motion for increased hearings and for the committee to travel to communities where aggregate extraction actually takes place?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** Thank you very much for the question. Certainly, we are very, very pleased that our motion passed and the all-party standing committee is working on the aggregate resources review—a very important one. We made a commitment to move that review forward; that has happened.

Certainly, we do understand, as I think everyone does, how important aggregates are, but we also understand that there is a need for us to look at how we can improve the legislation. It is the decision of the all-party standing committee in terms of those kinds of decisions.

**1130**

As for public hearings, I want to encourage everyone who is interested in presenting to bring forward their thoughts and presentations. Also, there will be other opportunities, I know, through a variety of other circumstances, teleconferences as well, to bring their feelings forward. We're very excited and very pleased that, indeed, the review is taking place and that the all-party standing committee is beginning their work today.

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

**Ms. Laurie Scott:** Again to the minister: Your Liberal members of the committee, as well as the NDP, blocked my suggestions to have extensive hearings—which you promised during the election—on the AR act. Many of the presentations that are scheduled are already booked with Toronto-based officials. In fact, public notice just went out today and the clerk's phone is ringing off the hook. But so far, we have not yet booked a single municipality or individual. Without an extension of the review period and a commitment to travel to other locations, there will be little or no opportunity for input from communities who are most knowledgeable on what is working and what is not with the ARA.

Again I ask the minister, will you ask the Liberal members of the standing committee to agree to travelling hearings for the ARA review, to expand the number of hearings beyond the meagre 12 hours already scheduled?

**Hon. Michael Gravelle:** To the Minister of Community and Social Services.

**Hon. John Milloy:** The Progressive Conservative Party cannot have it both ways. I mean, on the one hand, they talk about the autonomy of committees and the ability of committees to set their own agenda and to decide what they want to study, and now they're standing

up and asking us to interfere in the work of the committee.

The simple fact is, it is our government that took the initiative to ask the committee to review the Aggregate Resources Act. We gave the committee the power to determine how to do it. They discussed it and decided to schedule as has been outlined by the member.

I would point out, Mr. Speaker, we are in a minority Parliament. There are more opposition members than there are government members, so don't stand here in the Legislature and try to blame the government for a decision that was made by the committee, based upon consultation and discussion and, as I say, a majority of the members, which outstrip the number of Liberals who were there.

### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. The community start-up and maintenance benefit has provided thousands of social assistance recipients with emergency financial support to avoid eviction and homelessness. The Hamilton Community Legal Clinic says that the government's decision to cut this benefit by 50% and transfer the remainder to municipalities will "lead to more homelessness in Hamilton and in communities across Ontario."

Why, we ask, is the McGuinty government making a decision that experts say will actually increase homelessness?

**Hon. John Milloy:** I thank the member for the question. Mr. Speaker, as I've admitted in this House before, we had to make some hard decisions when it came to the recent budget. At the same time, I would outline to the member that investments, going forward—there are really only three areas where the government is investing significantly. That is in terms of health care, education and the final one, social assistance, where we're seeing an average increase moving forward of some 2.7% in my ministry and in that of the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

In terms of CSUM, Mr. Speaker, it's a housing benefit. As the honourable member is aware, we are right now in the process of finalizing a long-term housing strategy which takes a number of programs under my ministry and transfers them to municipalities, removing many of the rules and barriers which have not allowed municipalities to spend that money in a way that's appropriate.

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

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** Again to the minister: The community start-up and maintenance benefit is the absolutely last resource many people have before being forced right out onto the street. It's a homelessness prevention program. Now this program's funding is being cut by 50%. How will the government ensure that municipalities actually use the transferred funds to help people avoid eviction and homelessness? We'd like some answers on this. And what guarantee will the government give that

more people on social assistance will not end up on the street because of this very cut?

**Hon. John Milloy:** For a long time, housing advocates have recognized the fact that we have a variety of programs which are offered by my ministry, programs which are offered by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, which have been very difficult for municipalities to administer. There had been tight rules around them and there had been barriers around them. We have situations where municipalities are spending literally thousands of dollars to support someone in a setting and not have that capacity to take that money and put them in a more appropriate setting and offer the support.

What we are talking about through this new program is giving municipalities the flexibility they need to start to plan, to start to work with their communities and use this money that's aimed at keeping people at risk out of homelessness situations, and finding homes and supports for them and making sure that they can move forward. This is the approach coming forward. This is something that poverty advocates have long called for. This is something the municipal sector has wanted for a long time, and it's going to mean a big difference for those in poverty—

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

### AIR QUALITY

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Protecting the quality of air we breathe is a fundamental concern for Ontarians and is of significance in the Windsor area.

As temperatures begin to increase throughout Ontario, so too does the amount of outdoor air pollution such as smog. We know that smog-causing pollutants contribute to respiratory and other health problems for thousands of individuals every year. The traditional smog season in Ontario occurs between the months of May to September. However, they can occur at any time throughout the year.

Speaker, through you, would the Minister of the Environment please share with us what our government is doing to ensure Ontarians are properly informed about smog episodes?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** There are many factors that affect how much smog we get in the province of Ontario.

The ministry, as you know, issues advisories when there's a high probability of elevated smog levels occurring within the next 24 hours. During smog advisories, Ontarians are encouraged to lower what we would call smog-causing emissions by walking or biking to work instead of driving and are advised to avoid unnecessary exposure to smog by reducing outdoor physical activity.

In the past several years, our government has taken strong action to reduce smog in Ontario. We've shut down 10 of the 19 coal-fired electricity generating units and have reduced reliance on coal-fired electricity by more than 90% since 2003.

In 2008, 38,000 tonnes less of smog-causing pollutants were released due to the Drive Clean program, and

our government remains committed to improving air quality in Ontario so everyone can breathe a little easier.

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

**Mrs. Teresa Piruzza:** I know that the residents of Windsor are often looking for those types of initiatives to come forward.

I understand that our government has been working hard to reduce the smog at source, and in the past several years, we've seen a substantial decline.

On April 22 of this year, and in honour of Earth Day, the Ministry of the Environment released its 40th annual Air Quality in Ontario report. This report summarizes pollutant concentration levels measured at the ministry's reporting stations and also highlights trends over time.

Speaker, through you, could the Minister of the Environment please provide the House with the findings of this report?

**Hon. James J. Bradley:** I'm pleased, Mr. Speaker, to note that the state of our air quality in Ontario is indeed improving. The report found that, overall, levels of air quality contaminants have decreased over the past 10 years and the number of smog advisories have declined in recent years.

Our government has taken many steps to improve air quality. We've moving away from dirty coal to clean, renewable energy. We also introduced new standards for industry with respect to outdoor air pollutants. These standards are among the toughest in North America.

Air pollution does not recognize geographical boundaries. Ontario is taking action locally, regionally and globally to protect the health and environment of its citizens now and in the future. So I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that every time we take a specific action which is designed to improve air quality in the province, we see a measurable improvement, and we have certainly noted that since the year 2003.

#### CONSUMER PROTECTION

**Mrs. Christine Elliott:** My question is to the Attorney General and, again, it concerns the Mount Pleasant Group of Cemeteries. It has been recognized that the group is both a public trust and a charitable organization, and is therefore subject to the jurisdiction of the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee. Numerous complaints have been made about the operation of the group over many years to that office and to your office, yet no answers have been forthcoming and no financial information has been produced over the past six years. You say, Attorney General, that you're working on it. What exactly has been done over all these years?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** It's my understanding that both the Minister of Consumer Services and my own ministry have been trying to make this much more transparent than it has been in the past. But you should also know—and you probably know this already—that the group itself follows all the rules and regulations of the Cemeteries Act, which is really our responsibility.

Let me just finally say once again that if two groups of individuals do not like what's going on in society, there

is a method by which we can deal with that, and that is through our court system. We have a highly recognized court system that is extremely well regarded, and I would suggest, if the answers are not forthcoming as quickly as the group wants, that they take the necessary, appropriate legal action.

#### CORRECTION OF RECORD

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member for Toronto–Danforth on a point of order.

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Speaker, I need to correct the record. In my question to the Minister of Education, I said words to the effect of, "There has been a 50% increase in the number of special needs students going unassessed." It should have been "a 50% increase in the number of elementary schools who have special needs students not being assessed."

Thank you, Speaker.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** It is a point of order, and the member is allowed to correct his own record.

The member from Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Point of order: Speaker, I respectfully request that members of the Tibetan Parliament in exile be recognized by this Legislature. Indeed, it behooves us all here in a free democracy to support those who wish the same while being oppressed.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** That's not a point of order, but we welcome our guests being here in the Legislature of this province. Thank you.

#### VISITORS

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** The member from Bramalea–Gore–Malton on a point of order.

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** Mr. Speaker, I'd ask all the members of the Legislature to join me in welcoming the family of page Ranbir Singh: his mother, Kulbir Singh, and brother, the future me, Jagmeet Singh.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** We always welcome our guests here at the people's place.

There being no deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.

*The House recessed from 1142 to 1300.*

#### INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Mr. John O'Toole:** Earlier today, Monday, May 7, Peggy and I—our youngest daughter, Rochelle Trainor, and her husband, Jason, had our ninth grandchild. Congratulations also to Bob and Dianne Trainor of Sault Ste. Marie. Emilie Mollie Trainor was born at about 2 in the morning, I guess, at six pounds, five ounces, at the University College Hospital in London, England.

More miraculously, on May 7, 1982, Rochelle's mother, Mollie passed away, on that very same day 30 years ago today. It is a miracle.

Congratulations to Rochelle and Jason.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I welcome our guests to the gallery.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### JAMES MARKER

**Mr. Todd Smith:** I'm sad to inform you that a great Canadian entrepreneur from eastern Ontario has passed away. Halloween just won't be the same this year. James Marker, the inventor of Hawkins Cheezies, died last week at the age of 90.

In the mid-1940s, Mr. Marker, a young Ohio farmer, was looking for a way to preserve corn to feed his cattle year-round when he built a special device to turn the corn into porous sticks. That's when Chicago-based confectionery giant W.T. Hawkins came along and the cheezie was created.

When the US company went broke, Mr. Marker moved in 1949 to lovely Tweed, Ontario. In 1956, that plant in Tweed burned to the ground and the company, 30 days later, was back in business in Belleville, where it continues to churn out the tasty treats today.

Jim Marker used to call the cheezie the greatest snack food on earth, and many kids all over Canada have pulled the familiar red, white and blue bag of Hawkins out of their treat bag every year at Halloween.

More than being just a successful entrepreneur, Marker helped found the Belleville Airport, served on the executive of the Belleville Rotary for more than a decade and was an active community citizen for generations.

Might I point out that up until March of this year, Mr. Marker would go into the plant, or have three bags delivered to his home that he would sample, just to make sure the product met the standards that he had set. And he lived until he was 90, Mr. Speaker.

He will be greatly missed by the president, Kent Hawkins, and the GM, Tony McGarvey, and all the staff at the plant in Belleville.

### CITIZENS' AWARD

**Mr. Paul Miller:** This Thursday, the Stoney Creek Chamber of Commerce is holding its annual Citizens of the Year Awards ceremony for outstanding community contributions in 2011. As expected, the recipients are an excellent cross-section of citizens and businesses who have made an extraordinary contribution to our community.

Linda Shuker is citizen of the year. Linda has headed the wildly successful annual Winona Peach Festival for many years. This weekend-long event includes arts, crafts, vendors, car shows, concerts, great local food and fabulous peach tastings and recipes.

Other "crickers" honoured this year are Amanda Cicero of Cardinal Newman Catholic Secondary School, who is junior citizen of the year; McHugh Mowat Whitmore Ionico MacPherson law firm, the outstanding large

business; Donald V. Brown Funeral Home, the outstanding small business; ArcelorMittal Dofasco, with the community recognition award; Bertram and Barry Insurance, with the legacy award; and Colin Heyens, Orchard Park Secondary School, receives the humanitarian award. It is particularly rewarding to see two young people honoured this year.

I am proud of the work done by groups like the Stoney Creek Chamber of Commerce in continuing this recognition of our local individuals and businesses that have made our community such a great place to live. I congratulate all the recipients and I thank each of them for their contributions to Stoney Creek.

### ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH

**Ms. Soo Wong:** Today I'm pleased to stand in this House to recognize Asian Heritage Month. This year marks the 10th anniversary of the government of Canada declaring the month of May as Asian Heritage Month, an idea originally brought forth by Senator Vivienne Poy.

This year's theme for Asian Heritage Month is Advancing Democracy, Strengthening Canada. It is an appropriate theme, as this marks the 65th anniversary of the repeal of the Chinese Immigration Act. This act was used to prevent Chinese immigrants from coming to Canada. Between 1923 and 1947, fewer than 50 Chinese immigrants were allowed to come to Canada.

By celebrating Asian Heritage Month, we celebrate and acknowledge the contributions made by people like internationally renowned architect Raymond Moriyama, Dr. Tak Mak, the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, Ryerson University Chancellor Raymond Chang, award-winning author and filmmaker Michael Ondaatje, and actress Sandra Oh, to name a few. It also provides us with an opportunity to appreciate the everyday contributions of Canadians of Asian descent.

At a time when some countries have denounced multiculturalism, Canada and Ontario stand alone as the envy of the world for its admiration and respect for diversity. I'm proud to live in a country which recognizes the contributions of Canadians of Asian heritage. I hope you will join me in acknowledging their valuable contributions in making Canada and Ontario the greatest places to live.

### ORGAN DONATION

**Mr. Rob E. Milligan:** It certainly isn't every day that members on all sides of this chamber form a consensus on any issue, but I am pleased to see that the important matter of organ donation is something about which we can all agree.

Two months ago I tabled Bill 58, in which I called on the government to make a very minor change to the process for issuing health cards and driver's licences. The bill proposed that every applicant be asked whether or not they would agree to register on the Trillium Gift of Life organ donation registry. It was at that time, I'm sure,

a pure coincidence that the government chose to make the announcement that they agreed with that suggested change on the very day my bill was to be debated for second reading. Regardless of how they chose the date, it was the right thing to do, and the minister should be congratulated for that.

I have only one criticism of the announcement made by the Ministry of Health. They have indicated that the questionnaire will be rolled out in only 91 ServiceOntario offices and the balance of the 300 offices won't receive the questionnaire until 2013. Surely it won't take a year for the ministry to photocopy 209 additional instruction sheets and accelerate the timetable for the province-wide adoption of the questionnaire.

The ministry should do everything in its power to ensure that the new questionnaire is implemented province-wide without further delay.

#### MAXXAM ANALYTICS

**Mr. Bob Delaney:** It's time to congratulate a cutting-edge western Mississauga business for its forward-thinking co-op program for skilled immigrants. Maxxam Analytics launched a program in 2001 for skilled immigrants. That program offers the same training that other new employees and Canadian graduates receive.

Co-op students learn about basic health and safety in a Canadian laboratory, new tools and programs for sample testing, as well as the company's own standard operating procedures. They get the Canadian experience that so many employers look for.

Maxxam Analytics tests environmental products, food and water samples. It has brought in some 400 co-op students since the start of the program and hired half of them upon completion of their co-op program.

In recognition of this program, Maxxam Analytics was awarded the Toronto Star Award for Excellence in Workplace Integration at the sixth Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council Immigrant Success Awards.

Our western Mississauga friends, neighbours and co-workers are building families, communities and careers through enlightened training programs such as this one at Maxxam Analytics. Congratulations to Maxxam's CEO, Jon Hantho, and to all the employees at Maxxam Analytics. It is one reason why Mississauga has become such a magnet for skilled newcomers in Canada.

#### TOURISM

**Mr. Ted Chudleigh:** Tourism is a way for us and people from around the world to enjoy what Ontario has to offer. It is also a key industry, generating over \$21 billion in revenues and supporting over 600,000 jobs in close to 150,000 businesses across Ontario.

In 2009, the province received \$3.7 billion in direct tax revenue from the tourism industry. Nevertheless, this government is making decisions that will hinder tourism in Ontario. The HST increased the cost of rooms and numerous tourist events by 8%.

The proposal to close all three travel information centres in northwestern Ontario will hurt the north's existing tourism industry and will create a barrier to expanding tourism in new areas.

The cancellation of the slots-at-racetracks program will decimate Ontario's horse racing industry and a unique tourism draw for people visiting our province.

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Worst of all, in none of these cases were members of the tourism industry consulted. In 2009, after consulting with the tourism industry, the government released its own report intending to make Ontario a prime tourist destination. Most of these recommendations have been ignored.

Today, we face fiscal disaster because of our growing debt. Our economy is becoming increasingly uncompetitive and our businesses are saddled with red tape and poor economic policies. Credit rating agencies are screaming that Ontario is going down the wrong path.

Our tourism industry is an economic driver in Ontario, and I would urge this government to change its focus. Look at our industry leaders to generate growth through economic activity instead of through increased taxes.

#### FOOD BANKS

**Miss Monique Taylor:** Unfortunately, my seatmate was unable to be here to do his statement, so I'll take advantage of his time and tell the folks of the Legislature about an event that I attended this weekend.

It was quite the event. I slept outside in a box for hunger on Friday night. It was quite the experience, let me tell you.

The food bank in my riding is up 30% since this time last year, so there's a huge need in my community to raise awareness and money to feed the shelves at the food bank.

It was definitely something. I mean, yes, we had the comfort of 30 other people out there doing the same thing, but at the end of the night I was alone in my box and it was cold, it was dark, it was windy, the tarp's blowing around through the night. It just left a feeling of eeriness inside of me and something I will never forget.

I was really fortunate to have many great sponsors to help me out in this initiative and I was able to raise \$2,100 for my food bank. Hopefully, other people will take up this initiative and be able to do the same thing in their neighbourhood, because we're definitely hoping that next year we'll be able to double the numbers of attendees at the event.

#### THE HOSPICE AT MAY COURT

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** It's a great pleasure of mine to celebrate 10 years of the Tracy Arnett Realty Hike for Hospice, raising funds for the Hospice at May Court, a very special place in my riding of Ottawa Centre.

Yesterday, from 9 a.m. to noon, participants took a five-kilometre hike through the streets of Old Ottawa



South, beginning and ending on the grounds of the Hospice at May Court.

Rob Clipperton, former host and producer of CBC radio in Ottawa, was master of ceremonies for the day.

To mark the 10th anniversary of the hike was "The Power of 10" campaign to raise \$120,000, 10% more than last year and representing 10% of the total annual fundraising goal of \$1.2 million.

The Hospice at May Court is a community-based charitable organization that offers palliative and end-of-life care services for over 600 patients and their loved ones each year in a supportive and peaceful setting. The services are provided at no cost, in part with funds raised in the Hike for Hospice as well as financial support from individual donors, service groups, corporate sponsorships, foundations and the provincial government.

Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers and staff at the hospice, particularly Jean-Pierre Soublière, the chair of the board; Todd Burke, vice chair; Charles Armstrong; Louis Auerbach; Margaret Bloodworth; Janet Dunbrack; Vince Gilpin; Janice Horne; Heni Nadel; Michael Pentland; Jeannie Thomas; and also Margie Howsam, The May Court Club of Ottawa representative; Dr. Pipa Hall, the medical advisor at the hospice; and David Hogberg, the executive director of the Hospice at May Court. Congratulations.

#### EMERGENCY IN DUFFERIN COUNTY

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** I rise today to thank the Dufferin county emergency management services and all those who responded to a terrible rainstorm that occurred last Thursday on May 3 in my riding.

The equivalent of a month's worth of rainfall accumulated in a 12-hour period. Many residents were affected by the storm, which included an intense downpour, high winds and hail. The damage is estimated to be as high as a million dollars.

As a result of the flooding, at least 20 people were evacuated from several homes and apartments, and some spent time in an emergency shelter at the Tony Rose Memorial Sports Centre. Family Transition Place, our community's only women's shelter, was also forced to evacuate because of flooding that damaged the electrical panel and flooded the facility.

The storm's intensity was unexpected, and the efforts of the Dufferin county emergency management services as well as the town of Orangeville and all emergency responders deserve to be recognized and thanked. Norah Kennedy, executive director at Family Transition Place, and her staff, who worked very quickly to establish an alternative temporary shelter, also deserve our thanks.

Other organizations assisted evacuees by providing personal items, food and water. The Salvation Army, students at Orangeville District Secondary School and businesses like McDonald's and Rexall Pharma Plus came to the aid of those who were displaced from their homes.

It's the efforts of the first responders and all the volunteers who helped so quickly that made a difference.

I want to thank them for their excellent work in the face of danger.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### LABOUR RELATIONS AMENDMENT ACT (ONTARIO LABOUR RELATIONS BOARD), 2012 LOI DE 2012 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES RELATIONS DE TRAVAIL (COMMISSION DES RELATIONS DE TRAVAIL DE L'ONTARIO)

Mr. Hillier moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 84, An Act to amend the Labour Relations Act, 1995 with respect to the Ontario Labour Relations Board and other matters / Projet de loi 84, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1995 sur les relations de travail en ce qui concerne la Commission des relations de travail de l'Ontario et d'autres questions.

**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.

**Mr. Randy Hillier:** Speaker, this bill amends the Labour Relations Act, 1995, to remove the stated purposes of the act. The practice and procedure of the Ontario Labour Relations Board is no longer determined by rules made by the board itself but is determined by regulations made by the Lieutenant Governor in Council under this act.

At present, a party affected by the decision of the Ontario Labour Relations Board has no right of appeal. This bill provides a right of appeal to Divisional Court in accordance with the rules of court. It also makes members of the board and other officers compellable witnesses in any appeal or judicial review of the board's proceedings and makes the Minister of Labour and other ministry officials compellable witnesses before a court or tribunal.

## STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

### CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK

**Hon. Eric Hoskins:** I rise today to recognize Children's Mental Health Week in Ontario, which is observed in the first full week of May each year.

Children's Mental Health Week has two critical goals: to increase awareness of mental health and to decrease the stigma associated with mental illness. Mr. Speaker, we all need to talk about this very important issue in our families, in our communities and across this province.

And we need to take action and give young people with mental health challenges the support that they need so that they can reach their full potential.

I'm proud to lead Ontario's comprehensive mental health and addiction strategy, a joint initiative of the ministries of children and youth services, health and long-term care and education. The first three years of our strategy focus on children and youth because we know that one in five young people in Ontario—that's about 500,000 children—are dealing today with mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, schizophrenia and eating disorders. We also know that 70% of mental health and addiction problems begin in childhood and adolescence. So, Mr. Speaker, how we invest in our children today will determine the quality of their lives tomorrow. That's why, in the first three years of our mental health strategy, our government is focusing on children and youth with an unprecedented investment of \$257 million.

Through our investments to date, approximately 20,000 more Ontario kids and their families are benefiting from quicker and easier access to mental health services and supports provided through community agencies, through youth courts and in schools.

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At this point, I should mention that at noon today, I and my two critics from the opposition parties and others had the privilege of attending the photography exhibit here at Queen's Park of students from Stephen Lewis Secondary School. They did this exhibit in recognition of Children's Mental Health Week. It is an extraordinary exhibit, and I urge all members of the Legislature to visit the exhibit. They're here for the duration of the week.

Because schools are often the first place where a young person with mental health needs is identified, that's why we've invested in more than 400 child and youth mental health workers hired to work with students in schools, to work with mental health agencies and to work with courts to address important mental health issues faced by children and youth in this province. It's why 144 new mental health and addictions nurses are being hired to work with schools to help students with mild-to-complex mental health or substance abuse problems. Over the next few months, we will continue to roll out services and supports targeted at children and youth with unique mental health challenges.

I know this is an issue which has both confronted and been important to all parties of the Legislature. I know that it's important that we recognize that the efforts that have been under way in past years to confront these challenges and build a stronger mental health system to support children and youth and adults suffering from mental health needs. It has been an issue which has been driven by compassion and commitment to nonpartisan effort. I want to acknowledge that all parties, particularly the two opposition parties, have worked hard with the government on advancing this important subject.

Beginning this spring, new aboriginal mental health and addictions workers will also be hired to provide cul-

turally appropriate direct services to aboriginal children and youth in high-needs aboriginal communities right across the province. We will also enhance and expand telepsychiatry services to provide more service to kids in remote, rural and underserved areas.

This is not a problem that we can solve alone. We work hand in hand, as I mentioned, with all members of this Legislature and with partners right across the province. These partners include agencies, umbrella organizations, advocates, clinicians, workers and donors like Margaret McCain, the former Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick, who last month announced the largest private donation ever to child and youth mental health in Canada, a \$10-million gift to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, CAMH. I was proud and honoured to be present for the announcement of Margaret McCain's generous contribution.

So I want to thank all our mental health partners who are working diligently with us to support the mental health and well-being of our children and our youth. Together, we can and we will help change the lives of young people in communities across this great province.

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

**Mrs. Jane McKenna:** Thank you to the Minister of Children and Youth Services. I am pleased to rise today on behalf of our leader, Tim Hudak, and the Ontario Progressive Conservative caucus to recognize Children's Mental Health Week.

We know one in five Ontarians will experience a mental health problem at some point in their lifetime, and that 70% of those symptoms will surface during childhood and adolescence. That's a population of around half a million young people currently wrestling with these issues.

Children's Mental Health Week is about increasing awareness of children and youth mental health problems, decreasing related and promoting access to help. This week is not just about wearing a ribbon to show that you care; it's about being honest about the progress we're making and challenges we face on the issue of mental health for children and youth.

Tomorrow, the federal government will release its first-ever national mental health strategy, one expected to reinforce and, where necessary, repair provincial strategies.

I am proud of the work of the Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions, a comprehensive report that began with my PC colleague for Whitby-Oshawa, Christine Elliott. The report's 23 recommendations had many recommendations calling for additional services for children and youth. Ontario has invested in prevention and early intervention at the expense of treatment, but trends indicate that we need both approaches. Researchers with the US Public Health Service have forecast that by the end of the decade, childhood mental health disorders will rise by over 50% worldwide. Parents from Children's Mental Health point out that despite the inroads that have been made in recent years, there is still a crisis in Ontario. Five in six children with mental health problems will receive no professional help at all.

In the shadow of the recent budget, we have seen this government squeezing efficiencies from our strained system and announcing plans to mothball various youth treatment facilities. We see this in events like the closure of facilities such as Thistleton Regional Centre, moves that have been undertaken without consultation or warning to the families that will be impacted.

Funding levels alone don't tell the whole story, of course. We can make real progress by seeing clearly, thinking creatively and asking critical questions rather than believing that funding alone is a solution.

In the course of my stakeholder consultation on this portfolio, I have learned that there is, in fact, excessive funding overlap. Several agencies have nearly identical mandates and functions.

As well, as with so many things in this government, we're obsessed with hitting targets in terms of inputs, rather than concentrating on clearly defined outcomes or objectives. The system should work towards common benchmarks, but we don't have those.

We also need proper assessments so that individuals can be streamed into appropriate and effective programs. But we can't have an effective system without well-trained specialists and professionals. There is a high need for clinical psychologists and psychiatrists—the average age of practising specialists is 62 in psychiatry, and 57 in psychology. This should be a warning bell.

We need more university spaces to train psychiatrists and psychologists who specialize in children and youth. The University of Toronto apparently has only two spaces open for child psychiatrists.

The focus right now is on psychiatry aimed at seniors. The problem and the solutions are staring us right in the face.

Do we care enough to act? Some certainly do, and so I would like to pay tribute to the professionals who devote their lives to the children's mental health field, including the agencies in my riding of Burlington—specifically the dedicated people at the Reach Out Centre for Kids, or ROCK. Over the past 35 years, ROCK has grown to become a leader in providing innovative, family-centred mental health services. It helps infants, children, teens and adults live their lives through early assessment and intervention, prevention, treatment and therapy for those having or at risk of developing mental health problems or mental illness.

Organizations like ROCK help families across Ontario. I would ask that you support them as you mark Children's Mental Health Week and continue to keep children's mental health in the spotlight year-round.

**Miss Monique Taylor:** I'm pleased to rise today to recognize Children's Mental Health Week.

All of us at times experience problems with our mental health. Often it's because of the loss of a close friend or family member, or it's as simple as a change in our employment situation. Thankfully, in most of these cases, these feelings are temporary and we work our way through it. But sometimes the feelings continue and they become overwhelming, and this can be a sign that there's

more going on that needs more attention. Perhaps there's a previously undetected mental health disorder that needs to be treated.

Some of these disorders are more prevalent than others, and sometimes sufferers fall victim to more than one.

ASD, autism spectrum disorder, affects one in about 88 people. Anxiety disorders: About 6% of our children have anxiety disorders serious enough to need treatment. ADHD affects 5% of children. These are just some of the many mental health disorders. They can be caused by chemical imbalances, exposures to toxins or genetic influences. They can be a result of abuse or neglect. They can come from low self-esteem, poor performance at school, stress at work, severed or strained relationships. This information and much more can be made available by Children's Mental Health Ontario, and I would encourage all members to take the opportunity to meet with one of them or their 85 member agencies across Ontario.

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These community-based mental health agencies are the backbone of Ontario's mental health system for children and youth. They provide treatment to our young people with a range of social, emotional and behavioural problems. The agencies are staffed by many dedicated professionals who do wonderful, wonderful work for their clients. Unfortunately, due to the way that the system has developed, there is little uniformity in the delivery of the services and treatments across the province.

Their strong community-based focus has meant a lack of mandated programs or regulations of the sector. As a result, not every agency is able to provide the same levels of training. They cannot ensure the same treatment and coordination of services, and they're found wanting.

In 2005, the government stated that the number one goal was for a child and youth mental health sector that is coordinated, collaborative and integrated at all community and governmental levels, creating a culture of shared responsibility. We're not there yet, Mr. Speaker, and I know that Children's Mental Health Ontario is keen to work with the government on system reform.

Last year's budget provided \$257 million over three years, but the previous two decades before that were marked by chronic underfunding that took years of toil onto the system. Throughout those years, agencies found efficiencies. They shared IT systems, they shared back office services with other agencies, and they used video conferencing to reduce their travel costs. They found efficiencies in clinical services such as the use of walk-in clinics and group work instead of one-on-one treatment, which we all know is very needed in this province, Mr. Speaker.

The changes also meant cuts to employee benefit packages, and some agencies are entirely without financial, administrative and supportive staff. On rare occasions when the government provided funding increases, none of that money was earmarked for administrative needs.

The dollars announced in June 2011 do nothing to address the lack of administrative, supervisory or travel costs available for these agencies. Yes—and you know that we’re strong on this, Mr. Speaker—we all know that we need to put money into front-line services, but without the funding to support the operations of the agencies, clients will continue to suffer.

As we celebrate Children’s Mental Health Week, let us rededicate ourselves to the collaborative approach that includes the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the education and children’s mental health agencies.

## PETITIONS

### HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION

**Mr. John O’Toole:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. It’s nice to start this week. You look great in the chair there. My petition from the riding of Durham reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the province unexpectedly announced it is abandoning years of preparation, study and the signed Flow agreement that included a commitment to build the Highway 407 east extension in one phase to Highway 35/115; and

“Whereas the province, without consultation with the municipalities, and nowhere” in hearings held in the public was this ever mentioned to be phased in, “is now proceeding with a two-phased approach, stopping at Simcoe Street North in Oshawa; and

“Whereas this two-phased approach will mean significant financial, quality of life, safety and environmental setbacks for Durham region and its municipalities and hinder economic development, tourism and job creation for all of southern Ontario; and

“Whereas this two-phased approach will ultimately mean higher costs for all provincial taxpayers;

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

“We, the residents and businesses of southern Ontario, oppose any decision to terminate Highway 407 east in Oshawa or Clarington, and request that the province proceed with the Highway 407 East extension project as planned and promised, in one phase, from Brock Road in Pickering through to Highway 35/115, with a completion date of 2013.”

I’m pleased to sign and support this and give it to William, one of the pages here.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** And you look good in the chair.

### ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** I have a petition with respect to Bill 13, and it reads as follows.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“We, the undersigned citizens of Canada and residents of Ontario, draw attention to the following:

“Whereas, under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, every Canadian citizen has the following fundamental freedoms: the freedom of conscience and religion; freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, including freedom of the press and other media of communication; and freedom of association;

“Whereas the preamble for Bill 13 makes no reference to protecting against bullying based on religious beliefs, political affiliation or any general association;

“Whereas Bill 13 removes freedoms of speech, religion and association by forcing the promotion of values, lifestyles and beliefs which a Canadian citizen may not agree with, which they are entitled to under the Canadian Constitution, and furthermore has the potential to lead to these freedoms being removed from private schools;

“Whereas Bill 13 will most likely remove the freedom of religion and freedom of speech by only allowing groups to rent space who will conform exactly to the code of conduct within each board;

“Whereas Bill 13 at a few points defines bullying in a very broad, subjective manner that leaves it open to wide interpretation, with the consequences for such behaviour being student expulsion;

“Whereas Bill 13 appears to enforce and enshrine fairly new policies and procedures at the school board level, such as the Toronto District School Board’s ‘Challenging Homophobia and Heterosexism: A K-12 Curriculum Resource Guide,’ where the parental rights are removed around gender and sexual education beginning at the age of three;

“Therefore, the undersigned petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to vote against Bill 13.”

It’s signed by a significant number of constituents in the riding of Kitchener–Waterloo.

### PUBLIC TRANSIT

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Toronto Transit Commission will have an estimated ridership of 503 million in 2012;

“Whereas the TTC received only \$91 million from the province of Ontario for operations in the 2010-11 fiscal year with a total TTC budget of \$1.5 billion;

“Whereas fare boxes account for 70% to 80% of total TTC costs, making it one of the highest fare-recovery ratios in North America;

“Whereas the TTC recommended another 10-cent fare increase to all riders again this year;

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

“That the province of Ontario pledge stable and long-term funding of the TTC and other municipally run transit authorities in Ontario and ensure that provincial funding be restored to 50% of the operating subsidy; and

“That transit authorities who accept that restored funding freeze or reduce their fares.”

I support this petition and sign my name to it and give it to page Safa.

#### AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** Further petitions? The member from York South—

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** York West.

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

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Yes. That’s okay, Speaker; no problem.

I have a somewhat lengthy petition here with respect to first-time drivers and Bill 71 which I would like to read to the House, as it is addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas new drivers, especially young drivers, face very difficult challenges in obtaining affordable automobile insurance; and

“Whereas the challenge is even greater when new drivers look to acquire their first vehicle, which is a huge expense in itself; and

“Whereas the difficulty is compounded when a new driver with no previous driving experience is penalized by paying thousands of dollars more, just because they happen to be new drivers; and

“Whereas new drivers should be given the benefit of the doubt and grant them with an accreditation of six years’ driving experience in order to make automobile insurance available and more affordable to thousands of new drivers; and

“Whereas this benefit is extended to new drivers that have completed an accredited driving school course in the province of Ontario or North America; and

“Whereas approval of Bill 71 would be extremely helpful and beneficial for thousands of parents, and their young sons or daughters as well;

“Therefore we undersign this petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and ask the members of all parties to support passage of Bill 71 and give all new drivers an opportunity to prove themselves.”

I support the content of the petition and will affix my name to it.

**The Speaker (Hon. Dave Levac):** I thank the member from York West for his petition.

#### HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

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

“Whereas the horse racing industry employs approximately 60,000 people, creates \$1.5 billion in wages and \$2 billion in recurring expenditures annually; and

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“Whereas the partnership that was created between government and the horse breeding and racing industry has been a model arrangement and is heralded throughout North America, with 75% of revenues going to the

provincial government to fund important programs like health care and education, 5% to the municipalities and only 20% goes back to the horse business; and

“Whereas the horse business is a significant source of revenue for the farming community and rural municipalities;

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

“That the Ministry of Finance continue the revenue-sharing partnership with the horse racing industry for the benefit of Ontario’s agricultural and rural economies.”

I support this petition, I’ll affix my name and send it with Vincent to the clerks’ table.

#### PELEE ISLAND FERRY SERVICE

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** A petition on behalf of residents of Pelee Island and the surrounding area:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas there is a critical issue going on regarding the ferry service to Pelee Island; and

“Whereas both ferries have been in dry dock undergoing maintenance work, leaving Pelee Island and its residents without transportation service, causing severe and undue hardship; and

“Whereas maintenance to the Jiimaan and the Pelee Islander should be done at the end of the season, not in the beginning; and

“Whereas both boats should not be serviced at the same time; as a result, the farmers on the island are losing the valuable spring planting season, and other businesses are losing business daily; and

“Whereas the Ministry of Transportation should be looking into alternate ferry boats to service Pelee Island. There are several options, which include: the ferry from Kelleys Island, McKeil Marine, Dean Construction and Nadro Marine, which have tugs and barges to transport farming equipment;

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

“Direct the Ministry of Transportation to explore all options in order to implement the heavy-transportation needs of the residents and businesses of Pelee Island. Further, to direct the service providers to put together a plan to prevent further disruption to the ferry services of Pelee Island.”

I agree with the petition, Mr. Speaker, and I’ll affix my name to it and submit it with page Talin.

#### RADIATION SAFETY

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

“Whereas subsection 6(2)8 of the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act identifies dental hygienists as persons deemed to be qualified to operate an X-ray machine; and

“Whereas dental hygienists need to be able to prescribe X-rays and to be designated as radiation protection officers in order to provide their patients and clients with

safe and convenient access to a medically necessary procedure, as is already the case in many comparable jurisdictions;

“We, the dental hygienists working in Ontario, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To express support for the motion filed on April 17, 2012, by the member from Richmond Hill that asks the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to establish a committee consisting of experts to review the Healing Arts Radiation Protection Act (1990) and its regulations and make recommendations on how to modernize this act and bring it to 21st century standards, so that it becomes responsive to the safety of patients and clients and the public and to include all forms of radiation that are currently used in the health care sector for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes.”

I fully support this petition, and I affix my signature and send it with page Shaumik.

#### HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**Ms. Lisa MacLeod:** I am petitioning on behalf of my constituents.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario horse racing and breeding industry generates \$2 billion of economic activity, mostly in rural Ontario;

“Whereas more than 60,000 Ontarians are employed by Ontario’s horse racing and breeding industry;

“Whereas 20% of the funds generated by the OLG slots-at-racetracks program is reinvested in racetracks and the horse racing and breeding industry, while 75% is returned to the government of Ontario;

“Whereas the OLG slots-at-racetracks program generates \$1.3 billion a year for health care and other spending, making it the most profitable form of gaming in the province for OLG;

“Whereas the government has announced plans to cancel the slots-at-racetracks program, a decision that will cost the government \$1.1 billion per year and threatens more than 60,000 jobs;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature as follows:

“Call on the government of Ontario to protect the \$1.1 billion of revenue the government received annually because of the OLG slots-at-racetracks program; direct OLG to honour the contracts with racetracks and protect the horse racing and breeding industry by continuing the OLG slots-at-racetracks revenue-sharing program.”

Speaker, I affix my signature in support of the people of eastern Ontario.

#### DOG OWNERSHIP

**Ms. Cheri DiNovo:** This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas currently the law takes the onus off of owners that raise violent dogs by making it appear that violence is a matter of genetics; and

“Whereas the Dog Owners’ Liability Act does not clearly define a pit bull, nor is it enforced equally across the province, as pit bulls are not an acknowledged breed;

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

“That the Legislative Assembly passes Bill 16, the Public Safety Related to Dogs Statute Law Amendment Act, 2011, into law.”

I want to save dogs’ lives. A thousand have been killed. I’m going to sign it and give it to page Andrew to be delivered to the table.

#### WIND TURBINES

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

“Whereas industrial wind turbine developments have raised concerns among citizens over health, safety and property values; and

“Whereas the Green Energy Act allows wind turbine developments to bypass meaningful public input and municipal approvals;

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

“That the Ministry of the Environment revise the Green Energy Act to allow full public input and municipal approvals on all industrial wind farm developments; and

“That the Minister of the Environment conduct a thorough scientific study on the health and environmental impacts of industrial wind turbines.”

Thank you, and I will be signing this.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Mr. Toby Barrett:** A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources intends to make significant changes to the Ontario Stewardship Program through the reduction of funding, and more importantly, direct staff support via a stewardship coordinator as currently supplied to stewardship councils since program inception in 1995;

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

“Formally request that Premier McGuinty intervene and ensure that the Ontario Stewardship Program, with their 46 individual MNR stewardship coordinators, remain working on the landscape. It is a value-for-money program that the grassroots taxpayer understands and appreciates. On average, the government’s investment is returned at a ratio of better than 5:1, with over 16,000 volunteers implementing 600-plus stewardship projects annually; thereby advancing the government’s mandates in a fiscally responsible manner.

“In our view, the stewardship program is, and should continue to be, the bedrock for the delivery of Ontario’s biodiversity strategy, 50 Million Tree Program and species-at-risk stewardship, as well as many of the

important legislative initiatives your government has overseen.

“We would therefore respectfully request that you have Minister Gravelle and his management team reconsider the proposed changes to the stewardship program.”

I agree with the petition and affix my signature.

#### HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** A petition for the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ontario horse racing and breeding industry generates \$2 billion of economic activity, mostly in rural Ontario;

“Whereas more than 60,000 Ontarians are employed by ... horse racing and breeding industry;

“Whereas 20% of the funds generated by the OLG slots-at-racetracks program is reinvested in racetracks and the horse racing and breeding industry, while 75% is returned to the government of Ontario;

“Whereas the OLG slots-at-racetracks program generates \$1.3 billion a year for health care and other spending, making it the most profitable form of gaming in the province for OLG;

“Whereas the government has announced plans to cancel the slots-at-racetracks program, a decision that will cost the government \$1.1 billion per year and threaten more than 60,000 jobs;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly ... as follows:

“Call on the government of Ontario to” (1) “protect the \$1.1 billion of revenue the government received annually because of the OLG slots-at-racetracks program;” and (2) “direct OLG to honour the contracts with racetracks and protect the horse racing and breeding industry by continuing the OLG slots-at-racetracks revenue-sharing program.”

I support this petition, affix my name and pass it down with the page Vincent.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes the time we have available for petitions this afternoon. I apologize to members; there’s a chance tomorrow.

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#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

##### STRONG ACTION FOR ONTARIO ACT (BUDGET MEASURES), 2012 LOI DE 2012 SUR UNE ACTION ÉNERGIQUE POUR L'ONTARIO (MESURES BUDGÉTAIRES)

Resuming the debate adjourned on May 1, 2012, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 55, An Act to implement Budget measures and to enact and amend various Acts / Projet de loi 55, Loi

visant à mettre en oeuvre les mesures budgétaires et à édicter et à modifier diverses lois.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I recognize the member for Thornhill.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** It’s my pleasure to rise in the House today on behalf of the official opposition to begin debate on Bill 55, which is entitled the Strong Action for Ontario Act, subtitled Budget Measures.

Probably pretty well any time I’m putting something on the record that refers to the title of a bill brought by this government, I have to make this remark, and I’m going to make it again: Calling this budget Strong Action for Ontario doesn’t necessarily make it so. And I think the bulk of my remarks over the course of the next hour or so will underscore that fact.

Just for the benefit of people who might be watching us who are wondering why we’re debating the budget at this point, because there was so much publicity over the last several weeks on the budget motion and whether or not there would be an election and so forth in the province of Ontario, there are two different things here. One is the budget motion, which is where the finance minister moves that we adopt his budget, and that has been dealt with by this Legislature and passed. Now we’re into the technical phase of it, and what we’re talking about is Bill 55, which is a piece of legislation that, if passed, enables the budget to take place in the province Ontario.

So I thank you for the opportunity to speak to this.

I want to begin by talking about a little bit of my own history in the province of Ontario, because it speaks so much to what my expectations were and, I think, what the expectations of anybody arriving in this province would be. Before coming to Ontario, I was a Quebecer. I was a Montrealer, and I moved here with my then very young family—two young sons; I was a man in my 30s—in 1983, so 29 years ago.

It was kind of like the song New York, New York—you know the line, “If I can make it there, I can make it anywhere.” I felt that way about moving from Montreal, which had been besieged by political change. I was moving to Ontario, which, there was no question at that time, was unarguably the engine of Confederation. This was where everything was made. This was where financial service business got done. This was where insurance products were invented. This was where homes were being built and condos were basically rising from the ground up. I thought about the lines from that song, and I wound up moving from Quebec to come and work in a big corporation.

The big corporation lasted a period of time, and I thought it might be appropriate to make the move to small business, because I saw how well my entrepreneur friends were doing. I thought that if they could do it, so could I, and I persevered and did so. I wound up in consulting and probably had the best year I ever had working as a consultant, because by then I had appropriated and assimilated all of this knowledge about how corporations work and then how small business works and I could ad-

vise other people. Indeed, my services were in demand and I got paid handsomely for doing that.

I wound up in media, which many people know. I spent some years on radio as well as running radio stations, and ultimately wound up in this place, dealing with the public good and public administration. That's not necessarily the story of my life; it could be the story of anybody's life. That was Ontario: opportunity for all, opportunity to use what was available to you, based on your experience. Indeed, I was able to do that, and I'm happy to be here today.

I wish I could be standing here to applaud a new way forward for Ontario, because goodness knows, Ontario needs that. I wish I could basically say today that this is a government that has heard the people, that has heeded the call, that has decided that maybe those times I described about what was happening in my life 30 years ago aren't happening to that extent, or maybe not to any extent, anymore. Maybe people have lost some of that hope. Maybe they had believed that. I wish I could be standing here today and saying that, finally, this government is on the road to a balanced budget which would at least in part re-create some of those times. Sadly, Speaker, I cannot stand here and say that any of those things have happened. Instead, I'd like to relate a story about another entrepreneur.

Over the course of the weekend, I spent some time with some people. The gentleman is a guy about my age, also an entrepreneur. He was the very first person to say to me—and he said it this weekend, within half an hour of my getting together with him—the first person to say to me, “Why are you people hurting me?” I said, “How are we hurting you?” He said, “Well, you've put a tax on people who make over \$500,000 a year.” I know this guy, and I had no idea until he said that that he made over \$500,000 a year. He said, “I have to pay a tax on that,” and I said, “Cry me a river.” I did. I said, “How bad can it be?” He's actually the first person who complained about it. But it made me think, on a couple of levels.

I'll get into the nuts and bolts of the budget in a minute, but this very much relates. It made me think of what I had gone through. I never made \$500,000 in a year, but it made me think of a time when I did make \$300,000 or \$400,000 a year—and I did—in private business. It made me think of him making that kind of money now, and it made me think about how you get to that point and what kind of an opportunity base you require in Ontario to get to that point. In my own situation, as with my friends, in small business you risk everything. You roll the dice. He did to get where he is today; I did. I can tell you that his story parallels mine; mine, when I got into small business, was a situation where I had, when I first started my business, about two dozen employees, and by the time I sold it 15 years later, about 125 employees.

There was never an employee of my company, never an employee of my friend's company—never—who failed to get a paycheque every two weeks. I can tell you

that in my own case, as in my friend's, to get down that path to those big dollars, I didn't draw a salary for three years, the initial three years; all I did was write cheques. So it was my money, my family's money, my family's risk being taken that allowed for every single one of those employees to always get paid and never worry about being paid. And, Speaker, I might say that in that Ontario, an Ontario that allowed me that opportunity, not only did I not get paid, I put that money into the company so that other people could get paid, as did my friend; and I changed the light bulbs when they went out and I cleaned the toilets when they got blocked—all of those things that were necessary to make it. I drove from Thornhill to downtown Toronto, where the company was located, when some machine needed resetting. Then, after the three years, when I could take some money out, I took \$7,500 a month, so whatever the math is—I guess that's about \$90,000 a year. I did that for a number of years, and it was only in the last couple of years that I was able to realize some of the rewards that my friends who's making over \$500,000 is now realizing.

When you average that out—and I'm not trying to defend the concept of paying more tax if you make more money. I think that's inherent to the Income Tax Act in Canada, before you get into any specialty taxes. What I'm saying is, no risk, no reward, and if you average out the dollars of people who are making those big bucks, maybe they made \$100,000 a year for their risk. And maybe—maybe—the kind of modification to the legislation that we're considering, which will ultimately come, I'm sure, in amendments, will address the issue, but the fact of the matter is that there's nothing wrong in looking at high incomes and making sure that you do your part and taking them as the pinnacle of something that averaged much less over that year; and there's also something to be said for not pointing fingers at them, because those are the people who do take risks and as a result of those risks create the wealth that Ontario has historically had.

So those are the stories of my life and of my weekend that informed some of the debate that you're going to hear today in terms of Bill 55, the budget bill.

Once the horse trading was completed and the budget motion was passed, it didn't take long for the hammer to fall, did it, Speaker? Like dominoes, rating agencies—objective observers—voice their concerns over any government's direction, and over this government's direction in this particular instance. First, we heard that S&P, Standard and Poor's, had announced its negative outlook for Ontario's financial future. That was within 48 hours of the passing of the budget motion that we heard from S&P.

#### 1400

Amazingly, within 24 hours of that, Moody's actually got on board and didn't just comment but downgraded Ontario's credit rating—all of this within 72 hours of the passing of the budget motion. Jennifer Wong is Moody's assistant vice-president, lead analyst for Ontario, and she stated, “The negative outlook on the province reflects the



softening economic outlook, Ontario's growing debt burden and the extended time frame to achieving a balanced budget." That source is from Moody's Investors Service.

If that isn't a condemning indictment of this government's management, or mismanagement, of our province, I'm not sure that I know what is. People, led basically by the Minister of Finance of the province of Ontario, would like to sweep that away and say it doesn't matter, but it does, because we need independent observers with knowledge to say where we stand, whether we're individuals, whether we're companies, and certainly when we're jurisdictions like the province of Ontario, and that indeed is what S&P and what Moody's did. So the Aa2, which is the grade we've been awarded by Moody's, is not a condemnation of this province to immediate ruin, and a denial of any ability to borrow money, but it is a red flag being run up the flagpole that says, "Down the road a piece, if you don't get your fiscal house in order, you are going to pay," and that's what this is about.

Instead of reassessing their position once their budget had elicited such strong reaction, the McGuinty government persists in stubbornly—and very arrogantly, I might say—leading Ontario astray. They continue to write cheques that they can't cash, and they make promises they don't intend to keep. The Liberal budget resembled nothing of the Liberal election platform. The Strong Action for Ontario Act, as I've said, is anything but strong action.

To aggravate matters as far as my party, the official opposition, is concerned, there was a suggestion by the Premier of this province as well as by his Minister of Finance that for some reason, my party, because it hadn't participated to the level that was expected by that party in some sort of negotiations to modify the budget, somehow or other had forfeited our right to speak. Now, I can't conceive of how that even begins to make sense, but that's what they said. Therefore, if you take that to its ultimate completion, I shouldn't even be standing here and speaking today at all, because somehow or other, through that arrogant government, I have arrived at this point illicitly. I have no dog in the hunt. Why? Because I didn't want to play ball.

The fact of the matter is, and it should be noted for the record, that we did participate at the table with the Minister of Finance, going back to November and again as late as February, but there was nothing meaningful about it, because there was no suggestion put forward by this side of the House, put forward by the official opposition, that was of any interest to that finance minister or that Premier in terms of incorporation into the budget.

So I say that, illicit or not on the part of that government, here I stand on behalf of Tim Hudak and the official opposition.

Bill 55, the budget bill, is a huge bill. It looks not unlike the Toronto phone book—about that thick. It contains 69 different schedules. What that means, to the uninitiated, is that it modifies 69 different pieces of legislation in order to enable the legislation that it itself

represents, in order to enable that budget to be of force and effect.

Interestingly—and I took a look over the weekend at this book. This is not a prop but, rather, a budget addendum called Addendum to the 2012 Ontario Budget: Report on Expense Management Measures. If you take a look at any given page, essentially what you're reading is gobbledygook, because what it tries to do is talk about where the dollars are derived that are going to be saved so that we can have this "strong action."

So I picked one, Ministry of Children and Youth Services, where they look at saving \$16 million this year, \$16.2 million next year and \$16.2 million the year after that. That takes us to a scheduled election year, 2015, for a total savings of \$48.4 million.

I'm just going to read a highlighted portion; it's a paragraph long. Follow along with me—I'm talking about you legislators here in the House as well as people at home—and see if you can understand this.

"Building on transformation to date, the government is working with children's aid societies and the Commission to Promote Sustainable Child Welfare. The goal of this work is to find creative solutions to further improve the delivery of services to protect children, while containing costs through agency amalgamations; back-office consolidations; shared service delivery; developing a new funding model; establishing new approaches to accountability and outcome management; and improving service and financial management through implementation of the child protection information network.

"This transformation will support children's aid societies as they manage costs while continuing to provide services that protect children."

That's what it says; that's all it says. That equals \$48 million. And I'm sure that, somewhere, somebody with papers and pens and spreadsheets can show me that that is true. But for me to read that, and I'm fairly savvy with this stuff, it doesn't say anything.

Here's what I know about children's aid: If I go back a scant two years, this same government was not only unwilling to raise the children's aid budget in York region, where I represent Thornhill; it wanted to lower it. Only by a huge effort on the part of myself and my colleagues from York-Simcoe and from Newmarket-Aurora could we get the same allocation maintained, and now they're talking about cutting \$48 million in administrative expenses from the ministry that will somehow or other enhance children's aid societies. So I think there's a disconnect here.

This is the largest budget that I've seen in my time in this Legislature, in every single way. Unfortunately, quantity doesn't necessarily mean quality, and this budget is ample proof of that. Ontario is leading Confederation in ways that I would prefer it not lead. It's leading Confederation in debt level. It is leading in deficit level. The deficit in this year, projected in this budget, is three times the deficit of every other province and territory in Confederation combined. We are a province that represents 40% of the population of Canada, but

our deficit somehow or other has come to a sum that is three times the deficit of all other provinces combined.

Unemployment is another yardstick that has to be comprehended, has to be considered, in looking at the success or failure of any government. We're now in month 63. We'll find out, if we get to month 64 next week, when Alex Trebek—no, never mind. I don't mean to demean this by making it like a quiz show, but it almost is. It's "pull the card away and find out what happens." Sixty-three straight months as Canada's leader in unemployment: That's Ontario.

**Mr. Taras Natyshak:** "What is globalization?"

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I didn't hear your question, but it's 63 months.

This is a budget that falls short on every level. That's the point, Speaker. It falls short on every level. I am quite certain of my position and that of my leader, Tim Hudak, when the PC caucus stands and unanimously and unequivocally will vote no to this lacklustre budget bill that is closer to a collection of fantasies than it is to any sort of economic road map.

I want to say again, reiterate, the fact that this no vote and the no vote that preceded it when we considered the budget motion was, contrary to suggestions from others, absolutely considered and carefully considered. We are a party that puts above all else two aspects of life in a jurisdiction, life in the province of Ontario. One is that you have to live within your means, and the other is that you have to keep people employed. So when we talk about the fact that there is no jobs policy—and I'll deal with that more fully later on in this talk—we're serious. We're not talking about the creation of a blue ribbon task force or panel that says, "Someday, sometime, we'll report to you on how you make jobs." We're talking about making jobs. We're talking about a serious set of measures which this government has had many, many years to consider and to implement that would actually create jobs.

**1410**

We're also talking about spending. We've talked about spending ever since we were a party, and they've talked about spending and they've been actively involved in spending ever since they were in government. The bottom line on this is, if we take a look at revenue and we take a look at expenses in the province of Ontario, every single year that they've been in power—and it's eight and a half years now—there has been a revenue increase. Even in that horrible bottoming out that we experienced over 2008-09—which, admittedly, was a worldwide phenomenon aggravated by a negative situation in the province of Ontario—we still, in the province of Ontario, increased our revenue, year on year, in that year. We've had revenue shortfalls; we've never had a revenue diminution. We've never gone down, year on year, ever in the province of Ontario. So do we have a revenue problem? I suggest, Speaker, that we do not; we have a spending problem.

Speaker, this government has failed this House. More importantly, it has failed the people of Ontario, and we deserve so much better.

I want to talk about government action and the budget measures themselves.

We live in a great province. Let no one ever say that this party, in debate, when we talk about the government, is somehow or other transposing for "government" the term "province." Our province has always been a great province, it remains a great province, and it is a province that I would say, Speaker, based on everything I know about the 107 people from all parties who attend at this House, we all love and we all put all of our efforts into. This is a province that is dedicated to hard work. It is dedicated to honest living. It is a province where anyone from any walk of life can make a living for himself or herself the way I described that I did when I arrived here. This is the common perception that Ontarians have held.

I would take it a step beyond that, Speaker. I would say that for me, it has always been and remains an honour to be an Ontarian, and I think everybody feels that way. But this government's mismanagement of our economy at a time when what Ontario needed was leadership has shaken these foundations and shaken them very seriously to a point where—and I think we all know this; this is not a Progressive Conservative outlook, this is reportable—we have people leaving this province, people who came here to make their fortunes, to build their lives, to work with their families, to have a future, to make a life, who have decided that maybe they can make a life better in Alberta or maybe they can make a life better in British Columbia. Maybe they can. Maybe this has to fall on the doorstep of this government. This government has systemically hindered Ontario's ability to grow.

The province that was Canada's economic engine, as I referred to it earlier, is, after eight years of Dalton McGuinty, struggling even as our neighbours succeed. This is what I find so disheartening. To talk to people in other provinces who are having an easier time of it, to look at unemployment rates like 5% to 6% in our next-door neighbour Manitoba or over in Saskatchewan, while we sit there up in the sevens moving towards the eights—why is that? The Liberals refuse to change course, notwithstanding the protestations of ourselves and other groups.

We've talked to a great extent about the possibility of dealing with getting our house in order through a number of measures, probably the chief one of which was mentioned even today in question period, and that is the idea of a mandatory wage freeze in the broader public sector. The Ontario PC caucus has been calling on the government for months to look seriously into controlling the ballooning overdraft in the government chequing account. As a matter of fact, it's worth noting that in the very first meeting that I had, that was unproductive, with the finance minister in the pre-budget period—dealt with, amongst other subjects, this concept of a wage freeze. I was given a fairly learned lesson by Mr. Duncan on why this was not possible: the fact that it had been tried, that there was a British Columbia case that had gone before the Supreme Court. We went to the trouble of getting

legal opinions that said, to the contrary, we could do this and still can. But this government wasn't going to do it. This would have been effectively addressed if the government had taken decisive action and legislated a wage freeze for all public and broader public sector workers.

It's interesting that even as recently as four hours ago, there was the Premier standing in response to questions from my leader, Tim Hudak, saying, "No, we're not prepared to get into the business of a public sector wage freeze." I think the difference at this point between that Premier's position and the position of my party leader, and my party generally, is fairly narrow. We say what we mean, we mean what we say, and then we follow through and we do it.

At the end of the day, this Premier is saying, "We believe that we have a working relationship, that we spent years building, between ourselves and the broader public sector, and we can resolve it through what will wind up being a friendly round of negotiations." But I'm looking at the papers every day and I don't see anything friendly about this round of negotiations. In fact, I see a spectre of something to come that I'm not liking. I would say that even the unions involved, the groups involved, the associations involved in these negotiations would have respected, and still would, the position that my party has taken to a much greater extent, because at least they understand where they are in all of this.

If I say to you that a mandatory, legislated public sector wage freeze is what we propose for the next two years to even the playing field, then you understand exactly what it is we mean. Instead, we look at this dance—I wouldn't call it a mating dance, just a dance—between the province of Ontario and its various partners in the broader public sector these days, and I see it leading to much the same thing as what we're proposing. I take no great pleasure in talking about this from an I-told-you-so perspective, but that's what I see. Why don't you just do what you really mean to do at the end of the day? They can't afford to pay any more money; they haven't allocated any more money in this budget for the next two years. Therefore, we're talking about a wage freeze. Let's call it what it's going to be: a mandatory, legislated public sector wage freeze. But, no, I still hear the waffling on that side. Frankly, I find that offensive, and I think the people of Ontario should be offended by it as well.

During the recent recession, families and businesses all took a hit, a big hit, and I would like to point out very particularly, in the elderly part of our population probably more so than most. Why? Because if you were a person of—let's take a mean age of 70 in 2006 or 2007, and you wound up in the thick of that recession and found that the mutual funds you'd bought with your RRSP, that you'd turned into an annuity that was now paying you; or the savings that you had put in a bank account; or the equities that you'd bought on the stock market—whatever your instrument of savings happened to be, they took a hit too. So the dividend income or the interest income or the RRIF income—however you

derived your monthly living expenses—suddenly had to drop because of the hit that the nest egg took. It never recovered. That's not true for a 30-year-old, a 40-year-old, a 50-year-old or even for me in my early 60s, because I'm still working and I'm still earning a living and I can afford the time horizon that it takes for some of my savings to recover. Those people never recovered. So, a big hit? Nowhere more so than that. Everybody took one.

Ontarians and Ontario businesses recognize the need to tighten their belts. They get it. This is during a time of recession. Why does this government refuse to accept that same premise? Why is that? I have gone through numerous pre-budget submissions that asked for that very thing. I might also make this comment, Speaker: Pre-budget submissions were as scarce as hen's teeth. They were hard to come by, and there's a reason for that. That was because at the time that we ordinarily would have gone around the province with the standing committee on finance, looking for submissions from groups and individuals to say what was on their minds with regard to what the budget should contain, there were no pre-budget hearings, because the government stonewalled the opposition parties and didn't allow for the creation of that committee before the fact of this budget being presented.

In discussing this, the parliamentary assistant for finance and the finance minister himself talked about the fact that they had consulted extensively with people, using teleconferencing and doing direct consultations.

**1420**

But do you know what? That was consultation by the Liberal government directly with people. It was teleconferencing directly with people and interpreting whatever it got to its own ends, ostensibly informing the budget that way, without having any information coming from questions that might have been asked that would expose information; those questions to be asked by members of the third party and members of my party. We never had that opportunity.

So if this budget was informed at all by teleconferencing calls or meetings or some kind of pre-budget submissions that were invited directly by the Liberal Party and its finance minister, so be it. But there's no evidence of that for me; there's no evidence of that for the public to see. So it's not enough just to say it was done. It has to be seen to have been done.

I've gone through numerous pre-budget submissions that were directed to me, specifically, that came to my office. They asked for belt-tightening; they asked for strong measures. Interesting again that this bill talks about strong budget measures when, indeed, we don't consider them to be strong at all, because at the rate at which this government is spending, Ontario does not stand a chance of digging itself out of the hole that only the Liberal Party—only the Liberal government of Dalton McGuinty—has dug. He's the person—he's not holding the smoking gun; in this case, he's holding the spade, the shovel that dug us into this inextricable hole that, if it ever gets filled in, will be filled in by my grandkids and my great-grandchildren.

While Ontarians have dealt with layoffs, lower pay and anxiety about their future, the broader public sector has been out there expecting, and still expecting, that it's privileged position—because, let's face it, folks, while they are good people and work hard, they are the new elite, because we can't move at the level they've been able to move at financially over the course of the past eight years. In other words, the people who sacrificed and made tough decisions are the same people paying the salaries of those working in the public sector, a sector that accounts for the largest portion of this province's expenses: \$55 billion in the last year.

There's something wrong with a situation where hard-working families who have been hit by unemployment, wage cuts, salary freezes, shift reductions and so forth are expected to support a public sector that, as a result of Dalton McGuinty's lack of leadership, hasn't been reined in to do the same in these turbulent times.

We often quote a figure of 27% from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, being roughly the percentage difference, in favour of the broader public sector, of salary levels right now versus similar jobs in the private sector; 27% as a result of the fact that basically this government has gone along with, I think, bloated requests over the course of the period of time it's been in power. And now, when there's an expectation on the part of the broader public sector that this should continue and it can't continue, the government, if not indeed at risk of being at loggerheads with the broader public sector, may even be said to be at loggerheads already.

That's why we've been very explicit. That's why we've called for a broader public sector wage freeze from the outset, right after the election in October. That's why we still take that position today, Speaker, and frankly, that's one of the main reasons why, at the end of the day, we couldn't sit hand in hand around a table and sing Kumbaya with the Liberal government and say, "Your budget's okay," because the budget's not okay.

The budget is a budget that pretends to be a belt-tightening budget, where belt-tightening is defined as spending only \$2 billion more this year than we did last year. This is the only administration I can conceive of, the only people I can conceive of saying, "We're going to bump things up, but it's by such a lesser amount than we have in past years that we'll call this austerity." So they're spending \$125 billion to \$130 billion and they're only going to bump it up by \$2 billion, and this is belt-tightening. Why? Because every single year in the past eight years they spent 7% or 7.5% more than they did in the prior year, and that makes them better people.

I have two problems with that. One, spending \$2 billion more at a time like this is not belt-tightening. That's the first problem I've got. The second problem is that you have actually spent so much over that period of time that you've doubled the provincial debt from what it was in 2003 until now. You've managed to double the amount of debt of the province of Ontario—all the debt that was scored from Confederation right up to 2003. I find that inconceivable. But that's the Liberal way, the

Liberal way that refuses to acknowledge and accept a link between cause and effect, action and consequence. All actions carry consequences.

The Liberal way is incapable of distinguishing between needs and wants. When I talk to lay people—when I'm speaking about the budget outside—I often refer to the column marked "needs" and the column marked "wants," because people understand it this way. Budgets for provinces are not any different than budgets for people; not any different than budgets for businesses. The easiest way to say it is that it's just more zeros. So if your budget in your home is \$100,000, add three more zeros and that makes it a million dollars, add three more zeros and that makes it a billion dollars, and add three more zeros and that makes it a trillion dollars. It doesn't make any difference, it's still an amount of money and you have to parse how you spend different aspects of it.

In most people's businesses and most people's homes—and it should be this way in people's governments—there's a column marked "needs" and a column marked "wants." Let's take it on the simplest level. In my home, my needs column is my rent or my mortgage, my heating and electricity costs, my food, whatever supplies the kids need, clothing and stuff. Those are needs. They're not discussible; they're needs. We have to attend to them. Then there are wants. If I've saved well or I got a bonus from the boss or I've been careful about my needs, I might get to take the kids to Florida in December. That's how most people think, and that's the wants column.

With government, the needs column is that we have to provide for people's health—all their health care—we have to provide for education for our kids and we have to provide social services for the community. All those things that nobody would fail to acknowledge, we certainly acknowledge as well. But they go into the wants column to a great extent.

I could go into a fairly substantial discussion of the Drummond report, because Mr. Drummond dealt fairly well with a series of things that could be described as needs and a series of things that could be described as wants. But I will go into the Drummond report to this extent: It's been said in this House before, and I'm going to say it again because it's worthy of repetition, that the Drummond report was not about a series of needs and a series of wants; it was about a recipe, a recipe not unlike what you'd use in baking something. If you add enough of this and subtract enough of that, mix this together and you'll have an outcome. That outcome might be palatable.

The Drummond report recipe said, "Here are 362 ingredients"—he called them recommendations; I'll call them ingredients in the recipe. "If you mix all these ingredients together, you will get to a balanced budget by 2017-18"—a very laudable goal. "You don't have to follow the recipe. You can do substitutions. If you substitute, that means you can take something out of the recipe as long as you put something else back in." The suggestion at the time the Drummond report was brought into this House, which was nothing more than a delay

tactic, was that somehow or other my party said, "You have to adopt all 362 recommendations."

"We can't. We're going to be good guys. We're going to leave that. We're going to leave that. We'll take that out. We'll cherry-pick it."

We never said that. What we said was, follow the recipe. If you really do want full-day kindergarten, that's fine, but Drummond said, "You can't have full-day kindergarten, so you're going to have to put something else on the table that addresses the fact that you're going to spend \$1.5 billion or \$2 billion that I told you to take out." They didn't do it. That's the problem with this government.

I'm bringing it back to this simplicity: They decided that they wanted to maintain something that was in the wants column as opposed to the needs column because they defined it as a need. Okay, fair enough. But you have to pay for it, and they didn't. That's why we have a budget called "strong measures" that isn't strong. That's why we have a budget that, notwithstanding what the title represents, spends \$2 billion more than was spent last year and carries a title that suggests that somehow or other this government has become austere. But I said that's the Liberal way, which is incapable of distinguishing between needs and wants; the Liberal way, which is fundamentally incapable—incapable—of living on a budget, of living within its means.

Speaker, we weren't the only ones calling on the government to hit the brakes on its spending and take action on skyrocketing public sector wages. The CFIB recommended that public sector compensation levels must be kept in line with private sector norms. They noted that, "There is a need to review the spending and compensation practices of the public sector to reduce the cost to taxpayers, reduce provincial debt and encourage future cost efficiency to avoid future deficits." Sounds pretty good to me, and I think it sounds pretty good to most people. It is, after all, what we ask families to do. It is, after all, what we ask businesses to do. Is it not fair that we should ask the government to do it?

**1430**

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce, which represents over 60,000 businesses, also called for a long-term public sector compensation restraint strategy. How many organizations do you need to hear from before you start to agree with common sense? All that Tim Hudak and the Ontario PC caucus have asked for from this government is to treat everyone equally and to show taxpayers the respect that they deserve.

Contrary to what the CUPE president has said, Ontario doesn't have a revenue problem—I've mentioned this earlier; it has a spending problem. It has never had a revenue problem. We on this side of the House recognize that unless this government addresses its spending problem, the things that we truly need, the things that we truly value, like our health care, like our education, will continue to be at risk. That's what needs and wants are. We have those needs; they're addressing wants. That puts the needs in jeopardy. We recognize that the McGuinty

approach will leave us without the legacy that we, as Ontarians, are proud of, for our children, for our grandchildren and, yes, even for our great-grandchildren. That's why we think it is fair and we think it is reasonable to ask government workers to forgo a raise.

Let me say that in this Legislature, our money is where our mouth is. Unbeknownst to many people who might be watching us on the legislative channel today, all MPPs in this House have been on a mandatory wage freeze for the past three years. No complaints; the fact of the matter is, our wages were frozen three years ago. That's just the way it is. It was because we were what's called low-hanging fruit. It was easy for the Premier to say, "You're not unionized, and by the way, everybody else who isn't unionized and works for the government of Ontario will undergo a wage freeze," so they did. But they won't do it with their unions, the broader public sector. This government chooses to pander to its Liberal union friends who so generously helped fund the Liberal campaign in the last election and the one before that, and I'm referring to the Working Families Coalition. These people are fair-weather friends. To somewhat illustrate this, people have been watching television, listening to radio and reading the newspaper recently, and they've heard the name Sam Hammond—not a bad guy; head of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario and the first person to say, "I'm not going to have any of this." I don't think it took him an hour to walk out of negotiations with the Ministry of Education, saying that he wasn't going to tolerate any of this.

I think it's worth noting that Mr. Hammond has been at the forefront of the Working Families Coalition. I saw him here on budget day and chatted with him out in the foyer after Finance Minister Duncan read his budget speech. I said, "Well, Sam, what do you think?" He said, "Hah. At least with you, I know where I stand." That's the point that I made earlier, Speaker. We might not get along in terms of seeing eye to eye on compensation for elementary teachers or the broader public sector in general, but we do say what we mean and we do mean what we say. What they're getting over there—I'm talking about their friends the elementary teachers or the doctors or anybody else that fits into the broader public sector—is mealy-mouthed, two-faced approaches to how they're going to be compensated because they're trying to, on the one hand, balance the fact that that was where they got about \$9 million of support in advertising during the last election with the fact that they now can no longer afford to take care of them. That's what it is.

Job creation is the other aspect of this budget that goes so wanting. It's no secret to anyone who has read the budget that the McGuinty government has utterly failed to tackle what we have described, I think, accurately on this side of the House as a jobs crisis. It is a crisis when you have close to 600,000 people who want to work not capable of working because this government has not put the appropriate measures in place, taken the appropriate actions to see to it that any able-bodied person or, for that matter, people who aren't necessarily able-bodied but are

fit to work in some capacity—has not put the proper things in place to see to that exigency. That's a jobs crisis. The budget's so-called jobs creation council is just another government creation, another tactic like Drummond, a PR ploy that Ontario doesn't need. Ontario needs real action. Ontario doesn't need any more studies, it doesn't need any more conversations, it doesn't need any more words, and it doesn't need any more delays.

We've been down that road so many times—one too many times, I would say, Speaker. We have seen this page from the Liberal playbook so often: Create a board; create a study; create a commission; create a panel, blue ribbon or otherwise; give them some period of time, three, six, 12 months, whatever it takes—“Now we don't have to talk about it anymore because the work is being done.” That's the way it's done on the other side. Then the big day comes, and it's revealed and it's talked about in the popular media for about 48 hours, and then it goes on a shelf, never to be seen or heard from again. We've had the studies. We've had to pay for the economists. We've had to read and listen to their reports, the reports that the McGuinty government never had any intention of implementing. And you know what? On this side of the House—and maybe this also speaks to our attitude with regard to “Let's play nice”—we're done. We're just done with it. We can't listen to any more of it because it's nonsense. Ontario needs real action.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Real change.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Real change, as my friend says.

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce noted in their pre-budget submissions that to stimulate the economy and job growth, this government must reduce the regulatory burden on businesses, harmonize federal and provincial regulations, ensure future sustainability of the WSIB program by making it more fair for those who actually create jobs—guess what? They're going to do that. How are they going to do that? Well, they took a Progressive Conservative to head up the WSIB, and I bet you the unfunded liability will be addressed.

“Ontario can be competitive again if the government lessens the tax burden on small businesses.” That's another quote from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. I'm going to read it again. “Ontario can be competitive again if the government lessens the tax burden on small businesses.” It's true. We take a look at other jurisdictions—I'll get to that in a moment—and there are better places to locate a small business if you don't want to address this market or your business doesn't need to address a particular market because maybe you provide a service that can be bought anywhere. Maybe you sell over the Internet.

Ontario needs to offer the right conditions so that companies looking for new locations will choose us as their new home. Instead, policies that this government has enacted have hurt Ontario businesses, and all of us from all sides of the House know people who will tell us that.

The McGuinty government's energy policy makes it nearly impossible for businesses to operate in the prov-

ince. I participated in the debates—this must be three-plus years ago—over the Green Energy Act, at the time listening to questions being asked from our side or even participating in question period and asking then-Energy minister Smitherman what the ramifications were going to be, cost-wise, of the Green Energy Act on individuals and on businesses. The answer was, “Oh, I can't see it being more than 1% to 1.5%.” I'll never forget that.

How many people—and I'm just asking this rhetorically. Think about this, Liberals, think about this, NDP, and think about this, fellow Conservatives. How many people who are either in the home environment or in businesses are asking you, “What's wrong with my energy bill?”

It's insane. How many of you have been asked about the global adjustment—the global adjustment that basically is such a huge number that it doesn't just threaten to put businesses under; it's putting businesses under. Brian Weller of Richmond Hill writes, “Monthly electricity consumption means that generation costs have increased 35%, from roughly \$110,000 in January to \$150,000 in April, for one Ontario employer in our group.” Hey, this is serious money, and this is serious money that doesn't come close to 1% to 1.5%.

This government made a decision to get into a high-tech, kind of sexy approach to energy through renewables by licensing people through a feed-in tariff program to build substantial, or sometimes less substantial, wind installations and solar installations. We said then and we say now, “Nothing wrong with wind, nothing wrong with solar, but you got it wrong.” You got it wrong because what you're doing is you're paying a ton of money for electricity that you can't store. Now you're creating more electricity than you need, partly because you licensed too many of them and partly because you've destroyed the economy so much that we don't need that much energy, and you're having to sell this excess energy, give it away, pay people to take it. So we're spending millions and millions and millions of dollars. You've got to get that back, because those are millions in government money that are going out the door and they have to be replaced. “The present government has totally mismanaged the electricity supply and demand.” This is a quoted addendum to what my writer from Richmond Hill has to say.

Ontario is home to one of the largest R&D sectors in the country—Silicon Valley North, if you will—in the Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge corridor. There's a large bioscience sector in Markham, part of my own riding. We have great potential as a province.

I might relate a story. As some people will be aware, and it's no secret, our party has a jobs creation task force. We think, absent one on that side, we should have created one. We've been working fairly diligently for the last six months; we should have an interim report out pretty soon. We've had a lot of submissions from a lot of very interesting people who come from every aspect of Ontario life, be it academia, large corporate, small business, mining, forestry, whatever.

We talked to a particular person who represented research and development, R&D. This fellow was part of

a company that was the recipient of a fairly substantial, I'll call it a corporate welfare grant, for R&D. One of my colleagues said, "Did you need the grant? Was it at all instrumental in you locating your R&D here in the province of Ontario?"

He said, "No." They didn't apply.

"Why did you take it?"

"Well, because they gave it. We weren't going to turn it down."

"Would you have located your company in the province of Ontario if you hadn't bought another company that was already in the province of Ontario?"

Answer: "No way in hell."

That's pretty damning, as far as I'm concerned. On the one hand, I'm really glad they're here. On the other hand, I don't want to hear answers like that. It speaks to how this government manages our money, all in aid of being able to say that it has spent money on R&D or has somehow or other been instrumental in creating jobs. It's just not so.

Dalton McGuinty is at the helm. Ontario is systematically being undercut by its own government, a government that likes to pick winners and losers, rather than creating conditions in which businesses can thrive and letting the private sector do what it does best, which is do business.

Private sector people, especially small business people such as the one I used to be, are not that great at filling in forms, mostly because we don't have the time, and we have to recognize that, on the part of the people who are running those small businesses. If that's the case, you have to eliminate the paperwork; you have to make it easier; you have to get the roadblocks out of the way; and you have to let them go do what it is they do, which is mostly selling. When you sell, you bring in revenue. When you bring in revenue, you hire people. Those people pay taxes. Presto, you don't have 600,000 people unemployed anymore. It isn't quite that simple, but essentially that's the chain of events.

Despite their efforts to convince us to the contrary, we know that this budget will be the province's undoing. In fact, we have had ample proof, and I have already offered that proof by way of citing what happened within 72 hours of the adoption of the budget motion, and that was the downgrade by S&P and Moody's, the actual lowering of the credit rating of the province of Ontario.

Ever since the Liberal Party has taken power in the province of Ontario, it has been systemically reducing the growth potential, undermining our economic future, threatening our fiscal liquidity. The raw facts are that our debt stands at \$250 billion. It is projected by economist Don Drummond—not my economist; their economist—to be \$411 billion looming in 2017-18. That's five years down the road, Speaker. This is not soothsaying; this is projectable by an economist of great repute. The deficit this year: about \$15 billion; projected deficit by 2017-18: \$30 billion.

Have I told you about the underground economy? I'm going to tell you about the underground economy. A

couple of weeks ago, during the last recess of this House, I travelled to various ridings and did economic round tables with people who were in various aspects of business and the professions, and I'll tell you a story that came directly out of—actually, it was Richmond Hill again, but it was an amalgam of people from Richmond Hill, Oak Ridges–Markham, Thornhill; that area of York region.

Very particularly, one fellow said, "I used one of the major job engines"—I guess it was Monster or one of those—"and I advertised for several positions I had. They were entry-level positions and paid about \$14, \$15, \$16 an hour. Inside of the first hour that I was up on the site, I had 180 resumé submitted to me by email"—180 within an hour. "There was one thing in common to all 180 resumé, and it was a cover letter, and you know what the cover letter asked? 'I'll take the job if the job is still available, but I want the money in cash.'" One hundred and eighty out of 180 wanted the money in cash. I said, "Are you telling me that you particularly or somehow in general there's an underground economy where people are asking to be paid in cash to avoid all of the additional knockoffs that you get on the pay stub?" He said, "No; that's everywhere."

Then another fellow at the table piped up and said that there's a particular element of the restaurant industry—I won't, for the purposes of the Hansard record, say which element it is, but a substantial number of like-type of restaurants in the greater Toronto area where, very typically, the wait staff is hired at \$5 an hour cash, no tips; \$5 an hour cash, no tips; right now, people across the mainstream in Toronto. Why? Because people are desperate and they'll take it, and they'll take it specifically if it's in cash.

Our consumer price index, since this government's assumption of power, is a lesson in itself in fiscal mismanagement. If you take the 2002 dollar at 100 cents, in 2007 you needed to spend \$1.10.8 to get the same value. In 2008, it was \$1.13. In 2009, it was \$1.14. In 2010, it was \$1.16, and last year, in 2011, that dollar's worth of goods and services you bought in 2002, you had to pay \$1.20 for. God knows what it is this year with gas.

Under Dalton McGuinty, Ontarians have been taxed more, and it is becoming harder to afford the must-haves versus the wants, as per what I was talking about earlier.

In one local business survey, 95% of respondents said that they were very, very concerned about the provincial debt, and 82% said that the McGuinty government is on the wrong track and it's small wonder, Speaker. It seems like whenever Ontarians look to attain new heights, they can count on the government to muddy the waters with regulatory burdens, with red tape.

Do you know that red tape in the province of Ontario versus the province of British Columbia is about 2 to 1—about one regulation over there for every two we have? It's no wonder that they're doing so well and we're not doing as well as our potential says we should be.

This government is missing in action when there's a need for a vision, when there's a need for bold action, for a plan to make Ontario what it could be.

A couple of examples before my time runs out on the education front: the College Student Alliance is calling for a system to streamline the academic credit transfer process and move towards 100% credit recognition for students transferring between similar programs. We got that.

In this particular case, I can name the person who came to see our job creation task force, and you know his name: Rick Miner. Dr. Miner used to be president of Seneca College; now he's a private consultant. Basically, he talks about the fact that we have to make a lot of moves in academia to keep our province at the forefront and to keep being able to address the new jobs that are coming on stream. One of the main things he talks about is credit transferability, so that a Ryerson credit equals a U of T credit equals a York credit equals a UOIT credit, whatever it happens to be, so that young people can mix and match and come up with the new professions and the new combinations that are required. This would not only allow for greater movement within our post-secondary institutions but also encourage further study and growth in affected industries.

1450

Speaker, I see that my time is running out. I could probably do another hour, but I won't—some people will say thankfully. What I would like to do is finish the way I began and recall for members and recall for those watching the fact that Bill 55 is entitled the Strong Action for Ontario Act. Strong action means that you actually take measures that result in the change that is absolutely essential, and the change that's essential now in Ontario is jobs and curtailment of spending.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I thank the member from Thornhill for his comments. One of the comments he made when he started his speech off was that he talked about his friend who made \$500,000 and was complaining about the 2%. I found that very fascinating, because I remember when I started work in the early 1970s at Stelco, the ratio between a CEO and a working person on the floor was maybe seven or eight to one in their salaries. That ratio now, varying on different positions, could go to 30 or 40 to one, and that's where this government has fallen down, because of the ratios that people make in different jobs and in positions of CEOs.

You know, it's interesting that the member did not mention about sharing the pain. Well, you know, people who are making that kind of money—I don't know too many who are making \$500,000—use all the same facilities that we use in this province: hospitals and all the other necessities. They would probably be complaining if those things weren't there; whether they want to help contribute to it is another story. And the \$500,000 person can certainly write off a lot of his costs on—he'll find a tax shelter or some way to worry about the \$10,000 he's going to lose on his \$500,000. He'll find a way to take care of that and won't even feel the pain.

If you want to look at sharing the pain, you might want to look down in the States at Bill Gates and Warren

Buffet. These guys are billionaires, and they were willing to give away half their fortune because they couldn't possibly spend it in their lifetime, and they wanted to help society and give money back. These guys are philanthropists with a heart. Maybe some of the people in this country who are making that kind of money should have a heart.

The bottom line is that Warren Buffet pays less of a per cent of what he earns than his secretary. So the ratios are wrong. The tax system is wrong. It has got to be set up—if you want to be fair, you've got to be fair. This government didn't go far enough. I wouldn't have started at \$500,000; I would have started at \$300,000. You would have had a lot more money in the budget. I can't spend that much money in a year, \$300,000. I would never even dream to make that in a year. I think the Premier makes \$212,000, and he has a \$105-billion budget.

You've got to ask yourself some questions. Where is this member coming from?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield:** I'm pleased to be able to respond to the member from Thornhill about the budget.

There's no question that we have very significant restraints that we have to deal with. We've put forward a budget that speaks to job creation, job creation, job creation, while at the same time protecting two major components, and that is health and education. You cannot have job creation without a very highly skilled workforce, so we have invested in our universities, our colleges and our training institutions. We have the new career centre that's continuing to flourish, where people have changed their careers and are now getting into new careers. We enabled them to do that by providing the necessary funds as they go through one or two years of additional schooling.

But I also think it's important to recognize that there are a great many people in our society who do, in fact, earn significant dollars who are also very generous with those dollars. I think it's dismissive to suggest that because you have a great deal of money, you're not necessarily prone to giving back to society. I give you a good example of Wallace McCain and the Honourable Margaret Norrie McCain, who virtually gave away most of their fortune, when Wallace had passed away, to universities, to colleges, to training as well as to the arts and the theatre institutions and continue to support. So there are people who do have a big heart as well as big wallets. I just wanted to make that comment.

I think the other thing that we need to remember is that we have to work together to find the resolutions in order to continue to move this province forward. It's not going to be easy as we deal with the challenges facing us. We are looking to a two-year wage freeze for our teachers, our physicians, for our public sector workers. So we know that as we do this, it will take all of us in this House to work together to ensure that we have a future, and that's a future for our children.



**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's my pleasure to rise and bring comment on behalf of the great words that were given by our finance minister, the member from Thornhill, Mr. Shurman.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** I'm not a minister, yet.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** Sorry. Maybe that was a Freudian slip. I apologize, Speaker.

In any case, he is a gentleman who takes his job very responsibly. He brings a very pragmatic approach in his address. He referenced needs versus wants. We all need to do that, Speaker. Every single one of us cannot spend beyond our means.

He talked about reduced spending, and yet, this government in their austerity budget have 14 of 24 ministries getting an increase. How can you do that, when you're spending \$15 billion more a year? We need to live within our means.

He talked about jobs. Everyone needs a job to have a sense of self-worth. There's nothing better than getting up in the morning and saying, "I'm going to a job I'm proud of. I'm part of society. I'm giving my share." Yet there are 600,000 people unemployed, and we're going down tracks that are trying to bring industry like the renewables that just factually aren't creating those jobs. We're losing four jobs for every one created. We can't go there.

He referenced debt and deficit, a \$15-billion deficit that's going to go to \$30 billion, a debt that's \$235 billion, more than all of the years of Confederation. We have now done in eight years—they have now done—the Liberals have doubled that debt, and it will be \$411 billion. We're leaving these great pages that serve us every day and our kids and grandkids in a hole that they couldn't dig out of if they have to, if we don't take drastic decisions.

Leadership is about making the responsible decisions. We need, as a government, to stand in front of the people of Ontario and do the thing that's needed to get this economy and this province back to being the leader of Confederation. We need to reduce spending. We need a jobs plan and an action plan, as Mr. Shurman so eloquently said. It's not about talking, it's about doing, and we need to do that and we need to reduce the debt and the deficit. This budget did not, and that's why we, as a party, are very strong in our commitment and our discipline to say no, we cannot support it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jonah Schein:** I listened closely to the member from Thornhill and listened for some new ideas, and instead I heard much of the same old ideas that we hear over and over again in this city, in this province. They're ideas that are actually shared by the government, I believe. I have real concerns about the budget bill, about a continuing trend towards privatization, towards deregulation.

Everybody expresses concern for our children and our grandchildren. When I have children and grandchildren, I

want to make sure that they have clean air to breathe; I want to make sure that they have a public education system, that they have child care.

It sounds sometimes in this House like we're reading straight out of 1984, that George Orwell is here speaking, because of the doublespeak in this House. You know, to talk about people who work as civil servants as the elite of Ontario is absurd. People who work every day to bring public services to this province are the heroes of this province, and if we really care about workers, if we care about fairness, we need to be bringing people up to decent standards of work.

It's bizarre, again, to hear about the deep concern for somebody who earns \$500,000 and is being hurt in this province. I have yet to meet anybody in my riding of Davenport who earns \$500,000. I have met people who are struggling to put their child in child care, people who want to go to work but they don't have a daycare space. I was sent here to make sure that people who don't have a voice do have a voice in this province. I think that the people who earn \$500,000 do have a strong voice. They have access to good legal consults; they have access to the best accountants in this province. But we need to make sure that we're fighting for people who don't have that.

I think that the government is headed in the wrong direction on these things. I think that austerity has proven not to work. If you look at the UK right now, they're going into a second recession. We need to invest in our infrastructure here in Ontario to make sure that we are leaving a legacy we can be proud of for our children and our grandchildren. I'll stop there. Thank you, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Okay, that concludes the time for questions and comments. We return to the member for Thornhill for his reply.

**Mr. Peter Shurman:** Thank you very much, Speaker. In reverse order, let me address my friend from Davenport—my new friend from Davenport. Sometimes what you talk about when you use the term "old ideas" are just tried and true ideas. In other words, if you tighten your belt sometimes, you have something left in your pocket; your pants don't fall down. That's the only message here. I don't any less than you want clean air and clean water as I leave the stage and my kids and my grandchildren take it. I think those are important things. I think the issue for us is not to disagree on those things, but to figure out ways that we can make that happen.

**1500**

I think that in the case of this government, they, in the name of those things, take action that is inappropriate, and I'll cite just by way of example the whole energy file, without going into it again, because I've amply explored it. You can have renewables that result in clean air, but you can get them in a much better way than spending billions and billions of dollars you don't really have to get them.

Let me also address, since it's been brought up by both of the NDP speakers, this issue of \$500,000. What is it you hate so much about people who have actually been

successful? The fact of the matter is that maybe you can start making zero and maybe you ultimately wind up with \$500,000. I'm not here to defend people who make \$500,000. I represent Thornhill, as you represent Davenport or you do Hamilton East–Stoney Creek. I have people who are poor there. I have people on social assistance. I have people whose kids are waiting for a place in whatever treatment centre you want to talk about. I have drug abuse and alcohol abuse. We all have these things in our ridings and we all want to address them.

I want to thank my friend from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound for seeing the light and agreeing with me, and my friend from Etobicoke Centre for talking about the fact that we really do need to work together to make things happen in this province.

Thank you, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Before I call for further debate, I would remind all members to make their comments through the Chair.

Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** We have before us today Bill 55. You know, we get bills like this after every budget. It's a bill that enacts a whole bunch of legislative changes that allow the government's budget to go forward.

Now, people talked to me and they said, "Why did the NDP put down certain conditions that the government met, and why did you then sit on your hands and not vote with the government?" I said, "Well, this is about negotiation. This is about trying to change. This is about taking an opportunity where one exists without having to necessarily bring down a government at the time."

You know, we sat there in the lock-up. I sat there in the lock-up on that day, as many of the people in this room did. I watched as the Minister of Finance stood up and talked about his budget. I was somewhat aghast when I heard some of the ideas, although many of them had been leaked for weeks and months before that. He had leaked the thing about the horse racing industry. He had leaked about not looking at any new forms of revenue. He had leaked a whole bunch of things. But what I didn't know at that stage, as I listened to the finance minister, was how the Conservatives were going to react to this. Because as I listened to the finance minister, I thought this was a Progressive Conservative budget. I closed my eyes and I thought I was listening to Mike Harris speak. Instead, I was listening to Dwight Duncan speak. But they said many of the same things: the same words, the same phrases, the same target group. It was exactly the same.

I was sitting beside Andrea Horwath as we watched Tim Hudak, or the Leader of the Opposition—I should be formal here—and the member from Thornhill, who is the budget critic. They got up onto the little stage and they started to address the assorted members of the press. There were at least a hundred people in the room, and they had some pretty pointed and tough questions. We watched from a TV monitor in another room because we weren't allowed into the press area at that point, and I remember turning to Andrea Horwath as the Conserva-

tives said that they weren't going to vote for the budget, they were going to vote it down. They thought it was time for an election. We looked at each other and figured, well, it was up to us. We were going to have to try to do something on our own. We knew that we could not count on the Conservatives, because all they saw were things that were wrong; they didn't see anything that was right. They were, I think, truly looking at it in a political way. They thought that this was going to be a tough budget that people wouldn't like. On that they were right, but they had no answers as to what they were going to do to change it.

We talked for a few minutes, the leader of the NDP and I. We talked about what we could possibly do, and we decided that we had to do something but we needed to take our time, we needed to contact people, we needed to find out what the public wanted, we needed to talk to our own caucus, and that it was premature, and I don't think very good politics, to say you were going to vote against it before you even consulted with a soul. So we decided then and there that something had to be done.

We were dissatisfied with the budget because we saw that there was no real balance. There was no real balance with the austerity that was being proposed and the number of jobs that were likely to be created out of that austerity. We saw no real balance between those who work hard and save and do everything they can every day and who pay their taxes, and those who had a lot of money and oftentimes saw fit to put their taxes into shelters and send it offshore, and who earned \$500,000 a year or more and didn't pay any more taxes than an ordinary person on the street. We didn't see that kind of balance.

And all that period of time leading up to that, I remembered the Drummond report. We all waited for the Drummond report. Do you know that that man put out a blueprint with one arm tied behind his back because this government would not let him look at any revenue source? It's all well and good to say where you have to cut everything, but he wasn't even allowed the single option of finding revenue for this government. That's really what is important. That's how government balances the books. You have revenue on one side and expenditures on the other. If you're trying to do what this government is trying to do, you're going to cut all of the programs because you're unwilling to look at the revenue sources. You instructed Mr. Drummond to do that, and he did it.

I remembered back to my own time when I was mayor of East York. You know, I took over from the previous mayor, who came into this very Legislature, Dave Johnson: good man, tried hard, probably one of the most parsimonious people I have ever met in my entire life in his own personal life but also in the life of the municipality of the borough of East York. He wouldn't spend a dime if he didn't have to spend a dime and he was very careful.

But I became the mayor and I had a different attitude. The attitude wasn't that I was going to waste any money.

The attitude was that if we wanted East York to be a better place, we had to grow the revenue. That's what governments have to look at and what this government has not done in this bill or in this budget.

Part of the way, you know, over that period of five years before we were so brutally amalgamated against the wishes of the people, it was, I think, a real renaissance in East York. I like to look back, and the people who live there even to this day say it was too, because not only did we develop the municipality and build day-care centres and new community libraries and community structures, not only did we pave all the roads and go from one of the worst road systems in the entire province to one of the best, not only did we build sidewalks, not only did we do all the things, but we actually paid down the entire debt of the municipality and never raised taxes once.

People say, "Well, how could you do that? How could a New Democrat do this kind of thing?" What we did is we found a revenue source. We went out and talked to businesspeople and found out what they needed in order to want to come to East York. The only new factory that was built in the years 1990 to 1995, or in that entire decade, in all of what was then Metropolitan Toronto was built in East York. Why did the factory come to us? They could have gone to Mississauga, they could have gone to North York; they could have gone anywhere, but they came to us because we recognized what people needed. They didn't necessarily need a tax writedown. What they wanted from the municipality was action and, when they submitted their plan, that that plan would be acted upon. We had a program that anybody who wanted to build in East York and who wanted a permit could get that permit and action and an answer within 90 days. That was the whole thing, and the businesses started to flow in.

You know, I was on the hydro commission and we wired all of East York because we knew that the new businesses that were going to come in to our vacant factories were businesses that were going to need—to figure out animation and all those things—computerization and having the facilities wired. So we wired all of East York. We were first. That was even before it was done on King Street in Toronto. All of those buildings were filled. They were all filled, you know, and we had money to pay down our debts and we had money to do the social programs. It was all done, and then we got amalgamated.

1510

But that's what I'm trying to tell you, that it can be done. New Democrats have done this all across the country. In fact, if you go out and look at who has the best budgetary processes of any government, you won't find Conservatives and you won't find Liberals, you'll find New Democrats. You'll find that in British Columbia—

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Manitoba.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** You'll find that in Manitoba and Saskatchewan—

**Mr. Paul Miller:** Nova Scotia.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** You'll find it today in Nova Scotia, because New Democrats understand that issue, and the government fails to understand the issue because the government simply wants to cut and doesn't want to look at revenue sources.

I'm heartened to see that the world is changing very rapidly. I watched the news yesterday, and first of all in France I watched M. Hollande, who took over from a pretty right-wing government, the government of Mr. Sarkozy. I watched what he was saying and what he was doing. He was saying that austerity doesn't work for the people of France; he has given them a new way out, a new direction in which to head, and the people of France have chosen that because they don't want to choose the cut and burn and slash of Mr. Sarkozy and all of his ilk.

Then a little bit later in the news I watched Germany. Now, it wasn't the German national elections, but it was the German elections in a couple of their state governments. Those who were part of the Merkel team phalanx in the provinces lost. Even the ultra-conservative provinces, that had never voted anything except for Christian Democrat their entire life, lost, because they could see that what was happening to them was not the right thing, and they were looking for new solutions. The solutions were that we're all in this together and we all have to pay together.

Then I watched Greece. Heaven knows that's a difficult place. It's a pretty difficult place. I've been there many times. I have many Greeks who live in my riding. I go to all of their events, and I know them very well. It's very difficult because that's a very fractured Parliament, but if you see what happened, the government and the government before that were decimated in the polls. Both the NDP—it's the New Democracy Party, but they're the right-wing party—and the Pasok, which is sort of more like the NDP, they both lost. The big winner was the more left-wing party; they vaulted from a very minor party into now the second party and are probably the ones over the next six to eight days who are going to be given the opportunity of trying to put forward a coalition. Again, what happened in Greece is that those old, tired ideas of privatization and everything this government is trying to do have been rejected.

Last but not least, I watched Mr. Obama as he makes mincemeat out of the Republicans in the United States, and it just tells the home truth: We're all in this together, and we all have to do the right things.

So what are those right things?

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I heard some mutterings over there.

What are the right things? The most important thing this government or any government in Canada can do at this time is the creation of jobs and job growth, and that is not happening. It is not happening because it isn't just how many regulations you're going to cut, and it isn't just how many taxes you're going to slice; it's how you prepare for the growth that makes that possible, how you take the impediments away, how you provide the ser-

vices, whether it was me in East York wiring a community—and I know that’s much smaller potatoes than a provincial or a federal government—or if it’s just making sure that when someone wants to build that you give them the tools and the ability to do it in a speedy way.

We know that in Ontario we have unemployment above the national level, and it’s much higher than the national rate. We know in Ontario that the weekly wage has been declining and has declined for the last 20 years. Once you factor in inflation, people in Ontario are making less money today than they were making in 1995, and that says a whole lot.

Do you want to know why people are upset and ordinary people are starting to become disenchanted with this place and politics? It’s because life is not improving for ordinary people. It is improving for those who make a lot of money. It is improving for the big captains of industry, for the CEOs, for the hospital magnates. For all of those people, life is pretty good, but for ordinary people it has not improved at all since 1995.

We know that in Ontario, when they ask, we have the lowest rate across all of Canada in terms of optimism about the future. People are looking to the future with some kind of trepidation. It isn’t the trepidation, I hope, of thinking that 2012 is the great Mayan calendar year when the world goes through upheaval, although for many of them, it’s going through enormous upheaval as people lose their jobs and people lose their buying power.

Here we have the government. What does the government do? It goes back to the old levers, the ones that my friend from the Progressive Conservatives talks about, the ones that the government does. Tired old things: privatization, deregulation and cutting taxes for the wealthy.

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Michael Prue:** As my learned friend behind me says, this is what got us into the position in the first place. If you go back to Reaganomics and you go back to all of the things that were happening in the United Kingdom and Margaret Thatcher and you see what governments did, they all tried to do what they did, and it all had disastrous consequences for the people in those countries.

Today Britain is in decline. Today, if you go down to the United States you will see tens of thousands, maybe millions, of houses that are boarded up. Those were the wrong things to do. The right thing to do is for everyone to pull their own weight, to pay into the system and to build together. That’s what we need to do and that’s what New Democrats are bound and determined to do.

I looked at this bill, Bill 55. What’s in this bill that causes anybody to say, “Wow. What a great bill. How is this going to help me?”

The first thing I looked at was schedule 28. Schedule 28 is the government’s answer: how you’re going to set up new corporations to help the public get ripped off. Pretty simple. If you look at schedule 28, it makes ServiceOntario the new Ornge. We all know about Ornge. We’ve heard of nothing except Ornge pretty much since this Legislature came back. We’ve heard about the rip-offs of the system, about the spinoffs, the

creating of new agencies inside it—some of them public; some of them private; some of them hidden.

We’ve heard about Mr. Mazza making \$1.4 million. We’ve heard about his girlfriend, his water ski instructor, who suddenly made \$120,000 working her way up through the system in a couple of weeks.

We heard about the \$90,000 MBAs that people were paying. We heard about the helicopters. We heard about the motorcycle. That’s what the government created. That’s what then-Minister Smitherman created. That’s what this government has allowed to happen.

Look at schedule 28. There is a quote; I’m quoting straight from the act. They’re going to set up all these public-private corporations in ServiceOntario. I quote from the act, what we have before us: “No action or other proceeding may be brought against the crown for a delegate’s actions.”

Ah. So here is the government spinning off ServiceOntario, but no action can be taken from the public when it goes bad: can’t investigate it, can’t send in the auditor, can’t ask questions, can’t send in the Ombudsman, can’t do anything. But let’s just do this. Because the government has great ideas, you know? They’ve already tried the P3 model. They went out to Brampton, to the hospital. We all remember that: built at twice the cost. The taxpayers got ripped off, but there it is, and they always stand up and say, “But Brampton’s got a brand new hospital.” Yes, anybody can have a brand new hospital at twice the cost. Let’s hope we don’t have too many brand new hospitals like the Brampton hospital. Let’s hope that when we need a hospital in a community, we build it ourselves. Let’s hope that the public has its own money spent wisely and well. Let’s hope that we don’t do anything more like that.

**1520**

You know, this government is creating, under this new section 28, a brand new holding company. It is created and it’s going to allow for-profit and not-for-profit spin-offs. It has network profit and non-profit subsidiaries of ServiceOntario, if those go through, and it’s going to allow private sector leverage. We’ve been talking about private sector leverage. Do you know what that means? It means that when you go in and renew your driver’s licence, the spinoff companies then have access to your name and can sell you other things. They know your name, your address, your SIN; they can sell you other things. So, all these for-profit and not-for-profit spinoffs are going to have action, and that’s called leverage. That’s going to be allowed; in fact, promoted. That’s what this government is doing. I don’t know how you think that’s going to create jobs. I do know how it’s going to make some corporations and people very, very wealthy. I do know that it’s going to create other Dr. Mazzas, and I do know that maybe there will be orange and blue helicopters, and other colours, flying around the province, if you get away with this.

The legislation goes even further. Not only does it allow for the creation of these private sector P3 models in the Ontario government; it also allows them throughout

the entire MUSH sector, being municipalities, universities, schools and hospitals. So they can even spin off services to the MUSH sector. Is that what this government thinks? Is this your job creation plan? Is this what you're trying to do? Is this what you think the people of Ontario want? Because I have to tell you, I don't think the people of Ontario want this at all.

I looked at schedule 16, Mr. Speaker. Schedule 16 sets up a brand new regulatory regime. What this means is that regulations that in the past were administered by government will now be regulated by the industries themselves. What a wonderful thing: Let the industrial empire make their own rules and regulate themselves, so that—whoa. Does anybody here remember Sunrise and the propane? That was one of Mike Harris's best ones: Regulate the industry yourself. Let Sunrise regulate themselves, let the whole propane industry regulate themselves, and then watch as a whole block goes up in an explosion and flames and people die.

That's what is being promised here. Schedule 16 says that private industrial groups can control the regulatory bodies and that they can be their own watchdog. Is that going to save the government some money? Maybe. Is it going to make life better for ordinary Ontarians? Absolutely not.

Then, Mr. Speaker, I looked at the environment. There's a whole bunch of stuff in here about the environment that is really, really horrendous to me. You know, I listened to my friend from Davenport. He often talks about the environment. I know he is the critic in that area, but he talks about it with a great deal of passion. I listened as well to my colleague Mr. Shurman from the Conservative Party, who says we all support the environment.

I'm not so sure that the government members over there, especially the backbenchers—have you had a chance to see what Bill 55 does to the environment? Have you had anybody come and lobby you on this yet? I know I have somebody coming to see me this afternoon, and the environmentalists are really fit to be tied with what they're reading here. It's taken a while for them to get through the tome—this is a tome; it's at least an inch thick of little tiny minutiae and details. But if you get into the environment, what you're going to see is that the laws to amend the environment and all the administration by the Ministry of Natural Resources—it's all in there—are all being amended without discussion, being hidden in a type of omnibus bill.

I was reading in the paper about the government in the Ottawa, the Conservative government. They've hidden a whole bunch of things in an omnibus bill, particularly on the environment, to try to get around the environmental laws of Canada. Well, in the province, you did the same thing. You just hid it—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Yes, it's Harpersque.

You hid it here in the budget bill. What this does is, it diminishes the role of the province in looking out for endangered species. Do members over there know that

you're doing this in this budget? Do you know what's contained in here? The entire endangered species legislation is at risk because all of the meat and the bones of what is in that act is being given away. The stuff around the Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act is all being changed within the body of Bill 55. The fish and wildlife act is being changed within the body of Bill 55. The Public Lands Act is being changed within the body. The Crown Forest Sustainability Act is being changed, and so is the Niagara Escarpment act. All of these are little tiny changes that are contained within this budget bill which are designed to weaken the environment and weaken the effect that the province has had in the past over sustaining something that we all hold very dear to us.

In that same act, the government's rationale—and here are the words that are scary to me. They use the word “modernize” over and over and over again. They use the word “streamlining” over and over and over. And last but not least, they use the words “focusing on our core business.” The environment is everybody's business.

Are there flaws in our environmental process here in Ontario? Yes, there are. Can they be improved? Yes, they can. Is this budget bill the vehicle to best preserve the environment or to change it so that it makes us more sustainable, so that it makes our environment a safer place for ourselves and our children? No, it is not.

What is intended to happen here under this bill is that there are going to be new exemptions on habitat and species protection. I know how important that is and how hard it is even today to get the Ministry of Natural Resources, the environment ministry to come down and look when something goes wrong.

My wife and I have a small summer home in the riding of Essex, close to Windsor, and not too far away from our house is an eagle's nest. All of the residents who live on this island like to go and watch that eagle's nest. There's a developer on the island who was trying to build homes. I'm not going to say anything against him. That's his job. That's where he makes his money. He was told that he had to stay at least 100 metres away from the tree that houses the eagle's nest. Did he stay 100 metres away? Absolutely not. He bulldozed down hundreds and hundreds of trees, chipped them and carried them away and came perilously close to that nest. He did that because he can and because there is nobody in the province who could come by on less than three or four days' or a week's notice and stop him. The town was powerless to stop him. All of the conservation authorities were powerless to stop him. Here we have new exemptions to the habitat and species protections that are going to even take that away.

When you talk about what can be saved, it may not mean a lot to some people, but it certainly means a lot to me and probably even more to my wife. She's trying to save a little habitat of a Blanding's turtle. She's trying to save a habitat of the eastern fox snake, which is an endangered species that has been extirpated from most of Ontario. She's trying to save some little tiny marshland

and the eagle's nest, and there is nobody in the province who has been able, to date, to help her to do that, to stop people from this wanton development. And now I read in this that there are going to be new exemptions to make it even more difficult for habitat and species protection because anything that is private property will not be protected. Anything which is within 100 metres of somebody's home will be exempt from the law, which has been put in place, I think, for good purpose.

We need to have a real discussion about this. We don't need to have it in a bill, hidden away in the middle of a budget preparation, where it's going to be missed.

**1530**

We go on and see what this is. There are provisions in here for extending the guideline for implementation and species recovery. That means when you say you have to redo the area, when you have to let the wetlands revert back to what they were or allow the trees to grow, or the hundred things that the MNR might be involved in—to help extend the guidelines of implementation for species recovery—that's all being taken out. The bill is taking it out. Members over there need to know what your bill is doing. It's taking it out.

Land use permits: It's going to allow for the government, or an agency that they're going to spin it off to, to allow for land use permits in provincial parks and reserves. That means you're going to be able to build roads through our provincial parks. It means you're going to be able to sell off some of the land. Heaven forbid. We've seen the brouhaha here in Toronto, where the mayor wants to buy a little parcel of conservation land and everybody in the whole city, it appears, is upset about this, because no parkland has been sold in Toronto in the last couple of decades. But this is going to open it wide up, because land use permits in provincial parks and reserves are now going to be open.

Does anybody in the government over there realize what's happening in this bill? Has anybody over there spoken about this, even in caucus or to the public? I haven't heard a word.

It also said it will make it easier to build roads, so that we can build roads in our parks. I understand that we do need access roads through forests, and I understand that some roads are necessary for tourism, but this is going to make it easier to build roads without environmental approval.

The MNR is a compromised ministry. In 1995, MNR had 1.6% of all of the money in the budget of Ontario. In 1995, 1.6% was for MNR. Today, that's down to 0.5%. MNR, in the period of some 18 years, 17 years, has gone from having 1.6% of the budget down to 0.5% of the budget. It's one third. The number of employees is less than half. The resources they had are gone. And if it weren't bad enough, the government has enacted a whole bunch of environmental legislation. There are now 46 acts for the MNR to enforce, as opposed to 28 acts back in 1995, and they have less workers and less money. It's no wonder that the deputy minister said that the ministry is now compromised. I use that word used by the deputy

minister. MNR is compromised, and this bill is going to compromise them even more.

Let's go into labour. What's contained—hidden—in this tome of a bill? There's the essential service arbitration. Why is this in a budget bill? Because it can be hidden; that's why it's there. It can be hidden. What this is going to do is wherever there is an essential service that goes to arbitration—very often those arbitrations take a year or two years or sometimes even longer; they're complex and they're difficult. But the system works; it's cumbersome but it works. Well, this bill is going to say that arbitration cannot last more than 12 months, and then the government has the right to impose a settlement. This is going to cause labour strife; I'm absolutely mindful of that. Also, this has been done without any discussion with the affected parties, be they the union, be they the government ministries, or the arbitrators themselves. No one has been spoken to at all about this, but there it is.

Oh, of course, there's also that lovely thing that the Conservatives always want to talk about: the ability to pay. It's in there too: ability to pay. Now, I'm mindful, as a former mayor, that it's difficult sometimes. Municipalities do have difficulty paying. They have limited revenue sources. They also have to negotiate and pay, whether it be for firefighters or police or anybody else that they hire, and they have a limited ability to pay. But the arbitration process has been set up to make sure that there is some semblance of fairness across all of Ontario and some semblance to those employees who do not have the right to strike. This is going to hamstring arbitrators and hamstring the collective bargaining process, as much as it exists.

Then you've got the whole issue about balancing the books. That's sort of not in here, and maybe it should be more in here. The other day, Mr. Speaker, I had the privilege of coming back into the Legislature to vote for the motion that Mr. Arnott had filed about balancing the books. It was a very good motion. In fact, I think that that is exactly what should be done. Every government, when it no longer finds itself in deficit position, should be looking at at least paying a percentage of the money that they have in excess to pay down debts. It's certainly what I did when I was a mayor. We took any monies that were left over at the end of the year and we paid down the debt. Now, the debt wasn't in the magnitude of the debt of the province of Ontario, but when I became mayor of East York it was some \$13 million. By the time I left, five years later, it was nothing. There was a concerted effort that we made each and every year to take that money and put aside enough money to pay the debts because it was our goal, that we never saw realized because we were amalgamated, to have a debt-free municipality at the end of the payback period. I think we should have a goal like that in Ontario. That's why I was pleased to support the motion of Mr. Arnott.

We cannot, as a society, any longer say that the debts are going to be inherited by our children and our children's children and their children. The debt is too

enormous and it can never be resolved, provided that governments continue to go constantly into deficit position and constantly are afraid to look at where to find the new revenues—

*Interjection.*

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Or the cut in spending, as my Conservative likes to say. They always want to see the cut in spending. They never want to see the new revenues, because I know who they're protecting and they know who they're protecting as well.

But I think, and I'm a New Democrat, we are all in this together. From the person who pushes the broom in a factory floor, to the Warren Buffets of Canada, to the Conrad Blacks who've recently come from prison to live in his palatial manor in the Bridle Path, we are all in this together, and we all have to pay together and we all have to give the portion of taxes that are necessary to make sure that Ontario grows.

There would have been things that would have been great to have seen in this budget that weren't there. There would have been monies that we would have got from places, from either cutting back in certain ministries or by extra revenue. I just want to float some of them here for a minute, if I may, Mr. Speaker.

Health care: We all know that health care is expensive. We all know that we have to pay for it. We all know we have an aging population. We all know that the system that we have cannot be sustained in the long term if increases are going to be radically higher than the rate of inflation. You know, it's been a 5% to 7% increase year after year after year into health care in Ontario, and to what effect? We still have waiting lists for people in long-term-care facilities that can't be met. We still have waiting lists for people who want to remain in their own homes who cannot remain in their own homes because personal service workers—there aren't enough of them and they get paid so poorly that many of them don't want to stay. That's where the real money needs to be spent. But I didn't see any of that, really, in this budget. I saw an increase, a small one, but it is not enough to address the problem and the tsunami that is coming as the boomers age. It is not enough to even meet the needs of today.

I think we should have a revolution in health care, and I do believe that those people who live in long-term-care facilities deserve the 3.5 hours that George Smitherman promised all those many years ago with tears in his eyes and that has never been delivered. That's what I would have liked to have seen in Bill 55.

Look at job creation. There's nothing in there about job creation. Oh, yeah, they've got that same old tired stuff. Thank goodness the Liberals listen to some common sense. I should use "conventional wisdom"; I don't want to talk "common sense," because we all knew that that was nonsensical when that phrase was used politically.

**1540**

They have stopped the corporate giveaways by stopping the corporate tax cuts and capping them for a couple

of years, but they said "until we get back into balance." I don't know whether that's ever going to happen under any Liberal government in the history of Ontario, but they've said they are going to do that. But that isn't enough.

We in the New Democratic Party believe you can do so much more that isn't being done. We believe that we can have job creation by buying Ontario. We can look at rewarding those companies that create jobs with tax incentives to do so, or maintain jobs with tax incentives to do so. We know that a whole lot more—an investment tax credit, a training tax credit, a buy Ontario—my goodness, we could even look at Ontario Northland. I'm delighted to see the minister responsible for that here today.

Ontario Northland: I live in Toronto. I've lived in southern Ontario my entire life. I have visited the north every opportunity I've had as an MPP, and before then—to travel across northern Ontario by car, by rail, by plane, every way, because it is a wide and huge province. The people who live in the north deserve and should expect the same services as the people who live in southern Ontario.

Every day when I get on the TTC, I know that the fare that I put in the box—\$2.50; I buy tokens—does not cover the fare. I know that it's being subsidized, at first by the provincial government, and latterly mostly by Toronto. It is being subsidized by government. The reason it's being subsidized is because it's the right thing to do. It ensures that everyone has access to employment, to a doctor's care, to going to school, to getting out and about. It's the right thing to do.

I know when I get on the GO train—I've only travelled that a few times; I'm not a regular user—that's subsidized. It needs to be subsidized because people have to travel the distances.

I know some of the bus services—Greyhound, in central Ontario, is subsidized because we want people to be able to move from town to town within the modal splits, all of those things that politicians like to talk about. It needs to be subsidized.

But when it comes to the north, the subsidy is not to be there, and I think this is extremely short-sighted.

I promised one of my neighbours who lives right close to me in East York—he's a travel writer, and he sent me a very thoughtful letter the other day, talking about Ontario Northland, talking about it as a potential tourist boon that has not been used. It's conceivable that it can open up much of the country to wilderness hiking and canoeing. It's conceivable that it can be used to reunite families or keep communities in touch with each other, particularly small, northern, isolated communities and First Nations communities. He talked about the necessity of keeping the Ring of Fire as a commercial operation because someday the north is going to boom as the south has. Someday there are going to be more people in northern Ontario taking advantage of the resources that are available there—forestry or mining or farming or everything else that is conceivable to go there—and

without an infrastructure, without a railway, it's going to be very, very difficult.

I know it loses money. My goodness, Air Canada loses money, but do we say you can't have planes flying across the country? Most transportation systems aren't going to make money. Anybody who owns a car knows that it costs, but you pay it because you think it's important that the transportation be maintained. Buying the gas doesn't pay for the roads or the bridges or anything else. Buying the insurance—you have to have it—is a costly expense. But it is far more costly to say that those towns, those villages, those places where people live will now be without hope. How many of them are going to become ghost towns? How many people are going to have to move because they have no way of getting around?

I am very disappointed about this. I am very, very disappointed.

I know within the body of this bill that there are amendments that can be made. We intend to make them. I know within the body of this bill we want to do an investment tax credit. I know we want to look at job creation, training tax credits, Buy Ontario—all of those things that can happen and should have happened.

Do you want to know where to save money? I've asked this government a hundred times. I've made speeches on it, I've gone to all-candidates meetings, I've talked in here: in education. Why does this government insist on spending \$50 million a year on EQAO? Why does anybody over there want to spend \$50 million on EQAO?

You know, it's pretty simple. I'm a kid from Regent Park. That's where I grew up. I could have told you when I was a kid that those children who grew up in Rosedale probably got better marks than me and everybody in my class, because they did. I could have told you that the school in Rosedale had better teachers and better grades and better opportunity, if you were lucky enough to go there, than if you went to the school in Regent Park.

It is of no surprise to me at all today, when I see the listing that EQAO mandates and spends and the bureaucracy that the government allows to continue in education on EQAO and the spending of \$50 million, to see that the schools in Forest Hill do better than the schools in Jane-Finch. Anybody over there surprised they don't? I mean, you don't need to spend \$50 million to know this. And you've got to do something as well.

Then you look and you see what the school culture is, and you see the parents all banding together. I mean, I'm very proud in my community. I go to a lot of fundraisers, I go to schools where the parents are banding together and they're trying to raise funds. They have dances and night things and silent auctions and they do all this stuff. I know which schools do it, too. It's not the poor schools. I have poor schools. I've never been to one of those fundraisers in Crescent Town school or Secord school. I've never gone to one of the ones that are inner-city and where the kids are from immigrant parents and seen this kind of stuff. I see these wonderful things taking place in

the Beach, in the Upper Beach. I see them in the communities of professionals. That's really what's happening. The government needs to start looking at where you can save money from EQAO and put it back into those schools that need it, that can't afford to do the fund-raising.

I'm looking at the government in terms of the Ring of Fire. You know, here is an opportunity for Ontario. I don't see too much in Bill 55 that's going to help that. I see the Northland gone. I don't see a whole lot of stuff around how that's going to be built. I see negotiations taking place with developers and mining interests and all those people who are going to make a lot of money, but I don't see the communities that are affected being part of it. I guess that's what makes me a New Democrat. I think that everybody is in it together, that everybody needs to be consulted, everybody needs to move forward with one voice, everybody needs to know that the government works for them. It's not enough just to have it imposed from above.

So here we are: Bill 55. People come in to see me from the environment, the teachers who are angry, people who are angry that there's no real job creation, people who are angry about a whole bunch of things that they see here and ask what we are going to do.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we're going to try to do the same thing that we did with the budget itself. We are not going to walk away, as my friends in the Conservative Party did when the budget was announced, as I watched them on TV that day with Andrea Horwath, the leader of the NDP. We knew on that day it was up to us. If we are going to make this Legislature work for the people of Ontario, if everybody is going to be part of making a move, of making Ontario the kind of place it can be again, then we have to do what is right. We are not going to walk away. We are not going to ring bells. We are going to go to committee, and we are going to try to change the most egregious parts. We're going to try to put things into the bill which will help ordinary Ontarians to cope. We are going to make suggestions on where money can be saved and how it can be saved. We are going to make suggestions on where money can be found. I think that's what we need to do.

These are very difficult things to do. It's easier to vote no. It's easier to do what the Conservatives do. It's easier just to say, "This is a bad government," and vote it down, and, "Let's go out and knock on doors for the next six weeks." But that is not what the people of Ontario expect, nor is it what they want.

**1550**

We went out and we asked the people of Ontario, and polling was done later on that confirmed it: "Do you want an election held right away?" The answer was overwhelmingly no. Then we asked them, "What you want us to do?" They said, "We want you to wring whatever concessions you can from the government to make the budget better." This will be exactly the same here. I want the members opposite to know that we will be in committee every day, when this goes to committee. We



will be listening to the people who want to make deputations—and I know there are a lot. I have already received a list of some 40 people who have indicated that they have approached the clerk's office in order to make deputations on this bill.

If finance committee, in its wisdom, of which I am a member but not the Chair, decides it wants to hear those people, the standard practice is that we can hear four an hour. That would take about 10 hours, or about two days, to hear them all. But that's only today, and we haven't even advertised. We know that people out there have a lot of problems with this bill. If they're environmentalists, they have huge problems. If they're teachers who are negotiating or doctors who are negotiating, they have huge problems. If they're anyone else who just wants some fairness, they're going to be here as well.

So I'm saying to the members opposite: This bill needs to go to committee, and this committee may in fact have to travel. We may have to go to northern Ontario to ask about the railway. We may have to go to Ottawa or to wherever. We may have to listen to many, many deputations, but in the end we have an obligation to all of the people of this province to do what is right. And what is right is to make the province work for them, not for the special interests, not for those who are able to lobby the government and have ministries dismantled, not for those who have great big dollar-bill signs in their eyes saying that we can privatize ServiceOntario and we can do all the things to set up a new Ornge around ServiceOntario and make millions of mega dollars on the part of taxpayers. No; we've had enough of all of those things. The people of Ontario expect more and they expect better, and that's what we intend to do.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not even going to use my full hour. I think I've said what needs to be said, but I do want the government opposite to know that this bill is not going to go through as it is written. It needs to be changed in a major way. New Democrats are here to work. We will make those changes. We will make Ontario better for all of us.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** It was with interest that I listened to the member from Beaches–East York talk about his version of the bill in front of us. Our leader went to see the Premier in December and talked about what we needed to see in this budget. It was simple: some control of spending and a real jobs plan. We look back at what we got with this budget, and we got neither. In fact, we got a government that sat there and criticized us for not being there.

Within days, we saw the world markets react to this budget, with a credit watch on the first day, and later on, another downgrade, the third downgrade that this government has seen. We haven't seen downgrades since the days of Bob Rae and the NDP. Then the people of Ontario needed, I guess, what our member referred to as the Common Sense Revolution, where we go in and actually make government work and support business.

In this province, it should not be a bad thing to earn a profit. If it wasn't for these companies earning a profit, paying taxes, contributing to many of our charities and making the province work, we wouldn't have a province here. I think we have to get back to making this province competitive. We're looking at how we've squandered our money, whether it be on the Ornge ambulance or eHealth or the Oakville or Mississauga power plants. There are so many of these examples. But what's a simple answer? It's not a matter of watching what we spend. The simple answer is, "Raise taxes. How can we get more revenue?" Well, enough is enough. People in my riding are complaining.

I know I just have a second, but do you know what I heard back when we were talking about this budget? People sending me emails saying, "Go to an election. We can't afford the government." I think that's the message. They can't afford the government we have today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jagmeet Singh:** I'm very pleased to join in the debate. I listened very attentively to the last portion of the remarks of my colleague from Beaches, and I agree wholeheartedly. I think it's important to keep in mind that there are ways to save money that could address efficiencies.

Something I've heard time and time again from not only teachers but just concerned citizens is that the money that we're wasting on the EQAO should have been the first thing that this government looked at in terms of cutting when we're looking at education. There are countless other areas where we need to strengthen and reinforce our education system, but that's one that should have been the first on the minds of those who were making the decisions, to look at cutting it.

It touches on the other issue: Where has the consultation been? Historically, before the budget was ever passed or even proposed, there was active consultation with Ontarians, and that was lacking in this. There are a number of concerned people, and we need to hear from them in deputations. I wholeheartedly support the fact that our job here is to make the Legislature work, and we're not going to sit idly by. We are going to make sure that this bill is not passed as is and that there are some serious changes made to make it more fair, to inject some fairness back into the bill, to ensure that it takes care of those who are hard hit. I reinforce the commitment that we are not going to let this bill slide through as is, that we will fight hard to ensure that the concerns of Ontarians are represented. We will make sure that the Legislature works at the same time, but we will be resolute in enforcing our will to ensure that the people of Ontario are represented, that there's fairness for all and that we don't proceed with a just-cut-for-all process.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. David Zimmer:** Speaker, the most important thing that we, as legislators, can do for the people of Ontario is get our economy back on a solid, solid footing.

So how do we do that? Well, economists tell us, rating agencies tell us, our constituents tell us, that the single most important thing we can do is to deal with our deficit. That's why we are undertaking to deal with this deficit and to have it dealt with over the next five years.

Now, everybody has a role to play in helping us deal with the deficit. That's why recently you've seen the number of initiatives where we've asked the people of Ontario, our public service sector, our physicians—we've asked people to step up to the plate, and indeed we've asked members of this Legislature to step up to the plate, and contribute to that process of reducing the deficit by working with us on holding the line on salaries. Holding the line on salaries is a symbol of this province's commitment to dealing with the deficit in the next five years.

The economists tell us that for every dollar that we are going to take in in revenues, we've got to take in another \$4 in savings in order to deal with this deficit problem.

My sense, just talking to my constituents and reading the media, the press, all of the newspapers, the big-city papers, the small-town papers, is that there is an appetite—there is more than an appetite; there is a demand—by the people of Ontario to see us deal with this deficit, because they realize that dealing with the deficit over the next five years is the best possible way to restore Ontario to its traditional leadership in the economy of this country and in this province. That's the challenge that we have to face. That's why we all have to step up to the plate.

Thank you, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** It's my pleasure to speak to my NDP colleague from Beaches–East York, but I have to say right off the bat that his opening comment was that our party and our leader, Tim Hudak, stood up immediately and said no. Well, that's not true. We did go with ideas, concrete ideas, with what we said needed to be done to get this ship turned around, and that was rejected outright. So then we stood on principle and said, "You know what? We are going to draw a line in the sand," because we have Liberals and NDP who just want to keep spending us down and putting us over this deficit cliff. We're at \$15 billion, heading to \$30 billion. You can't continue to add more deficit onto that and expect to get anywhere. We cannot go down this slippery slope.

1600

I would like to ask, who pays? How much is left if debt repayment gets to \$30 billion, like it's projected by their economist? How many people then will receive the help that they always talk about?

Revenue, he said, versus cutting spending: It seems like, well, we'll just go back to the taxpayers, who, right now, say to my colleague from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry—and my people are saying the same to me—"I can't take any more. I just can't afford—you keep coming back for taxes, taxes and more taxes." We can't continue to go down that road. How are we going to ensure that those revenues are there? They've had eight

years of unprecedented revenue growth, and yet they've run us into a \$15-billion deficit. We can't afford another—God forbid—eight years, let alone one or two years. We just can't go there.

I find it very interesting that they talk about jobs and cutting, but every time they seem to be able to grab the floor, they're talking about cutting out nuclear. Well, I'd like to ask the pointed question: Nuclear provides unionized, good-paying labour jobs, and those companies, and those companies that support them, are union-driven and corporate and in my community, I know, are very philanthropic and give a lot of money back to the community every time we turn around. I always find myself confused when they're always slamming corporations. But I can only assume that at the fundraisers he was referencing earlier, a lot of corporate people or companies give to those fundraisers to help the less fortunate.

So at some point, Speaker, you can't have it both ways. We need to cut spending and add some revenues.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** That concludes the time for questions and comments. I'll return to the member for Beaches–East York, who has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Thank you to my colleagues from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry, Bramalea–Gore–Malton, Willowdale and Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound for their comments. Time will only permit me to talk about a couple of them.

My colleague from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry was talking about the credit watch. There's no doubt the credit watch is there. The credit watch was pending. The credit watch had nowhere to go except where it went when the government came back with the \$15-billion deficit. I'd like to think, though, that the NDP did a little bit in terms of the taxation policy on \$500,000, because that money went directly against the deficit. That's what needs to happen, and Conservatives need to know that too: that you can't be protecting those people who earn all that much money and at the same time would not countenance paying down the deficit.

My colleague from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound said that we were adding more deficit. It is not the intention of the NDP to add more deficit. We have the same policy you did to make sure that we were out of deficit within five years. We would be much more aggressive on how to do it, though, because we also know that revenues would aid, something that you would not do.

In terms of nuclear, why is the NDP opposed to nuclear? It's not so much the safety concern. It's because every single nuclear redevelopment has gone billions of dollars over budget. The Conservatives blew an extra \$5 billion in Clarington and Pickering. You know it and I know it and the people of Ontario know it: That's where the money was wasted, and we are in such bad deficit circumstances because Conservatives wasted the money on nuclear when it did not have to be wasted. There are other places to get energy. But the cheapest form of energy—no one is listening to the NDP—is the energy you don't use. It's conservation. We produce enough

electricity in this province, if we conserved right, that we wouldn't have to build another nuclear for 50 years.

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

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you very much, Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to speak on Bill 55. Before I get on the topic of this bill, I want to thank all the members for the best wishes they have given to me on the birth of my son, Rafi Ben Abbas Naqvi. Thank you very much.

Rafi was born Friday, April 27, at 12:27 a.m., at a mighty weight of five pounds and seven ounces. He and Christine, my lovely wife, are doing great. Thank you very much, everybody, for the nice emails and notes and gifts over the last week or so.

I'm very pleased to be speaking on Bill 55, which is the budget bill. It's an important bill that deserves the kind of debate that is taking place in the House. I'm really appreciative of the different points of view that are coming forward in this debate on this important issue, because this is probably, by far, one of the most important budgets that our government has put forward. It's an important budget because of the situation, the circumstances that we find ourselves in, not just in Ontario alone, but globally.

There is a change, there is a transition, that is taking place in the global economy. The impact and the effects of the great recession that started in 2008 and peaked in 2009 are still being felt. In fact, recovery is taking place, albeit slowly in some places of the world and at a reasonable pace in other parts. It's still a process.

As any transition period goes, the steps, the measures that are taken during that transition period, are important ones because we need to get it right. We need to make sure that we are in a solid, healthy position and place after the recession is completely over, after the recovery is complete, and Ontario in particular, obviously, for our purposes, is a stronger economy, is a vibrant place to live for all of us.

That's what this budget strives to do. The very first thing this budget does is it lays out a five-year plan to eliminate the deficit by 2017-18. That is the most important thing we need to do. I think the member for Willowdale spoke to that in one of the questions and comments. We need to ensure that the \$15-billion deficit we have right now, which we know is a result of the steps that the government took to fight the recession and make sure that Ontario doesn't get into the deep pain of the recession as we saw in the United States or we are seeing in southern Europe—we need to ensure that we are able to fight the recession. For that, we had to borrow money.

We had to make sure that we invested in our communities, and a stimulus package was introduced, along with other developed economies, along with the government of Canada and other provinces. In fact, all of our communities, all of our ridings, no matter which party or which side of the aisle you sit on, benefited from those investments. But the cost is that we had to borrow money to ensure that we protected jobs in our communities. We

had to borrow money to ensure that we protected the 400,000 jobs in the auto sector in our province, to make sure that there are good construction jobs. They were building hockey arenas and roads and bridges in our communities so that we could fight the recession.

Now that we are able to do that so successfully, we need to pay this borrowed money back. I think it's a simple principle. There's nothing more complicated or complex than that. I think people understand this at home, that sometimes you have to borrow money. We all do that. But when you borrow money, you have to have a bit of a reschedule plan. How are you going to pay back that money? And that's what we're trying to do. We need to make sure that we don't continue to move forward by borrowing more money, because when we borrow more money, we have to pay more money in interest. If we're paying money in interest, that means we are taking money from somewhere else, like spending in our health care and education, and diverting that money and paying it into interest. The best way to prevent that is to ensure that we pay back the money that we have borrowed or decrease the amount of money that we continue to borrow. And that's what the government is focused on: to take the next five years and ensure that we eliminate this deficit of \$15 billion. The discrepancy that exists in terms of the money we spend on programs and the money we collect from taxes—there's obviously, right now, a \$15-billion difference in that. We spend \$15 billion more than what we collect, and we need to find a balance where we can bring the two together. It's not rocket science.

I think at home, when you speak to Ontarians, they understand that, because that's basically a principle they use at home when they are balancing their books. You've got an income that comes in and you've got those expenses that you have to pay out, and you try to match both. Sometimes it happens that you spend more money than you take in, and that's where families actually sit around the table and they make certain decisions. They decide to make certain sacrifices. They may decide to say, "You know what? We're not going to take that extra vacation this year because we are going to save this money so that we can pay off our debt, the borrowing we have done."

**1610**

I think the same principle applies for governments. The analogy in my head is that the credit card is maxed out. You cannot just continue to borrow money at all times to pay for important programs that families rely on. That is why the single most important thing we can do right now is have a solid plan in place and then implement that plan to get off the deficit. That's the number one thing, in that we have a balance. We need a balance in place. You can't just do one way or the other. You cannot just cut programming. Something that our Conservative friends tend to argue is that you bring in a mandatory wage freeze, you cut programming here, and that's how you reduce your expenses and you'll find the balance. Or, as my NDP friends like to suggest, let's just raise taxes, let's bump up the revenues, and that's how you can eliminate the difference between the two.

Our thinking, the government's philosophy, is that the solution is somewhere in the middle. You've got to take a more balanced approach so that not only are you eliminating the deficit but you are also growing the economy at the same time and you are creating an environment to create good jobs and protecting health care and education, the two single most important services that families rely on in the province of Ontario.

What are the steps, for example, that we are taking in order to find that balance? Things that are incorporated in the budget and are outlined in Bill 55 are things like freezing the reductions in corporate income tax and business education tax. That's one of the steps we are doing. That helps on the revenue side of things. Freezing the corporate tax rate at the current rate and freezing the business education tax rate at the current rate allows more money to come in. We're also capping the Ontario clean energy benefit at 3,000 kilowatt hours per month. That's a saving. We're modifying the Ontario drug benefit program as it relates to seniors who earn more money and have the capacity to pay a little bit more into the Ontario drug benefit program. We are delaying and cancelling infrastructure projects to reduce borrowing by more than \$3 billion. That's some money we are saving on the expenditure side of things.

We're ensuring that user fees recover more of the costs of programs and services. In many instances, mostly in the transportation sector, some of the fees have not been touched since the mid-1990s or even earlier than that—making sure that those fees are more reflective of the costs today so that the costs are recovered. Most of them are on businesses because they need to make sure that they are paying the right proportion of the cost for the services they use.

We are extending the pay freeze for MPPs for an additional two years, bringing the total to five years. We are extending the pay freeze for executives at hospitals, universities, colleges, school boards and agencies for another two years.

These are some of the steps that we have outlined, not to mention that in the conversations we had with the NDP, we were able to bring in certain other measures; for example, the surtax on those Ontarians who make \$500,000 and more. We are increasing the tax rate by an additional 2% on that particular group of Ontarians until the deficit is paid off. All that money that is collected will go towards reducing the deficit.

It is a balanced approach, because that's what we need to do. So essentially, for what we are doing, for every \$4 that we are reducing our expenses, we're getting \$1 additionally in revenue. So we are finding savings of about \$17.7 billion through this budget. We have revenue-raising measures of about \$4.4 billion.

As a result of these actions over the next three years, which the budget outlines, we've got about \$22 billion less in borrowing than would have been required if we took no action.

Our premise is that that is the right way to go forward. That is the most balanced way to ensure that we are able

to balance the books by 2017-18: by eliminating the deficit, but also not take away from economic growth in this province, by ensuring that the province is a competitive place to do business and also not impacting health care and education.

I look at my community in Ottawa Centre. There are steps we announced earlier that we are moving forward with, which were part of this budget, to ensure that health care and education remain the number one priority. I'll give you an example. The University of Ottawa Heart Institute is located in my community. We had announced an expansion of the University of Ottawa Heart Institute. The heart institute is world renowned. It provides world-class care in the city of Ottawa and for the eastern Ontario region. It's a bilingual medical facility. Some of the world's best research is done at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute. In fact, a recent study that came out showed that the heart institute is in the world's top 2% in terms of the class of researchers it produces.

We are investing about \$200 million in an expansion of the heart institute. Through passing this budget that expansion continues. Why? Because it will provide for better quality care for the citizens of Ottawa and for the whole eastern Ontario region, a very important investment that is part and parcel of the budget. We're not backing away from that. We are maintaining that type of commitment to the health care sector and to my community in Ottawa Centre.

Another good example that I want to share with you, Speaker, is the investments we are making at Carleton University, again located in my riding of Ottawa Centre. We are investing, I believe, about \$14 million expanding the library at Carleton University. We have invested a lot of money in terms of building new buildings—about \$25 million to build two buildings called the Canal Building and the River Building. The next phase is to upgrade the library. It's been there for some time. I'm a former student of Carleton University. I did my master's there. I spent plenty of time—many, many hours—in the library. It is outdated. It needs the upgrade. By investing \$14 million, we're ensuring that the library will double in size. It will be state of the art. It will allow great opportunity for students at Carleton University to get an education.

I want to thank the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities for his continued support for Carleton University because, again, these are the kinds of investments that are going to ensure that we're creating a competitive economy.

Again, in this budget we did not back off from those types of investments. We are continuing with those investments, because they create a long-lasting impact. Not only do they pay immediate short-term dividends in terms of jobs that will be created in our economy, particularly in my city of Ottawa, but the result will also be in terms of better education that will be provided.

I can go through examples like this, and I'm sure all of us can give those types of examples for our communities. Again, what it highlights is a balanced approach that this budget is providing. I know that when you take a balance like this, where you try to blend both the expense side of

the ledger sheet and the revenue side of the ledger sheet to ensure that you've got a good plan, you're open to criticism.

I applaud the opposition for doing their job right. But I think that in these tough economic times we need to make sure we don't go one way or the other, because both extremes take us in a dangerous direction. They take us to a place that impacts people very, very hard. The last thing we want to do is eliminate the deficit on the backs of the people. We need to be smart about it. We need to be sophisticated in the manner in which we balance the budget, and I think we have really done so through this budget.

The other things that are important to highlight are things like continuing with full-day kindergarten. I have a lot of young families in my community and they are excited about the implementation of full-day kindergarten, because they know the impact it's going to have on their families. They know the impact it's going to have on their children. Not only are their children going to get the best education in a full-day kindergarten model, but also the savings the families have. I've got neighbourhoods in my community which are—some of the neighbourhoods are low-income. In a lot of them, the residents are new Canadians. I'm really proud to say that the very first two schools that received full-day kindergarten in my riding, the Cambridge Street Public School and the W. E. Gowling Public School, are both in the lowest-income neighbourhoods with a lot of new Canadian populations.

#### 1620

What we did essentially by introducing full-day kindergarten in those schools is that we just gave an incredible advantage to those students coming from those families where in many instances the parents don't even speak English or French, the first two official languages, and my riding is officially bilingual, designated under the French Language Services Act. We gave those children a great opportunity. I visit these schools often and you can see the incredible impact in these children; you can see the great involvement of those parents in the school community. That's the kind of difference we are making with the implementation of full-day kindergarten, not to mention saving about \$6,200 per year per child in child care costs. So if you're a family who is new to Ottawa, you live in my community—a downtown community—in an apartment, not only is your child getting a great education in this incredible education system we've got, thanks to our teachers, early childhood educators and other educators and professionals in our schools, but you're also saving money on child care costs. That allows that family, both mom and dad, to be out there and to be able to earn a living, integrate and establish your lives within the new community that you now call home. That is a significant benefit.

Why deprive other children—the program is rolling out and will be completed in another two years—from the same benefit? Because studies after studies are demonstrating that full-day kindergarten is the right

direction. Talk about an investment in the future. We often talk about the future here and we talk about the debt we are uploading on our future generations; it may be a valid point, but we've got to balance it off. I think the balance is that we're investing in our children by making sure that they get the best education. I would love my son—and I can say that now, standing here, which is a great feeling—

*Applause.*

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you. I want my son to have that best education. I want him to be in a full-day kindergarten program because he deserves it and it's going to place him in a far better position to compete, not only here at home but also globally.

The other important thing to mention—again, I hear from students all the time; I mentioned that Carleton University is in my riding—is the 30%-off-tuition grant that we've brought in. Again, it's a very targeted group, and I hear all kinds of criticisms from some of my student activist friends that it doesn't extend to everybody. But you know what? When we're talking about fairness, when we're talking about giving advantage to those who are on the lower-income side of things versus those whose parents make a lot of money, this is a classic example where we're creating that parity. We actually brought in a program that has that fairness. That 30% tuition grant does not apply to all students equally; it applies to a targeted group of students, those who come from families which make \$160,000 or less. What we're doing is we're targeting students of lower-income and mid-income families. I think that's a fair thing to do. I don't see why the NDP does not wholeheartedly approve and applaud that initiative, because it really exactly does what they've been arguing about in terms of creating fairness. I think that it is the right approach to take. When I'm at Carleton University, I've got young students stopping me in the hallways and telling me, "Thank you. We are benefiting from this. This is a great benefit because it is saving me about \$1,600 a year over two semesters."

Those are the choices that we've made. Those are the choices that are outlined in Bill 55. I really hope that the members look at the bill carefully and consider their support for this bill. Thank you very much.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Yes, thank you very much. Questions and comments?

**Mr. Bill Walker:** I'll begin by extending my personal congratulations to my colleague from Ottawa Centre and his wife on the birth of their son. I hope this doesn't constitute a conflict of interest that he's voting for that full-day kindergarten now.

He spoke of a transition period. I have to say that eight years of mismanagement to get us to where we are and continuing to develop a spending habit has me very concerned. They've had eight years and they've not got it right. They've doubled the debt. It will soon be more than the federal debt, which is unbelievable, if you really think about it.

My concern is that again they're adding spending this year. They've now acknowledged that we're not bringing

in enough. We don't have enough; we're spending more. But they still added \$2 billion. They've mismanaged our economy, they've run us into the ground and yet they're saying, "But trust us. Trust us. We're in a transition period. We'll do better." Well, eight years hasn't given me much comfort, or the people in my riding. It's too little, too late.

**Protecting jobs:** He talked about protecting jobs. The third-largest government expenditure is paying the interest on the debt. Just think how many jobs could be created if we didn't have that size of a debt. They let it get to \$15 billion and may let it get to \$30 billion, unfortunately.

They're gambling on lottery revenue to bring them out of the abyss, and I'm fearful of that. He talked about balance. We're looking for balance. Restrain your spending. Cut back, show the leadership that's needed to restrain that spending when you don't have the funds and go after something like a legislated wage freeze, which we've been talking about. My definition of balance is obviously different than his, because I wouldn't have added \$2 billion in a year when I'm already in debt the way I am.

You know, it's a simple thing. I have a son. In fact, I have two sons, and they come to me and say, "Dad, I want the new \$400 hockey stick." My simple answer is, "No. I don't have it. You're not getting it." My friend Mr. Harris from Kitchener–Waterloo just had Murphy Harris not too long ago. On his first breath, he was \$21,000 in debt.

Speaker, we cannot go down that road. The financial realities of today dictate that we could not support that budget in good conscience for our kids and grandkids.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for Welland.

**Ms. Cindy Forster:** I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the member from Ottawa Centre and his wife on their new baby boy.

The member from Ottawa talked about the government using a balanced approach. I think that this budget is anything but balanced. He talked about having the seniors—who are not wealthy; these aren't wealthy seniors. These are seniors who have done a little better in their life, perhaps put a little more money away, and making them pay more for their drug benefit plans while at the same time not adding maybe another half per cent to corporate taxes so that big corporations like banks and oil companies that are reporting billions of dollars in profit each quarter—so they pay a little bit more; or, instead, actually moving to a tax incentive program, where companies that are investing in equipment and machinery and technology and creating good full-time jobs actually get a tax credit.

This budget does very little for people on Ontario Works, on ODSP, for struggling working-poor families getting the child tax credit that is now being delayed. Those people aren't getting a fair shake, but the big companies getting tax cuts that they actually don't need really isn't fair to the working people in this province.

We talked also about privatizing ServiceCanada. I heard the member from Beaches–East York talking about the privatization. This will lead to another web, he said, like the Ornge fiasco. It will also drive down wages in the private sector because we all know that those private sector employees are not paid as well as the unionized employees at ServiceCanada—ServiceOntario; sorry.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** It's interesting to me: The member from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound didn't read his election literature very carefully because you were talking about, as my Conservative opponent, much higher levels of spending in health care than we anticipated. It would have been a lot more than \$2 billion this year. So maybe the member is sitting on the wrong side of this House and actually maybe got his literature mixed up.

**Mr. Bill Walker:** No, I don't think so. I got elected. I think I got it right.

**Hon. Glen R. Murray:** Yeah, you can say anything you like.

My dear friend from Welland, this is an interesting idea about a tax incentive, because it assumes that the problem is that employers need incentives to hire people. I'm spending a lot of time with employers. That's not what the problem is. The problem is, they need better-skilled workers.

1630

When I talk to employers—Bombardier right now has 5,000 employees, average age 53. They have to replace their entire workforce, and they want to add 2,000 more. The biggest challenge is that in Ontario, coming out of the recession, 70% of the jobs are high-skill jobs. People don't need tax breaks to create work; they need a skilled workforce. Most of the people who lost their jobs—81% of the people who lost their jobs during the recession—did not have a college or university education, which is why Second Career is so important. So I would disagree with my friends in the NDP, but I don't think we're philosophically that far apart.

To my friends in the Conservatives who whine about taxes all the time, the corporate income tax rate when you were in power was 14%, and you didn't squirm about that. It's now 11.15%. For manufacturing and mining, it was 12%; it's now 10%. Personal income tax levels, quite frankly, were also much higher—\$12 billion higher—and you had 90,000 more low-income Ontarians on the tax rolls. If our record is problematic for you, aren't you a little ashamed about what you did over the 40 years you were in power?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Jim McDonell:** I would like to also congratulate the member from Ottawa Centre for the birth of his new son. But I worry about my son's generation as well as his son's generation, as they're saddled with this huge debt.

They lose their ability to work around it to actually function as a government. We're looking at interest rates now that are the lowest in history, that forecasters are

saying are soon to go up. Add this to the downgrades we've been receiving. Our interest rate payments are now the third-highest expenditure. What's going to happen when they double?

That's what we're looking at. They're losing control. We're sitting here, looking around at ways of getting more revenue, ways of getting more taxes. This is a government that has got record levels of revenue over their eight-year period. But what do they have to show for it? They also have record levels of deficit. They've doubled the debt. It's easy to spend and increase spending—and I think he's very much right: We as a party are very much for spending more in health care. But after we saw the Drummond report, where we actually saw that 28% of what they're spending in health care is wasted—there's lots of room to look into that and increase services but still look at cutting back some payments to health care. Almost a third of their health care spending is wasted. That's what we can look at through this government.

I quote the Drummond report: It's not simply a matter of increasing spending; you have to be strategic. I think this is not what we're seeing. I don't think it's what the people of Ontario are looking for. They're looking for our government to make the right decisions and make a difference. Just increasing spending, making sure that they feed their friends so that they can have an income for their next election campaign—I think we have to start looking out for the broader public and look after this province's wallets.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I return to the member for Ottawa Centre.

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** Thank you very much, Speaker. I want to thank the members from Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound, Welland, Toronto Centre and Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry for your comments on the remarks that I made earlier.

Let's talk about some facts here. The fact of the matter is that our government has a track record of eliminating deficits. In 2003, when we came into office, we inherited an over-\$5-billion deficit from the previous Conservative government.

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** They can continue to deny that, but I think it's proven. It's by the Auditor General. We got rid of that deficit. In fact, not only did we get rid of the deficit over the next two years, but we had three back-to-back surplus budgets in the province of Ontario. We not only had balanced books but we had surplus books. As I mentioned earlier in my remarks, the big reason for the deficit we've got is because of the recession.

Here's another interesting thing: We have been going through this recovery in the province of Ontario when the dollar is at par. In fact, it's higher at times. When we talk about jobs in the 1990s and how great the economy was, this was at a time when the Canadian dollar was at 67 US cents, which gave a huge advantage to our manufacturers to sell into the US market and does not exist anymore. However, we have a situation that we pretty much have a full jobs recovery in the province of Ontario. Perhaps this

is the very first time in the history of Canada that Ontario or Canada has recovered sooner from recession than the Americans have. That is significant. I think that speaks volumes of the resilience of our economy; it speaks volumes of the economic policies that our government has put into place. We'll continue to make sure that Ontario is on the right path and has a stronger economy that creates jobs.

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

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** I'm pleased to rise today to discuss this important topic of the fiscal health of our province. We have been looking over it and noticing the mismanagement this province has been under the last eight years.

In preparing for my speech today I remember an old fable that my mother used to read to me and I'm reading to my daughter now—

**Mr. Michael Harris:** She just turned 80.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Mother just turned 80; yes, she did. Happy birthday to my mom.

The story is that of the ant and the grasshopper, of course. For those who aren't familiar with that, I'm going to paraphrase it for you very quickly, just to jar your memory.

It tells of an ant who, throughout the summer and fall months, worked really hard to store up his food for winter. He was preparing. While he worked tirelessly at building up his supplies, the grasshopper frolicked around in the meadows and just played. The grasshopper only saw how beautiful the times were at the time, in the summer. He didn't bother to create a stockpile of food like the ant. Then winter came along and, of course, the ant lived because he had prepared, whereas the grasshopper did not.

Going around the riding, I did relay the story to many people because I thought it was a pretty neat story in how it relates to today. Without even prompting any of my constituents, they all recognized the grasshopper as the provincial Liberal government. It's a sad statement in itself because after eight years of the McGuinty Liberals, the parallels are all too obvious.

If I can enunciate two things in my time here today, it's this: (1) the McGuinty government has absolutely no credibility when it comes to fiscal prudence and restraining spending; (2) this budget lacks a jobs plan, and it indicates the Liberals' fundamental misunderstanding of the importance of the private sector to our province.

I am a new MPP, Mr. Speaker, and therefore I have not had the chance to witness the McGuinty government's awe-inspiring mismanagement of public funds. So in an attempt to not get caught up in the spin that is revolving around this budget, I went to StatsCan to look at the cold, hard numbers, and here's what I found.

In the Liberals' first year of having access to the government coffers, they increased spending by 8.7%, despite better-than-normal revenue growth of 5.4%. At the end of the day, the Liberals still incurred a deficit. The following year, McGuinty tax increases were necessary to fund their spending habits, and revenue grew by

11.6%. But don't worry, I'm not going to talk about the broken promises from the McGuinty government not to raise taxes. They did sign a contract with the National Taxpayers Coalition saying they wouldn't raise taxes, but that is irrelevant now, because when I talk to my constituents about the Liberals' record of broken promises, the attitude I really do get has gone to straight indignation, with the phrase, "Well, what do you expect from them?"

Further, in the 20 minutes of time that I do have—now 16 minutes—I couldn't possibly do justice to all the brilliance of the Liberals saying one thing and doing another. However, the point I do want to drive home is that the McGuinty government has never been able to pull back spending.

After the first wave of tax increases and an 11.6% increase in revenue, what do you think the Liberals did? Do you think they took the lesson of the ant and paid down some debt, or kept the province's finances at a reasonable level? Or did the McGuinty Liberals behave like the grasshopper and continue frolicking in the meadow on the taxpayer's tab? I think everyone knows the answer in their gut, but I also have the proof, and that is the 6.8% increase in spending the Liberals incurred the following year. This pattern of out-of-control spending has persisted for the last eight years. Program spending under the Liberal government has grown from about \$60 billion to \$120 billion.

The McGuinty government, in true fashion like themselves, likes to blame everybody and everything under the sun for Ontario's precarious fiscal outlook. For instance, the Minister of Finance has cited the recession as one of the big reasons the province finds itself in such a fiscal mess. He claims that big spending was necessary during the downturn to avoid a catastrophe, but given the fact that the McGuinty government increased spending by nearly 50% in the four years they were in power before the recession, it would appear that they also believe that big government spending is necessary during good economic times. Now, if you believe in increasing spending during good economic times and believe in increasing spending in bad economic times, how can you possibly believe in fiscal restraint?

**1640**

In 2003, McGuinty promised to—and I'm going to quote—"make sure the debt goes in one direction only: down." Again, I'm not going to focus on the broken promises because it's something I've come to expect, but I do want to say that whatever rationalization the McGuinty government makes, the fact remains that from 2003 to 2007 Ontario experienced overall real GDP growth of 9.4%. During this time of economic prosperity, did the McGuinty government behave like the ant and take the opportunity to reduce spending and pay down the debt? Of course not. The McGuinty Liberals completely dismissed their pledge and grew the provincial debt.

Now the McGuinty government has come to the Ontario people and said, "Don't worry. We have a plan to

balance the budget." They call it a restraint budget. Well, I have a theory: I don't think the Minister of Finance understands the meaning of the word "restraint." I think he must speak another language than the rest of Ontarians. After all, he's never exercised restraint before, and this budget actually increases spending in 14 of 24 departments and by \$2 billion overall. I'd like to know where the Minister of Finance bought the dictionary, because his definition of "restraint" is definitely not the same definition I have. Rather than calling this a restraint budget, it is more appropriate to call it the 30-30-30 budget.

In it, the McGuinty Liberals neglect to take the necessary steps to balance the budget. If we stay on the path they have laid out for us, Ontario's deficit will hit \$30 billion by 2017. That's the first 30.

As you're already aware, under the McGuinty government, the provincial debt has doubled, at a level that took 23 Premiers before him to accumulate. McGuinty did it, doubled it, in eight years. If this trend continues, by 2017 the debt load of this province will reach \$400 billion. This works out to just over \$30,000 for every man, woman and child in this province. That's the second 30.

The first two 30s are confined to the provincial budget, but as we know, the fiscal decisions made by the government have a large impact on our economy. As we have tirelessly pointed out, this budget has no jobs plan. There are 600,000 people unemployed in this province, and the government seems to want to continue on the way that got us into the predicament. Not only will this budget not get people back to work; its tax provisions will result in 30,000 private sector jobs being lost, and that is the final 30.

Despite all this, the Liberals are trying to sell this budget as their cure, their tough medicine that will send us down the road to a balanced budget and prosperity. It is no doubt the reason that the Liberals titled their budget Strong Action for Ontario, and yet when we get into the details, there's nothing all that tough or strong about it. The McGuinty government's favourite tactic is, promise to take action tomorrow without having to take real action today.

I think one of the problems is that the Minister of Finance just isn't understanding finance. For instance, up until yesterday, the government was very adamant about cutting the so-called subsidies to the horse racing industry. When you use the term "subsidy," this sounds like a very reasonable thing to do. After all, a subsidy uses money collected through taxes and puts it forward to some program or business. If, in fact, the government is paying the horse industry a subsidy, cutting it would enhance the province's fiscal position. But I have just one question for the Minister of Finance: Does the government use tax revenue to subsidize the horse industry through the slots-at-raceways program? The answer is no. I would hope the government realizes this, because the agreement between the OLG and the horse industry is very clear. The horse industry does not receive a dime until someone inserts a coin into a slot machine located at



their track. This is not a subsidy; it's actually a revenue-sharing agreement.

I'm sure the minister will tell me he has made some responsible concessions. The reason I bring this up is because before the budget was released, the Minister of Finance made the slots-at-racetracks program a very big and public issue. Given the amount of time he has dedicated to talking about it, one would be forgiven for thinking that this one measure in itself might balance the budget.

He tried using an example of how the government was going to prioritize health care and education over less pertinent items. In all his tough talk, the minister failed to mention how he would make up the \$1 billion in profit the government receives from the program. That's right. One program, the slots-at-racetracks program, is not a subsidy, but it actually is providing \$1 billion that is used to fund essential services like health care and education.

This is our Minister of Finance: someone who doesn't know the difference between an inflow and an outflow, a subsidy from a revenue-sharing agreement. This is the man in charge of the province's finances, a man who would cut a revenue source that provides \$1 billion each year just because he doesn't know the definition of the word "subsidy." It's either that or all the minister's talk of horse racing was less about actual finance but instead a political game he was playing to stick it to rural Ontario.

Speaking of which, I come from rural Ontario, and my constituents have also been telling me during this process that they want answers to Ornge. They want us to have a select committee on Ornge. We have motioned it in this House. It's the will of the House, and the Minister of Health is refusing to call a select committee. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my constituents, I move to adjourn the debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Mr. Yurek has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1647 to 1717.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I would ask that the members please take their seats.

Mr. Yurek has moved the adjournment of the debate.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing while you're counted by the table.

You may take your seats.

All those opposed to the motion will please rise and remain standing while you're counted by the table staff.

You may take your seats.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 24; the nays are 34.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I declare the motion lost.

I now return to the member for Elgin–Middlesex–London, who still has the floor.

**Mr. Jeff Yurek:** Thank you, Speaker. It is clear that this McGuinty government loves to spend money. It's the nature of their expenditures that is alarming. Hiring public sector workers and paying them more for their service is a fixed structural cost. That means whether the economy expands or contracts, this government is on the hook for these costs.

The McGuinty government loves to blame the recent recession for Ontario's fiscal situation, but the reality is that their irresponsibility and priority of pandering and caving to public sector unions' demands has put Ontario in an untenable position.

I don't blame the McGuinty government for not predicting the recession of 2008. What I am blaming them for is not recognizing that recessions happen, and the less bloated a government's budget is, the better it will weather a downturn. A province that has its finances in order doesn't have to worry about a possible downgrade on its debt, yet exactly that is what we are facing today.

After eight years of enriching their most loyal campaign supporters, the public sector unions, at the expense of the rest of Ontario, they now think they have the ability to work with the unions and negotiate a freeze. What's even more interesting, but should be no surprise to anybody, is that the McGuinty government has said this before.

In the 2010-11 budget, the government vowed to crack down on public sector compensation. While the Minister of Finance tactically avoided using the words "wage freeze," he did say, "We will not fund any increases in overall compensation as those agreements get renegotiated. That's an important point to bear in mind. We expect our ... partners to bargain responsibly so that, together, we can do our part to protect schools and hospitals." That quote bears striking similarities to the rhetoric we're currently hearing from the minister. The minister has recently said that he wants to take a fair and balanced approach to collective bargaining. Essentially, the minister is saying the same thing he said two years ago.

How did his previous commitment pan out? At a time when families were out of work and taking pay cuts, the public sector, on average, received a compensation increase of 1.8%. This compares to an inflation rate of only 1% that year. That is hardly the tough medicine this province requires. But beyond that, it reflects the government's inability to keep their word and follow through. Maybe they were unwilling or maybe they were unable. Either way, it belies the credibility of the Liberal Party. And their record provides no comfort.

Over the McGuinty government's tenure, we've seen a pattern of spending, then taxing, then borrowing and then spending some more. At no point during the last eight years did the government attempt restraint. At no point during the last eight years did the government think ahead. And at no point during the last eight years did the government treat our tax dollars with the respect they

deserve. No. In the last eight years, the government continued to ask for more of our money through measures like eliminating scheduled income tax cuts, implementing the health tax, the gas tax, the HST, the electronics tax, small business taxes—I could go on and on.

They have taken this money and proceeded to waste it on scandals like eHealth and Ornge, which brings me back to what my constituents have been telling me: We want the government to follow the will of the House. We want a select committee on Ornge. We want the government—the House leader—to come forward and start the select committee on Ornge. Mr. Speaker, I move to adjourn the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Mr. Yurek has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

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

All those opposed will please say “nay.”

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. This will be another 30-minute bell.

*The division bells rang from 1723 to 1753.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Will the members please take their seats?

Mr. Yurek has moved the adjournment of the House.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise and remain standing so as to be counted by the table.

All those opposed to the motion will please rise and remain standing while you’re counted by the table.

**The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller):** The ayes are 45; the nays are 1.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading debate deemed adjourned.*

#### CORRECTION OF RECORD

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** The member for London–Fanshawe has a point of order, I understand.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** Thank you, Speaker. I have a point of order for April 30, 2012, page 1940. The sentence: “Simply put, the relationship between people, government and business has come to be one-sided.” The word “people” should be removed from that paragraph.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** I appreciate your point of clarification and correcting your record.

The member for London–Fanshawe on a point of order.

**Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong:** It’s important to admit when you have mistakes and correct them, so that’s what it’s all about. Lessons should be learned in the House from my example.

Anyway, on a more serious note, on April 16, 2012, page 1608, the sentence read, “it’s about affordability overall, that we have to make sure it’s coming out of our pockets.” It should be corrected to “and we have to make sure that rents are affordable, because it is coming out of people’s pockets.”

Thank you, Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ted Arnott):** Thank you very, very much. I appreciate it, and I appreciate the patience of all members of the House while the member did her point of order.

This House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 9 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1756.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

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

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

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

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

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Armstrong, Teresa J. (NDP)	London–Fanshawe	
<b>Arnott, Ted (PC)</b>	Wellington–Halton Hills	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
<b>Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Rouge River	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Northern Development and Mines / Ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
<b>Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Campbell, Sarah (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre de Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
<b>Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
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, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crack, Grant (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Damerla, Dipika (LIB)	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Economic Development and Innovation / Ministre du Développement économique et de l'Innovation
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Fedeli, Victor (PC)	Nipissing	
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
Forster, Cindy (NDP)	Welland	Deputy House Leader, Recognized Party / Leader parlementaire adjointe de parti reconnu
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Attorney General / Procureur général
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	
Harris, Michael (PC)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
<b>Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)</b>	St. Paul's	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara-Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jackson, Rod (PC)	Barrie	
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
<b>Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)</b>	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Leone, Rob (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Levac, Hon. / L'hon. Dave (LIB)</b>	Brant	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative
MacCharles, Tracy (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
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	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London-Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Government / Chef du gouvernement Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough–Westdale	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
McNaughton, Monte (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
<b>Miller, Paul (NDP)</b>	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Milligan, Rob E. (PC)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
<b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	York–Simcoe	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
O'Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth–Wellington	
Piruzza, Teresa (LIB)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Schein, Jonah (NDP)	Davenport	
Scott, Laurie (PC)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
Singh, Jagmeet (NDP)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Smith, Todd (PC)	Prince Edward–Hastings	
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
<b>Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB)</b>	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration Minister Responsible for the 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games / Ministre responsable des Jeux panaméricains et parapanaméricains de 2015
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
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	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	
Yurek, Jeff (PC)	Elgin–Middlesex–London	
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	
Vacant	Kitchener–Waterloo	

**STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Taras Natyshak  
Grant Crack, Kim Craitor  
Vic Dhillon, Michael Harris  
Rob Leone, Taras Natyshak  
Rick Nicholls, Michael Prue  
Mario Sergio  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

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Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Cindy Forster, Monte McNaughton  
Yasir Naqvi, Teresa Piruzza  
Michael Prue, Peter Shurman  
Soo Wong  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Valerie Quioc Lim

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: David Zimmer  
Sarah Campbell, Michael Coteau  
Joe Dickson, Rosario Marchese  
David Oraziotti, Laurie Scott  
Todd Smith, Jeff Yurek  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski (pro. tem)

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Phil McNeely  
Donna H. Cansfield, Helena Jaczek  
Bill Mauro, Jim McDonell  
Phil McNeely, Randy Pettapiece  
Peter Tabuns, Monique Taylor  
Lisa M. Thompson  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Shafiq Qaadri  
Laura Albanese, Teresa J. Armstrong  
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Mike Colle  
Frank Klees, Jack MacLaren  
Paul Miller, Rob E. Milligan  
Shafiq Qaadri  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod  
Laura Albanese, Bas Balkissoon  
Gilles Bisson, Donna H. Cansfield  
Steve Clark, Garfield Dunlop  
Jeff Leal, Lisa MacLeod  
Jonah Schein  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norm Miller  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Toby Barrett  
Toby Barrett, France Gélinas  
Phil McNeely, Norm Miller  
Reza Moridi, Jerry J. Ouellette  
Liz Sandals, Jagmeet Singh  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

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

Chair / Président: Peter Tabuns  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: John Vanthof  
Michael Coteau, Grant Crack  
Vic Dhillon, Randy Hillier  
Rod Jackson, Mario Sergio  
Peter Tabuns, John Vanthof  
Bill Walker  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tamara Pomanski

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

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Ted Chudleigh  
Ted Chudleigh, Dipika Damerla  
Cheri DiNovo, Kevin Daniel Flynn  
Ernie Hardeman, Tracy MacCharles  
Amrit Mangat, Michael Mantha  
Jane McKenna  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

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